WASHINGTON'S CHURCH. AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF OLD CHRIST CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA, TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTENARY SERVICES THEREIN, NOVEMBER 20 AND 21ST, 1873

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649196982

Washington's church. An historical sketch of Old Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, together with a brief description of the centenary services therein, November 20 and 21st, 1873 by Various

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd. Cover @ 2017

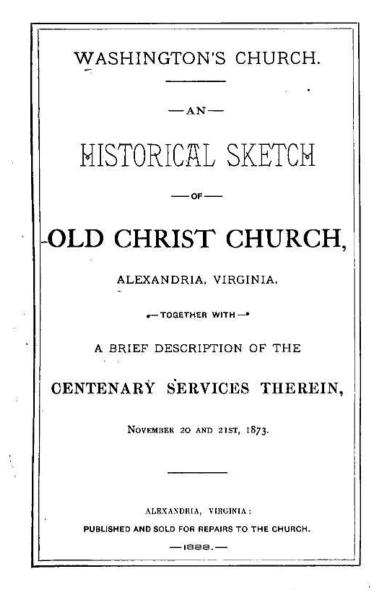
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

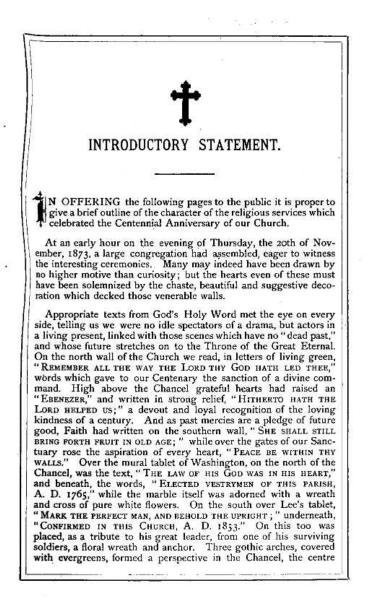
www.triestepublishing.com

VARIOUS

WASHINGTON'S CHURCH. AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF OLD CHRIST CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA, TOGETHER WITH A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTENARY SERVICES THEREIN, NOVEMBER 20 AND 21ST, 1873

Trieste





OLD CHRIST CHURCH.

one surmounted by a cross, three feet high, of flowers of God's creation. From this centre arch were suspended the words in large text, "CHRIST CHURCH." From either side arch, the dates 1773 (Old English) and 1873 (Modern), all formed with evergreens and white flowers. Above "Christ Church," in the centre arch, was a gas star, and below, just above the Communion Table, in letters of shining white, Earth's purest emblem of that purer robe we are to wear at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, the old, familiar words, "ANGELS, AND LIVING SAINTS AND DEAD, BUT ONE COMMUNION MAKE." The Bible and Prayer Book of olden times were used on this occasion; the former once Washington's and presented to the Church by G. W. P. Custis, Esq., of Arlington, in 1804. On the table were the old Parish Registers, dating back to 1765, and copies of the "Contract for Building the Church," and of "The Act

After the hymn, "I love Thy Church O God," the Rector read the following "Historical Sketch."

The Rev. Philip Slaughter was then introduced, who celebrated the old Church and its worthies in verse, which we will not trust ourselves to characterize further than to say that it was to the full worthy of its high theme. We will only add that the recital of the poem electrified the crowded congregation and kindled an enthusiasm which was with difficulty restrained by the sacredness of the place.*

The services of the first evening closed with the hymn, "Lo, what a cloud of witnesses, etc." Nor must we omit our tribute to the beautiful music which made another charming feature of the occasion.

But what word painting can give an idea of the second evening, when the Holy Communion was administered, and many, who for years had been separated, joined voice and soul in the service for "All Saints' Day." Children of the Church, whose paths in life had led them far apart, met together once more, to kneel at their Father's Board.

Even a more densely crowded attendance than the previous night marked the increased interest. The services were in full harmony with the occasion, beginning with the hymn, " O Paradise, O Paradise." Then the Ante-Communion Service was read, and the hymn, " Hark! the sound of holy voices."

*We regret our inability to present this beautiful poem to the public. Neither the official request of the Vestry nor the most earnest private solicitations have been able to overcome the author's too modest estimate of its merit.

to manual (10) -

4

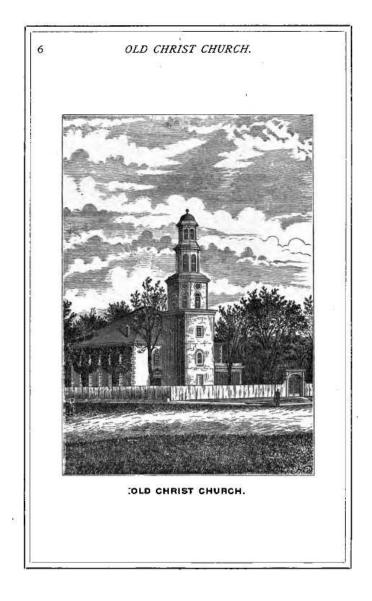
OLD CHRIST CHURCH.

