"Looking Forward"
"Looking Backward"

Anniversary Sermons

Of the
Reformed Church of Bergen
in New Jersey
THREE SERMONS

Preached at the
TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
of the

Founding of the
REFORMED CHURCH
OF BERGEN
(Organized 1660)
in
Jersey City, N. J.

by the

PASTORS
REV. CORNELIUS BRETT, D. D.,
and
REV. JOHN J. MOMENT
OCTOBER SIXTEENTH AND TWENTY-THIRD, 1910
Jersey City, N. J.

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COMMITTEE

On Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth
Anniversary of the Founding of the
Reformed Church of Bergen in
Jersey City, N. J.

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Rev. John J. Moment
Elijah S. Cowles
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THE REFORMED CHURCH IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

A Sermon

Preached in the
REFORMED CHURCH OF BERGEN
in
Jersey City, N. J.

by
REV. CORNELIUS BRETT, D. D.,
Pastor

SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER NINTH, 1910

Text—Song of Solomon, ii., 2: "As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."
If one of the founders of Christianity had become reincarnated during the 15th or 16th centuries, as Moses and Elias, who appeared to the disciples themselves on the Mount of Transfiguration, what sad changes he would have noted in the Christian Church. We imagine Peter, the fisherman of Galilee, ascending the massive steps of the Cathedral in Rome which bears his name. He enters the basilica and joins the throng of worshippers. Under one of the massive pillars he sees a statue in bronze, whose foot has been polished by the kisses of the faithful. They tell him that the statue is his own effigy, and that believers are doing homage to him, because the church marks the site of the old Roman circus, where the Bishop of Rome had been crucified, head downwards. From the image he turns to witness a stately procession. A man clothed in white, with a bunch of keys at his girdle, and crowned with a triple tiara, is borne upon the shoulders of men to the high altar, where a priest in gorgeous vestment is holding aloft a wafer of unleavened bread. As a bell tinkles sweetly the worshippers bow before that wafer, and one whispers in Peter's ear, "Kneel thou before the living Christ." From such idolatries and superstition the apostle must have turned away, passing through the clouds of incense on his way out to the purer air of the Tiber.

On the other hand, imagine Paul, the first apostle to the Gentiles, pressing beyond the limits of his missionary journeys to the forest where great cities have, since his day, been founded by tribes which he was wont to call barbarians. It is now the great German Empire. He enters one of the magnificent Gothic cathedrals and listens to the preacher before the high altar. Paul recognizes the uplifted cross,
for it is, as it has ever been, the symbol of Christian faith; but the sermon preached by the monk, in coarse garments with a girdle of rope around his waist, exhorts the people to purchase pardon for all their sins. The gospel which Paul had preached, like the earlier message of Isaiah, declared that without money and without price, redemption had been freely offered; but the monk Tetzel offers for silver and gold, not only pardon for sins committed, but the sanction of the church for the grossest crimes of passion to be wilfully projected into the future. He declares that the prayers of the church extend to the world beyond, and that a golden coin, dropped in the treasury, would at once throw open the gates of Paradise to any soul, although condemned to the tortures of Hell. As the crowds wrestle and jostle on their way to the altar to claim for themselves and their beloved dead the remission of sin, Paul also must have fled aghast, crying as he went, "The just shall live by faith."

The necessity for the reformation of the mediæval church is apparent from these two incidents. From its primitive simplicity the church had become a complicated organization. Its hierarchy had grown rich and powerful; it oppressed the people and failed to minister to spiritual needs.

Dante's Inferno crystallizes the superstition of the middle ages, and explains the uncanny hold which the church had on the people. The horrors of eternal condemnation were ever magnified, and sinners were taught that only through the church could any soul escape the wrath of the Eternal. Save for the dogmas, distorted and misconstrued, the people had been kept in absolute ignorance, while the little learning that was left after these years of darkness was conserved within the monasteries. Comparatively few, even of kings and nobles, could read and write. No reading matter was available, save in the expensive copies
of a few sacred books, and even these were locked up in inaccessible libraries.

The Reformation really began with the revival of learning. The Crusades had carried, with a wild enthusiasm of conquest, great bodies of Europeans into the Orient, and many brought back to Europe forgotten rolls of classic manuscripts. The conquest of Constantinople had also driven westward many Christian scholars, who carried their limited, yet priceless libraries, to the refuge of Italian and French cloisters. The result was the Renaissance, the revival of art, music and literature. The invention of printing followed, and the people awoke with a new thought. Slowly the light illumined the northern kingdoms, but as the day brightened a spiritual revival followed in the wake.

As translations into the vernacular made the Bible a book of the people, men read in it the charter of their liberty. Throughout all Europe one might hear the tramp of the advancing hosts of a new life.

Martin Luther did not originate the Reformation; he was himself a product of the new thought, and became a second Moses to lead the people out of the house of bondage. Before Luther the trumpet call of a purer life had been heard. In 1382 Wickliffe translated the Bible into English. Strong political influence kept him from ecclesiastical interference during his life, but after his decease his body was burned and his ashes scattered, as a warning to his English followers. In 1415 and 1416 John Huss and Jerome of Prague, the Bohemian reformers, were burned at the stake, and the ashes of the piles on which they had perished were cast into the Rhine. Meanwhile, Erasmus of Rotterdam satirizes the Papacy, while the Lollards in England, Friends of God in Germany and Brethren of the Common Life in Holland, continue to disseminate the Gospel of Christ. In 1517 Martin Luther nailed his theses to
the cathedral at Wittenberg and burned his bridges behind him in the fire which consumed the Pope's bull of excommunication. This bold defiance of Rome turned Europe into a battlefield, both intellectual and martial.

Many of the most thoughtful reformers, however, were not fully satisfied with Martin Luther's concept of Christian doctrines. Phillip Melanthon in Germany, Zwingle in Switzerland, and, above all, John Calvin, the Frenchman, who set up a Theocracy in Geneva, dissented from the Augsburg confession. This dissent from Luther produced a triangular conflict, in which were engaged the mother church of Rome, the immediate followers of Luther, and the Reformed Church, as founded in certain of the provinces of Germany, in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands and England.

In 1563, in the old university at Heidelberg, dwelt two young professors, Ursinus and Olivianus. The pious Elector Frederick III., who lived in a stately palace now in ruins on the hill overhanging the valley of the Neckar, had embraced the Reformed doctrines, and in order to formulate these, he commanded these two learned professors to prepare the Heidelberg Catechism. It was written in Latin, as were all theological books intended for the wide circulation, but was speedily translated into all the languages of Europe and became the standard of Reformed theology.

Protestantism made its way in England first of all through the people, but was officially proclaimed by Henry VIII. in order to free himself from the marriage bonds with Catherine of Aragon when the Pope refused to divorce him, that he might marry his new love, Anne Boleyn, in 1535 he proclaimed himself head of the English Church.

The history of doctrine in England is a long story. It is said that freedom from Rome and the liberty of
private judgment produced 157 different sects in a few years. The reformers of Great Britain were in correspondence with the leaders of the Continent, and for the most part the doctrines of Calvin prevailed among English and Scotch churchmen.

The three leading parties of the church of England were divided by their several interpretations of the apostolic precept and example concerning the government of the church.

The Episcopal party derived their name from the Greek Episcopos, which means an overseer. While rejecting the claims of the Bishop of Rome to be the head of the church, they adopted the slogan, "No church without a bishop;" retaining the ancient sees of Canterbury and York, and minor bishoprics throughout the realm. The Episcopal party succeeded in establishing the Church of England on these lines by the preponderance of authority exercised by king, nobles and ecclesiastics.

The Presbyterians also found a scriptural word for their name—Presbuteros means an older man, governing the church like Hebrew elders in the synagogue, by authority of experience. The Westminster Assembly, convened in the Jerusalem Chapter House, Westminser Abbey, adopted the famous standards which still bear the name of that historic cathedral. In Scotland John Knox succeeded in enlisting the nobility in defence of the Scottish kirk and in establishing Presbyterianism in Scotland.

