

YESTERDAY WITH THE FATHERS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649737925

Yesterday with the Fathers by Wm. Wilberforce Newton

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WM. WILBERFORCE NEWTON

**YESTERDAY WITH
THE FATHERS**

Yesterday with the Fathers

By

Wm. Wilberforce Newton, D. D.



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Cochrane Publishing Company
Tribune Building
New York

1910

EX 5882
N5

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97-1000
APR 24 1910

Dedication
to
GEORGE B. CLUETT,

Whose life, like the overflowing River Nile, has enriched all those who have been blest with his friendship, this volume is dedicated, by one whose love is only equalled by his life-long respect.

M185457

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Yesterday with the Fathers

CHAPTER I

CHURCH LEADERS IN PENNSYLVANIA FIFTY YEARS AGO

THE Rev. Dr. Tyng, at St. Paul's church (1830-1840), was perhaps the foremost representative of pulpit power in Philadelphia at this period. He stood upon the vantage ground of a distinctly definite reputation as a powerful and effective preacher, and St. Paul's church, with the memories of its former rectors, Dr. Magaw and Dr. Pilmore, was a conspicuous rostrum for a man with a message. Dr. Tyng at this period was a man of great power, and was one who knew his strength and was conscious of his many and striking gifts. When he said after his first visit to Europe that there was only one man in England who made him feel small, and that man was the Rev. Hugh McNeill, of Liverpool, he probably spoke the absolute truth.

St. Andrew's church in Philadelphia was at this period the conspicuous shrine of great pulpit power. Dr. Gregory Thurston Bedell held aloft the torch of evangelical light and power, and created a following of great influence as he preached from his high stool in the pulpit of this new church. It was sometimes a question whether this sensitive creature, like Tennyson's Nautilus, in the poem of "Maud,"

"Frail, but a work divine," would be able to finish his sermon, owing to his excessive weakness; and after the morning service was over he would be tenderly cared for and put to bed to rest his wearied frame for the evening service.

Dr. John A. Clark, his successor, was also a preacher of great power, and his book, "Walks about Zion," was a great favorite with the devout women of that period.

Rev. Thomas M. Clark, afterwards the popular Bishop of Rhode Island, followed as rector of St. Andrews church, and received a large number of votes at the episcopal election which was held in 1845, when Dr. Alonzo Potter was chosen Bishop as the successor to Bishop Underdonk.

The coming of Bishop Alonzo Potter to Philadelphia was the inauguration of a new epoch in the history of the Episcopal church in that city. The Evangelicals who had supported Dr. Tyng, and afterwards Dr. Thomas M. Clark, were afraid of the newly elected Professor from Union College because he did not use the shibboleths and pass-words of their party. They looked upon him as a Deist of the Paley school of thought. The high churchmen were equally alarmed at his election, for they saw in him an Erastian of the Tillotson type, and were unable to detect in his thought and speech the signs of the aggressive churchmanship of Bishop Hobart. It was a hard and difficult field into which the brave and stalwart soul of Alonzo Potter descended when he took up the reins of ecclesiastical government in the diocese of Pennsylvania sixty years ago. But it is the crowning glory of this remarkable man that in the twenty years of his wonderful episcopate he created new con-