A sermon delivered at the re-opening and dedication of the French Protestant Church, Charleston, S.C., May 11th, 1845

Charles Wallace Howard
A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE

RE-OPENING AND DEDICATION

OF THE

FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCH

OF

CHARLESTON, S. C.

ON

SUNDAY, THE 11TH DAY OF MAY, 1845.

BY THE REV. CHARLES WALLACE HOWARD,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

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1845.
DEDICATORY SERMON.

"Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."  
Psalm cxxxiv. 8.

We have this day dedicated by humble prayer, our modest but beautiful edifice, to the worship of Almighty God. For the first time its walls have listened to the words of thanksgiving and praise as they have ascended from the lips of a grateful congregation. We have this day revived the regular service of an ancient, pure and truth-loving church; a service which had long fallen into disuse, but which is now revived as we fervently trust, to flourish even unto the end. We have entered this day, for the first time, upon a public acknowledgment of the relation existing between us as pastor and people; a relation, after the sacredness of home affections, perhaps the most endearing which is found in life. Rarely has it occurred to any people to be impressed by so numerous, so varied considerations of spiritual moment, as those which attach themselves to us at this hour.

Your situation as a religious body is eminently peculiar. You are separating yourselves from numerous and well established Christian communities, with which you have been long connected, and to the services and members of which you are, doubtless tenderly attached. Bound by a tie of no ordinary interest, you have collected together, and by all the necessary steps have become an organized but solitary church of God. You are therefore without the sustaining influence of widely extended denominational sympathy. Grave considerations of duty, and well founded expectations of unfailling help, are necessary, to warrant just hope of success, in an undertaking so important, and in many respects so unusual.

It is the design of this discourse incidentally to embody these
motives of duty, but more particularly to present the reasons which inspire an humble confidence that you will receive this unfailing help from on High, and which, will enable you to appropriate the sentiment contained, both in the opening sentence of your Liturgy, and in the words of our text, "our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth."

This church, though standing alone in America, in the distinctive organization and forms of worship of the French Protestant church, is a branch of that martyr church, in the mother country. It was established by Huguenots, who fled their native land, that its cherished rites might be here observed in security. This church, thus founded, but whose worship was providentially interrupted, is now revived as nearly as possible in its original form. It is a part therefore of the great body which bears this name. If, in reviewing the general history of that body, we can recognize the sustaining hand of the Almighty, we may humbly hope, that the assistance mercifully extended to the fathers, will not be withheld from the children. A sufficient examination of the history of the French Reformed church is therefore proposed, clearly to evolve the truth, that God has marked it as his own, by his care of it in infancy, its wonderful preservation when weakened by error and persecution, and its happy revival.

France holds a distinguished position in reference to the Reformation. When Luther was actually engaged in a mission to the Pope, and Zuingle had not applied himself to the study of the Scriptures, Le Fevre had already propagated from the lecture rooms of Paris, the doctrines of the Reformation; in the very bosom of the Sorbonne, he had proclaimed the cardinal truth of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Circumstances, however, gave such subsequent prominence to Luther, as to warrant for him the title of first Reformer; yet still the Reformation began its work in France; an honor which France may not heretofore have appreciated, but which will at one day be claimed as the most pregnant and glorious event which has illustrated her history.

