

# SAINT JAMES'S CHURCH—A POEM

Annotated by WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

**T**HIS poem was written by the Rev. Thomas Jefferson Danner, in July, 1880. He entered into rest at the hospital of the Good Samaritan, Los Angeles, Cal., on Wednesday, January 22nd, 1913, in the 74th year of his age. At the time of his death, he was rector of Saint John's church, Pittsburgh, Pa., and secretary of the diocesan convention of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Mr. Danner had gone to California in November, 1912, for the benefit of his health, and had, apparently, been much benefited, when pneumonia developed, which in less than a week proved fatal. Brief funeral services were held in Los Angeles by Bishop Johnson. The body was brought to Pittsburgh by two sons, who had gone to Los Angeles immediately upon receiving word of their father's illness. Funeral services were held in Saint John's church on Tuesday morning, January 28th, 1913, by Bishop Whitehead, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Yates (who was in charge of the parish during the rector's absence) and the Rev. Messrs. Wightman, Cole and Benton, intimate friends of Mr. Danner. Eight of the older clergy of the Diocese were honorary pall bearers. Interment was in Allegheny cemetery. Mr. Danner was survived by his widow, one daughter, and three sons.

Mr. Danner was born in Lancaster county, Pa., and when quite a young man enlisted in the First Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteer Corps. Shortly after the close of the Civil War, he entered the Theological Seminary at Alexandria, Virginia, from which he was graduated in 1869. In that year he was admitted deacon and advanced to the priesthood by Bishop Odenheimer of New Jersey. His early ministry was spent in Delaware and New Jersey. In 1885, he came to the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and had charge of St. Luke's church, Georgetown; Christ church, New Brighton; and Trinity church, Rochester. On February 1st, 1892, he became rector of St. John's church, Pittsburgh, which he served continuously until his death (during the years 1909 and 1910 as rector emeritus, on account of throat trouble). By resting, he was greatly improved in health, and the parish falling vacant in 1911, he again became its rector. He had been secretary of the convention since 1894.

O, Thou, Who mov'dst the heart of Israel's bard,  
Whose spirit-whisperings thro' the world are heard  
Whene'er the soul, in highest strains of love,  
Pours forth th' inspirations from Thy throne above—  
E'en guide Thou me!

No child could e'er  
To mother hands more loving tribute bear  
Than I would fain upon thine altar lay,  
'Mid gladsome strains of holy festal-day—  
Dear old Saint James!

As child, new-born, though grown to manhood's years,  
Forth from thy font, 'mid changing hopes and fears,  
The path of faith my eager feet have press'd:  
And e'er in hours of toil, or sweetest rest,  
Memory speeds me back to those glad days  
When the bright vision of the Church's ways  
First dawned upon mine eyes: when stately round  
Of the "Ritual Year," enchanting, found  
Me following through each Fast and Festal-tide,  
Close bound, in love, unto my Saviour's side.  
I ever owe thee much, dear old Saint James!  
And would that I could now thy many claims  
To noble praise, in sweetest song rehearse.  
In the near-coming time, in glowing verse,  
Some worthier son, perchance, shall sing thy praise;  
And thus, from thee, enrich his own sweet lays.  
But now, my humbler muse content must be,  
In lower strains, to sing my love for thee;  
And, looking o'er thy closing seven-score years,  
Recount thy goodly deeds; thy hopes and fears.

'Tis the hand Divine,  
Whose wondrous movements hidden depths unlock,  
Which leads, by devious paths, the godly Locke<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Richard Locke helped to organize Saint James's parish. He was a missionary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; and served as rector of Saint James's church from 1744 to 1748.

To seek the scattered sheep of Christ's own fold  
 O'er acres broad; whose hidden wealth, untold,  
 Fair Conestoga girls—which, onward rolling,  
 As, through the ages, ever ceaseless flowing,  
 Seeks, at last, through woodland and savanna,  
 Th' isle-gemmed waters of the Susquehanna.  
 "God's acre" here, the titled Hamilton gives,  
 In Seventeen forty-four.<sup>2</sup> His memory lives!  
 For soon the House of God substantial stands,<sup>3</sup>  
 Where roved the wild, untutored Indian bands.  
 In holy service, brought from mother-land,  
 Thus many worship in this western land.  
 Anon, a home the shepherd seeks elsewhere;  
 And silence reigns within this House of Prayer.  
 But soon, with mission-zeal, good Craig arrives,<sup>4</sup>  
 And holy prayer and praise once more arise.  
 'Twas then decreed (in Seventeen fifty-three)  
 "Church of Saint James," the parish name shall be.<sup>5</sup>

