THE FIFTIETH YEAR:

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

CLARENDON-STREET BAPTIST CHURCH,

IN BOSTON,

OCTOBER 21ST, 1877.

BY

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PASTOR.

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1878.
"And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year. . . . It shall be a jubilee unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."—Lev. 25: 10.

SERMON.

We find ourselves constantly repeating ancient customs, because those customs are founded in what is natural and fitting. We keep the Sabbath because God has ordained it, and because also it meets the universal demand for rest and repose for our tired bodies. We keep our anniversaries because it is natural for us to pause on our return to a given point in the revolving year, and look back upon our progress and our attainment. And it is just as natural for us to keep the fiftieth year,—the half-way station of the century,—and from it to survey the past, and look out with hope and expectation into the future. And so, though we are no longer under law which by a rigid commandment requires us to observe the fiftieth year, we are constrained by grateful memories and hallowed reflections to set up to-day our memorial stone.

And we may say, moreover, that the Lord himself seems to have sanctified the year for us by lifting it into a marked spiritual preeminence. He has hallowed our fiftieth year by a special and gracious effusion of his Spirit. He has made it a year of jubilee by causing scores of ransomed sinners to return from their captivity "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." And you, brethren, who come back to us to-day after years of separation, are fulfilling the other requirement of my text. You gave your money and your toil and your prayers to build up this church; you have, therefore, a treas-
ure and possession in it still. It was your Christian home for years, and its people were your people. We welcome you back to-day, therefore, as you come home once more, in obedience to my text: "Ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family."

A Christian church is a living organism. It is simply the sum and aggregation of a certain number of Christian lives. Its history, therefore, if properly written, would be a series of biographies all interrelated and bound together. A church of Christ, if you will stop to think of it, is the most wonderful thing on earth. It was a fable among the old warriors, that the spirit of each soldier falling on the field of battle entered into their chieftain and became a part of his life. It is true concerning the church of Christ, and no fiction. The life, the character, the spirit of each departed saint has entered into the life of the church. The glorified ones live with us still; their piety and prayers and consecration form a part of the inventory of grace which we seek to count up to-day. Christ was the only man that ever lived who was on earth and in heaven at the same time. But the church, which is his body, is just like him in this respect. It has a heavenly and an earthly life running on together. We turn over the leaves of our church manual; here is a fresh page, just written over with the names of the new-born children of the family, and there is a page that opens and shuts in eternity. The light of glory falls upon it, and we read the names in the brightness of that celestial light. And yet it is all one book, a single volume in the great library of redeemed life. And it is this book that we are called upon to study and review to-day.

We go back, then, to that little group of baptized Christians, who in 1827 formed the nucleus of this church. They were not a discontented fragment, split off from other churches by unhappy schism. They were a select band of Christians, sent out with fervent prayers and loving benedictions from their several churches to form a new family; to take possession of a new portion of the inheritance of God’s church, and to set up their banners at a new post in opposition to Satan’s kingdom. 1 The church was literally born of the good-will, and cradled in the fellowship, of all the churches, and by the grace of God she has kept her inheritance of peace throughout her history.

An honored member of the Charles-street Church, who is with us, says:

"This was the first shaking off of the ripe fruit from our fruitful vine. Our church gave its best members and most vigorous blood in the large number of youth whom it contributed to form this body."

All the traditions that have come down to us of this company of constituent members would indicate that they were a rare band, a group of truly choice spirits. The oldest survivor of the group describes them as possessed of unusual zeal, but a zeal that was tempered by singular gentleness and moderation. This, says my informant, was peculiarly true of the two Lincolns, who bore so conspicuous a part in the formation of the church. They were not only zealous and consecrated, but extremely judicious men. They had rare skill in allaying discontents, and smoothing rough places. Active in the discipline and management of the church, they never showed the iron hand, but always the gentle and friendly and helping hand. They knew how to nurse and strengthen such as were weak in the faith, to comfort the feeble-minded, and to admonish as a brother him that was out of the way, instead of counting him an enemy. They were Christians distinguished for their gentleness as well as for their strength, for their charity as well as for their soundness in the faith. Such is substantially the tribute of one who knew this company most intimately. And if those who still linger among us of that primitive group, such as Mary

1 Rev. James D. Knowles.
2 Col. Lucius B. Marsh.
O'Brien, and John Putnam, and James W. Converse are samples of the original, we can well credit the testimony.

By the concurrent action of the three churches then existing, steps had been taken, in July, 1825, towards building a house of worship for a new congregation. On the 25th of September, 1826, a site having been procured on Federal street, the corner-stone was laid with appropriate services.