The doctrines of Le Fevre threw Paris into commotion. Farel, a noble of Dauphiny, had been attracted to the capital by the fame of its university. He heard with profound interest the startling truths taught by the professor. They became his own, and his life was devoted to their dissemination. Success attended the efforts of these two noble men; the simple truths of the gospel were diffused with great rapidity. Unabashed by the presence of royalty, they entered the dissonant court of Francis I, and found an humble advocate in Margaret, the lovely sister of the sovereign. The nobility in numbers followed the pious example of the princess. Anticipations of the speedy and entire reformation of France were awakened in the breasts of the Reformers. Their disappointment was fearful. The university, changing its ground, became hostile to them. Persecution was aroused. Driven successively from Paris, from Meaux and Metz, they found a temporary resting place in the South Eastern Provinces. Repulsed thence, they fled to Switzerland, and in the catholicity of the Reformation, received a cordial welcome from brethren. Having recruited their courage and strength, amidst the Christian sympathies of Geneva, they determined upon another assault upon the errors, which had overspread their beloved country. Lyons was the first point of successful attack. Greater things were then attempted. By the preaching of the word,—by the distribution of the Bible,—by the scattering of tracts, a powerful influence was brought to bear upon the kingdom. Amidst alternate hopes and fears, sometimes animated by success, sometimes overwhelmed by disaster, the men of God advanced steadily in the prosecution of their work. Providence raised up as their leader, John Calvin—a man fallible, because human, yet of whom the learned Hooker has said, "though thousands were debtors to him, yet he to none, but only to God, the author of that most blessed fountain, the book of life;" and who in spotlessness of life, in strength of character, in purity of motive, in ardor of piety, hath scarcely been equalled—never surpassed. Shape and form were given by him to the doctrines of the Reformation in his Institutions; a work to which modern theology has added nothing. Under his directions the antiphonal chants of Rome were displaced by the simple songs of Marot—the ministry was disrobed of its gorgeous vestments, all outward adjuncts appealing alone to the senses were removed; and the entire worship of the house of God, stripped of its false adornments, was restored to primitive simplicity. And when the sentence had gone forth that "burning alive was the proper treatment of the heretic," and
the multitude was thirsting for the blood of the Reformed, spurring the fear of death, in May, 1559, those dauntless men convoked their first synod in Paris, promulgated their confession of Faith, and adopted rules for the government of the church. And thus form of worship and government, the French Reformed church with a distinct Faith, and an instituted ministry and established form of worship and government, the French Reformed church became an organized and efficient body.

Anterior to this period, this church had endured one general persecution. It was now doomed to another, twelve years in duration. This persecution was fierce and relentless, sometimes twelve hundred, in one place, yielding their lives in defense of their Faith. Yet, so rapid during these twelve years of persecution was the advance of Protestant principle, that in 1571, there were 2,150 Protestant churches in France, in some of which there were five and even ten thousand members under the spiritual guidance of two, and sometimes five pastors. Ecclesiastical history affords no parallel to this rapid advancement. Her day of prosperity, was however, of short duration. The adversary, goaded to madness, summoned up all his energies, that in one dread blow, the truth might be annihilated. Under false pretences, the unoffending Protestants were collected in Paris in great numbers. At midnight, of St. Bartholomew's day, 1572, the armed soldiery were turned loose upon them. A vast number of Protestants, with the admiral Coligny at their head, were murdered in that dread night, under circumstances of atrocity at which the heart sickens and turns away in horror. Other towns followed the bloody example of the capital, and uncounted thousands of the Huguenots fell victims to their love for the truth. Triumphant medals, struck by order of Pope Gregory XIII., perpetuated this event, as signally illustrating the period of his Pontificate.

Up to this time, 1572, according to Dr. Edwards, there had been martyred in France, for the Protestant Faith, 39 princes, 145 counts, 234 barons, 147,518 gentlemen, and 760,000 of the common people, constituting a grand total of nearly 1,000,000 sufferers.

The effect of the massacre was disastrous. The leading Protestants were slain, and the people were a prey to their merciless foes. Many were frightened from their native land—some aban.

donned their Faith, and all were disheartened. So that in 26 years following, in 1598, the church was diminished to one thousand congregations,—a loss of one-half their number.

Henry of Navarre, educated in the Protestant Faith, promulgated in 1598, the Edict of Nantz. By this Edict a free exercise of religion, and access to temporal honors were secured to the Protestants. Their ministers were recalled, and the persecuted church was once more in comparative safety.

Permanent security was however denied it. Louis XIII., suffered and directed continued encroachments upon the Edict. Louis XIV., his successor, under two combined influences the most baleful which can be exercised upon man, licentiousness and superstition, violated habitually and upon slight pretences, its plainest provisions. The church which had once more advanced, until it could number 2,000 ministers, was checked in its progress. The churches of the Protestants were pulled down whenever the faintest pretext could be found. In Poitou alone, in 1764, out of 61 churches, only one was spared, and by this act 80,000 Protestants were deprived of a place of worship. They were forbidden the singing of psalms even privately in their houses. They were compelled to bury their dead clandestinely in the darkness of night. Their children were forbidden access to the public schools. Pensions were given to those children who apostatized. Debts were discharged by the simple act of becoming Catholics. Protestants were declared incapable of acting as guardians, and therefore all Protestant minors were placed under Catholic control. These are a portion of the "worrying and wearing out" influences, more to be dreaded than the sword or the faggot, which harrassed these unhappy sufferers; influences which could have been endured only by the sustaining grace of Almighty God.