The name "Independent" or "Congregationalist" speaks for itself. Certain ministers resented the intrusion of bishops in the name of liberty, and cried that "Presbyter is priest writ large." They claimed for all the people the right to govern the church. The Puritans beheaded Charles I. and made Oliver Cromwell Protector, but gave u the ecclesiastical battle on English soil to found their church in the New World, with Plymouth Rock as its cornerstone.
All of these sects, however, were of the Reformed Church. The Thirty-nine Articles, the Westminster Confession and the Saybrook platform were essentially identical. The name Reformed, however, was not used so universally in the British Isles and New England, because the descriptive adjective of polity obscured the generic title.

On the Continent, on the other hand, all Protestants, were united in defense of the Presbyterian polity, while they divided doctrinally as Lutheran and Reformed.

It is significant as well as gratifying that the British Parliament has recently put the seal of authority upon the title of our church. The new coronation oath with which George V. will ascend the throne pledges him to membership in the Reformed Church.

Nowhere was the Reformed system more cordially welcomed than in the Netherlands. The Bible had been translated into Dutch as early as 1477, and the people had been universally taught to read it. Speedily the wave of spiritual revival crossed the borderland, and the presence of numerous reformers in the Netherlands embittered the closing years of the reign of the Emperor Charles V., who, as Duke of Burgundy, was the ruler of the low countries. When Phillip II. succeeded his father in 1555, Charles V., abdicating his sovereignty, leaned upon the shoulder of a young prince who was known as William of Orange. The attempt to set up the Spanish inquisition in Holland aroused both people and nobles to a resistance which deluged the provinces in blood, and this William, called the "Silent," became head of the uprising. The name by which the Reformed Church was known during these terrible years of persecution and warfare was the "Church under the Cross," and the emblem adopted was the lily almost choked by thorns, with the motto, "As the lily among
thorns, so is my love among the daughters." For eighty years the people of these provinces, comparatively few in number, resisted the mighty force of Spain. It was not until by the treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that the republic was confirmed in its independence. The Reformed Church of the Netherlands had, however, continued its independent existence in spite of the confusion attendant on the wars. In the year 1618 the famous synod of Dort convened. It was attended not only by delegates from all the provincial synods of the Netherlands, but by ambassadors from the churches of France, from Germany and Switzerland, and by bishops from the Church of England. It was the closest approach to a synod of the universal Reformed Church of any of the great assemblies in the 17th century.

With the colonization of North America the Reformed Church was transplanted to the virgin soil of the great unknown continent. With the first colonists in Jamestown came clergymen of the Established Church of England. The colony was promoted by Sir Walter Raleigh, who complimented the virgin Queen Elizabeth by the name Virginia. In the year 1607 services were held and the holy communion celebrated with the Book of Common Prayer on the island in the James River, where the colonists made their first settlement. After the discovery of the Hudson River by the English commander in the Dutch ship, the "Half Moon," fur traders began to cross the ocean, not to become permanent colonists, but simply to gather for transportation furs purchased from the aborigines. Stories of the unlimited territory at the disposal of settlers were carried back to the densely crowded population of Holland. Adventurous seekers after novelty were the first to appear, and finally home seekers with their families emigrated to the Island of Manhattan. These emigrants did not seek new homes for conscience's sake; civil and religious
liberty had been secured by the victory over Spain, and religious privileges were abundant in the Fatherland. They came to better their conditions, and under contracts with the Dutch West India Company. In the early days of the colony no regularly ordained preachers were found, but the emigrants were pious folk and longed for the services of religion. The company, answering the petitions of the settlers, sent them lay preachers, or, as they were called, comforters-of-the-sick, who gathered the people in the loft of the windmill not far from the site of the present municipal ferries, adjoining the Battery in New York. This was the second planting of the Reformed Church in America.

The third body of believers sailed in the Mayflower from Delft Haven, in the Netherlands, arriving at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in December, 1620. We need not repeat the well-known history of the covenant on the deck of the Mayflower, before the soles of the Pilgrims' feet touched the sacred rock at Plymouth.

In 1628 the first minister arrived at New Amsterdam, and at once organized a Consistory of the Reformed Church. This was the first ecclesiastical organization in the middle states, and a succession of this Consistory is continued in the wealthy corporation of the Collegiate Church in New York City. Thereafter the Quakers found their way to Philadelphia, and members of the German Reformed Churches, entering the Delaware River, scattered through the colony of Pennsylvania. A band of Huguenots came to the Carolinas, and Scotch-Irish emigrants brought with them the Presbyterian Church of Great Britain. The colony of French refugees known as Walloons had also settled on Long Island, where the navy yard now stands. When the first minister began his services at New Amsterdam, he writes to the church in the Fatherland, that after
administering the communion in the morning in the Dutch language, he found it necessary to repeat the service in French in the afternoon, because so many of the colonists could not understand the Dutch. New York, even at this early date, was a cosmopolitan town.

A few years later, 1642, another minister came to New Netherlands, and the Church of Albany was organized. Meanwhile emigrants had taken up land in the towns of Midwout, now Flatbush, and New Amersfort, now Flatlands, and the Rev. Theodore Johannes Polhemus had been engaged as their minister. These two churches were organized in a single day in the year 1654. The next settlement was made on the Hudson River, midway between New Amsterdam and Fort Orange, at Kingston, and the church was there established in 1659.

When this Church of Bergen was organized these were the only centres of religious influence within the States of New York and New Jersey. All around grew the great trees of the virgin forest, the majestic river rolled on to the bay, where the tide ebbed and flowed from the ocean. All were waiting for the coming peoples who were to take possession, in the name of liberty, of the magnificent territory of our great States. For many years the descendants of the Reformed Churches in Germany and the Netherlands worshipped under their national names. We had the Dutch Reformed Church and the German Reformed Church, both teaching the Heidelberg Catechism. About thirty years ago, however, both of these denominations dropped the national description from their titles, and we have now the Reformed Church in the United States, and the Reformed Church in America, which is our own. We love our Church for her glorious history. The seed of the martyrs has borne fruit in the magnificent organization which, though limited in number, both in
churches and members, has exercised a great influence over the religious life of our middle states.

Theology is progressive, and while the doctrinal standard of the 16th and 17th centuries has never been formally abrogated, the people have made a simpler creed of their own, and claim the right to think and to act upon the new thought of the age in which we live. The clergy of our Reformed Church stand abreast of all who are trying to solve the problem of to-day in the light of the never-to-be-forgotten history, with gratitude for the guidance of the Spirit unto the present hour. The children of to-day grasp the blood-stained banner of the Reformation and press forward to conquer America and the world for Jesus Christ.
AN HISTORICAL SERMON

Celebrating the

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE FOUNDING

of the

REFORMED CHURCH OF BERGEN

in

Jersey City, N. J.,

by

REV. CORNELIUS BRETT, D. D.,

Pastor

SUNDAY MORNING, OCTOBER SIXTEENTH, 1910
WHEN in the year 1842 the pious builders of this temple presented it as a thank offering unto the Lord Jehovah, they placed these words behind the statély pillars of their porch, “Jehovah, our God, be with us as He was with our fathers, let Him not leave us or forsake us.” This edifice has served as a shelter for this congregation for nearly 70 years, and now, as we gather to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of our church, we repeat and renew our petition, “Jehovah, our God, be with us as He was with our fathers.” With gratitude to our fathers’ God we crowd his gates to-day, and offer our service of thanksgiving. I ask you to review the deeply interesting history of these two centuries and a half. In the year 1660 churches were scattered along the seaboard of North America, even as mission stations are now found in China and Japan. In the colony of the James River clergymen of the Church of England had been, since 1607, holding services according to the Book of Common Prayer. In New England a few Congregational pastors were ministering to the scattered colonists. What John Fiske calls “Penn’s holy experiment” had not yet been attempted. Between Massachusetts Bay and the James River no religious rites were celebrated, save within the Dutch provinces of New Netherland, which, according to the claims of the Dutch republic, included Delaware.

