

[Fourth Universalist Society, New York City]

## UNIVERSALISTS TO MOVE

### Church of the Divine Paternity Buildings Sold

Present Place of Worship, Bought in 1866 for \$40,000, Has Been Sold for \$625,000—Fourth Universalist Society Was Organized in 1838—The Rev. Dr. Charles H. Eaton Reviews the Church's History and Urges It to Renewed Vigor.

In the Church of the Divine Paternity the Rev. Dr. Charles H. Eaton yesterday delivered a sermon on "The Forward Movement," taking his text from Exodus, xiv., 15: "Go forward." In his sermon Dr. Eaton referred to the sale of the church in which the service was being held, as in line with the forward movement, and the law of progress in the intellectual and spiritual world, as well as in the world of affairs. He said there were churches in this city, beautiful and honored, that were still in their theological swaddling clothes; that had not yet cast off the fetters of the traditions of the past that bound them, and were not yet in the upper steps.

"The Church that is not advancing is dead. The Church that does not see the new demands, the broader kingdom, and that will not walk through the broader door to the larger kingdom is not worthy of the name of a Christian Church," he said.

Dr. Eaton said he had used that text because the church in which he had ministered for fifteen years had arrived at a critical point in its history, and had recognized the central law of growth. He then reviewed the history of the Fourth Universalist Society from the time of its foundation, in September, 1838, to its entering the present church, in 1866. He said a new centre had been created, and that of the members of the congregation at present, only nine families lived on the east side below Forty-second Street, and the minority were on the west side below Fifty-ninth Street. He said the committee had taken the step of selling the present property in order that the church might enlarge its philanthropic work, and that its members had heard the voice of God, which told them that working, and not alone preaching, was necessary in the church.

"We will not say," said Dr. Eaton, "as did that eminent Englishman, 'What has posterity done for me, that I should do anything for posterity?' We owe to those who have worked for so great gifts of energy and privilege, and we will give similar debts to our descendants."

Dr. Eaton spoke of the tender and hallowed memories that clung to the old church, and said, "I believe if we are only wise from now on, we have made the wisest move in our history. We leave here not because we are bankrupt, without or within, but because we believe we can do a larger work for God and man [sic]."

The speaker drew a beautiful picture of what the new church would be, its splendid endowment, and the interest, renewed and enlarged, that would be taken in the work.

"I urge upon you," he said, "the necessity of working in unity. There may be differences of opinion, but we will find the way of working together. Remember that it is to be your church, that you are to give it to God, and to receive it back from God filled with His spirit and devoted to the cause of humanity."

Dr. Eaton paid a glowing tribute to the late Dr. Chapin. After the prayer he announced that worship would be held in the church for at least another year, [by] which time it was thought the new chapel would be ready, and that the church would be ready

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in a year from next Fall. The site has not yet been selected, but there will be a meeting in the near future to decide upon one.

The present church buildings were sold a short time ago for \$625,000.

The Rev. Dr. Chapin was more prominently identified with the development and prosperous growth of this church than was any one of its former pastors. The former congregation, of thirty members, held services in the Apollo Rooms, in lower Broadway, in 1838, under its then pastor, Rev. William Whittaker, and organized under the name of the Fourth Universalist Society. The congregation moved to the temple of the New Jerusalem Church, in Pearl Street, a short time afterward. There it worshipped for six months, and then took a larger building in Duane Street, near Chatham Street, now Park Row. A year after moving to that place the Rev. J. [Isaac] D. Williamson became pastor, and continued his connection with the church for three years. It was during Mr. Williamson's pastorate that the society reorganized under its present name, the Church of the Divine Paternity.

It was not long after the reorganization that the congregation moved to the lecture room of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, but it remained there only a short time and then took a new church in Elizabeth Street, near Hester Street. The Rev. Moses Ballou then became pastor, but he was soon succeeded by the Rev. Thomas L. Harris, who served until 1848, when the Rev. Dr. Chapin became pastor.

Soon after Dr. Chapin's installation the congregation moved to Murray Street, and thence to Dr. Bellows's church, in Broadway. The congregation occupied the present church in 1866, having paid \$40,000 for the site, which was then thought to be an exorbitant price to pay for property so far up town.

The movement to dispose of the present property was begun several years ago. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, in the latter part of 1893, said that \$650,000 had been offered for the property, and it was declined. He advised the congregation to accept \$700,000.

It was Dr. Chapin's strong individuality and fervid oratory that attracted large numbers of persons, and made the church prosper. He obtained widespread attention by his speech before the Peace Convention at Frankfort-on-the-Main in 1850. He was born in this State, and received his degree of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard University. He died in 1880.

The Rev. Dr. C. H. Eaton, Dr. Chapin's successor, is an adopted son of E. D. Draper of Roxbury, Mass., and is the son of the Rev. Henry A. Eaton of Worcester, Mass., who died when Dr. Eaton was still a child. He was graduated from Tufts University, and his first church was at Palmer, Mass., where he was influential in erecting a church building. While there he was called to this city and accepted the charge of the Church of the Divine Paternity.

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