To complete their wretchedness, on the 5th of October, 1685, the protecting Edict, by an act of infamy, was formally and wholly repealed. It was then enacted that every place of worship, belonging to the Reformed in France, should be demolished; that no assembly for the celebration of service should be permitted on any pretext; that all Huguenot ministers continuing to refuse conformity should quit the kingdom within fifteen days after the publication of the edict; that all Huguenot schools
should be utterly suppressed; that all children hereafter born of Reformed parents should be baptised and educated as Catholics; and every attempt at emigration was prohibited under heavy penalty. On the other hand, ministers conforming were exempted from certain taxes, and a pension was assigned to them and their widows. Choosing to adopt the profession of advocates, the ordinary preparation was declared unnecessary. They were permitted at once to enter upon its duties. The laity were allowed to retain their property, provided they would consent to abstain in public and private from every profession of their Faith and every form of worship.

Could measures of more satanic cunning be devised, by which to suppress and destroy the truth? Tearing down the churches, banishing the pastors, taking spiritual possession of the children, offering rewards of money and place to the lapsed, and prohibiting departure to the determined. If earthly power, and worse than earthly sagacity could have destroyed the church in France, it must have fallen, in this, its hour of dreadful trial. Louis boasted that he had exterminated the heresy. Vain man! We are reminded of the monarch to whom the rebellious waves were disobedient. However much he might torture, banish, murderously destroy the unhappy Huguenots, the truth which they held was indestructible and destined to an ultimate triumph. In despite of all prohibitions more than half a million of Protestants succeeded in their escape from France. The limits of this discourse will prevent our dwelling upon the horrors connected with the flight of such a multitude—the abandonment of home—the tedious and weary night journey; the poisoned atmosphere of the crowded ship and the buffeting of the tempest. Stimulated by the prospect of successful flight, every thing in suffering which the human constitution could endure, was cheerfully met, that their cherished end might be attained.

The position of those to whom flight was impossible, was one of great spiritual peril. Deprived of most of their pastors, and the most eminent of their lay leaders, without houses of worship or opportunity of unreserved religious communication, the worse results were to be apprehended. Many actually gave up their Faith, others outwardly conformed, but the larger number remained firm to the last.

Determined to worship God, the faithful met in caves or in the forest. In the darkness of the night, lights were hung upon the trees, to enable them to read the scriptures, and the psalms which they sang. And when, in the solemn acts of their worship, the soldiers came upon them, the old and the young freely gave up their lives. Multitudes perished. Slaughter at last became weary of its labors. Policy foresaw the ruin of the kingdom in the depopulation caused by flight and the sword, and the work of general persecution ceased. But the truth had outlasted it all, and still lived in the hearts of God's believing children.

Louis XIV., was summoned to another world, in 1724. During the reign of Louis XV., his successor, the history of the Protestant church in France is melancholy,—sometimes it is scarcely distinguishable in the errors which pervaded it—at other times, recovering its purity, traceable only by the blood of its martyrs. At length indications of the rising of a more tolerant day were manifest. In 1787, twelve years from the accession of Louis XVI., an edict was granted by which Protestants were allowed to assemble for worship and to enjoy a tolerable share of religious freedom. Two millions of Protestants instantly rallied around the Reformed church, once more an acknowledged body.

But hopes of permanent peace were soon destroyed. The revolution trampled all religion under its feet. Infidelity with its arrogant pretensions to liberality was not more lenient than the superstition it professed to despise. Rousseau, while he praises pacific dispositions, states in the same letter, that in dealing with fanaticism, “you must lay aside philosophy, shut up your books, and take up the sword.” And this is the spirit of the sect. The Sabbath was abolished—religious worship prohibited—the Bible burned, and Christianity nationally condemned, and for ten years France was destitute of almost every form of religious worship.