The first settlers of Manhattan Island were fur traders who expected to return to their native land after acquiring their fortunes. They were succeeded
in a few years by home seekers, lured to the western wilds by the promise of extensive estates, where they might live in independence of landlords. To these were added a colony from the banks of the River Wall, to which they fled for refuge from the persecutions of France. They were French in race and language, known to history as Walloons. The Dutch West India Company soon began to advertise their holdings in the New World, and many a shipload of emigrants from Amsterdam found their way through the Narrows to boweries waiting for them on the banks of the river, which had not yet received the name of its discoverer. In 1660 there stood the Church of St. Nicholas, built within the fort on the lower end of Manhattan Island, where has been recently erected the stately Custom House. There were four churches on Long Island, at Flatbush, Flatlands, Bushwick and Gravesend, all under the care of a single pastor, the Rev. Theodore Johannes Polhemus. A lonely church, midway between Fort Orange and New Amsterdam, had been planted at Esopus, now Kingston, N. Y. In that year three new churches came into being, one in Brooklyn, about a mile from where now plies the Fulton Ferry, which also came under the pastorate of Polhemus; a second at New Harlem, on the northern part of Manhattan Island, and the third in the new village of Bergen.

There had been previous settlements on the west bank of the Hudson, opposite Manhattan Island. In 1630 Michael Pauw obtained the patent for the territory lying along the west bank of the river from Hoboken to Amboy. His first agent was Jan Evertse Bout, who built a house near where now is located the corner of Washington and Grand Streets, afterwards known as Paulus Hook. He was soon followed by Cornelis Van Vorst, whose house was built near the present Erie Ferry. Pauw failed to carry out his agreement with the West India
Company to bring 50 families as settlers within his patent, and the whole territory, which he had called after himself, Pavonia, reverted to the company. His name is preserved in one of our avenues.

Other settlers made purchases, and a line of farms stretched along the river from the place where the Palisades dip into the river to the Kill von Kull. The Indian War of 1643 was disastrous to the colonists, driving every surviving settler back to the shelter of the guns of New Amsterdam. When peace was declared they crept back one by one, but again in 1655 a second Indian War once more devastated the country. At the close of this terrible year not a white man remained west of the Hudson. Peace was assured once more by a treaty which included the re-purchase of the twice conquered lands. It was then decreed by the Council at New Amsterdam that no settlements were to be permitted west of the North River, except in defended and concentrated villages. The village of Bergen, with its municipality, its school, and its church, was the result of this decree. Between August and October, 1660, might have been heard on Bergen Square the sound of hammer and of saw, as the first rude homes of the pioneers arose within the palisades. During this week of celebration others will tell the story of the school and civic government. It is reserved for me to speak only of the church.

The early churches in New Netherlands were regarded as missions under the care of the Classis of Amsterdam and the Synod of North Holland, of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. The Reformed Church in America did not assume full independence until the year 1771. The West India Company was pledged to send "pious and learned ministers" to care for the Dutch emigrants. These devoted men would not have sailed without this promise. They found it difficult, however, to persuade the graduates of
their universities to leave their snug and comfortable livings, to brave the dangers and sacrifices of the New World. Eleven ministers in all, before the year 1660, had come to New Netherlands, of these several tarried but a short time and then returned to the old home. The care of the new churches was therefore committed to the "comforters of the sick," or, as they are frequently called, "the voorlesers." There is no documentary evidence of the organization of the Church of Bergen. During the year of its founding Peter Stuyvesant, writing to the directors of the West India Company in Holland, pleads for ministers for the new churches; and mentions the village across the North River as destitute of religious privileges. Dr. Taylor narrates that a certificate of character and church membership in the Church of Bergen, dated November 27th, 1660, was extant fifty years ago. It is also shown from official documents that Englebert Steenhuyseen had been engaged as voorleser and schoolmaster as early as the summer of 1662; and it is probable that one of the pastors of the church of New York, perhaps that devoted friend of the church Henry Selyns, who came to New Amsterdam in the year 1660, gave to the people of the infant colony the pastoral care which they coveted. A subscription list dated 1662 is on file among the archives of Albany, showing that at that time an efficient church organization. In 1664 we find, in the handwriting of Dominie Selyns, a list of members of the church; that portion of this list found on the first page of our ancient records has been printed in the program distributed to-day. In this original list we find the names of eighteen women and nine men. Even in this early day the church had learned to depend upon its faithful women, who outnumbered the men as two to one.

Another sign of vigorous life at an early day is the record of the deacons showing the amount of
the collection taken at every service; and Dr. Taylor says: “The frequent admission to full communion after 1664 proves the value of such services as they were able to maintain.” The earliest services were probably conducted in private houses. Within a single room, which served the family as kitchen, living room and parlor, the neighbors gathered to welcome the man of God, who had sailed in his perlauger from the fort on Manhattan to Communipaw and had been driven in some primitive wagon to the centre of the village. Dutch hospitality welcomed him with plain substantial fare, which probably included liquors imported from the old country. Then the table was cleared. The broom of the house-vrouw swept the sand upon the floor into fantastic figures; unplanned planks were placed from chair to chair, and the neighbors began to assemble for the worship of God. In winter they were greeted by the blazing logs in the big fireplace. The old Dutch Bible was laid upon the table, and some of the worshippers brought with them smaller editions of the word of God, in which they were wont to follow the reading of the law and the scripture. Printed in the Bible were the psalms, set to melodies that had been hallowed since the beginning of the Reformation. The sermon was long, but the people, with intelligence based upon religious education, followed the preacher with intense interest and gave approval to every point. If the Lord’s Supper was to be administered, the table was spread with clean white homespun linen, and pewter vessels answered the purpose of the later chalice moulded from silver coins given by the people. The members of the church sat around the table and reverently partook of the sacred emblems.

If good fortune had brought an infant to one of these homes since the last visit of the dominie, parents and sponsors present the child, and a new
name is enrolled upon the register of baptisms. Little did these pioneers imagine their records would become the happy hunting grounds of an American aristocracy, proud of their ancestors, as giving them birthright to Daughters and Dames. After Steenhuyser had been engaged services were held every Sunday, the sermon being read from a book; but the congregation waited for the administration of the sacraments until the ordained minister found it convenient to come over.

The building of the first place of worship is involved in obscurity. Tradition points to the hillock on Vroom Street, opposite Tuers Avenue, as the site of the first church. Whether this building was erected for a church and loaned to the school, or whether it was built for a school and used for worship on Sundays, we do not know. The school lot was set apart in the layout of the original village, which was surveyed by an engineer named Jacques Cortelyou. How soon the school building was erected upon it it is impossible at this date to state. The lot on the hilltop, where now the second pastor of the church lies interred, was the original burial ground of the village, and the school was under the care of the consistory of the church. It is probable that during the poverty of the church a single building served both school and church.

In 1680, however, a substantial stone edifice was erected in the centre of the lot on the corner of Vroom Street and Bergen Avenue. It was octagonal in shape; a picture of it adorns the program placed in your hands to-day.

The stone which was set over the door of the church is marked 1680, W. Day. In very small letters and figures we discover also, May 20th, showing that the edifice was erected in the spring of the year. It seems strange that it was necessary to find an Englishman to build this church. The only explana-
tion is that there were very few stone edifices at the time and no stone mason was to be found among the colonists. The initials of the principal men of the colony were cut in rude letters on a few of the stones, and a careful search reveals these in the present temple. The stones for the building of this and subsequent edifices were found in the neighborhood in the form of huge sandstone boulders, which were probably deposited on the traprock of Bergen Hill during the glacial period.

There were no photographs during the existence of this building, and I have always supposed that the cross which surmounts it existed only in the mind of some later artist. If any device adorned the roof it was the weather vane in the shape of a rooster. The Reformers of Holland rejected the cross as an emblem, because it had been used in the Catholic Churches, accompanied by gross superstitions. The Catholics claimed Peter as the founder of their church and the first Bishop of Rome, while the Reformers magnified Peter's denial of his Lord, in order to show how weak was the apostle whom Rome exalted as the vicar of God. Accordingly the cock was put upon the Reformed Churches to remind the people of the crowing on the morning after the denial, which awoke the soul of Peter to repentance. It is said that the windows in the roof were made for defense against the Indians, and the worshippers went out from their palisades armed with muskets ready to repel assault. We find, however, no evidence that these precautions were necessary. After the final sale of their maize ground and forests, the Indians seem to have retired to the interior, leaving the settlers unmolested. Perhaps they saw in the preparations for defense a force which they were unwilling to assail. In districts remote the aboriginies found new places for their wigwams.

