

THE RICHEST CHURCH.

Millionaires of the Rev. John Hall's Big Flock.

Average Collection on Communion Sundays Not Less Than \$18,000—

Personality of the Intelligent Irish Preacher and a Look at Him in the Pulpit—History of a Famous Church.

The Fifth-avenue Presbyterian Church, founded in 1808, is the richest church in New York. The collection taken up on communion Sunday of each month averages not less than \$18,000. Checks for sums ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 are not uncommon.

On one Sunday in 1894 the plate had \$40,000 deposited in it. Within the last five years the total of voluntary contributions for mission work, church maintenance and miscellaneous charities aggregated in excess of \$830,000.

The Rev. Dr. John Hall, the pastor, receives a salary of \$15,000 per annum, which is swelled by presents from millionaire members of his congregation, by bequests and fees, to an equal amount.

The magnificent mansion adjoining the church, which the members of the congregation built at a cost of \$75,000, the venerable minister lives in opulence, and imported servants from the north of Ireland move about with stiff-necked dignity.

Immediately after the Supreme Court last spring overthrew the income tax Dr. Hall suggested that the wealthy laymen of the Presbytery contribute to the support of the church's mission funds the amount of the checks which they had drawn to pay that tax. He followed up the suggestion by sending to the Mission Board his own check for \$1,000. The inference was naturally drawn that his own was \$84,000.

The result was that such a flood of begging letters poured in upon him that the good doctor was forced to write a card, denying that his income reached any such figure, but the real amount he did not state.

If Henry G. Marquand, John S. Kennedy, Robert Bonner, Charles Butler, Morris K. Jessup, John S. Pillsbury, John J. McCook, Alexander Maitland and other millionaire members of the congregation followed the doctor's suggestion, the contributions of the year would exceed that of 1894, when they footed up \$234,274.

THE CHURCH AND ITS PASTOR.

The Fifth-avenue Presbyterian Church, at Fifth-street, is, for a Presbyterian Church, an imposing edifice, and there is a wealth of decoration in its interior that meets the disapproval of many of the sect who meet in humbler edifices in the city. The ornamentation is, however, confined to artistic wood-carving and stained-glass windows of quiet design, mostly in geometrical form.

The floor is sharply declined towards the elaborate pulpit, over which hangs a superb organ that cost \$35,000. There is in consequence a suggestion of a public hall about the interior. Dr. Hall in the pulpit wears a black silk gown, relieved at the throat by a white neckcloth with large bands. He is of middle age, with a full head of hair, and a calm, dignified expression. The choir is composed of five or six young men, who lead the congregation in the old-fashioned congregational singing that has ever obtained in Presbyterian churches.

There is nothing in this Fifth-avenue church to distract attention from the pastor or the gospel as he expounds it. The number of communicants remained steadily in the neighborhood of 2,700 for many years.

The pastor of this church, the Rev. Dr. John D. Hall, is a native of New York, when he was induced to leave Ireland, when he was induced to leave Ireland, when he was induced to leave Ireland.

On account of the doctor's great prominence in the city, he has been the subject of much gossip, and much that has been said has been incorrectly worded, to say the least.

Dr. Hall was born on July 28, 1829, in County Armagh, Ireland, and lacks but four years of the three score and ten that was, according to the prophet, allotted to him. He is 6 feet 3 inches in height, of massive frame, ruddy complexion, and does not look more than 55. He is a remarkably vigorous man for his age. He has a taste for outdoor exercise and has long been a conspicuous and familiar figure on the Fifth-avenue promenade. He generally walks to his residence, and is attended, but a stalwart and devoted attendant from the land of his birth follows at a discreet distance, keeping a watchful eye on the pastor, and a firm grip on a heavy blackthorn stick.

This precaution has been deemed necessary ever since on one bright Sunday morning, in 1881, a young man, John G. Roth, fired three harmless shots at him as he emerged from the church and walked towards the door of his residence. The affair created great excitement at the time. Roth was sent to an asylum.

INDUCED TO LEAVE IRELAND. Dr. Hall's father was an elder in the Presbyterian Church. The son, after receiving a classical education, entered Belfast College, and afterward took a theological course. He was licensed to preach in 1849. In 1866 Dr. Hall visited the United States as a delegate to the General Assembly of the Presbytery of Ireland. He occupied various pulpits in the course of his visit, notably in New York City, where he held that of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, then located at Nineteenth street and Fifth avenue.