On July 16th, 1827, the church was recognized by a council composed of the pastors and deacons of the neighboring churches. On the 18th of July, 1827, the meeting-house was dedicated in which the church was to find its first cradle, and under the name of the Federal-street Church we entered upon the first chapter of our history. Dr. Sharp was at the dedication to preach the consecrating sermon. It is said that this good man was so far a believer in infant dedication, that it was his custom, when a child was born in his parish, to make an early call, and offer over its cradle a consecrating prayer. He was proud to claim this infant church as a child of venerable Charles street; and he came, with great joy, no doubt, to set apart the new-comer in holy consecration. And this again speaks well for us. Churches, like children, are sometimes foundlings. They come into being with none to welcome them, and are left upon the door-step of the neighboring churches, to be cared for and supported whether they will or not. We were not only welcome in our infancy, but were the pride of the parent churches.

Dr. Baldwin, as early as February, 1825, had called a meeting at his house, to pray and consult in regard to the formation of a new church. He had died before the enterprise was consummated. But his successor, Mr. Knowles, stood in his place on dedication day, to welcome us into the sisterhood of churches. His address has come down to us. He spoke of the sorrow of the two churches, the Second and the Charles Street, on parting with so many valued brethren, but added: “Yet this sorrow is soothed and overcome, nay, is heightened into gratitude and joy, when we think that our brethren and sisters have left us in kindness and peace, to form a new family. . . . . In the name of our Redeemer, then, we cheer you onward. And now, my dear brethren," he said in closing, “let us exchange the mutual pledge that we will still be of one heart; that as brethren having one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, we will live and toil together in love; that our prayer for each other and for the whole Zion of God shall be, 'Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.'"

Almost immediately upon its entrance into its new house of worship the church began a course of marked prosperity and usefulness. From all we can gather, we judge that its success must have been quite unprecedented. For aggressive work, for rapid growth, for the fervor of its piety, and for the largeness of its charities it at once took the very foremost rank. Instead of the long and disheartening struggle which many churches have to pass through before attaining a position, it stepped immediately into a place of eminent usefulness and strength. The house of worship became quickly filled with a young and vigorous congregation; its Sunday-school gathered a large company of scholars and had a most excellent and devoted band of teachers; its prayer-meetings were marked with great spiritual power, and, from the very first, constant and large accessions began to be made to it of such as had believed. It is said that probably no church in Boston of our faith ever had so rapid and at the same time so solid a growth as did this.

If we ask for the secret of this remarkable success, it is probably to be found in two causes. In the first place, it was a new church in a new and excellent field; and, other things being equal, a new church can do what an old one
The results of his ministry were singularly enough most apparent after his retirement from the pastoral office. Immediately following his resignation, an extensive religious interest commenced, from which a large addition was made to the church. Though no longer pastor, he remained for some months guiding and inspiring the work, thus gathering the largest fruit of his ministry after that ministry had officially closed.

Rev. Handel G. Nott was the next in order to occupy the pastor's office. He was installed over the church on the 23d of May, 1839. He was a man of deep piety, of unaffected humility, and of strong and vigorous mind. He remained with the church but a single year, resigning through no disaffection or want of harmony on the part of the people, but from a sincere conviction that he might be more useful in another field. He left his charge, carrying with him the warm affection and sincere good-will of every member of his flock.

And now we reach the first period of depression in the church's history. The tide of prosperity, which at the first had risen so strongly and steadily, suffered a temporary ebb. The population had begun to sweep away towards the south; the warehouse encroaching more and more upon the domains of the home, the families one by one removed to other parts of the city.

And then the church, which had so freely received in accessions from sister churches, was called in turn to give. Strong and valued pillars were taken from her, to build into the superstructure of other congregations. In March, 1839, thirty-one were dismissed to form the Harvard-street Church; in April of the same year, thirty-one to form the Tremont Temple Church; and in the next year, nineteen to constitute the Bowdoin-square Church. These reductions in membership, together with the frequent changes in the pastoral office, had produced a temporary feeling of depression with those who had the interest of the church most at heart.

But at this juncture of affairs the church were fortunate in securing the services of Rev. Wm. Hague, as her fourth pastor; he having accepted the church call and entered on his duties in September, 1840.

To the accomplishments of an eloquent preacher and a judicious pastor, he added those of a wise ecclesiastical general. He was much given to studying the field in which he was called to conduct a pastoral campaign. He was the last man to counsel remaining in camp at any given station, after the field of conquest had been transferred to another point; and from all that we can infer regarding the situation at the time, we judge that, upon entering upon his ministry, he very soon began to sound the call in the ears of the church, "Arise, depart, for this is not thy rest."

At all events we find the church, very soon after his settlement, agitating the question of removal to some more populous location. In 1844 the Proprietor's Committee was authorized to make sale of the Federal-street property; and on the 23d of February in the year following (1845) public services were held for the last time within its walls.
society, amounting to about sixteen thousand dollars, has been paid. May pastor and people not fail to realize their indebtedness to God for past mercies, and their dependence upon his grace for all future favors. May they be distinguished by great humility, and by active devotion to their Master’s service."

