

Frederic Dan Huntington

IN REVIEWING THE HISTORY OF EMMANUEL AT ITS SEVENTY-Fifth Anniversary, Bishop Lawrence speaks of "a church half the size of the church today, running north and south. Of course, no Parish house was thought of —. In fact, at that time, though there were chapels for weekday services and Sunday School, there was no such thing as a parish house throughout the whole church. It is a very modern invention." He summarized the ministry of Dr. Frederic Dan Huntington as follows: "Dr. Huntington was Plummer Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard who had been attracting much attention and controversy. In 1859 he resigned 'owing to his conversion to Catholic Theology and the Episcopal Church.' After being ordained, he preached here and there, showing independence and force, and it took courage for the committee to select Dr. Huntington as Emmanuel's first Rector. Time justified his election. He struck a fresh note in the life in our church. He was an organizer as few ministers were. He gathered the young people in Bible and other classes. He set the laymen to work; started a mission in what was called Church Street District, composed of tenements on a marsh, where he and his people built the Church of the Good Shepherd. He kindled new interest in the Indians, creating the Dakota League. Finally, he so commended himself to the church at large that in 1869 he became the first Bishop of Central New York."

Dr. Huntington lived with his wife and five children at 98 Boylston Street facing the Public Garden, according to his daughter, "one of a row of prim brick dwellings with granite

steps and dark green doors on which brass numbers gleamed hospitably. Small iron balconies jutted out above area-windows and square-yard allowances of grass. Next door lived Judge Putnam, and farther along came the Bowditches, Tildens, Reveres, Lincolns, Sumners, Gannetts — good neighbors who thought more or less alike, were interested in city and state, and friendly among themselves." *Ruth Huntington Sessions in her book, "Sixty Odd."*

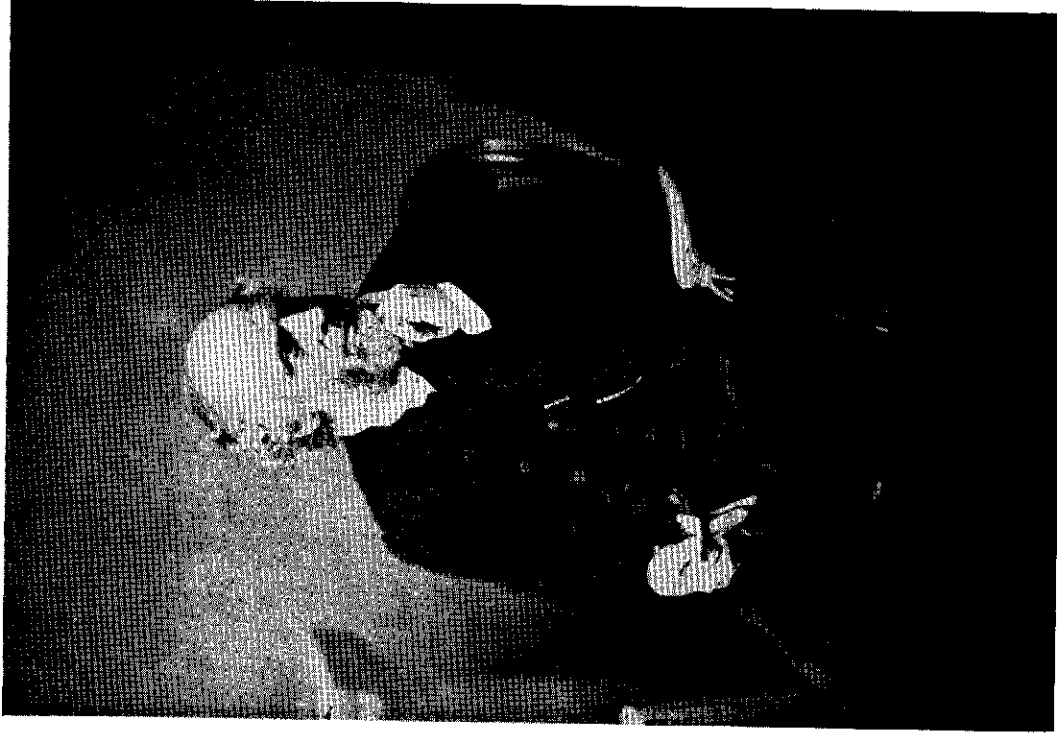
His daughter recalls, "Behind the parlor which was the family room was the doctor's study — full of books and tributes. His large desk in the center of the room was always in order and never gave signs of hurried or disorganized work. He wrote his sermons with a quill pen which squeaked as it travelled over the square sheets of paper —. He was a master of English and the recipient of more honorary degrees than any other dignitary of the Episcopal Church at that time."

Parish work under Dr. Huntington began well in advance of the finished church. Sunday School functioned actively under three young men loaned from St. Paul's. The "Industrial Department" began in 1861 to supply employment — sewing — for the poor women in the Bedford Street neighborhood; no one was to receive more than fifty cents a week! Later this became known as the Dorcas Society and continued on for several decades. In 1863 a missionary box was sent to Bishop Whipple for the Indians and this was the foundation for the Women's Missionary Group of Emmanuel.

As early as May, 1862, Dr. Huntington asked that a fund be raised for the erection of a Mission; this was denied him because of a legal doubt as to binding the Corporation in a way "not in original purpose of the Church."

However, in 1863 Emmanuel's own Chapel was built, and in '64 a transept was added to the church to provide more seating capacity.

Dr. Huntington still felt the need for a mission chapel and this time he did not ask it from Parish funds but as a gift from individuals, and at the annual meeting of the following year



The Rev. Frederic Dan Huntington, D.D.
1861 - 1869

the completion of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd was announced; it was consecrated, and paid for.

It should not be forgotten that this congregation and their vestry saw their sons go off to war, yet with rare courage and faith, persisted against great difficulties and financial struggles to support Emmanuel and help it to minister to the coming generations.

With these "coming generations" in mind, and inspired by the great preaching of Dr. Huntington, Mr. Benjamin Tyler Reed, now Senior Warden of Emmanuel, had a great longing to found a school for the training of men for the ministry. He finally made possible the establishment of the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge by generous gifts in 1865 and 1867, totalling \$100,000; and Emmanuel largely contributed to the Episcopal Fund which supported it.

The first mention of the women of Emmanuel in the minutes of the Vestry comes at the annual meeting, April 22, 1867, where it is recorded that the Senior Warden said, "The Priests will have noticed the very handsome new communion service of silver which was for the first time placed on the Lord's Table on Easter Day which is a donation to the Parish from the ladies who worship with us."

These first eight years of Emmanuel's history under Dr. Huntington's rectorship, laid the solid foundation on which the spirit and tradition of Emmanuel has been built through the years. He left Emmanuel on March 28, 1869, to become the first Bishop of Central New York, residing in Syracuse. That he continued to be an outstanding member of the Church and his community during his bishopric of thirty-five years is told perhaps in an episode at his death on July 11, 1904. Over the notice of his death in a Syracuse paper was a headline — "The best-loved man in Syracuse." The working people asked to have a button made, struck off by thousands and worn by telegraph boys, factory hands, salesmen and women all over the city, his face on a black background and the words, "We mourn Bishop Huntington." Such was Emmanuel's first rector.