of his sonorous voice upon my drowsy spirit when he spoke in minor tones, and the painful excitement of his sudden high-pitched exclamations, which roused me with an abashed and startled countenance from fitful dreams. And I remember, while being nudged with expressive gestures by my parents to keep awake, how I longed to sink out of sight upon the floor of the pew and yield to the over-mastering desire for undisturbed repose.

How often in more recent years, when the cares of business made the burden of life almost insupportable, have I longed to hear one of those delightful sermons of my childhood, when the voice of the preacher, meaningless to me then, like the droning of a bee soothed the tired senses until they sank unconscious into the arms of Death's twin-brother, Sleep.

One of the great events in the church history of Wilmington, which I believe under the hand of God led to your original founding, was the wonderful revival of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the Wilmington people in the year 1858. I was then eleven and a half years of age, and attended with my parents and brothers and sisters the First Presbyterian Church on Front Street, which I saw burned to the ground afterwards, and I also attended the morning session of the Sunday-school which was held in the lecture-room in the rear of the church building, and which still stands in the alley opposite our present Front Street market house. I can remember my first tottering steps when I was learning to walk, but I can not remember the first time I attended church: it must have antedated even that remote period.

Mr. Robert Gibbs was the superintendent, and a Mr. Sherwood, who was a merchant of Wilmington, was my teacher. The pastor of the church was the Rev. Matthew B. Grier, a scholar and a gentleman of the old school, who was perhaps more generally respected and honored in the town of Wilmington than any other minister of his time. He was a man of attractive and striking personality, of about six feet stature, remarkable intellectual attainments, most courteous and refined deportment, singular grace and ease of manner, and of extreme punctiliousness with reference to his immaculate clerical dress.

It was his custom to make regular visits, or visitations, upon the families of his congregation every month, and I have often recalled with great amusement some of the occasions when he visited my father's family and examined us with reference to

that indispensable qualification of our faith, the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

I remember that his visits were timed for Saturdays, or after school hours on week days, so that no excuse would be valid with reference to other obligations. I recall also our brawny Scotch nurse, fresh from the Highlands, whose duty on the occasion of the minister's coming was to corral the youthful members of the family and prepare them by careful scrubbing and change of clothes for the ordeal of his examination.

About that time I had developed a remarkable fondness for the breeding of pigeons and possessed a flock of different varieties numbering forty or fifty, all told. These pigeons were known and recognized by familiar names, and to an especially fine pair of white fantails I had given the names of our pastor and his dignified wife. On one occasion the alarm was given to the boys at play that the minister was approaching and that we were to prepare for presentation. My two brothers and I immediately took refuge under a storehouse in the yard, from which we were ignominiously dragged by our heels by the Scotch nurse, and after a careful overhauling were sent into the house to be catechised. One of our number, however, escaped (I think it was our brother from Charleston). I may mention at this particular juncture that the female fan-tailed pigeon, already referred to by name, had been missing for several days. You can imagine the consternation of our good mother, while we were being examined on the question of "Effectual Calling," to hear from the back yard an excited and effectual call to us by the brother aforesaid, "Come out, come out, Mrs. Grier has alighted on the top of the stable!" The reassuring "Ha, ha," of our good pastor, however, relieved our embarrassment, and this incident, with his better acquaintance, established our hearts in mutual affection.

The personnel of the white members of the original organization of the church on Chestnut Street is doubtless well known to you, but I think that the excellent character of our colored members has not been sufficiently emphasized. I recall William Cutlar, Alfred Hargrave, Henry Taylor, and George Price, sr. They were all superior persons, skilled craftsmen, intelligent, courteous, self-supporting, and generally respected in this community, as their worthy sons are respected who are here tonight.

After they had bought and occupied the original building and engaged a talented colored pastor, named Rev. D. J. Sanders,