In the interior of this octagonal church the bell
hung in the apex of the roof, and the men lined the sides of the church, except where the pulpit was placed. The women sat in high-back rush-bottom chairs placed in the centre. These were purchased by individuals and were regarded as private property. During the winter the women brought with them foot stoves, containing hickory coals, which warmed their feet and protected them from an unheated building. Specimens of both chair and foot stoves exist in the community as relics. In summer they wore sunbonnets, which hung down the back during service. Some people argue that a revival of the sunbonnet to replace the picture hat might be an advantage.

Meanwhile the voorlesers continued their services; besides reading the law and scripture lesson, they led the people in singing, without accompaniment, the old psalms of David. Striking the tuning fork, the chorister would find his key, and as every note was whole, before he ceased to sound it, nearly all the congregation had joined him in its prolongation. Many of these psalms the people knew by heart and sang them while about their daily toil as expression of constant yearning after God. The voorleser was schoolmaster and clerk, and when one of the neighbors yielded up his spirit to God, that busy official was the man who invited the neighbors to the funeral and then took charge of the burial.

In 1678 a pall to cover the coffin was purchased at a price of 254 florins. The pall was rented by the deacons at the rate of 14 florins for each funeral. A smaller pall seems to have been purchased at a later day for the funerals of children, and this was rented at the rate of 7 florins for each service.

Steenhuysen must have ended his term as voorleser in 1665, for at that time Reynier Bastianse Van Giesen was installed, and for forty-two years continued in office. He died in harness, and was buried
AN HISTORICAL SERMON

May 15th, 1707. He was the ancestor of a numerous family, and among his most honored descendants was the Rev. Acmon P. Van Giesen, D. D., who was pastor in prominent Reformed Churches for more than half a century. He was succeeded in 1708 by Adrain Vermeulen. Mr. Vermeulen also was the ancestor of a faithful minister of God, and other of his descendants are holding prominent positions in the State at the present time. The fourth voorleser began his work in 1736, his name was P. Van Benthoyzen. He was in office twenty-five years when the last voorleser, Abraham Sickels, began his service. During Mr. Sickels' term of office the first pastor arrived, and the voorleser no longer was required to read the sermon from the printed page. In 1789 Mr. Sickels was succeeded by Mr. John Collard, whose new title was clerk. He faithfully kept the records for two pounds and fifteen shillings per annum. In a letter written by the Rev. Henry Selyns to the Classis of Amsterdam, dated October 28th, 1682, he says, "I have been requested to preach to the people of Bergen, a village lying across the river, three times a year. This I do on Monday mornings and afternoons, and also administer the Lord's Supper. I find there a new church, and upon administering communion I find one hundred and thirty-four members. At other times these people are accustomed to come over here, that is New York, for service." The service to which the people of Bergen went must have been the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Their regular service was attended by their own voorleser. Selyns continued for a period of seventeen years to make his journey to Bergen. In 1699 Rev. Gualterus DuBois became a colleague of Selyns in New York, and for more than half a century, beginning with the year 1700, be continued to pay his regular visits to Bergen. He was on the eve of his regular appointment when he was suddenly prostrated by disease,
and within a few days passed to his reward. Beyond the village of Bergen were the outlying farms, "the Buyten Tuy," and behind where now the stately Statue of Liberty lifts its lights to welcome the ships arriving in our noble harbor, was the sister village of Communipaw. From all Hudson County and beyond, the people drove to Bergen as to the Mecca of their faith and hope. The settlements were sparse, and the place where hundreds of thousands now make their homes, was a rural community whose proprietors tilled the soil and lived in the sweet simplicity of the Christian home. The only public places were the taverns, and there were few of these. The amusements of the people were as simple as their lives, but their religion was a living reality. Their faith was firmly rooted and grounded in the doctrine of the Reformation.

The greatest enthusiasm prevailed in the year 1750, because a young minister had arrived in New York, and was willing to become pastor of the Church of Bergen. He preached his trial sermon, was accepted and installed. He preached not only on Sundays, but on Wednesdays as well; thus establishing at an early date the midweek services of our church. Within a few weeks rumors from New York came to the congregation in Bergen that there was an irregularity in the ordination and therefore in the ministerial standing of Peter DeWint, and that the Classis of Amsterdam demanded his retirement from the churches under their care.

In a letter from the Church of Bergen to the Classis of Amsterdam, the elders and deacons pleaded earnestly to be allowed to retain their beloved pastor, but ecclesiastical authority was absolute, and the church was left once more to the voorleser. It was a terrible blow for the church that had waited 90 years for a minister, but the outcome was accepted loyally.
One of the most noted families in the early history of New Jersey was that of Frelinghuysen. The ancestor was Theodore Frelinghuysen, who was born in East Friesland. He was the first minister of the Reformed Churches on the Old Raritan. One of his sons, John Frelinghuysen, succeeded his father in the care of these churches. As there were no theological seminaries for the training of ministers, young men who chose the profession were accustomed to reside with ministers of special ability, and study theology while assisting in parochial work. Among the young men who found their way to the home of John Frelinghuysen was William Jackson. His father was a Scotchman, Patrick Jackson. When during the governorship of Lord Cornbury, liberty of worship was denied to Presbyterians in New York, he opened his house for the forbidden service, and paid a fine for his courage. He, however, married a daughter of one of the Dutch families and became identified in the Church of New York. Dutch, therefore, became the home language of William Jackson, and was also the language of his educational home on the Raritan. In 1753 a call was made on William Jackson by the churches of Bergen and Staten Island. They assumed jointly the payment of $500 annually on condition that the candidate was to study in a university of Holland and receive ordination from the Classis of Amsterdam. He was then to return as pastor of the two churches, to reside in Bergen, but give half of his service to the people of Staten Island. A stone parsonage was built for him somewhere near the site of the porch of our present church. His New Jersey parish extended over the whole of our present Hudson County, including Jersey City, Hoboken, Bayonne and North Hudson.

By the road which followed the line of the present West Side Avenue he found his way to the landing place at Bergen Point, where the ferry waited to con-
vey him across the Kill. The church of Port Richmond is the successor of the ancient church of Staten Island. Jackson is described as a powerful orator, with a commanding voice. He frequently preached in other parts of New Jersey, and received many calls to new fields. As a field preacher he is said to have been second to Whitfield. When his mind began to fail his sermons were sometimes continued beyond the limit which the congregations of that day had set for the preacher. It is said that on one occasion a friend held up his watch as a hint to the dominie that it was time to stop, but the preacher called out from the pulpit, "Put up your watch; Paul preached until midnight." This personal affliction was another severe blow to the churches, and finally in 1789 the Classis of Hackensack, to which the churches then belonged, persuaded him to resign his call, and he was put under legal bonds not to preach. With loving appreciation of his thirty-two years of service the congregation secured to him the use of the parsonage during his life, and he remained twenty-four years as the ward of his old friends. The old minister did not, however, need to live on charity, as his father, Patrick Jackson, had bequeathed a considerable fortune and large tracts of land on Manhattan. It seems a long time from these later years of the 18th century. But when I became pastor of the church there was still living Mrs. David Brush, whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. Simmons, kept house for the Jacksons during the closing years of their life. Mrs. Jackson was the daughter of William's old preceptor at Raritan, whom he courted while a student. She was said to have been a woman of remarkable culture and attainment. Both Jackson and his wife, with one of their sons, lie in the old hamlet burying ground on the corner of Vroom Street and Bergen Avenue. This old cemetery always reminds me of the
description of a country churchyard in Gray's Elegy:
"Beneath those rugged elms, that yew tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

The beautiful stained glass window which adorns our temple was presented to the church by two great-granddaughters of Dominie Jackson. The window appropriately represents Paul and the Angel of Macedonia. Beyond the green sea are to be seen the blue hills of Europe, and the angel seems to say: "Come over and help us." So the angel of the Church of Bergen said to the young student of Utrecht, "Come over and help us."