Originally settled in Cedar street, in 1824 the congregation removed to Duane street, and in 1852 to Nineteenth street and Fifth avenue, where it remained until it took its present fashionable location in 1875. Robert Bonner, the millionaire proprietor of the New York Ledger, was a member of the church, and it was Dr. Hall's appearance in New York. Mr. Bonner was much impressed with the manner in which the doctor was going the rounds, and was mainly through his efforts that, shortly after the doctor's return to his charge in Dublin, he received an urgent call by cable to the vacant pulpit. It is said that the doctor left Ireland with much regret. The New York salary offered was \$10,000, the largest paid up to that time to any preacher in New York.

It was in October, 1867, that the doctor preached his first sermon. He has labored without intermission with this congregation for twenty-eight years. No other minister of the Presbytery of New York has such a record of continuous service. Many of the oldest families of New York have been steadfast to this church since its formation, and hundreds of children baptized by the venerable minister have later in life faced him at the foot of the pulpit to be united in bonds of matrimony.

PREACHES THE "OLD GOSPEL." The life work of Dr. Hall, clerical and literary, has received extended mention in Appleton's American Encyclopedia, and in the Presbyterian Encyclopedia, edited by Dr. Nevins. His contributions to the Presbyterian publication always attract attention, and in the general assembly of the sect he is a towering figure. He was active in the affairs of the Union Theological Seminary, and only withdrew from the governing board of the institution on account of the pressure of his pastoral duties.

He was for ten years Chancellor of the University of the City of New York, a growing educational institution established under Presbyterian auspices

to offset, if possible, the growing influence of Columbia College, which is Episcopalian.

Dr. Hall rarely appears in public outside of religious bodies, but his response to the toast of "Commerce and Civilization" at the 1892 banquet of the Produce Exchange was widely quoted. Dr. Hall preaches at all times "the old gospel," and nothing but the gospel. On one occasion only has the doctor in a sermon even remotely referred to politics. On November 14, 1894, after Tammany had been swept from power, he delivered an address in the chapel of the Dutch Reformed Church, in which he urged that Christian principles are opposed to every phase of corruption. On that occasion he said: "The Christian is the man who should be the best politician, because he is honest, pure and just. The basis of true citizenship is that you should do no wrong, that is the true partisanship. You are then serving God in your day and generation."

AT A MORNING SERVICE. A Sunday Morning reporter attended the morning service in Dr. Hall's church last Sunday. The pews were well filled. There was nothing striking about the appearance of the congregation. The novelty of the costumes worn by the women was especially noticeable. The interior of a Presbyterian Church is not the place to go to witness a panorama of the latest fashion in millinery. It was difficult to realize that, taken in the aggregate, this is the richest congregation in New York, and the names of the members of its members are in the "social lists," and that many of its male members are powerful factors in the commercial and financial life of New York. The names of the members are known on the floor of the exchanges than in the clubs, and the names of the women are identified with the cause of charity and kindred movements rather than with the Patriarchs' ball or the annual Horse Show.

An atmosphere of fellowship prevailed and welcome was written in the face of the stranger as he entered the door and was promptly escorted to a seat where he could both see and hear. Although the members of the church, there is a rule of the Committee on Seating Strangers, which declares all seats vacant after the singing of the first hymn.

At 11 o'clock to the minute the towering form of Dr. Hall emerged from a door at the right of the pulpit. He walked erect, almost briskly, up the steps into the massive carved pulpit. He sat for a moment, then rose, hymn-book in hand—they are flat, long books, with well-known Presbyterian tunes—and announced the order of service: "Oh, God, We Praise Thee."

With a voice of deep, rich and rare sweetness that at once explained the hold that his ministry has upon the hearts of his following, he read the first verse, and then repeated it. The choir of young men stood, the congregation followed, the great organ pealed forth a few introductory notes and the singing of the hymn began. It was not the hearty congregational singing of the old-fashioned Presbyterian sort, but a solemn and reverent hymn, sort of hymn, and the hymn dragged in spite of the efforts of the young men in the gallery, who made much noise as they dared under the circumstances.