Napoleon, however, saw that a nation could not exist without a religion; and his sagacious mind determined upon the restoration of Christianity. A Romanist himself, the first consul granted toleration to the Reformed—professing to consider Catholics and Protestants as branches from the same trunk. This toleration was almost counterbalanced by the injurious interference of Napoleon in the administration of the affairs of the church. No doctrine could be taught without the sanction of government—
no pastors were permitted to resign without its approbation. All elections were to be approved by the first consul. The professors in seminaries were nominated by him. No synod was suffered to assemble without permission, and no synodical assembly could last more than six days. And all matters proposed for discussion were to be submitted previously to the proper officers of state. The injurious effect of this interference of the civil power can be readily apprehended. It naturally resulted in coldness, worldliness and error, both in the ministry and the churches. Upon the restoration of the Bourbons, the Protestants suffered severely, for a short period. Their situation, however, gradually improved, and upon the accession of the present king, the charter sworn to by him, in 1830, characterizes the Roman religion, not as the religion of the state, but as the faith professed by the majority of Frenchmen. When peace was declared in 1815, many devoted christians flocked to the continent from Great Britain, and ardently engaged in labors for the restoration of the French Reformed church, to its former purity. From that period dates its revival. In 1815, there were in France 564 pastors of the Reformed; in 1843, 677; and in 1845, there are upwards of 700. The Protestant population of that kingdom now numbers between four and five millions. Purifying itself from the errors which have infested it, and re-animated by the zeal of former years, we must regard this church with lively hopes for the future. By the distribution of the Bible and of Protestant tracts, and by the labor of Evangelical missionaries, they have commenced a renewed effort for the spread of the truth. Nor are they alone in this work. Protestant Christendom cannot forget the land of Calvin and of the martyrs for truth, and has aroused her energies to their assistance. Even in our own country, an effective society, directed by the wisdom of our most worthy men, is yielding a powerful instrumentality for the regeneration of France.

America, with the roll of her illustrious sons before her, can never forget the ennobling, elevating influence of the Huguenot, in forming her own high character, and it is meet and fitting that she should gratefully give of her treasures, and humbly supplicate in her prayers, that the children of the Huguenots in France, should be strengthened in their weakness, and the truth which they hold, be triumphant over its antagonistic error. Before such combined instrumentalities at home and abroad, accompanied, as we trust they will be by the energy and demonstration of the Holy Spirit, error must recede and disappear; and the cheerful light of the glorious gospel be reflected from every mountain, and illuminate every valley of that lovely, but benighted kingdom.

In this imperfect review of the history of the French Reformed church, who can fail to recognize a constant and direct interposition of Divine Providence in its behalf. Other churches of Protestant Christendom have endured sore persecutions, but upon no one has such a combination of adverse influences operated, as upon this branch of Zion, rendered illustrious by its trials. At one time, so fierce has been the tempest which has assailed it, that the flame of piety has almost been blown out, and again it has righted itself against the blast, and burned with an upward and steady light. At other times, temptation has assumed the place of persecution—but temptation could not ensnare where the sword had failed to intimidate. Through persecution and temptation, it has lived, it has revived, it prospers. Surely the Lord who made heaven and earth hath been her help in times past, and now he will not forsake her, nor her branches, though reaching across the breadth of the wide Atlantic.

The past history of this particular church warrants an humble confidence that the Lord will be its help in the future. History gives us an account of no race of men, in whom higher and loftier virtues are united, than the Huguenots, who fled from France upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. Piety without bigotry, firmness without obstinacy, love of country, second only to love of God, courage which feared only to do wrong, and principle which halted at no sacrifice, were developed in them to a degree, that has seldom, if ever been equalled. Such is the deliberate and uncontradicting testimony of impartial history. The miserable policy of the infatuated Louis, deprived him of half a million of his best subjects, and gave to Germany, Denmark, Holland, and Great Britain, a population who carried with them, not only the higher virtues, but the arts and embellishments of life. And when the hospitalities of these Protestant kingdoms
had been extended to the utmost, it was found that thousands were still without a refuge. These homeless ones, were pointed to the new world, and gladly did they avail themselves of the security which it offered. While numbers settled along the coast of the Northern and Middle States, South-Carolina became their great resort. A few had sought this place of refuge anterior to the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. From 1655 to 1657, at least one hundred and seventy families, selected this State as their future home, forming at that early date, a large proportion of the whole population. In this colony they formed four congregations;—one at Jamestown, on the Santee; one at Orange Quarter, in the parish of St. Denis; one at St. John's, Berkely, and one in Charleston. The three congregations in the country retained their peculiar worship for about twenty years, but in 1706, they became connected with the Protestant Episcopal church. The church in Charleston, has however, always maintained its original features.

In the year 1764, two hundred and twelve Huguenots, under the direction of Rev. Messrs. Gibert and Boutiton fled from France, and established themselves in the back country of Carolina. Several of this company, however, remained in Charleston. Among this number was Mr. Stephen Thomas, who became connected with this church at a very early period, was made an elder, which office he held for a number of years; from his familiarity with the French language, was elected clerk and reader of the scriptures, and closed a life of exemplary piety, at the advanced age of eighty-nine; and was buried in the cemetery of the church he had so long served.