A son of William Jackson, named after his grandfather, John Frelinghuysen, was a minister of the Reformed Church, who preached for a term in Harlem, and died in Fordham, New York, in 1836.

During the pastorate of our Dominie Jackson these events of importance should be noted: the new church, standing in the centre of the burying ground on the corner of Vroom Street and Bergen Avenue, was built in 1773. It was a good specimen of church architecture as found in Holland. The cornerstone is inserted in the south wall of this building. Our program presents a picture both of church and stones. Serious difficulties arose concerning the title of the church to the lands that had been set apart for its use at the beginning of the colony. In 1764 a special commission was appointed to investigate the allotments of land both to the church and school. Four plots of ground are mentioned as the property of the church. The first is the lot on the corner of Vroom Street and Bergen Avenue, where the church then stood. The second was a four-acre plot on which the present church and parsonage stand, including the tennis courts in the rear. Parts of this tract north of Highland and south of Glen-
wood Avenues were sold at a later period. The third was a meadow lot in South Bergen, and the fourth a wood lot in North Hudson, not far from Grove Church. These latter have also since been sold. Had the corporation retained its ancient heritage, we might have rivaled in endowment the church of New York.

A charter was granted to the church on the twentieth day of December, 1771, in the twelfth year of the reign of George III., William Franklin being then Governor of New Jersey. One of the powers granted by this charter was the appointment of the schoolmaster. In 1771, also, the Reformed Churches in America separated from the Classis of Amsterdam with the full consent of that Classis. A pastor and elder from Bergen were members of the convention which adopted the first constitution.

We must remember also that during the ministry of Mr. Jackson the War of the Revolution was fought. The bell of the old church, which had tolled for the death of all the English sovereigns from Charles II. to George II., and had merrily rung when after the British Revolution, William III., Dutchman by birth and education and descendant of the noble William the Silent, was crowned with his spouse Mary, as King and Queen of Great Britain. When the news of the Declaration of Independence was received from Philadelphia again the bell ringer "rang with a will" to celebrate the birth of the Nation. The Dutch farmers were intensely loyal to the American cause, and Jackson must have frequently seen both Lafayette and Washington as they visited old Bergen; perhaps he himself visited the camp of Light Horse Harry Lee on his way from the victory at Paulus Hook. That camp, they say, was west of the house where Dr. Hornblower recently died.

From the retirement of Mr. Jackson until the settlement of the new pastor there was an interval
of nearly three years. The church on Staten Island determined to find a resident pastor, and the churches of Bergen and English Neighborhood extended a call to a candidate for the Gospel ministry, John Cornelison. On the twenty-sixth day of May, 1793, the new minister was ordained. According to his call, he was to preach in Dutch on Sabbath mornings, and in the afternoon to expound the Catechism in English. From this time the records are kept in English. Two-thirds of his services were to be given to Bergen and one-third to English Neighborhood. A new stone parsonage was erected on Bergen Square. These arrangements existed until 1806, when the Church of Bergen secured the entire services of its pastor. Mr. Cornelison had studied under the Rev. H. Meyer, who was one of the ministers, before the time of the theological seminary, who opened his home for the education of the clergy. The ministrations of Mr. Cornelison were greatly blessed in this congregation. In his own handwriting from the old records of the church we read his grateful expressions for the wonderful work of the Spirit of God in bringing the Gospel to the hearts and consciences of his people. In later years, however, he sadly notes the decadence of the religious spirit and the prevalence of vice, even among the members of the church. The consistory felt that it was incumbent upon them to deal with a member of the church who boldly denied to his pastor his belief in a personal devil and the existence of Hell. The heretic was suspended from church membership.

African slavery at this time was lawful in New Jersey, and the slaves belonging to the old families of the congregation crowded the galleries, and in many instances became members of the church in full communion. These humble folk received a goodly part of the beloved pastor's service.
He was greatly helped by his faithful partner. One of our beloved friends, who died only a few years ago, told me how Mrs. Cornelison gathered a class of little girls around her and taught them from the Word of God. This was the germ of our Sunday School.

When I became pastor there were still upon the roll of membership the names of seven who had joined the church under the ministry of Dominie Cornelison. On the twentieth day of March, 1828, with triumphant assurances of unshaken faith, he yielded up his spirit to the God who gave it, aged 58 years and 9 months. You may read his brief epitaph on the mural tablet which adorns our church. On the twenty-sixth day of May, only two months after the death of Mr. Cornelison, the Rev. Benjamin C. Taylor was called. Dr. Taylor was of English parentage. He was born in Philadelphia, February 24, 1801, and was graduated from our seminary at New Brunswick in the year 1822. He married a daughter of the Rev. James V. C. Romeyn, of Hackensack. From the parsonage whence Mrs. Taylor came, seven daughters went out as brides, and their descendants are found in many of the leading families of New York and New Jersey. The only son succeeded his father in the pastorate. Dr. Taylor's active service extended over a term of 44 years, when his infirmities compelled retirement, thereafter he lived for ten years longer in his own house on Bergen Square, and died at the age of 81 years. Dr. Taylor was a power in the community. When he was installed as pastor there were only four churches within the present County of Hudson. Besides the Church of Bergen, which for 150 years had stood alone, there were St. Mathews of Jersey City, which has since been disbanded; a Presbyterian Church which has also since been disbanded, and a Methodist Church north of the Five Corners, whose existence has been
merged into the Simpson Methodist Episcopal Church, the first of that order in our community. He lived to see about 60 churches cover the field of the original four. It was during his pastorate that the Church of Bergen became the "mother of churches," and whenever a new church was organized, a new minister installed or ordained, Dr. Taylor was the inevitable chairman of the committee to undertake the task. He was a splendid and faithful administrator in detail; he kept the minutes of the consistory in his own hand, and his records are models of accuracy. In the city of Bergen he was superintendent of education, and carried the same devoted spirit into the management of public schools.

During the two months between the death of Mr. Cornelison and the coming of Dr. Taylor, Mr. Benjamin Welsh had organized a Sunday School in the old Columbian Academy. The Sunday School was then a novelty in the community, but Dr. Taylor wisely adopted it as part of his church work. He also conducted a Sunday afternoon Bible Class, to which many of the men who have been pillars of the church looked back with gratitude. I think the last member of the Bible Class has passed away. He was an enthusiast for foreign missions, and in those early days when the Reformed Churches co-operated with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Dr. Taylor was a corporate member of the Board. The meetings of the Board were held in different cities, and were delightful conventions of progressive workers. The pastor of the Church of Bergen invariably attended these meetings, and was often called upon to speak for the cause. He was always a leader in denominational affairs, and a supporter of educational institutions.

About the year 1840 the old church on the corner of Vroom Street and Bergen Avenue became over-
crowded, and a petition was presented to the consistory, signed by representatives of 50 families, protesting that they could not find sittings in the church of their fathers. By the wise and efficient leadership of the pastor funds were secured for the erection of a new edifice. It was necessary to remove from the site hallowed by long years of blessed service, because the graves of the departed were so near the walls of the old building that enlargement was impossible. The site chosen was that which had been consecrated by the home of the earliest pastor. The cornerstone was laid on the twenty-sixth day of August, 1841. Dr. Taylor notes that nearly one thousand persons were present. The Rev. Thos. DeWitt, D. D., of the Church of New York, delivered an address in the Dutch language, which at that time was understood by the fathers and mothers. Prayer was offered by the senior pastor of the Church of New York, the Rev. John Knox, D. D. Another prayer was offered by the Rev. Phillip Duryee, of English Neighborhood, N. J. The cornerstone was laid by the pastor, and the benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Samuel A. Van Vranken, D. D., then of New York, but afterwards professor of theology in our seminary in New Brunswick. While the new building was being reared the congregation crowded the old Columbian Academy. Whether it was the close contact in the smaller room, or the result of the sacrifices which the people were compelled to make in building the new temple, or the spiritual visions which accompanied their hope of having at last an adequate house of worship, we cannot tell; but the spirit of God moved the heart of the people during those months of exile, and the greatest revival in the history of the church gladdened the pastor's heart. The church was dedicated July 14, 1842, and the pastor preached a sermon from the text, "I will glorify the house of my glory."
A feature both of the cornerstone laying and the dedication was the singing of hymns written by Mrs. Anna Romeyn Taylor. The quality of these will be recognized from this quotation:

Hosannah! Let the chorus swell,
    The echo long resound;
Again in holy courts we dwell,
    In God's own house are found.