This state of things seems to have continued for several years. But from about 1839 the church seems to have entered another period of depression. The tide of population was again found to be setting rapidly away from the vicinity of the church. There were large diminishments by death, and by removal to other parts of the town, especially into the growing suburbs of the city. Then came again the question of removal; then the proposition for union with the Shawmut-avenue church, which seems to have come near accomplishment. Shortly after, following in quick succession, came the two closing chapters in the history of the Rowe-street church, — the resignation of Dr. Stow in May, 1867, and the farewell services in the church, the 31st of May, 1868. Between this and the entrance into a new place of worship, the church enjoyed kind and hospitable entertainment with the Second church, now called the Warren avenue.

The property disposed of, and the present location secured, the corner-stone of the Clarendon-street church was laid October 31, 1868. Then came the calling of the present pastor; his acceptance of the invitation, and his entrance upon his ministry by preaching the dedication sermon on the evening of December 9, 1869.

The events which have succeeded during the intervening eight years are too fresh in your minds to require rehearsing. They are too recent events to be invested with the halo of historical interest. They are too personal to make it proper that I should speak of them, and so I leave them to be set forth by the historian of the next half century. Only permit me to express the honor I esteem it to be called to hold succession in such a ministry; to be a fol-

lower in the line of such a pastorate. Two of my predeces-sors still abide with us,—Dr. Malcom, the first, and Dr. Hague, the fourth, in the order of succession. I had fondly hoped when assuming the charge that the last, Dr. Stow, would remain to be a father and counsellor in the sacred relations of ministerial fellowship; but he departed on the very night his successor was installed,—a coincidence, the solemnity and significance of which I shall never cease to feel. While in this pulpit prayers were going up for a blessing on the ministry just beginning, the father in Israel, worn with labors and broken with fatigue, was breathing the last earthly prayer of a ministry just ending. Would God that I could know that the mantle of the Elijah who that night went up had fallen on the Elisha who is left to occupy his place!

I leave the last eight years of our history to be written by other hands, only putting on record our grateful recollections of the blessings that have attended us in the Clarendon-street church; the harmony that has prevailed, the growth that has been attained, and the peculiar blessing that has crowned our fiftieth year. The trial by fire has once come to us, the church being partly destroyed by the flames on the morning of the first Sunday in January, 1874. Every church of every name in the vicinity proffered us its hospitality for the time in which we should be out of our house. The Union Congrega-tional Church, which had so long been a neighbor on Chauncy street, was accepted as offering us the best facilities for carrying on our work; and the months spent there will ever be grate-

fully remembered for the opportunity which they offered us of fraternal fellowship with brethren owning the same Lord. We returned to our renovated house of worship on the first of May, 1875, where by the blessing of God we still abide.

It becomes us, brethren, on the fiftieth anniversary of our existence to count up our mercies, and to inquire in what
God has signally and especially blessed us as a church. To this question I am sure you will make answer: —

First. He has blessed us in an eminently useful and devoted ministry. Malcom, Ide, Nott, Hague, and Stow, are names that will not only be ever warmly cherished in our household of faith, but which will ever be closely identified with the religious history and character of our city.

Second. The church has been greatly favored in the long list of eminent Christian men and women who have been enrolled upon her catalogue. I can only speak of them in a word. You know them better than I. Heman Lincoln, the wise and devoted deacon, whose name stands first upon our roll, so esteemed as a citizen, so trusted as a counsellor, so conscientious as a Christian. Till ninety years and upwards he remained on earth to bless it by his hallowed example, and then went home with the benedictions of generations resting upon him; and with him we recall his honored wife, passing on to glory a little before him, who blended so rarely the graces of culture and the graces of piety. Ensign Lincoln, “the strong staff and the beautiful rod,” on whom the pastor always leaned, the gentlest and most consecrated of Christians, while he was so aggressive and energetic and zealous as a worker for God. His children and his children’s children are with us to-day. Margaret D. Baldwin, the Dorcas of the church, abundant in works of charity and in wise schemes for enlisting the Christian women of the city in doing good to the poor.