We must not forget that in the flight of the Huguenots from France, and their settlement in Carolina, there was no admixture of political motive. Never had monarch more loyal subjects, or a country more dutiful children, than those men, driven from their homes by the merciless fanaticism of Louis XIV. No thirst for gold impelled them—no visions of domination over subjugated and plundered savages allure them across the pathless waters. Their flight was a religious flight, and their settlement a religious settlement—there is not the shadow of any other than religious motive from the beginning to the end. Neither were they led to abandon their homes, from bigoted aversion to unessential forms and ceremonies; they had been prohibited to read, or praise, or pray. We may conceive them adopting the language of an aged gentleman, who had weeping exclamed in France, "If I and mine were but now entering some country of refuge, where we might worship God according to our own consciences, I should think myself the happiest man in the world, though I had only this staff." And for the most part staff in hand, they came, that unmolested, they might here worship God according to their own consciences. Upon their arrival in this country, with what touching language do they record their thankfulness for their deliverance. The published letter of the young Judith Manigault is perhaps familiar to all. Even in exchanging her own beautiful France for this then unwholesome wilderness, and though compelled to engage in personal and menial labor, she could close that remarkable production with this sentiment, "Let it suffice, that God has had compassion on me, and changed my fate to a more happy one, for which glory be unto him."

Daniel Huger, the original emigrant of that name, concludes his family record in 1711, with this language: "Oh Lord in Christ, our blessed Redeemer, thou hast preserved us from the persecutors of the blessed gospel, and brought us into this remote part of the world; thou hast guided us and blessed us here in a wonderful manner, and we now enjoy the benefit of thy dear gospel in peace and quietness through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

One of the family of Mazycks, records in his family Bible, in 1685, histhankfulness in the same spirit, "God gave me the blessing of coming out of France and escaping the cruel persecution carried on there against the Protestants; and to express my thanksgiving for so great a blessing, I promise, please God, to observe the anniversary of that by a fast." The same devotional thankfulness doubtless animated all—it is our misfortune that no record of the expressions of others is within our reach. Stripped of property, hunted like felons, they were content to endure all, provided, in their own language, they could enjoy in banishment the "benefit of the dear gospel in peace and quietness."

It is, perhaps, impossible for us to conceive the eagerness with which persons of such a spirit, reared upon the foundation on which this edifice now stands, the building in which they were
together to offer their vows before the Lord. Their work was speedily done. The escape had been successful, the perils of the sea were past, and the fugitives had found an altar and a resting place, and they were glad. With what profound emotions, must their first public service in their own sanctuary, have been attended. True no gorgeous temple greeted for them the sabbath morning's sun,—no deep toned bell from its lofty tower summoned them to the observance of a pompous ritual, for them no rolling equipages disturbed the stillness of the sacred day. A simple church was theirs; and the quiet waters at once their only monitor of the hour of prayer, and their only instrument of conveyance, bore them in their rough canoes parents and children, young men and maidens from the dwellings on the banks of the neighboring rivers, to the edifice which their pious hands had erected. Imagination cannot picture a scene more exquisitely touching, than such a first service, in such a church, deposited in the graves which surround us. In the lapse of years the church which they had founded, was, however, called upon to encounter difficulties of a peculiar character, arising from the fact, that its services were performed in a foreign language, content to endure its hardships, and satisfied with its humble character, those people of God were suffered to pass out their days in comparative security, and after death, their remains were deposited in the graves which surround us. In the lapse of years the church which they had founded, was, however, called upon to encounter difficulties of a peculiar character, arising from the fact, that its services were performed in a foreign language, gradually passing into disuse, even in the families connected with it. The building itself, was destroyed by fire in the year 1740. It was rebuilt in 1800, but being found inconvenient and not of sufficient size, it was taken down, and the present edifice erected in its place subsequently. We have reason to believe that the Rev. Elias Prioleau, and the Rev. Florent Philippe Trouillart, were the first and probably joint pastors of this church. Of the first mentioned, the Rev. Mr. Prioleau, we have remains, indicating not only great purity of doctrine, and earnestness of piety, but also elegance of style, and vigor of mind. His descendants in this city have manuscript copies of his productions, delivered in France as early as 1677. He died on his farm near this city, in 1699.