'Tis done! We've consecrated now
    This building to His fear;
And we, adoring, humbly bow,
    Believing God is here.

Here with His Son, His Spirit too,
    To reign, and rule and bless,
His covenant mercies to renew,
    And give His word success.

We wept to see our temple razed,
    Our father's house destroyed;
But now, each stone in order placed
    Again may be enjoyed.

Last week a grandson of Dr. Taylor brought me the manuscript of the 200th anniversary sermon preached on the second day of December, 1860, which he presents to the Hudson County Historical Society, and it will be on exhibition among other relics during this week.

A son of Dr. Taylor, the Rev. William J. Romeyn Taylor, was ordained to the Gospel ministry in the year 1844. He served the Kingdom of God faithfully for nearly half a century, and left in his place as ministers of Jesus Christ, three noble sons, who are at the present time holding important positions in the church.
Our own deacon, Mr. Benjamin Taylor Van Alen, also discovered a printed program of the hymns sung on that occasion by Sunday School and congregation. Among these are two written by the pastor's wife.

We can only quote a single stanza, appropriate now as then:

This ancient church whose fostering care
   We all have felt and own,
And whose deep interests now we'll bear
   Before our Father's throne;
To each department, ev'ry mind,
   Lord grant all needed grace,
Till work and praise are finished here,
   And we behold Thy face.

When Dr. Taylor was declared by the Classis "Emeritus," which is an honorable title, equivalent to "Well done, good and faithful servant," I was present as member of the Classis from Newark.

Within a short time the Rev. James L. Amerman, who is with us to-day, was installed as pastor. For him the present commodious parsonage was erected. His ministry was continuously blessed by additions to membership, but on listening to a call from Japan for a minister of experience to go out as a teacher of preachers, Dr. Amerman felt that it was his duty to respond; accordingly, he resigned his pastorate, and with his wife and infant daughter sailed for Japan, followed by the good wishes and prayers of his congregation, then numbering 280 members.

When the first suggestion of a call from the Church of Bergen reached me in my delightful parish at Montgomery, Orange County, I thought it would be impossible to make the change. We had just enjoyed a blessed revival of religion, and it seemed as if it were my duty to remain a little longer with the new converts, but later in the summer when your call was
renewed, and a committee of your consistory consisting of John Brinkerhoff, Nicholas Vreeland and Lewis A. Brigham came to Montgomery to urge my acceptance, I consented to come. I was installed in August, 1876. In September our family removed to the parsonage, and here we have lived ever since; here our children have been reared; hence they have gone forth to seek homes of their own, and the privilege is accorded me, after thirty-four of the happiest years that ever fell to a pastor's lot, to join in this quarter millennial celebration. Dr. Taylor was still with us when I came, and presided at my installation. We saw his gradual failing as he relinquished one service after another, until even the benediction was a burden, and he came no more to the place which he loved better than all the earth beside. At the fiftieth anniversary of his pastorate we called in to greet him, many of his old friends, and after the service in the church the Ladies' Aid Society entertained a large number of guests at his own house. Four years later he quietly departed, and was reverently borne, after the custom of the village funeral, by the deacons of the church, first to the House of God, and then to the cemetery on the east of Bergen Avenue. It is not often given to a church to have all its departed pastors sleeping under its shadow. This is the unique privilege of our ancient congregation.

It is not necessary to speak of events so recent as my own pastorate. In the year 1882 our commodious parish house was erected, and has since been a boon to the church in that larger work which the growth of the community has brought to us. We have enjoyed several seasons of revival. At one communion we received 117 members. The number of members has grown from 280 to 728. We have received in all 1,386 on confession and by letter; an average of about 40 a year. The growth of this city has been phenomenal, and a goodly share
of its increase has entered at our doors. Time fails me to speak of the organizations which have been assistant in every good work. The Ladies’ Aid Society has been a most efficient helper. The Guild has been ready to respond to every call. The hearts of the Christian Endeavorers have overflowed with enthusiasm for Christ and the church.

For three years our Men’s Club has stood nobly by the church and pastors.

Many other societies for boys and girls have helped in training our youth for service. One of our “boys,”” baptized and reared in our congregation, Rev. J. Howard Brinckerhoff, has entered the ranks of the Gospel ministry and is now pastor of the ancient Church of Herkimer, New York.

The rural character of our congregation has meanwhile passed away. When our family moved into the parsonage, 21 sheds, under which horses and wagons were sheltered during service, stood behind the church. Some of them were still in use.

I need not remind you how many of the mothers and fathers of Israel have gone to their reward. “The fathers, where are they, and the prophets, do they live forever?” Nine years ago the congregation united to celebrate twenty-five years of my pastorate, and I enjoyed the kind word of appreciation spoken, and the generosity of the congregation, which enables me to gratify the long-cherished desire to visit my mother’s grave on the Island of St. Thomas. I also gratefully acknowledge your kind consideration in providing an assistant to be “eyes unto me in my blindness.” We speak with appreciation of the Rev. V. D. Strong, for two years and a half my helper in the Gospel. For nearly three years also you have been enjoying the eloquent sermons of the Rev. John J. Moment, who is the sixth pastor to be regularly installed in this congregation. His clarion voice rings out a call to the duty of the hour in the
service of God and man. I have no thought of retiring as yet from active service; so long as God gives me strength, and you are willing to bear with me, I shall remain at my post. I am looking forward with high hopes to the larger development of the religious life of this community, and pray that this church, which for nearly 150 years stood alone in upholding the torch of Truth, may not be found wanting now that a large share of responsibility falls upon others. "The Lord Jehovah has been with us, as he was with our fathers." Let there never be an act on our part or on the part of our children that will cause His face to be turned away. To have God with us we must be with God. May we stand by all that is of value in the past, while we open our hearts to all light that may stream in upon us from the rising Sun of Righteousness.
A LOOK FORWARD

Closing the
TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FOUNDING
of the
REFORMED CHURCH OF BERGEN
in
Jersey City, N. J.

A Sermon Preached by
REV. JOHN J. MOMENT
Associate Pastor

SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER TWENTY-THIRD, 1910
C. EXT, Revelation, iv., 1:—After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and a voice saying, Come up hither and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter.

The "hereafter" which John saw was nevertheless not in heaven. It was the far-stretching ages of this world. He was called up into heaven, as we go to the top of a hill, merely that he might have a better view.

We make much of the "impenetrable veil" that hangs between us and the future. In fact, we can all see into the future. Only on the vantage ground from which we look it depends how clearly we see and how far. Down in the muck of the merest materialism a man can still get some vague glimpses of the life ahead. He can discern some little improvements that are bound to come, some much-needed repairs that will doubtless be made. From the mountain top of finer moral sensibilities he can see out over a larger sweep, with a clearer vision. From the heaven of absolute purity he can see off beyond all the wrongs and the contests to a consummate day when the holy city, New Jerusalem, shall come down out of heaven from God; when a voice out of the throne shall say, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God.

The man who rises high enough to commune with God is always a prophet, a prophet, I mean, in the popular sense of the word. The history of the word
tells the story. A prophet was literally not a man who foretold the future, but a man who spoke on God's behalf. But the man who can speak on God's behalf always does in simple fact reveal the future. Hence the magnificent pictures of the coming golden age which we find in Micah, Isaiah and the rest. And the meaning of the word changed as the people fastened their attention on the prophet's most spectacular function.

The trouble with certain politicians, editors and others, who see in the enthusiasm of reformers only the material for jesting, is that they are living down in the bogs. If you want to see the future, clear and true, you have to get up on the heights, where the moral air is pure, where the spiritual sun is unclouded, where you can look off afar.