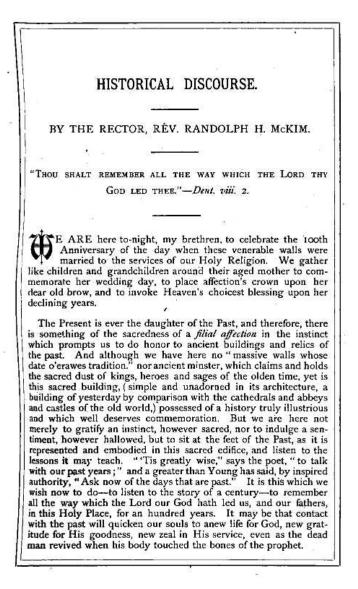
5

The Rector struck the key note of the rich prelude to the service by quoting, "Angels, and living saints, etc.," which vibrated through all hearts and tuned them to unison, as chord after chord was touched, waking sweetest memories, highest resolves, purest hopes. He was followed by Rev. Cornelius Walker, D. D., (a former Rector) and Rev. Philip Slaughter, each leading our thoughts from the Communion of the Church below to that time of Christ's own promise, when in our Father's Kingdom we shall drink anew of the fruit of the vine. This deeply impressive service influenced all present. The large congregation remained through the entire Communion. An unusual stillness reigned and it was observed that many, after communicating, seemed to forget to rise from the Chancel rail—so absorbed were they by the holy memories and meditations of the occasion.

It seemed most fitting that the services of the following Sunday should catch the sweet echo of that glad time, and that as we crossed the boundary of another century we should hear the words of the Lord, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."*

* This was the text of the sermon preached the following Sunday by the Rector, that day marking the close of the sixth year of his Pastorate of this Church.





OLD CHRIST CHURCH.

8

On such an occasion it would be proper that " Days should speak and multiude of years " declare the story of the past: but it falls to my lot, as Rector of this Church, to endeavor, as best I may, to sketch its history this evening. If I can gather but a few of the ripe lessons which cluster thick about these venerable walls we shall not have met here in vain to-night.

On the first day of February, 1765, by virture of an act passed the previous year, (being the 4th, George III,) the Parish of Fairfax was created out of a portion of the Parish of Truro. On the 28th of March, the same year, a vestry was chosen, consisting of twelve gentlemen, one of whom was Col. GEORGE WASHINGTON, then just thirty-three years of age. His name stands fifth on the list, he receiving two hundred and seventy-four votes; while John West receives three hundred and forty, Chas. Alexander three hundred and nine, William Payne three hundred and four, and John Dalton two hundred and eighty-one.* It appears thus that the Parish organization dates back one hundred and eight years, and it further appears from the records that there were two churches then in the Parish, doubtless of a very early date. The one at the Falls, known as "Falls Church," and the other at Alexandria, known as "The Lower Church."[†] The exact situation of the latter building is unknown, but it appears quite certain that it did not occupy the site of the present edifice. If tradition can be relied on, the Church at the Falls was the Parish Church, and the one at this place "The Chapel of Ease." The respective dignity of the two churches is indicated by the comparative emoluments of the office of sexton in the same; for, in the year 1766, Gerrard Tramill, sexton at the Falls Church, receives a salary of five hundred and sixty pounds of tobacco, while John Rhodes, sexton at Alexandria, receives only five hundred pounds of the same article!

That the Chapel at Alexandria was neither a very elegant nor a very substantial structure may be inferred from the fact that, upon the completion of the new Church at the Falls, the old structure at that place was sold by the Vestry for $\pounds 7$ 10s.

* The first record in the Vestry book bears date August 26, 1765, and Washington's name is not on the list of Vestrymen. Probably be found it it more convenient or deemed it more important to act as Vestryman for Truro Parish, to which he was elected the same year, and so " may have" resigned his place in the Vestry of Fairfax.

†Through the kindness of the CENTURN Co., we are able to insert a wood cut of Old Pohick Church, which, being nearer to Mt Vernon, enjoyed more of Washington's fostering care than even Christ Church, Alexandria. The two churches are twin sisters; of each Washington was elected Vestryman; in each he was a frequent worshipper. It is said that Old Pohick, then a rain, suggested Bishop Coxe's ballad, "Old Churches." At the request of a friend we append a verse or two: