

# DR. HALL'S NEW CHURCH.

## THE DEDICATORY SERVICES.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING—A COMPLETE AND ATTRACTIVE HOUSE OF WORSHIP—THE PASTOR'S OPENING SERMON—THE GLORY OF THE LORD IN HIS HOUSE—THE MEANING OF THIS — A MINISTER'S SINGLENESSE OF PURPOSE.

The new Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, of which Rev. Dr. Hall is Pastor, was yesterday solemnly dedicated in presence of a congregation that filled every portion of the spacious building. It stands at the north-west corner of Fifth avenue and Fifty-fifth street. The style of architecture, so far as the interior of the edifice is concerned, is early English. The building fronts 100 feet on Fifth avenue, and 200 feet on Fifty-fifth street. The front on Fifth avenue is flanked by two towers. That at the south-east corner has a base 30 feet square, and when the spire is completed it will rise to an altitude of 300 feet. The north-east tower will be 160 feet high. The principal entrances are on Fifth avenue, between these towers. They lead into a vestibule, and thence into the auditorium. The vestibule is 45 feet 7 inches long by 16 feet 6 inches wide, and the main floor of the auditorium is 100 feet deep by 85 feet wide. The height of the ceiling is 60 feet. An elliptical form has been preserved in the construction of the auditorium, which has seating capacity for about 2,000 persons. The arrangements as to ventilation and acoustic properties are excellent, and the minister's desk may be seen from any part of the building. Besides the main entrances, there are three entrances in Fifty-fifth street, as well as one in each of the towers. All these are double door-ways, and they give ready means of ingress and egress for a large congregation. There are two lesser towers on Fifty-fifth street, which serve the purposes of air-shafts. The air is taken at the top of these towers, and is distributed through the church by ingenious ventilating contrivances, the building being absolutely free of drafts. The lighting is effected by forty-nine traceried windows. Twenty-four of these are over the galleries, twenty-four smaller ones under them, and there is besides a large window at the east end. The air with which the church is ventilated is drawn down through the tower by an iron fan seven feet in diameter. The fan runs at a rate of 220 revolutions a minute, and this speed gives a delivering capacity of 30,000 cubic feet of air in the same time. By means of this apparatus a volume of air can be thrown into the church which renews the atmosphere in some fifteen minutes. All this great volume of air, however, can be applied to the purposes of ventilation without creating any noticeable current. The cellar of the church is applied altogether to purposes of heating and ventilation. Nine thousand feet of steam-pipes form a net-work on the ceiling of the cellar, and the air is made to pass over them, and is so heated when it is desirable to warm the building. Cold air is forced into the building at an altitude of fifty feet above the auditorium. Besides the church proper, all the other necessary buildings are provided. There is a large hall at the rear of the principal building, and behind that is the chapel. Its dimensions are 75 by 45 feet, and the ceiling is 25 feet high. There is a gallery on one side, and when necessary the extent of the lecture-room may be increased by throwing into it two ladies' parlors. The Sunday-school room is over the lecture-room, and its dimensions are the same. There are also rooms for the minister, the Trustees, the sexton and his family, as well as several class-rooms and a commodious library. The exterior of the building is faced with New-Jersey stone, and all the wood work of the auditorium is of polished ash. Some portions of it are beautifully carved. The organ and gallery for the choir are situated at the back of the minister's desk, on a level with the gallery.

The dedication services were set down for 11 o'clock, but an hour earlier large crowds were in waiting round the principal entrances, while others sought admission at the private doors. In a little while the portion of Fifth avenue in the vicinity of the church was crowded with carriages. As soon as the doors were opened, both the regular congregation and visitors poured into the church, and very soon every seat was occupied. The exercises were exceedingly simple. They consisted of the usual morning service, a prayer of dedication by Rev. Dr. S. J. Wilson, of Allegheny Seminary, Pennsylvania, Moderator of the General Assembly; a sermon by the Pastor, the reading of portions of the Scriptures, and the singing of specially selected hymns by the congregation. Rev. Dr. Hall offered prayer, and then the hymn "Before Jehovah's awful throne" was sung. The effect of so many voices singing in perfect unison was very fine. Dr. Hall next read a portion of the Scriptures, including Exodus xxix., 31, xl., 34, a part of 1 Kings viii., and from the New Testament the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Moderator of the General Assembly then led the congregation in devotions, first offering the prayer of dedication, and then reading the second hymn "Son of God, to Thee we bow."