Through nigh a score of years (from Fifty-eight)  
 The loy'list Barton fills the rectorate.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The year is not known definitely in which James Hamilton, Esq., gave lots numbered 35 and 36 on the general plan of the town of Lancaster for the use of Saint James's parish. It is generally supposed that the lots were conveyed at the time the parish was organized, in October, 1744, or shortly thereafter. The original deed was lost, and on March 13th, 1784, was replaced by another. William Hamilton, nephew of James Hamilton, Esq., conveyed to William Augustus Atlee and Jasper Yeates, wardens of Saint James's church, lots numbered 35 and 36, subject to a yearly ground rent of thirty shillings. William Hamilton stated in the new deed, however, that he was fully satisfied that it was the intention of his uncle, James Hamilton, Esq., that the lots assigned to Saint James's church (about 1744), were to be free from ground rent; he therefore released the wardens from any payment whatsoever during his natural life.

<sup>3</sup> A church of stone was started about 1745 and completed in 1753.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. George Craig, missionary of the S. P. G., visited Lancaster on June 19th, 1751, and entered upon the cure of Saint James's church.

<sup>5</sup> Prior to 1753, when it was decided to name the church in honor of Saint James, the Apostle, the congregation was referred to as "the Church of England in Lancaster," "the church in Lancaster," and, frequently, as "the mission in Lancaster."

<sup>6</sup> The author is mistaken. The Rev. Thomas Barton did not enter upon the rectorate until Easter, 1759. On the cover of an old book, now in possession of Mr. George K. Reynolds, is the following, written by Mr. Barton:

"Arriv'd, & settled at Lancaster May 15th, 1759, but first preach'd there as Minister of the Place, on Easter-Day the 15th of April, 1759."

Anon, dark clouds betoken war is nigh,  
And calm defiance lights each patriot's eye.  
No human power can stay the hand of God;  
Nor mightiest nation 'scape His chastening rod.  
Through years of suffering on the bloody sand,  
Our fathers, by their vows, undaunted stand.  
They joyous hail the day when favoring peace  
Bids war its work of woe and carnage cease.  
How fares the church, whose praise we sing,  
As through the land the battle tocsins ring?  
No shepherd stands to guard the feeble fold—  
Her sons, among the patriot band enrolled!  
And holy worship but too seldom breaks  
The mournful silence, which forever makes  
Deserted House of God as home of dead  
To human souls that crave the Living Bread.<sup>7</sup>

Returning peace, with freedom to the land,  
Revives the parish work on every hand.  
The faithful Hutchins,<sup>8</sup> priest and rector, leads  
His people on, through prayer and holy deeds.  
Anon, this godly priest, and laymen three,  
With priests and laymen of as high degree,<sup>9</sup>

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In the old minute book of the parish it is stated that the Rev. Mr. Barton was present at a meeting of the congregation on Easter Monday, April 11th, 1759. This is incorrect. Easter occurred on April 15th, 1759, and the date in the minute book should be April 16th.

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Barton served as a chaplain in the French and Indian War. He was a staunch Loyalist during the American Revolution. He refused to subscribe to the oath of allegiance. Saint James's church was closed from 1776 until 1783 and no regular services were held in it. Mr. Barton remained in Lancaster until 1778, when he was allowed to remove to New York city. He was virtually a prisoner, as he was on parole. He died there two years later, in 1780. Occasional services, however, were held in Saint James's church from 1776 to 1783.

<sup>8</sup> The Rev. Joseph Hutchins served as rector from 1783 to 1785.

<sup>9</sup> The author is mistaken. Only one layman from Lancaster, Gen. Edward Hand, was present. At a meeting of the vestry on Monday, March 14th, 1785, William Parr, George Ross and Edward Hand were appointed deputies to attend the meeting in Philadelphia for the purpose of effecting an ecclesiastical government. The meeting which was held on Monday, May 23rd, 1785, in Christ church, Philadelphia, was attended by the Rev. Joseph Hutchins and General Edward Hand. It was the first convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

In Philadelphia meet the patriarch White;  
And, in the name and fear of God, unite  
To found, secure, in this broad western land,  
The third Diocese of that sister band  
Which now, in trust for Christ, most loving holds  
This glorious land within its Christly folds.

Through fifty summers, with their golden yield,  
Through fifty winters, with snow-whited field,  
The Master's work's thus bravely carried on,  
When dawns the promise of a brighter morn.  
The youthful Clarkson pastor Rigg succeeds,<sup>10</sup>  
And ampler bounds, 'tis said, the parish needs.  
The old "Stone Church," of past Colonial days,  
Ceases to echo Fast and Festal-lays.  
Its goodly spire, of stone and crossed' beam,  
Yields—with a six-horse Conestoga team  
Yok'd to 't,—and, trembling, tott'ring, seeks the ground,  
Where mingled stone and timber's scattered round.<sup>11</sup>

O'er ruins of the old, the new Saint James  
Springs up, with larger hopes and loftier aims.<sup>12</sup>  
Here, in the spring-tide of his priestly days,  
Muhlenberg<sup>13</sup> calls to earnest prayer and praise;  
Commencing that brave life of work and song  
For which unnumbered souls their thanks prolong.  
Here, Ives is wont to break the Bread of Life  
Ere comes the mitre or the mental strife.<sup>14</sup>  
Here, the godly Bowman, priest and bishop,  
Rules with love, and leads in holy worship.<sup>15</sup>  
And then, when all is o'er, and he's at rest,

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<sup>10</sup> The Rev. Elisha Rigg served as rector of Saint James's church from 1791 to 1796. He was succeeded by the Rev. Joseph Clarkson, who served from 1799 to 1830.

<sup>11</sup> The stone church was razed in 1819. The tower is said to have been pulled down by a number of horses hitched to it.

<sup>12</sup> The present brick structure was erected 1819-20.

<sup>13</sup> The Rev. Dr. William Augustus Muhlenberg, author of the hymn entitled, "I would not live alway," served as co-rector from 1820 to 1826.

<sup>14</sup> The Rev. Levi Silliman Ives served as co-rector for one year, from 1826 to 1827. Subsequently, he became Bishop of North Carolina. Later, he entered the Roman Catholic Church.

'Tis near the church his presence ever blest.  
Here, scholastic Mombert<sup>16</sup> speaks with power  
Of Him whose faith shall bless our latest hour.  
Here, Watson<sup>17</sup> serves, amid no light affliction;  
Making on "old ways" many an innovation.  
Here, and e'en now, the zealous rector, Knight,<sup>18</sup>  
Upholds the blood-stained cross—strong in the right!  
And, with rejoicing heart, must needs behold,  
The blessed fruits of labors manifold,  
By which, through one hundred, six and thirty years  
The faithful priests of God, 'mid hopes and fears,  
Have made Saint James to take so proud a stand  
Among the noblest churches in the land!

From out his quiet, cozy, rectory home,  
The eyes of the pensive pastor roam  
'Mong stone-capped mounds, with trailing vine and rose,  
'Neath which the faithful dead in Christ repose.  
And o'er his spirit, oft, the shadowy Hand  
Casts radiant beams from out the restful land.

Adjoining here, the Orphans' Home yet stands,<sup>19</sup>  
Where living hearts, and eager, willing hands  
Instruct young lives, guide well the little feet,  
Which from the world here find secure retreat.

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<sup>15</sup> The Right Rev. Dr. Samuel Bowman served as co-rector from 1827 to 1830. He was rector from 1830 to 1861. Though elected Assistant Bishop of Pennsylvania in 1858, he continued rector of Saint James's church until his death in 1861. He is buried in the graveyard adjoining the church.

<sup>16</sup> The Rev. Dr. Jacob Isidor Mombert, a converted Jew, was co-rector from 1858 to 1861; and rector from 1861 to 1869. He was an unusually fine scholar and prolific writer.

<sup>17</sup> The Rev. Dr. Edward Shippen Watson served as rector from 1869 to 1877. During his rectorate, the fine chancel, sacristy and vestry were erected. He was an authority on church architecture. His vision became seriously impaired.

<sup>18</sup> The Rev. Dr. Cyrus Frederick Knight was rector from 1877 to 1889. In the latter year he was elected to the See of Milwaukee, being the third priest from Saint James's parish to be elevated to the Episcopate. It was during his incumbency that this poem was written.

<sup>19</sup> Saint James's Orphan Asylum was incorporated in 1838.

Hard by, the Home for Aged and Infirm<sup>20</sup>  
Opes wide its door, and bids the lonely turn  
In hither, from the toilsome paths of life  
And seek repose, from anxious care and strife,  
Ere yet the summons comes adown the skies,  
And weary pilgrims to new life arise.  
Schools,<sup>21</sup> too, where heart and mind alike are trained,  
Are ever sought, in strength, to be maintained;  
For cultured mind, with godless heart combined,  
Is ever fraught with ill to human kind.

No narrow circle can such life confine;  
The mother-arms must needs the child entwine!  
And so on old Spring Garden's slope<sup>22</sup> now stands  
Saint John's Free church,<sup>23</sup> upbuilt by willing hands.  
Here, Powers, Appleton and Barker<sup>24</sup> sow  
The seeds which to fruition richly grow.  
In chapel, too,—Saint Luke,<sup>25</sup> methinks, 'tis named—  
The blessed Master's love and truth's proclaimed.

O, blessed fruits, indeed, of faith and work!

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<sup>20</sup> The Bishop Bowman Church Home, for the Aged and Infirm, was incorporated in 1857.

<sup>21</sup> Saint James's parochial schools, for boys and girls, were established in 1848, under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Bowman.

<sup>22</sup> A name by which Mulberry street was known in the early days. A spring was located on or near lot number 730, which is on the east side of the street, midway between Chestnut and Walnut. No one to-day seems to know exactly where the spring was located, although it is mentioned in the early deeds to the property. See Proceedings of The Lancaster County Historical Society, Vol. 5, pp. 132-3.

<sup>23</sup> Saint John's Episcopal church was founded in 1852-3. Dr. Bowman being in New York one Sunday, entered, as a stranger, a pew in an Episcopal church. The owner of the pew ordered him out. This so impressed him that he determined to build a free church in Lancaster, and in 1852 the plan took shape. Dr. Bowman preached a sermon to the congregation of Saint James in December, at the same time naming the vestry for the new parish. He headed the subscription list with \$1,000.00, and appealed to the people of Saint James for means to complete the work. The church, erected at the corner of Mulberry and West Chestnut streets, cost \$15,000.00, including the lot (\$900.00). Dr. Bowman pledged one tenth of the cost and paid it; he also gave more to free the church from debt. This was the pioneer free church in the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

<sup>24</sup> The early clergy of Saint John's were: Rev. Henry A. Coit, Rev. John C. Eccleston, Rev. Horatio N. Powers, Rev. Edward Webster Appleton, Rev. Theodore A. Hopkins, Rev. F. D. Hoskins and Rev. Thomas Burbridge Barker.

But, priests of God! is this alone *your* work?  
Nay; noble laymen, filled with godly zeal,  
Sustain the priestly hand through woe or weal!  
What church but prospers when true, earnest men  
Support the work, with help of loyal women!  
O, out upon those carping, croaking souls,  
Whose motto's "Ruin"—when large heart controls!  
Who, gushing, when a passing fancy's pleased,  
Are poor, retiring, once the novelty's ceased.  
But honor, praise and blessings from above  
On those whom princ'ple guides; whose motto's "Love"!  
Great names crowd the annals of Saint James of old,  
And noble deeds its passing years enfold.  
Great task, indeed, 't would be for willing pen  
Fully to note the deeds of earnest men.  
Invidious, too, perchance, to mention names  
Where certain 'tis there are forgotten claims.  
For 'tis not meet, it is not justly right,  
That partial hand should e'er presume to write  
The deeds of those who, in respective spheres,  
Thus work for God, 'mid joys or lowly tears.  
Yet, here, the names of sterling Christian statesmen,  
Doctors, judges, lawyers, merchants, tradesmen,  
Form one continuous roll of honored worth;  
Long antedating e'en the Nation's birth;  
And the goodly number of God's poor, the lowly.  
O, children, truly of a mother holy,  
When round the throne, at last, ye gather,  
In the presence of your God, the Father,  
In the Book of Life your names, rejoicing, see  
And ye confessed' of the Master be!