Subsequently the church has been under the care of at least twelve pastors, of whom we have an account; and of how many more, it is impossible to state, as the records were destroyed by fire, in the year 1740. From the operation of evident causes, it has been frequently without a pastor, and the services of the church have been therefore interrupted at intervals, until the year 1826, when they were wholly discontinued, and the families heretofore in connection with it, became parts of other religious denominations in this city.

It was impossible that the descendants of the Huguenots should remain satisfied in this dispersion. They have determined in the strength of God, that the services of the ancient church should be revived, in the language of our country, translated from the French original. The church was endowed in 1701 with a moderate portion of property, which has gradually increased in value, and ample means were thus placed in the hands of its corporate authority, which authority has never, amidst all its misfortunes lost its existence. A portion of these means have been appropriated to the erection of this building, which is at once an ornament to the city, an evidence of the watchful care with which the patrimony of the church has been guarded, and a monument to the perpetuity of those sacred principles with which the French Protestant church is identified.

And now as the doors of your sanctuary have been thrown open—children of a martyred ancestry, you have come forth from the bosoms of the Christian churches, which have kindly sheltered you in your dispersion,—to kneel where your fathers knelt,—to pray where your fathers prayed, and to utter your thanksgiving where their songs of deliverance had been uplifted unto Him who had been their help. Even the stranger to your descent cannot refrain from participating in the emotions suggested by the hour and the place. Could these graves open and give up their dead, and the spirits of the departed, rising from their slumber of years, be permitted to look upon the transactions of this day, with what benignant smiles would they reward the labor of your hands; and with what joyful remembrances would they listen to the chants, and the prayers, and the word, for which in days long passed, they had sacrificed all earthly hopes.

But the passage of the hour admonishes us to hasten to the conclusion of this branch of the subject. As then, we review the
history of this church—the almost miraculous escape of its founders—their unquestioned piety—their singleness of religious motive—the difficulties overcome in its establishment—the continued preservation of its corporate authority when its ministry had ceased, and its members were scattered abroad—its revival at this late day, under circumstances of so great interest, we may surely recognise in it the hand of an Almighty Providence, and entertain the well grounded hope, that the Lord who made heaven and earth will be its help hereafter, as in times past he hath mercifully aided and preserved it.

In the government and doctrines of the French Reformed church, we perceive another ground upon which to rest our hope of divine help. In the Reformation, so far as it concerned ecclesiastical government and discipline, the great principle by which the work was wrought out, was the entire parity of the ministry of the gospel. This principle was ably sustained by Calvin and his coadjutors, and has been perpetuated in this branch of the church. During its entire history, we find no pre-eminence of station allowed to any minister, save the temporary and necessary authority placed in the hands of moderators of church judicatories elected for the occasion, and which authority expired with the dissolution of the electing body. In the organization of each particular church, the minister was elected by the people, elders were chosen to hold spiritual rule; and deacons to minister to physical wants. The elders, with the minister, constituted the consistory. A representative from each church, within certain bounds, formed the provincial synod, and from the provincial synods, by the same method of representation, was created a general synod, meeting as the exigency of the church required. An organization, certainly not unscriptural, and which experience has demonstrated to be fully equal to the ends proposed by ecclesiastical government.

The doctrines of the French Reformed church are the doctrines of the Reformation and of the Bible. In the year 1559, at the meeting of the first synod in Paris, to which allusion has already been made, a confession of faith was adopted, embodying the doctrines of the church. Seldom has a more remarkable ecclesiastical meeting occurred, than this synodical assemblage. It was at the hazard of life that one then announced himself a Protestant in Paris. D’Andelot, brother of admiral Coligny was then in prison upon charge of heresy—but a few days previously an unhappy Protestant was torn from the hands of the magistrates, to suffer death from the brutality of the populace. In the midst of these perils the synod met secretly, Francis de Morel presiding over the deputies from eleven churches,—continued their secret sessions from May 20th to May 28th—calmly arranged the discipline of the church and determined cases of conscience, and prepared and published their confession of faith; concerning which, there can be no hesitancy in saying that, it is inferior to no compend of christian doctrine which the church has possessed. Prepared under the eye of Calvin, it contains those peculiarities of doctrine, which by many in the articles of the Protestant Episcopal church, and by all in the confession of faith of the Presbyterian church, are called Calvinistic. It teaches the total depravity of our nature—the union of three persons in the Godhead—the divinity of the Saviour—the indispensable necessity of the operations of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of man—the satisfaction of the law in the death of Christ, and justification by faith in his name unto eternal life. All of which, together with the remaining points of orthodox faith taught in this confession, are so clearly deducible from the sacred scriptures, that concerning them among evangelical christians, there is now no controversy. It may be regarded, as prophetic of good, that you, my brethren, in giving publicity to your creed, unattracted by the refinements of modern language, have gone back nearly three centuries to the beginning, and have re-published and re-affirmed as your own this very confession, containing as it does a theology born mature, and to which age has added neither vigor nor proportions.