The hymn ended, the congregation took his seat. A dead hush followed as the pastor, closing his eyes and laying his hands outspread with palms down, said softly: "Let us pray." And a beautiful prayer it was. Not fervent appeals for blessing, but a prayer that meek, eloquently and scholarly presentation of the hopes and needs of the Christian, a confession of his dependence and a glorification of the power that rule the earth. It breathed the spirit of domestic peace and spiritual patriotism. There was a word for "those who are yet returned to their city homes." The prayer was ten minutes in duration.

Then the divine read the tenth chapter of Paul to the Romans, with careful attention to the elocution, for the epistles are hard to read so as to convey the meaning to the hearers. An exposition of gospel meaning, with careful attention to the elocution, for the epistles are hard to read so as to convey the meaning to the hearers. An exposition of gospel meaning, with careful attention to the elocution, for the epistles are hard to read so as to convey the meaning to the hearers.

DR. HALL'S SERMON. The text of the sermon was: "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before My Father, which is in heaven."—Matthew x, 32-33.

It was an analytical sermon, an exposition of gospel meaning, an interpretation of the word "confess" and "deny." A great literary critic once said that if Byron's "Sennacherib" was read in England, it would be read in the same way that they were listening to poetry. And so it was with Dr. Hall.

It was not a flight of eloquence. It asserted in many ways propositions that have never been disputed in the minds of his hearers. It was a sermon of the highest order, and the attention was paid to every word. Men and women leaned forward to catch the lowest notes, while the eye delightedly followed the speaker's face. When the sermon was over, the pastor said that they marked each change of thought or fancy.

Much of the time the doctor leaned with both hands upon the pulpit. When he made a point to his mind was clear he spread open his arms with the wondering inquiry: "Christian, can you not do an appealing word, asking: 'How can you, then, fail to believe?'" Again, warmed by the fervor of his own faith, he raised his right hand impressively, and said to the hearers: "The old-fashioned Bible expounder, but calmly, deliberately, convincingly: 'I believe it, and will stand by it.'"

The sermon was punctuated with anecdotes, stories that are like the windows in a house. The frequent reference to history, sacred and profane; his quotations from the doctors of the church and the laws of the prophets evinced deep scholastic research and thorough command of the stored-up learning of nearly a half-century's study of the Bible.

The forty minutes allotted to the sermon slipped away as ten, and came to an end all too soon. There was a brief prayer, another hymn, and then all bowed their heads as the benediction was pronounced. The congregation slowly passed out a score or so going the rounds of the pulpit stairs to exchange greetings with the pastor.—World.

COLD AIR FOR SALE Will be Delivered Through Pipes or in Tanks. A company has been incorporated in New York City for the purpose of supplying cold air for refrigerating purposes to hotels, restaurants, meat shops and houses, through a pipe service, similar to that employed in the distribution of steam. The cold air is to be manufactured by the anhydrous ammonia process in a central plant, is pumped into mains which are laid beneath the streets, and the house connections are made by service pipes, which are carried in a steel cylinder, similar to those in which soda water is delivered to drug stores.

The worst effect of sin is within, and is manifest not in poverty and pain and bodily debilitation, but in the disordered faculties, the unworthy love, the selfishness, the brutal and enslaved spirit.—E. H. Chapin.

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In the Matter of Reclamation District Number Four Hundred and Seven of the County of Sacramento, State of California.

IN THE MATTER OF RECLAMATION DISTRICT Number Four Hundred and Seven of the County of Sacramento, State of California. The petition for the formation of said district having heretofore been approved by this board, and the landowners of said district, and he is hereby appointed inspector, and that H. M. Larkin and Samuel Layson be and they are hereby appointed Judges of said election.

By unanimous vote of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sacramento, December 1, 1895. (Seal.) Attest: WM. B. HAMILTON, County Clerk of the County of Sacramento and ex-officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. 63-td

In the Matter of Reclamation District Number Five Hundred and Fifty-four of the County of Sacramento, State of California.

IN THE MATTER OF RECLAMATION DISTRICT Number Five Hundred and Fifty-four of the County of Sacramento, State of California. The petition for the formation of said district having heretofore been approved by this board, and the landowners of said district having heretofore adopted and filed their by-laws, and he is hereby appointed inspector, and that H. M. Larkin and Samuel Layson be and they are hereby appointed Judges of said election.

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By unanimous vote of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sacramento, December 2, 1895. (Seal.) Attest: WM. B. HAMILTON, County Clerk of the County of Sacramento and ex-officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. 63-td

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