On Seawanhaka's fearful, burning deck,  
'Mid fire and water—Oh! unsightly wreck!—  
Helpless, the priestly Diller<sup>26</sup> prostrate falls;

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<sup>25</sup> The poet is mistaken. The chapel of Saint James's parish, at the corner of Lime and Locust streets, was erected in 1869 at a cost in excess of six thousand dollars. There is nothing in the parochial records to indicate that it was named in honor of Saint Luke.



Nor heeds his daughter's voice that pit'ous calls:  
 His soul, as if on martyr flame upborne,  
 Rejoicing, hails its Paradisial morn.  
 In Saint Luke's, Brooklyn, (rector, forty years)  
 From sorr'wing throng, fast fall the blinding tears.  
 And joining here the long, white-surpliced train,  
 That sweetly hopeful, chants the funeral strain.  
 Mem'ry speeds me backward to my boyhood home,  
 Where happy, as a youth, I loved to roam;  
 Whence with Barton <sup>27</sup> (late of New York College).  
 Seeking each the same enriching knowledge,  
 By saintly Muhlenberg was willing led  
 The paths of Flushing's prophets' school to tread.<sup>28</sup>  
 'Tis here, beside the coffined, charred remains  
 Of this, thy sainted son, dear "Old Saint James,"  
 That a gentle Spirit, chiding, often tells me:  
 "A loving task, half-finished, ne'er should be."  
 Aye, bids me end the half-forgotten song,  
 Erstwhile begun, thy praises to prolong,  
 Ere comes to me the summons from on high,  
 And I, in holy fear, lie down to die.

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My loving task is done! Though poor it be.  
 The best I have, I give, Saint James, to thee.  
 They tell me all is changed; that nevermore  
 Shall friendly eye behold thee as of yore.  
 O, Change! O'er all thy withering hand is cast  
 To rob us of the things that link the past;

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<sup>26</sup> Rev. Jacob W. Diller, member of a Lancaster family identified with Saint James's parish, was, for thirty-eight years, rector of Saint Luke's church, Brooklyn. Returning in 1878 from a trip to Cuba on the ill-fated steamship *Seawanhaka*, which caught fire at Hellgate, he, an old man at the time, became dazed and confused by the fire. Grasping a post on the vessel, he would not permit himself to be moved by the frantic and persistent efforts of his daughter to get him to the rail, and there he met a fearful death. His daughter remained with him until the last moment and fled only after she herself had suffered severe burns.

<sup>27</sup> The Rev. Dr. John Graeff Barton, grandson of the Rev. Thomas Barton, was associated with the Rev. William Augustus Muhlenberg in Saint Paul's College, near Flushing, Long Island; and later was Professor of English language and literature at the College of the City of New York.

<sup>28</sup> Saint Paul's College, College Point, near Flushing, Long Island.

Yet welcome here, thy oft detested form,  
Since beauteous lines the Master's house adorn  
With chancel, by most cunning art designed;  
Added transept, with lengthened nave combined.  
With massive tow'r, for bell of sweetest tone;  
And ample porch, with pillars carved of stone.  
How changed! Yet praise we change so marked, so light;  
For thus to honor God, 'tis meet and right.  
The everlasting hills are God's alone;  
The gold, the silver and the solid stone!  
Then give to Him, from Whom we all receive,  
The best that Nature or that art can give.

They tell me all is changed. And yet, not all!  
The silver tones of the old bell yet fall  
Upon the list'ning ear. From o'er the sea,  
Ere yet this land of setting sun was free,  
It came by friendly wind and rolling wave,<sup>29</sup>  
With peals for font, for altar, and the grave.

Sweet bell! O, listen, whilst I tell

The thoughts that with me present dwell:

Whene'er my priestly work is done—  
And e'en through death, life's but begun—  
Whene'er for body rest is found,  
'Neath sunny wave or grassy mound;  
No silver tongue of tolling bell  
May sweeter sound my funeral knell  
Than iron tongue of thine, sweet bell—  
Bell of Saint James, I wish thee well!

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<sup>29</sup> The original invoice for the bell is in possession of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It is dated London, England, January 31st, 1771. The bell arrived in May of that year.