Such, then, is the government, and such are the doctrines of the French Protestant church in its purity. True, at times, the ruins of wholesome restraint have been relaxed, and fearful errors have crept into the minds of her ministry and members; but these are the departures and not the thing itself. To the purity of her standards and the excellency of her discipline, abundant testimony has been borne by men the most elevated of other denominations. The great Edwards has said of her, "The Protestant church of France, was a great part of the glory
of the Reformation." Dr. Croly, the present rector of St. Stephen's, London, considers this church represented by the great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp—spoken of in Revelations—and of the church itself, he says, "The French Protestant church long deserved its emblem. It held the gospel in sin­velations—and of the church itself, he says, need not multiply testimony drawn from other phen's London considers this church represented by the great

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of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief
corner stone. Though in his providence, it may have been dismantled, and its crumbling walls have been overspread with the symbols of decay, yet the foundation remains, and the busy hands of the christian artian are even now at work, and uprising from its ruins, the promise teaches us to believe, that her fair and symmetrical proportions, shall yet gladden the hearts of those who have mourned her decay.

Such, then, are some of the considerations drawn from the past, which constitute your present undertaking an imperative duty, which strengthen you in your prosecution of it, and which enable you happily to appropriate the language of the text, "our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." These considerations for the sake of distinctiveness I will concisely repeat; the divine interposition manifested in the preservation and re­vival of the French Protestant church general, and of your own particular church, and the certainty that in doctrine and disci­pline, your belief and practice are in conformity with the direc­tion of inspired wisdom. In the conduct of the future, let the sentiment of the text be deeply impressed upon your minds. The christian paradox, that there is strength even in our weak­ness is true of the church collective, as well as of its individual members. The more perfect the sense of our own infirmity, the more certain are we to obtain the assistance of Him, who "doth set on high those that be low; that those that mourn may be ex­alted to safety." This divine assistance is absolutely necessary to success. "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase." Were you possessed of a ministry more eloquent than the tongues of angels, and of a ceremonial, which by its tasteful solemnity could win the attention even of thought­lessness, or cold cultivated indifference, and did there congregate around your altar an eager crowd of the pure in life, and the lovely in character, and the elevated in station, and the refined in intellect, without the divine blessing all would be vain; and the services of your sanctuary would become as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal," and error in doctrine, and formality in worship, and aberrations in practice would follow an unhallowed reliance upon unassisted human agency. God hath ordained, that we should obtain this divine help through the instrumentality of prayer. He hath mercifully promised that those blessings which are consistent with his glory and our well-being shall be bestowed in answer to petitions rightly offered. These petitions must ascend from humble hearts, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble;—he forgettest not their cry, and hath respect unto the lowly." They must be offered in peni­tence, for "the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, a broken and contrite heart O God thou wilt not despise." They must be offered in faith, for we are required to "draw near unto Him with a true heart in full assurance of faith, nothing wavering, and whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in his name, he will give it you. They must be attended with a holy and obedient life, inasmuch, "as whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Such assurances, multiplied throughout the scriptures, warrant a delightful certainty, that humble, penitent, believing prayer, accompanied by the incense of a holy life, will receive its answer.

Let your prayers ascend habitually to the throne of grace in behalf of your revived church. Supplicate the divine blessing in behalf of the officers of the church, that in all purity of motive and ardor of piety, they may rightly fill their important trusts—in behalf of the members of the church, that they may by a godly life, and a well ordered conversation adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour—and in behalf of the whole body
in all its parts and relations, that as "a building fitly framed together, we may grow unto a holy temple in the Lord."

Brethren, may this impress of humble dependence be stamped upon you from the beginning. May you be a people, whose "help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." May you gather every intimation of duty and anticipation of success from His countenance, and cheerfully walk the path which His providence indicates.

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." Amen.

ORDER OF DIVINE SERVICE
FOR THE
RE-OPENING AND DEDICATION
OF THE
FRENCH PROTESTANT CHURCH OF CHARLESTON,
ON SUNDAY, 11TH MAY, 1845.

