

Horatio Potter: From Farm to Fifth Avenue



A spirit of earnest Christian activity seems to be reviving among us.

—HORATIO POTTER

Horatio Potter was born February 9, 1802, at LaGrange, New York, a farming hamlet southeast of Poughkeepsie. That area had been settled by Quakers at the end of the eighteenth century, and among them were the Potters, who moved over from Rhode Island. It is not irrelevant to this history to note that Horatio Potter was the first Bishop of New York to have grown up in rural America, for when, much later, people tended to be overly optimistic about small churches supporting themselves, the farm-bred Potter knew better. He was the last of ten children—his immediately older brother, Alonzo, became Bishop of Pennsylvania, and was father of Henry C. Potter—and while the Potters were not poor, they must needs be prudent. *Prudent!* That is a key word to understanding the Potters.

He was educated in the country schools, we suppose, to a level that enabled him to enter Union College in Schenectady, from which he graduated in 1826. He was made a deacon in 1827, without benefit of seminary training, and priest the next year. He looked forward to life as a teacher, but spent the first year of his ministry as rector of Trinity Church, Saco, Maine. He then went to Trinity College, Hartford, where he was professor of mathematics and natural philosophy for five years. In 1833 he was called to be rector of St. Peter's Church in Albany, where he remained until elected Provisional Bishop of New York on the eighth ballot in 1854.

Many years later, the bishop is recorded as saying he "never meddled with other people's affairs" while rector of St. Peter's. Here is another key to understanding him, for this suggests hard work in his own appointed duties and an avoidance of the strife that had beset the

diocese since his institution at St. Peter's by Bishop Onderdonk. Potter's name is not prominent in diocesan affairs until shortly before his election, but his abilities had already commended him to other dioceses searching for a bishop, and he was "several times" mentioned for vacancies.

What was this greatest city of the nation like when Horatio Potter was summoned from Albany to be the second Provisional Bishop of New York? Perhaps the new bishop already knew about the busy department stores: A. T. Stewart's, Lord and Taylor, R. H. Macy, and Lewis and Conger. He might also know about the prominent commission merchants who received fruits and vegetables sent downriver for sale in the city. And he would also know about the auctioneers, important men who managed the sales on the vast imports coming from Europe, Asia, South America. But now that railroads augmented the river's supply of American-made goods that came into the city, businessmen were specializing. Gone were the days when an up-and-coming city merchant paced the dock waiting for ships that would bring his firm sugar, rum, coffee, flour, pimento, oak staves, Indian meal, bread, onions, mahogany, linen, potash, beeswax, bamboo blinds, and "sattin Breeches."¹ Now he might deal specifically in, say, the mahogany the many able cabinetmakers in the city required. By 1860, two-thirds of the country's imports and one-third of its exports passed through the Narrows. American seamen had earned a worldwide reputation as able and hard-driving.

Croton River water came to the city by way of bored logs, fitted together. Wells were practically forbidden, poisoned because the city had not yet found a mode of sewage disposal. There were no uniformed police until 1845, and only then were the constables made to wear uniforms so that they could not so easily join in the brawls they were sent out to subdue. The Irish immigrants had occasioned fierce street fights (though, on the whole, the Irish showed a remarkable ability to conform to the ways of the older Americans). It had been fairly easy for the recent immigrants to arrive in New York; bunk passage was about \$20 (but luxury cabins might cost as much as \$150).

New York City was especially strong in two mercantile areas: textiles and metal products from England. By 1860, most Americans bought their clothes through New York firms. The merchants in Manhattan had a virtual monopoly on English woolens and finished cottons, on German and Irish linens, and silk and laces from France. Since much southern cotton was transhipped in New York—thus giving New Yorkers a double chance at the business—many southern businessmen spent part of their time in the city or its suburbs. Their collective influence on New York's commerce goes far to explain the city's reluctance

to support the first administration of Abraham Lincoln.

Metal products from Birmingham in England were cheaper than similar American goods, and when the Crimean War used many ships hitherto in the American trade, these imports could be shipped in American bottoms. Albany and Troy, however, seemed to reserve unto themselves the prominence in stove manufacturies. And then there were the shipyards across the East River, using more and more hardware until the day when entire hulls would be sheathed in metal.

From the days of Provoost and earlier, New York City had its centers of speculation. By 1840 the stock exchanges were firmly established (if not always as firmly controlled), and many a shrewd lad came in from the country and made his fortune in the environs of Wall Street. And many lost their riches in the Panic of 1857, which, as it happened, introduced yet another set of new men who bought, sold, scalped and were scalped, retired rich or fell into the already congested streets. Whether a man was wealthy or starving, he could be sure of one thing: there was a great deal of money in New York. By 1855 there were an estimated 214,000 workers in 24,000 places making goods worth more than \$317,000,000.

All this material prosperity demanded a corresponding spiritual development. One historian finds reason to assert that "the religious history of New York between 1825 and 1860 is one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of Christian expansion."² The Episcopal Church was a major beneficiary of this restless searching as, at another extreme, were the adherents of Mormonism, Millerism in the 1840s, and Spiritualism in the 1850s. It is arguable that John Henry Hobart was but the Episcopalian symbol of the Second Awakening of the 1820s which saw significant revivals in all the manor churches leading to "active" parishes, Sunday schools, enthusiasm for spiritual reform, and a new interest in promoting missions domestic and foreign. We have already seen the Episcopal Church's application of these Second Awakening ideals. Less obvious in the Episcopal Church, however, were the concomitant movements that inevitably followed. The temperance movement began to succeed when some of the churches took it seriously; it has been wondered if Onderdonk's miseries had been occasioned by a general repugnance for liquor that took hold in the mid-1840s when the first local option law was enacted. Abolition and the rights of women were also subjects openly debated in the wake of the Second Awakening. (Only after 1848 did married women in New York share the same inheritance rights as were allowed single women.) As for abolition, by the 1850s there were divisions in the Methodist and Presbyterian churches over the subject.

The wily Horatio Potter may have regarded these as "other peo-

ple's affairs" and taken care to avoid them. Perhaps we should excuse him on the grounds that his primary task was to be a bishop—and only a provisional bishop at that—in a diocese long disturbed by the suspension of one bishop and saddened by the premature death of another. Also, the man had undergone a rough transplanting. He could remember pleasant days in a parish rectory with a wife (now dead) and children (now also gone) in provincial Albany, where laurels came naturally to a prominent city minister.

He was consecrated in Trinity Church on November 22, 1854. It is said that eleven bishops were present, and that seven participated in the laying on of hands. As far as we know, Onderdonk was not present; nor was he listed among the clergy in the diocesan *Journals*. Potter seems to have had a reputation for poor health, and it may well be that many of those present in Trinity Church that morning wondered if he, like his predecessor Wainwright, would go to an early grave. As it turned out, they need not have worried on that score!

Horatio Potter was the first of New York's bishops who hadn't ever had official ties with Trinity Church. All his predecessors had been assistant ministers at the old church, and three—Provoost, Moore, and Hobart—had been rector there. The rector at this time was the aged William Berrian; it was under his leadership that Trinity Church, now in a neighborhood decidedly unresidential, further developed its policy of parochial chapels. Richard Upjohn had recently completed Trinity Chapel in 25th Street; the rectory would be next door. The northward move is a steady theme in the nineteenth century. "Old Trinity" (scarcely twenty years up, in 1855) would serve less and less as the church where significant diocesan ceremonies would take place. Other churches, notably St. John's Chapel, were preempted. This was a beautiful, large edifice, designed by Isaac and John McComb and built facing a park named Hudson Square. Morgan Dix remembered that

the place became the Court end of the town. St. John's Chapel faced a charming pleasure-ground in which grew noble trees, representing almost every variety found in our native forests. This park was surrounded by the residences of the wealthiest and most fashionable members of New York society; and on the east side was one of the noblest ecclesiastical edifices in the city with lofty spire, and deep porch receding from its massive colonnade of stone, a building still [in 1900] imposing, and admired even in its slow delapidation and decay.³

It is, perhaps, necessary to say here that when the "most fashionable members of New York society" began to desert the St. John's neighborhood, Trinity Church sold it and its bucolic park to the New York Cen-

tral Railroad. A freight terminal was built there and, as Dix indicates, St. John's Chapel fell into gradual disintegration. But it was still beautiful when it was razed in 1918.

St. John's Chapel was for many years the central meeting place for New York's Episcopalians. It was abandoned in the city's northward march, leaving unanswered a moot question: should not the Diocese of New York have a permanent, central church, perhaps a cathedral? Horatio Potter would answer that question, but not as early as 1855.

The episcopate of Jonathan M. Wainwright had healed beyond the proportion of its brevity. Now it was clear that Horatio Potter must proceed to lead the diocese. He must familiarize himself with its strengths and weaknesses, point new paths. A man of fifty-three can well do this, especially when empowered with Potter's wisdom and balance. But first, he must find the materials at hand. To begin, there were 20,000 communicants in the diocese and 304 clergymen. Independent funds promoted various Church agencies and causes. The bishop of the diocese was, *ex officio*, a participant in most of these although, as we have seen, some funding groups had been established precisely to thwart the dominance of Onderdonk. We are speaking about a time prior to the day when there would be a definite organization on a diocesan level. Horatio Potter needed the help of semiautonomous well-disposed forces. The Society for the Promotion of Religion and Learning, for instance, helped support forty-nine students in the General Theological Seminary, and provided them with books, as it would do for generations to come. Diocesan missions were at this time financed by means of a "missionary agent" who, under the direction of the bishop, went about appealing for funds to support seventy stations in twenty-seven counties. The results of his efforts were gratifying, it was said. Grants ranging between \$100 and \$300 were allotted the clergy in the missions. (This would not include James Starr Clark and George Seymour in Dutchess County, for they were employed by John Bard of Annandale.) The bishop's salary was to be paid from the Episcopal Fund, and it was hoped that the principal would one day amount to \$150,000. Trinity Church offered \$20,000 on condition that another \$50,000 was subscribed by other churches. When this didn't happen, it was determined to assess "the churches in all portions of the Diocese."

Some parishes offered "interest" on what they supposed they ought to pay, and this was a help. But there arose the question, which bishop should receive the money? For there were two: the unresigned Bishop Onderdonk and the Provisional Bishop Potter. Bishop Potter's salary was set at \$6,000—a very lordly sum. But there was the prior claim of Bishop Onderdonk. The diocesan convention of 1855 was considerably upset when it was discovered that there was only \$1,900 in

the Episcopal Fund. Predictably, Henry Anthon moved that all of it should go to Bishop Potter; let Trinity Church undertake to support Onderdonk, read the motion, since he had "for so many years been a faithful minister there."⁴ The motion was lost, but the sarcasm was not. John Jay, no supporter of Bishop Onderdonk, rose to speak about the insufficient support of the "clergy generally in the rural districts, and for a smaller number in the cities." This, he said, was "unjust to the Reverend Clergy and unworthy of the laity." The result of the prolonged discussion was a potpourri of pleasant intentions: each parish should purchase a "glebe and parsonage," insure the rector's life, increase his salary, and pay him in advance, quarterly.

When Horatio Potter rose to address the convention, he could review with considerable pride the accomplishments of his first year as provisional bishop. To begin with, the sense of peace bequeathed by Wainwright still prevailed. And Potter's energies had about equaled those of his lamented predecessor. He had traveled perhaps 9,000 miles and visited two-thirds of the parishes. More than 1,800 persons had been confirmed. In a moment most politic, Bishop Potter stated that the episcopate is a task "at which we must remain until summoned away from it by death." That ever-so-innocent statement served to grasp the offensive away from any who held Potter to be a usurper. The man was very canny. He proceeded to speak to those who would divide the diocese: "For a person possessing a fair amount of energy and facility in the dispatch of business and correspondence, there is nothing in the administration of such a Diocese as this that need, of necessity, greatly oppress the mind or exhaust the strength" of its bishop. It was John C. Spencer of Potter's own St. Peter's Church, Albany, who had first proposed again dividing the diocese in 1851; had the erstwhile rector once encouraged his leading layman to do that which he now opposed? Whatever Potter's secret ambitions had once been, he could be proud of his first year's accomplishments.

He had no staff, no secretary, no tried-and-true helpers at hand whose perfect judgment of all things from Staten Island to Canada, Montauk to Syracuse, would save him from grave blunders. In that first address he mentioned only two prevailing problems: the predicament of smaller churches, and the deleterious effects of the Oxford Movement in New York. He said that there would always be churches so small that they could not support themselves, and therefore they would require funds from other churches. As for the Oxford troubles, the bishop said that no "great movement" in the Church was ever without its excesses. He praised Tractarianism as "energetic" and "important," and (to calm those who feared yet more defections to the Church of Rome) he had reason to believe that "large numbers of Roman Catholic clergy

and laity have now conformed to the Anglican Church." This is perhaps the first use of the word *Anglican* in a diocesan address, and astute auditors may have wondered where these "large numbers" who had joined their Church were.

It was a salutary address. The bishop minimized the burdens of his office, and he dismissed the dangers of the Oxford Movement because, as he rightly declared, there were much larger concerns at hand. The next year he was more direct. He related the expected statistics about visitations (200 during the preceding year), and confirmations (2,496), and then unburdened himself of his thoughts to this

grand Council of the Church, consisting of scarcely less than a thousand persons, *when all are present*, convened in the great central city of the Union representing a Diocese long since become conspicuous not more for her magnitude and position than by the amount of ability usually found among her members.⁵

While those delegates were still preening their feathers at these compliments, they heard the bishop say that Church extension was not keeping up with the growth of the State of New York. "Luxury and extravagance are growing apace," said this scion of Quaker forebears. "Can we say that we are doing all we ought to do to supply this city with houses of worship, with faithful ministers? Can we say that we are doing all we ought to do to uphold the hands of the Missionary Committee of the Diocese?" The diocese had been most casual about foreign missions, too: "We in this country are indebted, under God, to a foreign Church—we have robbed Africa of its sons and daughters—we have sent our pestilential commerce to corrupt and half-depopulate some of the islands of the ocean—we are debtors to all on foreign shores." Church missions, domestic and foreign, were important and deserved more support than that provided by "a few general collections loosely made."⁶

There was a General Convention in the year 1856, and for the Diocese of New York its primary importance may have been the report of a special committee appointed earlier to consider the "Memorial" presented by the Rev. William Augustus Muhlenberg of Sixth Avenue's Church of the Holy Communion in the preceding General Convention. Muhlenberg, as we know, was the charming and innovative rector who, with some of his friends, believed the entire nation required a traditionally ordained ministry that would function in a manner more comprehensive than that presently afforded by the Episcopal Church. Could not men be ordained who, assenting to the Scriptures, the Creeds, the two Gospel sacraments, and the "Pauline" understanding of grace, might find a God-given work beyond the confines of the Epis-

copal Church? Let them be ordained, said the Memorialists, and let them report every third year to the bishop who had ordained them.

The Memorial was vaguely worded, and many Episcopalians who were impressed by the names of the signers tried to take it seriously but failed to grasp exactly what was proposed. The result was a series of recommendations by General Convention aimed at what we today would call Church renewal. These included suggested improvements in Sunday worship and Christian education in the parishes. Significantly, the ministry of women was recognized as an unused, even unwanted, resource in the Church.

Horatio Potter was as vague about the proposal as was the Memorial itself, but the possibility of women working in the Episcopal Church fixed upon his practical mind. Muhlenberg's Sisterhood at the Church of the Holy Communion was already a celebrated thing in the Church. Patterning them after the Kaiserweith Deaconesses, Muhlenberg's Lutheran background enabled him to take ecclesiastical risks—and get away with it! When he founded St. Luke's Hospital in 1850, his women workers in the parish became notable pioneers in that important enterprise. Potter watched the Muhlenberg experiment and waited. The field was new, untried and, frankly, vulnerable to the same Protestant hostilities that had wrought punishment upon the Onderdonks. Except for occasional bazaars where needlework was sold, women had never been called upon to do much in the American Church. It had been thought noteworthy, even shocking, when Wainwright appointed a Board of Ladies to help oversee the Charity School established at Grace Church in 1824. Perhaps Horatio Potter was already aware that now, in the 1850s, shops and stores were offering many goods hitherto available only through the distaff in their homes, that more women now had more free time. If he and other Church leaders had thought deeply about this nineteenth-century phenomenon, they would have realized changes the Church could have utilized as well as graced.

Let us move further, to 1859. Here we will find one opportunity and two problems that would require future settlement: the opportunity was St. Stephen's College; the problems were division of the diocese and the perennial awkwardness of the Onderdonk suspension. We will consider the college in greater detail in subsequent pages of this history, but it must be said here that the college was an outgrowth of the Society for the Promotion of Religion and Learning. In 1859, the Society was helping to support men studying for Holy Orders in the General Seminary, Hobart, Trinity, Columbia, and New York University. Other men were enrolled in secondary schools and with private tutors. The Society, it was announced, was assisted "in carrying out the plans" of a Training School for men preparing to enter General Seminary by a

"warm hearted and liberal churchman of the Diocese," John Bard, who had given land and buildings at Annandale on the Hudson River.

There were as yet no clear plans for a college. The idea was mainly an outgrowth of independent missionary activity in the Hudson Valley. The Memorialists, and many other Episcopalians, believed education desirable. John Bard's devotion led him to found schools and churches near his riverfront estate. He was encouraged to do this by a neighboring rector, Henry DeKoven, who will now detain us for a moment, not only because he was older brother of the saintly James and father of the composer Reginald but, more to the point, because after building Christ Church in Red Hook village he engaged a curate, Frederick Sill, who perhaps overmuch shared DeKoven's enthusiasm for Church extension. For, after "the Reverend H. DeKoven, family and servants took their departure from Boston for Europe" for a two-year grand tour, Sill initiated services in Clermont, Rock City, and Pine Plains. Thus, when the rector of Red Hook returned from Europe he was shocked to find himself in charge of not one, but four congregations. He very soon parted company with his energetic curate, and then, perhaps overwhelmed by the prospect of work awaiting him, resigned Red Hook in the year we are considering, 1859. It should be added that two of the four congregations survived.

This digression suggests that the growth of the Episcopal Church in even the smallest hamlets was regarded as something feasible. Expansion of the Church was "in the air," and statistics are quite to the point: thirty-four congregations were gathered regularly between 1855 and 1860 in the present Diocese of New York. Add to that number nine congregations in the present Diocese of Albany, an estimated twelve on Long Island, and a modest five in what is now the Diocese of Central New York, and the total is sixty new congregations in a span of five years. The evidence increasingly pointed toward a division of the diocese and, to many, it convincingly pointed to the reinstatement of Bishop Onderdonk.

Bishop Potter spoke in his 1859 convention address to the one possibility, and obliquely to the other. He approached the matters with stealth, beginning with an account of the flourishing Church in New York City: new Trinity Chapel was thronged; Holy Apostles, Transfiguration, the Church of the Incarnation, St. Peter's, Christ Church were all enlarged, or reporting much growth; there were encouraging signs at St. John Baptist, Advent, and at St. Timothy and Zion. Lest New York Episcopalianism be identified too much with the frivolities of the "Court side of town," St. Luke's Hospital should be considered, for there might be seen suffering every hour of the day: "Go, ye giddy sons and daughters of pleasure and see what human life is in another of its

aspects," said the bishop. He acknowledged increased Lenten attendance in Episcopal churches and the "excitements in other bodies" due to the current religious revival and then, having said what everyone present wanted to hear, he proceeded to say what many men present did *not* want to hear: "What the Bishop has to do in the way of visiting, in summer, in the interior of the Diocese is little more than an agreeable change and refreshment after the town work of winter and spring [and he had] done each year an amount of work which, I venture to say, has been fully equal to any done in the same by any of my very laborious predecessors."⁷ If the diocese seemed overlarge, the answer wasn't more bishops, but more money, and the bishop warmed to his subject by saying that five or ten new missionaries could be used immediately to work under his personal direction if the money was forthcoming. Since no such funds were in sight, there was no reason to think that northern New York would prosper as a separate diocese as had Western New York after 1838. There! he had said it: Horatio Potter remained firmly opposed to carving a northern diocese from what was left of the Diocese of New York. He was certain such a diocese could not survive.

He was, necessarily, less candid about the specter of Bishop Onderdonk. The suspended bishop had borne his long punishment in a stoic manner. Except for his circle of very loyal friends, he was conveniently forgotten by much of the diocese, though it must be admitted that the Onderdonk case itself was indeed well remembered.

We come, then, to the final phase of the Onderdonk tragedy. After the bishop's suspension the contest had been between those who believed the man guilty and justly ousted and those who, with equal conviction, believed him innocent and the victim of partisanship. A middle shade of opinion not immediately discernible when the sentence was imposed in 1845 eventually appeared, but very soon it was obvious that none but his most die-hard supporters thought that Onderdonk could ever again act as the Bishop of New York. General Convention's new canon allowing the election of a provisional bishop further weakened Onderdonk's prospects. Wainwright's mediating mildness and Horatio Potter's tactful statesmanship put an end to any hopes the suspended bishop might still entertain. But yet *he* was the Bishop of New York and whoever else might function in his place was obliged to use the style "Provisional."

There had been informal discussions about the anomaly, and they surfaced at the diocesan convention in September 1859. For reasons not now clear, Francis Hawks, Henry Anthon, and Alexander Vinton agreed to work toward Onderdonk's restoration. Not surprisingly, Anthon soon withdrew from the undertaking and stated Onderdonk should cease hoping for the impossible: "Persistence cannot restore

public confidence and reputation," he declared.⁸ George Templeton Strong shrewdly guessed "it is part of the old scheme" of dividing the diocese, with the understanding that Potter would take the Albany area.⁹ The diarist, loyal to the bishop but sensible about the situation, probably confided to his journal the clearest summary of the affair ever given: the bishop had been guilty of "certain ill-bred familiarities and caressings that meant nothing," but now, since "nine-tenths of the community" acquiesced in the suspension it "would only be a scandal and an offence" to restore him at this late date.¹⁰

Not everyone could have been as dispassionate as this diarist who so often noted the Trollopian affairs of the Episcopal Church he loved and served so well. Certainly Bishop Potter wasn't now relishing a return to Albany, and in a sense it was the provisional bishop who closed the door on Onderdonk. For, encouraged by Hawks, the aging bishop made one final, pathetic gesture of appeal. He stated that, if reinstated, he would turn over to Potter all administrative duties of the diocese, and he would refrain from visiting any parishes where he would be unwelcome.¹¹ He would do all in his power to make Potter's delicate position easy. These were the general agreements between Hawks and Onderdonk in July 1859. The next month, Hawks and William Eigenbrodt of the General Seminary conferred with the bishop, whom they had not seen for some time. Hawks reported that he was "very subdued and Christian-like, he seemed to me to be a different man from what he was years ago."¹² In his irenic mood, Bishop Onderdonk agreed to make his own renewed plea to the House of Bishops.

So he played his last card. He wrote the House (some of whose members had been his judges and jury) that his conduct had indeed been censurable. He said he knew he had brought reproach upon the Church and, of course, deserved to be disciplined. He expressed "sincere, penitent sorrow" for any wrong he might have done. Nevertheless, the House of Bishops declined to lift the sentence. In the ballot, Horatio Potter did signally what he had all along done inferentially: he abstained from voting. It is a safe guess that, had Potter argued in favor of the remission, Onderdonk would have been reinstated.

Bishop Onderdonk lived on. "Often have I seen him on his churchward way," said an observer,

walking with a downcast look, as if unwilling to attract attention, and saluting only those who spoke first to him; but then the salute was returned by him with a genial warmth, tinged with sadness which went at once to the heart.¹³

To someone requesting genealogical information, the bishop wrote:

... The years of severe trial which have been allotted to me, have yet, through the mercy of my Heavenly Father, often seen me greatly comforted and cheered by the kindness of friends, whom I continue to find every now and then, in unexpected quarters, and often in hitherto unknown persons. It is an unspeakable consolation to have reason to believe that many prayers are offered in my behalf, for I indeed feel that I need them.¹⁴

He died, quite unexpectedly, in his seventieth year on April 30, 1861. His funeral at Trinity Church was attended by crowds "that filled the church and overflowed into the churchyard and into the public streets."¹⁵ Ever loyal Samuel Seabury of General Seminary preached at the service and used as his text the words Onderdonk himself had chosen at Hobart's obsequies: "He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." But George Templeton Strong wrote it plainer in his diary: "Died this morning, poor old Bishop Benjamin Treadwell Onderdonk who just missed a great career and an honored name."¹⁶

SISTERHOODS

We have seen that William A. Muhlenberg at the innovative Church of the Holy Communion on Sixth Avenue envisioned a band of women workers who would visit tenements, seek out and help the poor and sick, and teach in the Sunday school. It may be said that the charming rector's wisdom did not equal his energy, and the Church is all the better for that. Always ready to formalize his schemes before they were well thought out, Muhlenberg had, in 1845, conducted a service of "Dedication" in which Miss Anne Ayres pledged herself to Christian service. She was joined by several other women, and in 1852 a "Sisterhood" was formally acknowledged. When Dr. Muhlenberg disclaimed any intentions of founding a convent, Protestant apprehensions in the Episcopal Church calmed. His "Sisters" were to make none of the traditional vows and, in particular, it was made known that there was to be no profession of lifetime commitment. It was this vow that so aggravated Protestant convictions.

By 1856 the Sisters of the Holy Communion (as they were often called) had added to their work a dispensary and infirmary. This caught the public's imagination and, the next year, the indefatigable Muhlenberg was able to gather enough support and money to build a four-story hospital on Fifth Avenue at 54th Street; it was named St. Luke's Hospital. The architect, John W. Ketch, followed Muhlenberg's ideas of

what *this* hospital was to be: the wards opened into the central chapel, the institution was to be the ideal Christian family writ big, with Dr. Muhlenberg himself the paterfamilias, and the Sisters of the Holy Communion, well—sisters. The hospital grounds were like those of a Victorian mansion; there were shrubs and flower beds and shade trees and a gazebo. There was a small conservatory but, in time, it became the pleasant custom for New Yorkers to inundate the hospital with flowers for the patients, so that children carrying Easter flowers to St. Luke's on Fifth Avenue is said to have been the origin of New York's "Easter Parade." The hospital was demolished in 1896, after the new St. Luke's was built north of the cathedral on Morningside Heights.

When Dr. Muhlenberg moved into his quarters at the hospital, he was fulfilling his stated role as head of the St. Luke's family. The Sisters were also in residence there, and for a year or so all went well enough under the direction of Sister Ann Ayres. Then, problems inherent in Muhlenberg's scheme for the Sisterhood emerged. Some of the Sisters, notably Jane Haight from Catskill and Harriet Cannon from Connecticut, desired a formalized conventual life; Sister Anne Ayres opposed them in what must have been, at least partially, personal differences arising from the stress of responsibilities in the hospital. Muhlenberg, apparently fearing he would have irreconcilable squabbles on his hands and probably lose capable Sister Anne in the bargain, suddenly terminated the Sisterhood. In fact, he had never contemplated lifetime vows for those Sisters!

Four Sisters were thus forced to withdraw from St. Luke's. For a short time they dispersed; a providential situation reassembled them. Whether they appealed to Bishop Potter, or whether their plight and hopes were generally known, we cannot tell, but it happened that in the spring of 1863 the House of Mercy needed new leadership. The House was the former Howland mansion, a ponderous Greek revival structure somewhat the worse for disrepair and neglect. Mrs. William Richmond (sister-in-law of James, Bishop Onderdonk's adversary) had established there a home for neglected, derelict girls. Unfortunately, Mrs. Richmond's abilities did not match her enthusiasms, and when her health failed even she realized help was necessary. Who could be better than the deposed Holy Communion Sisters? On the first day of September 1863, the "Sisters of St. Catherine" (as they then were called) took charge of the House of Mercy. They were then Jane Haight, Harriet Cannon, and Mary Heartt. Sister Jane, their *de facto* leading spirit at this time, insisted that Mrs. Richmond leave the House of Mercy entirely to the Sisters. In doing this, it was made clear that henceforth the Sisters would be an independent group. The report of the House of Mercy for 1863 reads:

This institution furnishes a home for girls in need of attention; is situated on the banks of the Hudson River at the foot of 86th Street, being in possession of ten lots of ground and a commodious house. There are accommodations for eighty inmates, although the largest number yet cared for has been about forty. Mrs. Richmond, the founder and long the superintendent of the Institution, has recently resigned her charge to a Sisterhood, who take the internal management of the House. A committee of ladies from many of our City Churches render valuable assistance.¹⁷

About this time the Rev. Edward Folsom Baker offered his assistance and, apparently at the Sisters' urging, compiled a service for their forthcoming profession.

This quickly brought Bishop Potter into the picture. He had watched, cautiously, the developments that took the Sisters from St. Luke's Hospital to the House of Mercy. He was probably quite undecided in his mind as to whether the Sisters should adopt a conventual life, or whether the role of women Church workers was preferable. A pragmatic man, Potter never ventured on unsure ground, and his wisdom led him to wait and see what happened. But now rumors said the Sisters contemplated a lifetime profession, with vows taken in a semipublic service. The bishop may already have had fears that the Sisters were interesting themselves in rites not entirely congenial to most Episcopalians; perhaps the rector in Catskill had informed him that Jane Haight had left St. Luke's Church there because its services weren't sufficiently "High." So Bishop Potter wrote to the Rev. Edward F. Baker, "I now hear that something very formal and somewhat peculiar is proposed to be used on occasion of the introduction of a new member into the Sisterhood, and that a number of persons have been invited to be present . . . The question of a form of initiation has occupied the anxious attention of other Bishops." But when Bishop Potter was shown the order of service, he agreed to all "the Christian Ladies now in charge of the inmates of the House of Mercy propose."¹⁸ In fact, the bishop "performed the service of Reception" himself, in St. Michael's Church in 99th Street, having been assured the event would be "kept very quiet."¹⁹

Perhaps to further protect himself, Bishop Potter appointed a committee of five city rectors to advise him. None of the five could be expected to oppose a Sisterhood. First of all, there was Isaac Henry Tuttle of St. Luke's, Hudson Street; he would for a time serve as the Sisters' pastor—hardly an opponent. Morgan Dix of Trinity Parish was considered the enfant terrible of High Churchism, and Arthur Cleveland Coxe was sometimes considered the High Church poet laureate. Abram Littlejohn of Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, was not known to oppose, and Thomas McClure Peters of St. Michael's was the prime agent of the

Sisters' going to the House of Mercy, and it was he who lent St. Michael's for the "service of Reception." This committee, then, would strengthen Bishop Potter's conviction that the Sisters would be a significant help in the Church in New York and, in addition, provide him with the counsel such a committee could give. The result, in response to questions the bishop himself had asked, was that Bishop Potter should be visitor of the new community, that he should appoint a chaplain for the Sisters, that a "suitable and uniform habit be adopted," and a "code of Rules subject to the Bishop's approval" should be speedily drawn up. In this way, and with these recommendations, the Church in New York sought to find a solid path for its indigenous Sisterhood. As we shall see, several years later another community would seek its foundations from the Community of St. John Baptist at Clewer, in England.

The Community of St. Mary, as it was soon known ("St. Catherine's" being discarded), shortly felt itself qualified to assume work beyond the House of Mercy. In October 1864, the Sisters took charge of the Sheltering Arms of Jesus; eight months later, they added St. Barnabas' House to their responsibilities. These might have been the beginnings of vast growth but, as it happened, so many Episcopalians were said to object to the "practices and usages" of the Sisterhood of St. Mary that work in the Sheltering Arms was given up in 1870, and at St. Barnabas' House even earlier. Thereafter, the Sisters concentrated on the House of Mercy and St. Mary's School in 46th Street. In 1872 the convent property on Mt. St. Gabriel was purchased, and there architects Henry M. Congdon and Ralph Adams Cram would in time design convent and school respectively.

Bishop Horatio Potter's lengthy convention address in 1864 included mention "of several of those Christian women who were formerly so well known and so esteemed for their good works in St. Luke's Hospital . . . [That confirmation service] which interested and touched me most deeply was the confirmation administered to twelve weeping penitents in the hallowed little chapel in the House of Mercy."²⁰ Speaking of the Sisters' innovative role in the Episcopal Church, the bishop warmed to his subject, making it quite clear that he stood behind them. What critic stood ready to undertake this work? he asked.

The care and responsibility rests now mainly upon these Christian women. Shall they be chilled and discouraged for lack of sympathy and support? Shall they and their poor inmates be starved for want of some of the crumbs which, in this great city, fall from the Rich Man's table? Shall they be neglected and forgotten because they lead a recluse life, devoted to their anxious and trying work? . . . We have in that House every element of success, if efforts in such a work ever can be successful.²¹

This was no apology for the conventual life; it was a practical man seeing a task assumed by women who, with their previous experience at the Church of the Holy Communion and at St. Luke's Hospital might succeed.

CIVIL WAR

Potter was perhaps less emphatic in the one paragraph about the Civil War then raging. He observed that "persons whom I met had been made not worse, but better, while perilling their lives in the sacred cause of their country"—an utterance probably accepted reluctantly by convention members who already had friends and relatives killed in the war. The previous year, 1863, the bishop had marveled that the diocese prospered so markedly during wartime. The Episcopal Church had not been much agitated by either southern or abolitionist points of view until just prior to Fort Sumter. Some prominent Episcopalians supported slavery, none more conspicuously than New York's Dr. Seabury, rector, editor, and seminary professor. There were also laymen who, late in the day, joined the Jays in demanding emancipation. Abolition had a long and heroic history in the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, but the Episcopal Church seemed aloof from the struggle. When the South seceded, Episcopalians there sensibly organized the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, so the General Convention of 1862 was much smaller than its immediate predecessor conventions. New York was much heard from in that convention. Murray Hoffman (long a member of New York's Standing Committee) rose to second a motion condemning the Rebellion. Milo Mahan of General Seminary (and father of the admiral-author) opposed any censure of the South. Francis Vinton made sure there was adequate seating in the House of Deputies for deputies from the southern dioceses; let no one say the South had been repelled from the convention. Vinton's gesture was not forgotten in General Convention of 1865 when the few southerners attending found places awaiting them.

It may be that there was sparse mention of the war at diocesan conventions because, in the nature of things, the delegates there were likely to be wealthy, and thus their sons able easily to pay a substitute to enlist. At the time, it is well to remember that no sensitive bishop would use a convention to harangue churchmen about this tragic war that, seen as "the irrepressible conflict," left bitterness in so many homes. Bishop Potter had seen firsthand what wartime chauvinism could do, for his colleague of Washington College days, the Rev. Francis Lister Hawks, had run afoul of city patriots soon after hostilities began. No New York rector was abler, or more ill starred, than Hawks.

Celebrated as rector of three New York City churches in succession—St. Stephen's, St. Thomas, and Calvary—and proprietor of St. Thomas Hall, a school whose failure prevented Hawks from accepting a bishopric, he had been rector of Calvary Church since 1850. However, as everyone acknowledged, he was

known to be a Southerner; and when the Union flag was not displayed at the Church, suspicion was aroused. One day the Church was threatened by a mob, demanding that the flag be displayed. This Dr. Hawks refused to do. The temper of the mob became so dangerous that the sexton rushed to Mr. William Scott [a vestryman] with the information that the mob was about to burn the Church. Mr. Scott went at once to Dr. Hawks, and in a few minutes the flag was flying over the building.²²

Dr. Hawks was obliged to resign. He moved to more congenial Baltimore, where he was briefly rector of Christ Church (a successor there would be Horace W. B. Donegan). But even before the Civil War ended he was back in New York, founding a new parish; it would have been his fourth in the city, but he died before he could fully enter into its work. His return to the city implies the antisouthern sentiment wasn't as dominant as might be expected. Some of the seminary professors were known to be Copperheads, a fact that might not have helped the fortunes of that "impecunious institution." On the whole, however, the Civil War was seldom mentioned in the records of the diocese except for Bishop Potter's brief references to the hostilities in convention addresses.

Postwar growth in New York State, and the prosperity of upstate towns, revived the idea of again dividing the diocese. Bishop Potter was opposed to small dioceses because he doubted they could support themselves. His views might have prevailed had not another area begun to agitate for separation: Long Island, now no longer a rural appendage to Brooklyn. The diocesan convention of 1868 appointed Hamilton Fish chairman of a committee to look into division of the existing diocese. The committee immediately began to study the possibility of two new dioceses. In Long Island, the clergy were overwhelmingly in favor of division, the laity slightly less so. A new Diocese of Long Island would immediately become the seventh largest in the American Church, it was said.

If there should be a new upstate diocese its prospects, too, seemed promising. Most of the clergy there were in favor of a separate diocese, with the life-belt hope that "some connection with the mother diocese can be retained." There were nominally ninety-six parishes there, but twenty were thought to be moribund. If a new diocese were created, it

would be the tenth largest (New York would remain greatest of all: 166 parishes, 271 clergy, and at least 20,000 communicants). There remained the question, Could a new northern diocese support itself? Since Bishop Potter was attending the first "Pan-Anglican Council" at Lambeth, the New York convention adjourned until November so that he could preside over the important deliberations.

The result in that adjourned convention was the decision to set apart Long Island and the area north of Dutchess and Ulster counties as two new dioceses. It was understood that no part of the Episcopal Fund or the Fund for Aged and Infirm Clergy would go to either of the new jurisdictions. But the new northern diocese would be given \$50,000 by New York, a gift unbestowed for many years. Long Island immediately raised an endowment from wealthy Brooklyn Episcopalians. General Convention approved the divisions in October 1868, and it was then Bishop Potter's pleasant responsibility to preside over the election of bishops for the new areas. In the Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, the organizing convention for Long Island elected the rector, the Rev. Abram Littlejohn, November 18, 1868. In St. Peter's, Albany, Potter's old parish, on December 21, 1868, the rector, William Crosswell Doane was chosen first Bishop of Albany, for such was the name chosen. It was the first diocese in the American Church to be named after its see city.²³

From 1868 onward, despite periodic urgings for further alterations, the Diocese of New York has been that area south of Columbia and Greene counties. "Beloved brethren, today we begin a new history as a Diocese," said Horatio Potter to the 1869 convention.

RITUAL AND OTHER CHANGES IN THE CHURCH

While the General Convention of 1868 neatly divided the Diocese of New York, it was less successful when wrestling with demands that ceremonial prohibitions regarding worship be made explicit. Of course, it is impossible to devise ironclad rubrics for every moment and movement, but for a time the House of Bishops considered a canon that would outlaw the use of incense, crucifixes, processional crosses, lights on the Holy Table ("except where necessary" for the officiant to see the written page), bowings at the Holy Name, genuflections, choral services and vested choirs (unless the vestry or bishop consented). The bishops, exhausted, realized any such canon would be unenforceable. But the fact that the bishops were engaging in a Ritual War skirmish pointed to divisions in the Church far more profound than the simple carving up of geography. Some Episcopal leaders argued for "comprehension," a Church able to contain a wide variety of ceremony. But

most Episcopalians were doubtful that this could be done.

In the very year that the House of Bishops discussed the prohibitions, the Rev. Ferdinand C. Ewer, rector of Christ Church (then on Fifth Avenue at 35th Street, in the immediate neighborhood of at least four other Episcopal churches), left that traditionally Low Church with 116 parishioners in order to found a parish that would from the outset use whatever "catholic" practices were found to be desirable. The name of the new church was St. Ignatius: a most un-Episcopal name, said some critics, who probably didn't know which saint by that name was honored in the new parish, where the word "Mass" was used at once. Incense followed in 1877. When Arthur Ritchie became rector, he "introduced" (as they said) full colored vestments, candles, wafer bread, the mixed chalice, holy water stoups, the Reserved Sacrament, and the service of Benediction.²⁴

Elsewhere in the diocese there were signs of practices and ceremonies that would have puzzled Hobart and astounded Onderdonk. Confessions had been heard by Dr. Houghton at the Church of the Transfiguration in the 1850s,²⁵ and in that church might be found altar candles and a processional cross, too; this is the church that claims to have had the first vested choir in America.²⁶ But then, the Transfiguration was thought to be a peculiar place, which is why, in 1870, a neighboring rector directed an actor to see the rector of "the little church around the corner" about burial arrangements for another actor—for "they do that sort of thing there."

Liturgical embellishments came fast in the post-Civil War years. To us they may seem harmless, perhaps a trifle fussy; but to a large segment of Episcopal people they were nothing less than a denial of the Protestant martyrs who had died at the stake. One observer barely disguises his disapproval of the new mode at Trinity Church in 1868:

The choral service is one of the specialties of Old Trinity. It was introduced in its present order by Dr. Cutler, who succeeded Dr. Hodges as organist. A choir of boys was introduced in connection with the voices of men; the whole dressed in white surplices make quite a show in the chancel . . . The choral service is very taking. Everything is sung that can be sung—the Psalter, the Creed as well as other parts of the service. The people are mere spectators . . . The service opens on Sundays with a thronged house—aisles and vestibules full. The crowd remains till this singing is over and the sermon begins. Then it disperses, as if the performance was complete . . . At the opening of the service the leader of the music comes out of the robing room dressed in a black gown, followed by about forty or fifty boys and men in surplices. The rector leads [a successive procession] followed by a train of clergy in white robes. At the opening of the

vestry door the audience rises and keeps on their feet till the procession moves into the chancel and are seated. The priest intones after the manner of the Catholic Church. The preacher of the day is escorted from the vestry to the pulpit by the sexton. The rector of Trinity is thoroughly High Church . . .²⁷

The "catholicity" of Trinity is equaled by the elegance of Grace Church, where the "intelligence, wealth and fashion of New York" congregated. "To be married in Grace Church has been regarded as the height of earthly felicity." Brown, the sexton there, "has the air of a boatswain. It is worth a visit to Grace Church to be ushered into a pew by Brown. He shows you into a seat and impresses you by his condescension as he closes the door."²⁸

The formalities of Trinity, and the fashion of Grace, never troubled Potter, for these were part of ongoing Episcopal Church life. The processions of Trinity would soon become standard practice. Potter's difficulties—and he managed them with a Potter's accustomed adroitness—lay in the extremities that came to his attention. He had a High Church mind, but was skeptical about the accoutrements of worship. Once, seeing a crozier in the church, Potter told the incumbent "that unless he removed that implement from the chancel the service should proceed no further."²⁹ He may have seemed to be a "timid" man who dreaded confrontations,³⁰ but perhaps that was an ingredient of his statesmanship. He said he saw himself as a "harmless drudge." If there were complaints that the Sisters of St. John Baptist were encouraging auricular confession, the bishop would be appropriately exercised. "But we always had Dr. Houghton to straighten him out," reads a note in the Community's archives.³¹ Knowing something of the man, we can believe Potter readily allowed himself to be "straightened out" when the trouble was a preferred practice of a Sisterhood, for he knew the worth of their community to the Church of New York.

In 1868, however, there occurred a more troublesome situation that attracted so much publicity that soon every Episcopalian had heard of the "Tyng Case." Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., was the able, earnest founding rector of the church of the Holy Trinity in 42d Street where parish life was fully developed in schools and lodging houses. Tyng had already have several brushes with ecclesiastical authority when, in July 1867, he held a service in a Methodist church in New Brunswick, New Jersey. There was at that time a firm custom, reinforced by canon law, prohibiting Episcopal clergy from speaking in other churches. The canon was probably violated on occasion, but Tyng was such an inveterate rebel for the Low Church cause (as he saw it) that the two New Brunswick rectors saw themselves forced to make formal complaint to Bishop Potter. A court of five New York clergy found Tyng guilty of

"intrusion," with mitigation, and recommended public admonition. This was carried out, deftly, by Bishop Potter on March 14, 1868, in the Church of the Transfiguration, a site chosen perhaps to satisfy High Church people that Tyng had at least seen the inside of one of their places.

This would have been a tempest in a teapot had not some of Tyng's supporters believed that verdict yet another signal advance for un-Protestant things. The Tyng Case became a cause célèbre in the so-called Ritual War that saw yet another battle in New York. For, in October 1873, after the House of Bishops decided precise rubrics would be futile, George D. Cummins, Assistant Bishop of Kentucky (*the* bishop lived across the river in Hoboken!), received the Communion and preached in a non-Episcopal church in the city. Bishop Potter preferred to ignore the occasion, but the outcry was so loud from the Church at large that Cummins, already seeing himself an outcast in a Church where developing liturgical practices were abhorrent to him, eventually founded the Reformed Episcopal church. (Is it not of some interest that the present Bishop of New York descends from early members of this new Church?) Bishop Potter made his expectations clear: there were to be no colored vestments, no extraordinary "demonstrations at the Holy Eucharist," no hearing of confessions "in the technical sense," no use of terms and language native to a foreign Church but not generally familiar in the Episcopal Church, such as *Mass*.³²

FURTHER INNER CITY WORK

Episcopal Church efforts to relieve the situation of New York's poor people were as old as Neau's work with the slaves, and Elizabeth Seton's care for the ill in Trinity Parish. Bishop Potter was always aware of poverty in New York, and was probably disappointed that the Sisterhoods hadn't developed faster, for he believed them to be a potential source of much Church work. The Diocese of New York has always been a myriad of churches situated in places which might be characterized as affluent, modest, or downright poor. Of course, the city churches tried to make sure their position was maintained by occasional removals when the neighborhood showed signs of change; a few churches like St. James' and St. Michael's remained where they were founded and waited for fashion to come knocking on the door, which it did. Other churches were too slow to make the advantageous move, lost their parishioners, and slowly died. Some remained in the old neighborhoods and did the work at hand. It seems that every city has its run-down areas, and Church work among the poor and disenfranchised

receives some, but never enough, notice.

"This city is the paradise of preachers," said a reporter in 1868. He was, of course, thinking of the richer churches, the more fortunate clergy, who might expect a salary of "\$6,000 and a house. Magnificent presents, a tour of Europe, a life settlement, a provision for sickness and old age."³³ Such delights attract the public attention, but few eyes saw the letter of a rector who, in resigning, informed the vestry that he had at last "received an invitation to a post of duty that will enable me to provide food and raiment for my family."³⁴ (The vestry in question responded by making provisions that no subsequent ill-paid rector would sue the parish.) The man was simply expressing his frustration at the inadequate salaries most nineteenth-century clergymen were expected to endure. The rector of St. John's, Cornwall, wrote:

The living here is quite as costly as in most respects as in the city, and greatly above the salary. The Carpenter who works for me in the School room earns his 22 shillings a day—\$16½ a week. Mine will not reach his, even with the parsonage added, while my expenses are double his, owing to the difference of position. I mention these facts to show that I am the largest contributor to the support of the parish.³⁵

But if the clergy often regarded themselves as among the poor of the diocese, they knew conditions were far worse with untold numbers of the laity. In New York City it was plain that the parishes must do more work among the poor; the Episcopal City Mission could no longer oversee all the work in the jails, hospitals, and tenements. Heroic labors had been undertaken by the City Mission: "I think it has been my privilege, both in public and private, to speak of Christ and his salvation to nearly 20,000 souls in the past year," said a City missionary, "Mr. Heath," in 1869. Trinity Church began its Mission House in 1876; two years earlier the old rectory next to St. John's Chapel had been made into an infirmary under the Sisters of St. Mary. The Sisters of St. John Baptist came over from Second Avenue at the request of Dr. Dix because he, like Bishop Potter, was convinced that the new Sisterhoods would be the greatest factor in accomplishing what could be done. The Community of St. John Baptist had been particularly effective among German immigrants on the East Side; German services were continued in Trinity Church until 1909. The Sisters of St. Margaret also became associated with Trinity in 1878, and the next year Trinity Church Association was organized to enlist influential laymen in the work. Among the young men who were charter members were James Roosevelt Roosevelt (the future President's half-brother), William Jay (whom we have already met), Elliott Roosevelt (brother of Theodore, and father of

Eleanor), and R. Fulton Cutting (who, as we shall see, became the diocese's informed conscience about the Church and society). Such other New York parishes as were able soon had "welfare" programs, fresh air homes, lodging houses, working men's clubs, and schools meeting special needs. But these reached their greatest strength in the next decade, and will be discussed later.

SISTERS OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST

Passing mention has been made of the Sisters of St. John Baptist. It is perhaps a mark of Horatio Potter's self-possession, and the respect he generally commanded, that in the midst of the ritual troubles of the 1870s he encouraged the establishment of another community of Sisters in New York. It was in 1870 that a churchwoman, Helen Folsom, acknowledged to herself and others that she was called to work for "the relief of the poor," and to gather other women of like mind in the "Religious Life" such as had been undertaken by the Community of St. Mary. Miss Folsom's idea differed insofar as she saw herself working in the Lower East Side, among the immigrants there. Even more important to her was her hope to establish there an American branch of the English Order of St. John Baptist, which she had visited in 1866. In 1871 she became a postulant of that Order; three years later, three Sisters sailed from Liverpool, appointed by Canon Carter of Clewer for work in New York. They carried a letter from the Bishop of Oxford, who commended them to Bishop Potter. Upon arrival in the city they spent a night at the motherhouse of the Community of St. Mary in 46th Street, and then moved to the Folsom house downtown. After some delay they were able to settle in their own convent house on Second Avenue below 14th Street and begin their work.

That work progressed and expanded rapidly. They began Holy Cross Mission in 1875. It was initially part of the once prosperous Church of the Nativity, which, like most downtown parishes, had fallen upon hard times. The uptown gentleman who compiled the *Centennial History* of the diocese in 1886 wrote that the Sisters' work was, primarily, "the restoration of fallen women who are either prepared to return to the world to live in it more faithfully, or else to remain secluded under religious rules, if, after due probation, they are found fitted thus to devote themselves." This was *not* meant to suggest the "fallen women" were expected to become members of the Order. The Sisters also, and increasingly, were engaged in "the instruction and training of orphans and other children."

The Midnight Mission, in which women forced into the street were

gathered within the protecting walls of the Community, was particularly well publicized. Now, stories of commercialized vice and brutalization might be heard behind the closed doors of Episcopal drawing rooms. And, in the atmosphere in which they worked, the Sisters of St. John Baptist readily adopted the "tough love" image which earned them deep respect: "I would rather face all the judges in the city than the Sisters," said one who had faced both. When James O. S. Huntington and Robert Stockton determined to attempt a monastic life among the poor, they turned to the Sisters' Holy Cross mission and named their Order after the Sisters' church. Later, Huntington somewhat archly objected to the Sisters' income derived from tenement rents and moved uptown (and then to West Park, after a brief stay in Maryland). As for the Community of St. John Baptist, it maintained its Lower East Side base, with subsidiary houses in Farmingdale and Mamaroneck; the Order also had Sisters stationed at various parishes across the country, but the mother house was moved to Mendham, New Jersey, in 1915.

THREE CELEBRATED RECTORS

In the last years of Horatio Potter's episcopate there were three rectors who were noteworthy in New York, renowned not only for their own abilities but because each was preceded and succeeded by men of similar caliber. They were Henry Codman Potter of Grace Church, Morgan Dix at Trinity, and Edward A. Washburn at Calvary. Henry Potter was the bishop's nephew and we shall soon hear much of him. Washburn, "regarded by his contemporaries as an intellectual giant,"³⁶ had as his assistant at Calvary the Rev. William Graham Sumner. Together they gathered the Club, a group of New York area clergy who were invited to meet regularly—the kind of gathering Bishop Hobart tried to forbid and his successors have occasionally deplored. The purpose of the Club was the serious discussion of religious thought in a time of profound change. Its members published a book, *Faith and Modern Opinion*.

The changes uppermost in these minds had little to do with liturgy and rubrics. They were concerned with the century's developments that seemed to undermine the Christian's beliefs. Darwin and other writers now seemed to supplement the Bible in providing thinking people an understanding of the universe and its creation. Genesis no longer stood alone, untouchable. Moreover, and partly as a response to secular poaching in what had once been the ecclesiastical preserve, the old High and Low Church parties would never again be clearly definable. "You can hardly find a representative of either among the younger

men," said Phillips Brooks; "the ritualists and the Broad Churchmen divide the field." Evangelicals of the old school were unable to accept contemporary biblical inquiry and were scandalized that churchmen like Bishop Colenso would question the historical integrity of parts of the Old Testament, or that other churchmen could produce a book like *Essays and Reviews*, whose appearance in England in 1860 seemed to relish the challenge the new thinking presented Christianity.

Washburn of Calvary Church illustrates the decided shift in an Episcopal school of thought. Not interested in the trivia of church ceremony, he would once have been thought a Low Churchman; his thinking would disown the Evangelical label because a man who thought like Washburn was loath to confine God's grace narrowly or urge it excessively. Washburn and the friends who talked to him in his study or listened to him on Sunday mornings (among whom was a young girl later known to the world as Edith Wharton) viewed God's action as abundantly perceivable in much of the new discovery. They liked to be called Broad Churchmen.

In contrast, but not necessarily in opposition, there was Morgan Dix, rector of Trinity Church for half a century. Dix was a graduate of the General Seminary, was its supporter, and was much influenced by its traditionally High flavor. That older emphasis upon order in the Church received, as we have seen, new inspiration when the Oxford Movement people freely used the word "catholic" to mean something more specific than merely "universal": the Church—the Episcopal Church in particular—was divinely ordained. Men like Dix withheld their energies from intellectual inquiry into the accuracy of the new German thinking, or the tentative results of textual criticism. Rather, they saw their role as primarily priests in a Church which must *be* the Church, which must deepen the spirituality of its people and lead them to commend Christ and his Church to other people. They clearly defined what they believed: priesthood depended upon episcopal ordination; the Bible as interpreted by the Creeds and early Councils was the rule of faith; the Eucharist was the primary service of the Church, being of such divine ordinance as led to a doctrine of Real Presence in the communion bread and wine.

Morgan Dix was the champion of the High Churchmen. During his long rectorate at Trinity he lived to see men of his party far outpace him in their ceremonial preferences. Dix, like his hand-picked successor, William T. Manning, was mainly concerned about the solemnity and beauty of a church service fit for God. He made sure that Trinity and its chapels were well staffed, the preaching orthodox, the facilities available to the neighboring population. As we have seen, Trinity added the subsidiary parish activities and functions when necessity or opportunity arose, but always the prevailing principle was the Church as the wor-

shipping assemblage, complete with valid ministry, confirmed in an unbroken tradition. It might be said that the old-fashioned High Churchman was most congenial with God in the chancel, while the Broad Churchman more congenial with him in the study. (In New York, however, there was urgent need for those who would fit God into what was seen on the sidewalk; the Potters knew this.)

When Henry C. Potter became rector of Grace Church in 1868 he almost immediately jolted that parish into a shamefaced recognition of the shabbiness of city life only several blocks away. His successor, William Reed Huntington, inherited a church of proven involvement in municipal affairs. Washburn's successor at Calvary was Henry Yates Satterlee. He undertook the East Side chapels that brought Calvary Church to its greatest era and then, in advanced age, went on to be the founding Bishop of Washington.

CULMINATION OF A GREAT EPISCOPATE

Bishop Potter marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of his episcopate at a great reception held November 25, 1879. The occasion may have witnessed the widest assortment of Gotham notables ever assembled in one place. For the bishop had overcome whatever animosities might have lingered from the Onderdonk days. He was admired and now, in old age, was the revered head of a prosperous diocese in a prosperous nation. He had used his natural geniality to smooth the way. When someone falsely accused him of transgressions he replied, "Now, I am content to bear my own sins, but I don't care to bear anything more."³⁷ But the bishop could be quite firm, as the vestry of St. James' Church, Goshen, learned when they received from Bishop Potter a letter saying they could expect no more help from him if they didn't stop dallying and elect a rector, quickly.³⁸ To another vestry he bluntly declared, "To call Mr. H. to Butternuts would be to kill the parish absolutely."³⁹ Speaking of the average sermon, he said, "We have so much barn door eloquence—inflated, declamatory, high sounding, with not quite enough of thinking and sound matter under it."⁴⁰ He once wrote to a friend:

We bishops, though hard working, are an uninteresting set after we are gone . . . Some years ago a friend said to me, "Why *will* you work so hard? Well, if you kill yourself we will give you an elegant funeral, and we will elect another Bishop as soon as we can." Alas, he has gone before me.⁴¹

Horatio Potter knew exactly who and what he was, and thus he appeared to be modest ("I always ran away from photographers," he once

said). He was somewhat less the man of New York than his nephew-successor would be. He was, throughout his long episcopate, a man who minded his own affairs. A biography summarized his life's aims as "reaching the laboring classes and the poor, to popularize the Church, to draw the plainer sort of people into her fold, and to push on home missions in the city and in the rural districts."⁴²

He continued active and wise long after his twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations. He was eighty years of age when his health failed. The last public service was an evening confirmation in the Church of the Incarnation on May 3, 1883. In the days following he became so aware of deteriorating health that all engagements were cancelled. Though he would live for another four years he realized he could not bear any diocesan responsibilities. Therefore, in September he requested that the forthcoming convention elect an assistant bishop to whom he could entrust "the entire charge and responsibility of the diocese." The convention complied. So, once again the Diocese of New York had one bishop in name and another bishop in fact.

There remains for us one more aspect of Horatio Potter's episcopate, and that is the idea of a cathedral for New York. A cathedral was first mentioned by Hobart; it was, perhaps, in a moment of that Anglophillism which diminished after his European tour. Onderdonk seems to have given no thought to a cathedral church. In fact, only two of New York's bishops have devoted great energy to a diocesan cathedral: Horatio Potter and Bishop Manning; the former by urging a cathedral at a diocesan convention, and the latter because he inherited, in prosperous times, a partially built cathedral. Henry C. Potter and Bishop Greer viewed the cathedral as of peripheral importance, but it must be admitted that in Greer's time the cathedral close was developed as we now know it. Bishop Burch and Bishop Gilbert were not given the time to enter into building work, and Bishop Donegan affirmed that, in his time, other matters demanded priority. All this is in advance of the time we are now considering but is mentioned here because it was Bishop Horatio Potter who set in motion the idea of a cathedral for New York.

Many sites had been suggested. Among them was a location in Central Park (assuming the city authorities would cede such a plot), or a site on midtown Fifth Avenue (assuming the city's many Fifth Avenue rector would be able to summon enthusiasm for the idea). Samuel B. Ruggles, one of the doughty laymen of the diocese (and father-in-law of George Templeton Strong), spoke of Morningside Heights, an idea that strained people's faith in Ruggles's accustomed perspicacity. Perhaps it was Ruggles's suggestion that led Bishop Potter to give as his opinion, "I should regret it very much if a site should be selected too high up town or too far west of the Fifth Avenue."

It is thought that Potter's formal urging of a cathedral was a response to a letter from Stephen P. Nash, a prominent layman who hoped to see a "central church" for the diocese. Bishop Potter met with a committee at his house on January 3, 1873. A charter was granted the following April 16, but there seem to have been few formal meetings of the cathedral committee from 1874 until 1886. The record, or lack of record, makes it clear that the New York clergy found it difficult to summon up interest in themselves in the cathedral project. Apart from a few, the undertaking was, in the beginning, kept alive by laymen. The most conspicuous of these was perhaps George Macculloch Miller, who was a cathedral trustee from the earliest until his death in 1917.

We will continue the cathedral story a bit further. It was well-known that the last large tracts of land available in Manhattan were those in the northwest quadrant of the city. Despite Horatio Potter's objections earlier, it was probably that part of the city that Charles F. Hoffman, rector of All Angels', and others had in mind when, in 1887, they proposed giving land somewhere in the city adequate for a cathedral "and certain other Church institutions"; St. Luke's Hospital was specifically mentioned.⁴³ By the end of that year arrangements had been made to purchase the Leake and Watts orphanage property on Amsterdam Avenue. A list of architects thought qualified to design a cathedral had already been drawn up—and an impressive list it was: McKim, Mead and White; Henry Vaughan; Halsey Wood; Heins and La Farge; Henry M. Congdon; Robert W. Gibson (architect of St. Michael's Church just down the avenue at 99th Street); William A. Potter (the bishop's brother, who designed St. Mary's in Tuxedo Park, St. John's in Yonkers, and St. John's in Barrytown), and Robert H. Robertson (who had just completed St. James', Madison Avenue). Perhaps because he was busy with the capitol and other public buildings in Albany, Henry H. Richardson was not listed.

One of the reasons for purchasing the Leake and Watts property was its promontory. The classic orphanage building was splendidly sited facing the city, and the architects who submitted preliminary drawings in a contest that drew much attention envisioned a great cathedral perched on Morningside Heights facing south, facing the city. The drawings of the various architects were exhibited at the Academy of Design and published in a folio volume. But Horatio Potter's original dream had gotten out of hand, for most of these designs provided for ancillary buildings—a school, a chapter house, and the like. It was probably for this reason that the cathedral was eventually located toward the north end of the plot, with the entrance on the avenue (for it appears that the cathedral trustees sold part of the land to St. Luke's Hospital).⁴⁴ Since there were as yet no immediate plans to build, the

cathedral trustees offered the site for the World's Fair Columbian Exhibition set for 1892, an offer that was not accepted. During these years it was difficult to gather a quorum for any of the trustees' meetings, and the Leake and Watts site had not been paid for as late as the autumn of 1891. The orphanage authorities were very patient.

The architectural firm finally chosen after the unsigned drawings had been carefully inspected was Heins and La Farge. Their design called for a great church derived from the Byzantine. It would employ full scope for the American glass, tile, and metal work then coming to respectful attention in the art world. On January 1, 1892, the first "cathedral" service was held on the site, in a room in the old orphanage set up as a chapel. Excavations began as soon as weather permitted and, to the dismay of all, it was necessary to go down seventy-two feet before solid bedrock could be found. The cornerstone was laid on St. John's Day, 1892. Eventually the remains of Horatio Potter, who died January 2, 1887, were transferred to a sarcophagus directly behind the main altar, a site said to be the traditional burial place of a cathedral's founder.