

THE FIFTH CHURCH LIGHT.

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THE FIFTH BAPTIST CHURCH

Spring Garden and 18th Streets.

By WILLIAM K. KRIPS, EDITOR.

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PHILADELPHIA, OCTOBER, 1890.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

The December issue will begin a new year with our paper and the subscription price will be 50 cents a year in advance, instead of 35 cents. Quite a number of subscriptions are still unpaid for this year. It would be a great help if paid before the next issue.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH NUMBER TWELVE.

The committee to seek for a new lot not having reported on July 6, 1857, the church directed them to report at the next meeting. On July 27th, they reported progress and were continued. Nothing further was heard from the committee, and on April 26, 1858, they were discharged. Two reasons may be given for this inaction. One of the committee was Deacon William H. Richards. He was the Senior Deacon. Had been a constituent member of the Sansom street church, as also of the Fifth church. He was greatly beloved, his opinion was valuable, and his influence widely felt. He had favored the removal, and his wealth would have enabled him to give largely for the object. In November, 1857, he died and the committee were discouraged at the loss of one from whom so much had been expected. Another reason no doubt was that the congregations were so large and the additions so numerous during the preaching of Rev. T. L. Breckenridge, that it was supposed if he became the pastor the same success would attend his ministry, even in the unfavorable location.

A special meeting of the church was held on December 5, 1859. The object was stated to be to consider the propriety of changing our location. After a general expression of views it was resolved that the whole matter be referred to a committee of seven to report at the next regular church meeting. On December 16th, the committee made a report favoring the removal, with the following res-

olution: "Resolved that a committee of three be appointed to ascertain the number of members that are willing that the property in Sansom street should be sold and a new location be secured," which was adopted. On February 27, 1860, the committee on location reported in favor of the lot at Eighteenth and Spring Garden, but a motion to authorize the committee to purchase the lot was defeated. The opposition to this movement was principally from the older members who for long years had worshipped in their loved sanctuary. Some of the younger members who resided south of Sansom street would find it inconvenient, if not impossible, to go to the new location, as there were no street cars at that time. But the large majority of the active members and the liberal givers were convinced that the only thing to save the church from extinction was to remove to a new neighborhood. Business houses and places of amusement; liquor saloons, and other places of evil resort, had so crowded upon us that it was impossible to retain a congregation or Sunday-school.

On March 5th, a special meeting having been called for the purpose of final action in the matter, the following Preamble and Resolutions were adopted:

Whereas, this church has for several years contemplated the sale of this property and removal to a new location, therefore,

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to sell this property preparatory to our removal.

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to conclude the purchase of the lot at the North-west corner of 18th and Spring Garden Streets on the best possible terms.

On March 26th, the committee on the purchase, Brothers Isaac Ford, Wm. Petit and Thomas Tolman reported that they had purchased the lot, 89 ft. 10 in. on Spring Garden Street, 170 ft. 11 in. to Brandywine Street, at \$7.75 per foot, or \$11,603.50, and had paid in cash \$3,657, leaving a ground rent of \$7,496.50, at an annual interest of \$476.79. The same evening it was resolved that the committee who have purchased the lot, with the addition of Richard V. Boswell and Charles N. Cadwallader, be a building committee, with power to contract for the erection of a church edifice on the lot just purchased at a cost not exceeding \$35,000.

The committee immediately had plans

prepared by several architects, and finally approved of one by Alfred Biles, a young man not prominent in his profession, but whose talent was evident and was proven by the beautiful structure he designed. This was the first church edifice he had built, and among the first of this style of architecture in the city. He did not live to see it completed. After the chapel was finished and the work on the main building was suspended for want of funds, as the Sansom Street property was not yet sold, he raised a company of cavalry, was made captain, joined the Army of the Potomac, and was killed by rebels lying in ambush. Fortunately he had finished all the plans and drawings for the main building before he enlisted in the service. Ground was broken early in May and the erection of the chapel was pushed forward vigorously during the summer and autumn with a view of having it ready for use before winter. On November 19th the Building committee reported that the chapel at the corner of 18th and Brandywine would be ready for occupancy on the 28th inst. That \$6,000 had been paid on account, that \$3,000 was still due, one half to be paid on its entire completion, and the balance on January 1st, 1861. A committee was then appointed to make the necessary arrangements for the first service, to be held on Thanksgiving Day, November 28th, 1860.

The following evening the first prayer-meeting was held with an attendance of about thirty. On the next Sabbath, December 2nd, the pastor preached morning and evening. On that Sunday Brother William Mann and wife were received into membership before the communion service. In the afternoon the first session of the Bible-school was held, with an attendance of eight teachers and seventy-seven scholars; forty-five of these were transferred from the school on Sansom Street, and twenty-two were new scholars. The next Sunday the school was further increased by receiving five teachers and thirty scholars that had been in attendance at a mission school of the Tenth Baptist Church, at the corner of Fairmount Avenue and West Street, above Nineteenth. The Tenth Church relinquishing the field as we now proposed to occupy it. From that time the school increased rapidly; by the first of July we had registered two hundred and forty-three scholars. The congregations were small during the first few months. The neighborhood was new; not a single house on Spring Garden Street between Sixteenth and Twenty-third, and