These last seven days have not done much for us if through them we have not succeeded, in rising somewhat above the plane of our common living. If it is not true that we have had to rise to higher altitudes, morally, spiritually, in order to see so far back into the past, at least the sight of that past, those pioneers with their courage, their faithfulness, their simple godliness, must have carried us to higher altitudes. And now that we are on the heights it is a proper time for us to turn about and take a glimpse forward that we may see what we shall see and take heart for the coming contests.

I have heard of readers who in reading history pretend to skip the dates. I have read histories in which the writers have professed to omit most of the dates in the interests of popular reading. In fact, it is mainly the dates which make history fascinating. If you want to know merely what mankind has accomplished thus far in its progress you have but to look around you. You read history in order that you may know when each battle was won, because you wish to time the steps by which the
race has marched forward. No historian really omits the dates; he at most disguises them. And no reader really skips the dates; he at most refuses to be bound down to precise decades. In our present festivities we are interested not so much in the fact that our church and city were founded; that goes without saying, for here they are. We are interested that they were founded in 1660.

Here it is that history has the advantage of prophesy; prophesy has no dates. Isaiah mounted to his watchtower and descried on the far horizon an age of gold. The world waited with such patience as it might for several hundred years, when John ascended to the heavenly heights and descried the same age of gold, still on the far horizon. Again the world has waited for nearly two thousand years. How much longer have we to wait? On this question, as on all questions which He touched, Christ spoke the last word, when he said, “Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.”

Yet this is the very thing we are most curious to know. If I should occupy a half hour in telling you that a day is coming in the indefinite future when

"man to man the world o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that,"

you might listen to me with patience, even with some pleasure, if I could frame my thought in language that was at once sufficiently poetical and sufficiently fresh. But if I could prove to your satisfaction that in some particular year, say 1930, in one community, say our own, just one class of people, say the policemen or the directors of our street railway company, would treat as brothers another class, say the convicts or the traveling public, I should need no poetry to maintain your interest. And this is precisely what
I cannot do. We do not know even what these next succeeding years are going to bring forth, but we can make some conjectures, and we are not left without evidence as a basis for our conjectures.

For the evidence we shall again have to turn our eyes backward. I suppose that those who live in the shadow of some great English or continental cathedral would be tempted to smile at our enthusiasm in this celebration, at our assumption that 250 years constitute something like antiquity. They need not smile. When our forefathers were clearing out this wilderness for a settlement, Europe also was just clearing out its wilderness of barbarism. For the beginning of modern England historians are accustomed to set the very year of the founding of this community. It was the year when Charles II. came to the throne after the collapse of Cromwell's commonwealth. If you were looking for a precise year from which to date the history of modern Europe in general you would probably not go back of that more than a dozen years, to the ratification of the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Europe existed before this, but it was a different, almost another Europe, as I think you will recognize before I have finished. The Europe which we know to-day was just stirring into life 250 years ago.

How far then have we gone in this quarter of a millennium, and what chance have we of going farther and faster?

If you look merely at the illustrious names which adorned that age and compare them with the illustrious names of to-day, you will not feel that we have made much progress. Milton was in the midst of "Paradise Lost," and among other authors we recall Moliere, Corneille, Racine, Dryden and John Bunyan; Fenelon and Jeremy Taylor among the preachers; Christopher Wren, the builder of churches; Hobbs and Locke and Sir Isaac Newton; Louis XIV,
Mazarin, Colbert, Jan DeWitt and William of Orange. For those who are accustomed to judge of epochs by their great men I am not sure that the first decade of the 20th century would shine in comparison with the middle of the 17th.

Such an easy method of comparison, however, is too superficial to be of any particular value. And a clearer view into the life of that former time will materially modify our verdict.

Cross the water with me and cross the centuries, and take a look at Europe in the year which we are celebrating.

In England, of which Macaulay presents a striking picture at just about this time, only two cities outside of London had populations approximating 30,000. The other towns ranged below 10,000. And in them all, large and small, the streets were mostly unpaved and so narrow that few of them permitted a carriage to pass. At night they were unlighted and infested with thieves. The houses were unnumbered; not enough people could read to make it worth while to write the numbers. Ten or twelve books constituted a fair library. Among the sports were bear baiting and the most brutal kind of gladiatorial contests. When the gilded youth of London wearied of these pastimes they went out to Bridewell and watched the authorities beat disobedient wives. Men were hanged for the most trivial misdemeanors, hanged not one by one, but by the score, and then quartered and frequently hung in pieces by the roadside as a warning to criminals.

Through the country, roads were almost impassable. The very geography of much of the island was unknown. The outlying farmers slept with arms at their side, with huge pots of hot water hanging on the crane, with stones heaped at the door, all to serve as weapons of defense against uncivilized clans which covered much of the north country. There were few
postoffices and no newspapers. Except in London men not only did not know the news of Europe, they did not know the news of the adjoining county.

Little provision was made for the poor, and it has been reckoned that one in every four people in England was a pauper. Only the well-to-do ate wheat in any form. Not more than half the population ever tasted meat, and for these nothing but game was available during the winter months. The slogan of the workingmen was "A shilling a day;" heaven knows what their wages really were. In 1685 the justices of Warwickshire passed an ordinance forbidding any employer to give or any employee to receive more than eight pence a day. Not only did children go to work in the mills as soon as they could walk, but philanthropists boasted of the wealth which the children produced. Not least among the causes of poverty, the land was full of old soldiers, discharged from many wars, no longer able to fight and trained for nothing else.

There was no knowledge of medicine and no thought of sanitation. The normal death rate constituted what we should call a plague, and once in every three or four decades a massacre of nature, which was then called a plague, swept through the land. A drought or a storm threatened a famine in which thousands would actually die of hunger.

Such was "Merry England" when the Dutch were carving a home out of the wilderness of Bergen Heights. It is no foregone conclusion which had the more carving to do.

Spain and Italy were in worse plight. France worse still. Germany had made a beginning out of semi-barbarism during the previous century, but then had come the inevitable war, and in thirty years the population had been reduced from twelve millions to four millions. Berlin itself had become a little village of two or three hundred half-clad starvelings.
Meantime the schools were closed, the churches were mainly demolished; a whole generation had grown up without education of any kind, and civilization had to begin almost new. Only the Dutch provinces served to relieve the picture of its monotony of gloom, and even there were ignorance and destitution beyond anything of which we can think.

If the year 1660 was glorious in Europe, it was glorious there, as here, as a time of beginnings.

Galileo had been dead less than twenty years, Descartes only ten, and with them had begun a real science and a sane philosophy. Useful information began to have some place in learning alongside of useless information. The man who was at this time clerk of the British Admiralty, a graduate of Oxford University, took time a few years later to learn the multiplication table, and even had thoughts of teaching it to his wife. Through the work of Sydenham there was fair hope that soon physicians would find something to do for a sick man beside taking a pint or so of his blood. Boyle, Woodman and John Ray were laying the foundations of the study of chemistry, mineralogy, botany and zoology. In the fall of this very year, 1660, the British Royal Society was founded.

We have traveled a long way in these 250 years, and yet 250 years are a very brief time in comparison with the course of human history. What miracle was it by which in this fashion mankind began to rush forward? It was no miracle at all. If you will stop to think you will see that it was quite impossible that any considerable part of this progress could have been made during many preceding centuries.

First of all there was no liberty of thought. This does not mean merely that the authorities, popes and kings, would not permit the people to think for themselves. The people did not believe that they ought to think for themselves. They all pounced, like
a pack of wolves, at the throat of anyone who dared to utter an original thought. Finally, however, had come the Reformation. In 1660 its wars had been concluded for just twelve years and the victors still did not know the full significance of their victory. They knew that they had won their own right to hold their own faith. They had hardly begun to suspect that they had won the same right for other men, for all men. Hence religious persecution was not yet ended. A single year, a little later than this, found 4,000 English Quakers in prison. Later still came the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes with its unspeakable butchery. We frequently speak of liberty of conscience as having already been won in Holland. By this we mean merely that they no longer actually killed men in Holland for differences in belief as they had done, not the Spaniards, but the Dutch themselves, a half century earlier. Thirty years after this the leaders of the Reformed Church expelled a minister for the crime of disputing the malign influence of comets and accepting the Cartesian philosophy, and with ringing of bells they forbade all men to read his books. If that be liberty of conscience, it is liberty with a string to it. Nevertheless the victory had been won, though its fruits were not yet fully gathered, and from this time forth liberty of thought grew in England and on the continent. Here then is one evident reason why progress has been more rapid in modern times.