MORNING SERVICE.
Canticle 5th, page 98, Prayer Book. (Congregation rising.)
Prayer Dedicatory.
Ode, composed (by request) for this occasion, by Miss Mary E. Lee. (Congregation rising.)

Chorus—Praise to Jehovah! glad praises we bring,
Who dwell in a land where He only is King!

Hunted like prey, by the despots around them,
A price on their lives, 'mid the scenes of their birth,
The Huguenots burst from the fetters that bound them,
And yielded up all that was dearest on earth,

Chorus—The Ark of Religion in safety to bring,
To this free Western Land, where God only is King!

Toil was their birthright; but nobly repressing,
With Faith's mighty bulwark, the tide of life's ill,
They left unto us, their glad children, a blessing,
The true Rights of Conscience, which cherish we will,

Chorus—As close to the Huguenot tenets we cling,
In this free Western Land, where God only is King!

Peace to those Martyrs! their trials are ended;
Tyrant and Victim both sleep in the dust:
Yet is the flame of the altar they tended,
Transmitted to us, their descendants, in trust,

Chorus—While still knit together, God's praises we sing,
In this free Western Land, where He only is King!
Holy One! Dweller in sphere without measure,
Yet to the humblest dispensing thy care,
O, smile on our Temple, that boasts of no treasure,
But vows of contrition and accents of prayer.
Chorus—Praise to Messiah! glad praises we bring,
Who dwell in a land where God only is King!

The reading of the Commandments, page 7, Prayer Book,
followed by the Confession, &c., page 2.

Lesson, from the Old Testament.
Canticle 9th, page 99, Prayer Book (Congregation rising.)
Lesson, from the New Testament.
Prayers, page 3, Prayer Book.
Three verses of the 29th Hymn, viz:

Isaiah liii. 1, 2.

Triumphant Zion! lift thy head
From dust and darkness, and the dead:
Though humbled long, awake at length,
And gird thee with thy Saviour's strength!

Put all thy beauteous garments on,
And let thy excellence be known;
Deck'd in the robes of righteousness,
The world thy glories shall confess.

God from on high has heard thy pray'r,
His hand thy ruins shall repair:
Nor will thy watchful Monarch cease,
To guard thee in eternal peace.

The 212th Hymn, viz:

Hebrews xii. 1, 2.

Lo! what a cloud of witnesses
Encompass us around;
Men once like us with suff'ring tried,
But now with glory crown'd.

Let us, with zeal like theirs inspir'd,
Strive in the Christian race;
And, freed from ev'ry weight of sin,
Their holy footsteps trace.

Behold a witness no bler still,
Who trod affliction's path;
Jesus, the author, finisher,
Rewarder of our faith:

He, for the joy before him set,
And mov'd by pitying love,
Endur'd the cross, despis'd the shame,
And now he reigns above.

Thither, forgetting things behind,
Press we, to God's right hand!
There, with the Saviour and his saints,
Triumphanty to stand.

To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
The God whom we adore,
Be glory, as it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

AFTERNOON SERVICE.

Canticle 8th, page 98, Prayer Book. (Congregation rising.)

After 2d Lesson, Canticle 12, page 101, Prayer Book. (Congregation rising.)

Before Sermon, 200th Hymn, viz:

Sir John xiv. 6.

Thou art the way, to thee alone
From sin and death we flee;
And he who would the Father seek,
Must seek him, Lord, by thee.

Thou art the truth, thy word alone
True wisdom can impart;
Thou only canst inform the mind
And purify the heart.

Thou art the life, the rending tomb
Proclames thy conqu'ring arm,
And those who put their trust in thee,
Nor death nor hell shall harm.

Thou art the way, the truth, the life;
Grant us that way to know,
That truth to keep, that life to win,
Whose joys eternal flow.

SERMON.
101st Hymn:

And wilt thou, O Eternal God,
On earth establish thine abode;
Then look propitious from thy throne,
And take this temple for thine own.

These walls we to thine honor raise,
Long may they echo in thy praise;
And thou, descending, fill the place
With the rich tokens of thy grace.

Here may the great Redeemer reign,
With all the graces of his train;
While pow'r divine his word attends,
To conquer foes and cheer his friends.

And in the last decisive day,
When God the nations shall survey,
May it before the world appear,
Thousands were born for glory here.

To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
The God whom earth and heav'n adore,
Be glory, as it was of old,
Is now, and shall be evermore.