



THE OLD CHRIST CHURCH, HAMILTON.

OUR PARISHES AND CHURCHES.

NO. 14.—CHRIST CHURCH, HAMILTON, ONT.

IN November, 1834, after a three months' curacy in St. George's Church, Kingston, the Rev. J. Gamble Geddes (now Dean of Niagara) was sent by Bishop Stewart of Quebec to visit Hamilton, which was described as a flourishing place where the people were desirous of building a church and wished to have a resident clergyman among them. At that time occasional Sunday services were performed in the Court House by the Rev. John Miller, then rector of Ancaster, and in his absence by a divinity student, Mr. James C. Usher, afterwards rector of Brantford. The only places of worship at that time erected were the old Methodist chapel at the foot of King street, and St. Andrew's (Presbyterian) church, a small wooden building still in existence.

Very soon after the arrival of their minister, the people began to take steps for the erection of a church. On the 13th of June, 1835, the first public meeting was held, at the office of John Law, Esq., "for the purpose of furthering the erection of a

Protestant Episcopal Church." One site was offered as a gift by George Hamilton, Esq., on upper John street, a second by Mr. Nathaniel Hughson, on the east side of James street, and a third by Allan N. Macnab, Esq. After many meetings and much discussion, the lot on James street was chosen, and a building committee was appointed consisting of the following gentlemen: George Hamilton, Edmund Ritchie, Daniel C. Gunn, Miles O'Reilly, and Allan N. Macnab. Mr. Wetherall, the architect, furnished the design, and the work was commenced. Jonathan Simpson was the contractor.

The work of building was prosecuted under many and great difficulties during the years 1836-37-38, and it was not till the 31st July, 1839, that the church was open for public worship. The Rev. R. D. Cartwright, of St. George's, Kingston, preached the opening sermon. The public journals of the day gave a long and interesting account of the ceremony, and "congratulated the people of Hamilton upon possessing one of the handsomest churches in British North America—a lasting credit to their piety and liberality." To show the light in which the old building of Christ Church was regarded in those early days, the Rev. Alexander Gale, at that time the respected pastor of St. Andrew's Church, while paying a friendly visit to the rector, was

shown a very neat model of Christ Church, and when told the dimensions—100 by 66—he exclaimed at the enormous size of the building, and said (prophetically, as it would appear), "The committee must have intended it for a Cathedral." It was not consecrated till the year 1842 by Bishop Strachan, under the churchwardenship of Samuel Mills and Richard Duggan. At this time the tower and spire were still unfinished; but the ladies having made a strenuous effort and raised the sum of \$1,000, a fresh stimulus was given to the work and it was completed without further delay. Two liberal grants were obtained from two great Church Societies in England, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. This church, in the course of a few years, not more than seven or eight, being found too small for the congregation, a project was formed for re-building it of larger dimensions and more durable materials. Plans and specifications were obtained at considerable cost; but the scheme was eventually abandoned; and it was resolved instead to erect another church at the south side of the town, for the accommoda-