A second reason is that up to this time there had been practically no self-government. Europe had been rescued from the semi-anarchy of the early middle ages by the power of kings, and the kingly power was still a fetish. Look in upon the palace yard in London on some afternoon during these years and you will see there a crowd of sick folk waiting. It is raining, perhaps, and they continue to wait for long hours, drenched and chilled, but still patient.
Finally the rain breaks, the palace door opens, the king comes forth in state and begins with solemn ceremony to lay his hands on each shivering form in the multitude. It is the "king's cure." So sacred do they consider his person, so different from that of an ordinary man, that they believe his very touch will bring health. A century later one of England's foremost men of learning went to the king for such treatment. Little wonder that republics failed. Cromwell's attempt had just ended in something like anarchy. A republic was then under experiment in Holland, but it was struggling with the old monarchical idea, and came to an end a few years later.

The people could think of no form of government other than that of a divinely commissioned sovereign with power to rule over them. And the kings took every advantage of the superstition. Their creed was put into an epigram by the man who was then on the French throne, when he said, "L' Etat, c'est moi" (The State; I am the State). The kings did not rule, with rare exceptions, in the interests of the people. They used the nation as a preserve for their own hunting. They squeezed from it every last cent of revenue for their various extravagances. The best blood of the nation they poured out recklessly in their interminable wars.

The first real experiment in democracy was not made till more than a hundred years after this, in America, and even then Europe made confident predictions of failure. But from the days of Cromwell and the Dutch republic democracy in Europe has advanced steadily in reality if not in name. If the throne of England should become vacant to-morrow all the necessary functions of royalty could be discharged quite adequately by a rubber stamp.

A third reason for the rapidity of modern progress I have already suggested. It is the absence of war. We sometimes discuss whether war will ever be ban-
ished. The thing that war used to be has been banished already. And I may say in passing that as it is easier to kill a wild beast than to tame it, I am not sure but that the harder part of the task has already been accomplished. War has already been tamed.

In the olden times war was pillage, massacre and destruction. The track of an army was a wide, ghastly swath of ruin, towns demolished, women ravaged, the very children torn to pieces in sport if not in vengeance. And before the time of which we are speaking armies had been marching up and down, to and fro, through every district of Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire. We speak of Thirty-Year Wars and Hundred-Year Wars; we should not be far wrong in saying that Europe had been at war for a thousand years and several centuries beside. War was the only legitimate occupation of the barons; a French noble in 1660 was degraded if he entered a merchant ship. It was the only dignified plaything of the kings; no king had time to consider his subjects, he was busy gambling for territory, with the lives of his people for dice and the battlefield for his gaming table.

What kind of a structure could civilization build when the people themselves were not willing that any man should devise plans for the building; when the kings stood by always, ready to snatch away every ounce of gathered treasure; when war stalked periodically through and left no stone standing on another? It is crazy to think that any other progress was possible until these three things had been accomplished: Until men had obtained some liberty of thought, some measure of self-government and some immunity from war.

When a man nowadays proposes any movement looking toward the world’s betterment he is at once and always met with the argument that we have
been a very long time in arriving where we are now and that we shall doubtless be a long time in getting much farther. Do you see the illiterate folly of that argument? We have not been a long time arriving where we are now. We have come here almost at a bound. Ages of preparation went before, but they were only ages of preparation. The modern world has grown to its present stature in two centuries and a half. And it has grown in spite of the fact that this period did not begin with the old thongs broken, but only with their weakening and the promise of their final breaking.

And to-day we have liberty of thought. To-day the autocracy of kings is past. To-day war, if not over, is at least rare and shorn of its old power of universal devastation. The men of this century do not realize their opportunity. For us there is no Utopia which need be thought visionary; undesirable it may be, but not impracticable. If we hesitate to-day before the task of setting the world right, our fears are merely born of the habit of centuries. Past failures are utterly irrelevant to the contests of to-day. The hopes that men dared to foster in the past ought to be bagatelles to our purposes.

Eight hundred years ago Henry IV. of France resolved that in his reign every peasant should have a pullet boiling in the pot. Surely it is not much for us, especially with our modern mechanical contrivances and our improvements in the science of agriculture, to resolve that in our time every man who does an honest day's work shall be able to maintain his family in comfort. Four centuries ago Sir Thomas Moore dared to dream of a time when every household should have a decent home. Surely it is not much for us, especially with our hitherto unthought of materials and facilities for building, that we should resolve at least as far as he dreamed. In 1660 the churches of London were ringing with pas-
sionate denunciations of intemperance. Surely it is not much for us, especially with our forty-fold multiplied means of entertainment, to think of clearing away the foul dens which disfigure our streets and inoculate both home and government with their poison. Our forefathers here established schools to care for the children with the very establishment of the community. Surely it is not much for us to set out to save the children from being deprived of both school and play while they bear a killing part of the work that belongs to men.

There was a dream at least a century and a half older than our city of a working day not so long as to make a drudge on either man or woman. There was a dream centuries older still of a beautiful city, with grass and trees and flowers and fair buildings, airy and clean. O, there were many dreams conjured up in the night by wise men of olden times, some of which took form and became in part real, others of which perished with the dreamers; dreams of good homes; dreams of plenty in which all should have a fair share; dreams of a commerce in which there should be no piracy either beyond or under law; dreams of good laws well administered; dreams of justice between man and man, and of brotherhood; dreams which in former times may have been merely the material for poet’s verses, but which with us ought to be the stuff out of which we fashion our sober plans for to-morrow.

I recently heard a speaker assert with considerable emphasis that what we need in this country is the spirit of good old Dutch conservatism. That is precisely what we need. We need something more of that conservatism which caused those men to look around upon the homes of Holland, the most prosperous and the freest in Europe, and say, “This is good, but it is not good enough;” which sent those home-loving Dutchmen, in little sailing vessels, out through
the fogs and storms of 3,000 miles of ocean to new farms out of the untilled wilds of a new world. There is the sort of conservatisim that the world needs, then, now and forever. They kept their churches and their schools, all that they had that was right, but where they saw chance for improvement they did not dabble, they plunged.

When one speaks of radical changes there are always those who fly in imagination to the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror. The era of the French Revolution belongs to antiquity. It had more in common with the ages of the Pharaohs than with the 20th century. We have learned several things since then. In particular we have learned three critically important things: We have learned to let men think their own thoughts; we have learned the first lessons at least in the art of self-government; we have learned that there are other ways of dealing with opposition than by killing off all who oppose us in war. It is possible now, as it was not possible then, to make some advance toward heaven without first walking through hell. I do not mean that our task to-day is easy. We do not need that it should be easy. Men ask only that it be not impossible.

Perhaps in its fullness it is impossible even now. We may fail of our highest purposes. Cromwell's commonwealth and the Dutch republic both failed. But in their failure they revolutionized the governments of the modern world. The only kind of failure which ever befalls a high endeavor is triumph deferred.

Through all these ages it has been the church which has kept alive the vision of a better day. This much the church has consistently done even when it was actually at war with human progress. In the church to-day we need a fuller sense of our responsibility in the fulfillment of the golden prophesies of
the long past; in ushering in John's "holy city;" in establishing the kingdom of peace and righteousness which Christ promised to the world. And for the accomplishment of this vast design we need more men in the church. We need you not for your money. I have known men who avoided the church because they could not give. I have known others, in the church, who felt humiliated that they could not give more. We need you, men and women, that we may all be inspired together; that we may all work together, for that great thing, the coming of the kingdom. Every man who withholds his hand is something more than a drone; he is a barrier in the path.

Such barriers there may be in sufficient numbers that our triumph also may be deferred, but he knows little of history who does not see that times have changed; that, one community all alive with hope and resolution, we may make history by decades, where our forefathers counted the time, not by centuries, but by millenniums.