Dr. Hall next made the customary announcements, after which he invited his hearers to a consideration of the First Book of Kings, viii., 11. "The glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." The glory, he said, that filled the tabernacle, as they read in the Book of Exodus, was a cloud which was present to the sense of the people. But it was so overpowering on the senses of those who stood by that they were unable to continue their ministrations, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Between the Jewish temple and those of to-day there were many points of contrast beside those of mere magnificence and cost. The Hebrews had but one temple, and they could not build up another. One nation, one law, one temple, was the old prescribed order of things. That was not so with us. The temple in which they were was one of many such houses in the City and neighborhood. They ought to rejoice when the Lord set up a new temple. There could be no rivalry in the church while Jesus Christ was present, no more than there could be between the stars in the heavens. The temple at Jerusalem was built by royal means, by men of war and men of peace who shadowed forth Christ's glory. It was not so with us. Our temples, said the preacher, have been erected by the people and for the people. Some of their own in estimating their share of responsibility had calculated with a great generosity, had acted with a largeness of heart and of hand which was not likely to be soon forgotten by their fellow-worshippers. The house in Jerusalem was meant only for symbolic worship. They had to look forward to something which was yet to be done, and all the importance and value of that worship was only in relation to something which was yet to be done. Not so in their own case. Their worship was on the basis of facts already accomplished. It was not worship in symbol, it was worship in truth. The fullness of the revelation of God was given to us in the New Testament. The ministrations in the Jewish temple were to be conducted by special persons, who were hereditary in their office. They were consecrated for the purpose. They monopolized the service, and the people were excluded. Not so here. All of them were to worship here. But although there were those distinctions between the Jewish temple and theirs of to-day, yet there was enough in common between them to make it eminently proper to study this subject. We should, he said, get some distinct idea of what was meant by the glory of the Lord; what was meant by filling the house with the glory of the Lord, and finally, what was the advantage of filling the house with the Lord's glory. First, what was meant by the glory of the Lord? The cloud that was visible to the senses of the Hebrews was not Jehovah, but it indicated His presence. That indication of His presence was not new with this people. It meant that He was not there by His natural presence merely, but that He was there for a purpose, to dwell in the midst of them. That was the meaning of the cloud being visible to the eye. It was not an entirely new transference with the Hebrew people. It had been so with Abraham and so with Moses, and it was so with the Hebrews in later times. Stiff of neck, stolid, unbelieving, often hard of heart, they needed to be led and guided, and so the pillar of cloud went before. But when they came into the place prepared for them the cloud filled the house of the Lord. We, he said, do not now need such a manifestation as this. Prophecy had been fulfilled, and miracles had done in the New Testament time what these manifestations had done in the old. Jesus Christ had been with us, and had filled the world with evidences of his presence with Christian religion and Christian civilization. He had left us a promise, which looked backward to the Old Testament and looked forward to the New. He had promised that Pentecost would come, and in fulfillment of that promise tongues of fire had come down to indicate to the people that the glory of the Lord was to be the word of the Lord. This was what was meant by the manifestation of the glory of God in his house, not the Deity as such, but God in Christ, God in His relation to us, dwelling with us, making us His people, keeping us His own. When we asked for God's glory, we asked that He would reveal Himself in relation to us as a God with whom we could be in covenant and who could take us and make us His children. In the second place, could the house be filled

with God's glory? It was, said the preacher, the higher kind of glory that reached to human intellects that touched the human heart and transformed and transfigured it, and so when we look for God's glory to fill His house, we look for souls there. Jesus Christ came down among us. He spoke men's language; He bore their burdens; He wore their sorrows; to the weakness of man He united the omnipotence of the Almighty, thus giving the highest and most complete testimony of God's infinite good will to man, and of his clemency and tenderness. When we know this, knew this God in Christ, in the highest sense is his house filled with God's glory. No ceremonies could so indicate it. Not pealing organs, not long flowing processions, not all such things put together could so indicate the presence of God's glory as the living, loving, believing soul in relation to the Almighty. Now, if we will think of it, this is the philosophy, if we must have philosophy in matters of such great import, of the preaching of Christ; for we see that those who did not know Christ do not know the last and highest demonstration of God's love. Can we have any doubt of how much of the Lord God Almighty's glory and goodness we see? The glory that fills His house is not a fixed and definite quantity. This glory is in Christendom not in heathendom; one man may have more of it than another, and a man may have more of it at one time than another. And here he asked that he might be permitted to say that so long as he had the privilege of preaching from the desk he would be distinctly and emphatically a preacher of Christ. He asked their prayers that he might be held up and sustained in his effort to do that which was the approved choice of his judgment; that he might be simply a preacher of Jesus Christ; that he might not strive after the arts of the logician or rhetorician, or seek to become a painter in fine words. They might not always like his meaning—he prayed God they might—but they must have no doubt as to what was meant. He desired that there might be no doubt about the message. He wished to add another thought, and it was that God's glory was the great dignity of the Church of Christ. They should make much of the ministry and of the Church only on the ground on which the Lord Himself made much of them, not on the ground of any lineal succession. They should rest their claim to the dignity of the Church on the function of the Church herself, that is to be a witness of the truth. She was to bear testimony to man concerning God, and to hold out her hands to Him and bring Him into her bosom. This was her dignity, this her glory, and was the day when the claims of the Church rested on any other ground than this on which the Lord Himself had placed them. Dr. Hall spoke briefly on the advantage of having God's house filled with His glory, and at the conclusion of his sermon offered prayer. The hymn "Great King of glory, Come" was then sung, and the morning services terminated with the Doxology.

In the afternoon at 4 o'clock there was a further service, when a sermon was preached by the Moderator of the General Assembly. At the evening service, addresses were delivered by Rev. Drs. Vermilye, Adams, and Paxton.