I cannot speak of the living, for time would fail me; but I must make one exception: Mary Lincoln O’Brien, who stands to-day so truly on the border land of heaven that we hardly know to which world she belongs. In her venerable age she waits her summons to go home; so saintly in her life, so adorned with “the beauty of holiness,” that she seems yet young with the youth of immortality. I returned last week from her home in Beverly, bringing to the church this message, “Tell the brethren to abide in Christ.” Fitting exhortation for one who is so like the beloved disciple who writes to the church in his old age, “And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, ye may not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

And, speaking still further of the dead, I make mention of Sarah Lincoln Haven, of blessed memory; and Fanny Sheldon, so revered for her tender sympathies and gracious deeds; and Adeline Putnam, who, having served so faithfully for many years in another church, came back to her early home to spend her last days, and to die in the midst of her kindred. And Susannah Ridgway Lord, of precious memory, and Jonathan Carlton, and Ichabod Macomber, and Joseph Stevens, faithful deacons and devoted servants of the church. All these and many more, if I had time to mention them, belonged to that honored band of constituent members.

And then, coming down the succeeding years, we find among the treasured dead, such names as Lydia M. Malcom, the devoted and beloved pastor’s wife, so useful in her life, and so sincerely mourned in her death; and Deacon Elijah Mears, and his queenly consort, so full of generous affection and kindly grace; Harriet Henchman, so devoted in her zeal and so strong in her attachment to the church; Susan D. Reynolds, quiet and gentle of heart, but strong in faith and good works; and Sarah Colby, whose rare force of character and eminent devotion to the church have been so signal perpetuation in her sons and grandsons. Of such as these latter, a pastor might well speak as did Paul, “Those women which labored with me in the Gospel . . whose names are in the book of life.”

There are many who have been of us who have had an eminent name without as well as within the church. There is William D. Ticknor, the distinguished publisher, who as a young man wrought with such zeal in the office of Sunday School Superintendent; and Richard Fletcher, as a lawyer and
a judge standing in the very highest rank of his profession, and yet combining with his eminent judicial wisdom the piety and stern purity of a saint. All through his busy life, at the bar and on the bench, like the old Puritans, he kept a daily journal of his spiritual exercises, whose pages since his death I have read with a rare and wondering interest. Learned as he was in legal wisdom, he was almost as learned in theology; and in his large and well-selected library, the works of the saints and the theologians were as numerous and well studied as those of the lawyer and the jurist. With such a rare combination of legal and religious culture, we wonder not that he should have ranked among the intimate friends of his earlier and his later days such men as Daniel Webster and Charles Sumner on the one hand, and President Wayland and Professor Hackett on the other. I count it among the highest privileges of my life to have known this man in his mellow and beautiful old age, and to have ministered at his bedside in his dying hours. Some of you remember him well as an early and valuable superintendent of our Sunday school, and most of you remember him perhaps still better as he appeared at the prayer-meeting of the annual Fast-day, with his words of wise and deliberate religious counsel and instruction.

And, following down our catalogue, we come upon the name of Augustus A. Gould, the eminent physician and not less eminent naturalist; a lecturer in botany and zoology in Harvard College, the author of many scientific works, and the colaborer of Prof. Agassiz in important investigations. "As an accomplished naturalist," says the "American Encyclopedia," "his name stands preeminent both at home and abroad." As a member of the church he was honored in his life and sincerely mourned in his death. And then Charles D. Gould, his brother, known equally well as a publisher and senior partner in a house honored both in America and England for the character of the literature to which it set its imprint. For more than thirty years a deacon in this body, he won, if any one ever did, a title to that name of highest honor, "a servant of the church,"—so devoted to every interest of the church, so patient in the care of details; so constant and prompt in every duty laid upon him. Had he not carried the church on his heart through many years, it would have been far less efficient in many points than it is to-day; and had he not carried its history in his head, we should have known far less about it than we do to-day.

And time would fail me to speak of Samuel G. Bowditch, so eminent and intelligent as a Christian, and so honored and esteemed as a citizen and a public man; of those who have been distinguished in the walks of literature, like Prof. John L. Lincoln, of Brown University, Dr. Heman Lincoln, of Newton Theological Seminary, honored sons of an honored father; and Edward C. Mitchell, of Chicago Seminary, and now of Regents Park College, London; Prof. T. W. Bancroft, of Brown University and of Dr. Lucius E. Smith, the editor of the "Watchman." But I must pause, having spoken thus of the dead, and of the living who have gone from us. Of those still with us, I cannot speak, lest eulogy which is fitting for the dead may seem like flattery when bestowed upon the living. Suffice it to say, that we have still with us Christians as eminent, and deacons as worthy and beloved as those who are gone. One, after long years of devoted service, has just retired. His work and his worth will suggest his name without my mentioning it.

There is one, not an original member, who has nevertheless been with the church through all its history. Entering our membership in middle age, he has made up for his delay in coming by the forwardness of his zeal, and the ardor of his enthusiasm in every good work. I must not utter his praise. But as the fathers have told us what works were wrought by the Lincolns in their day, let us tell to the
generations following what a worthy successor these good
men found in a beloved deacon who still abides among us.

Thirdly, the church recalls as among her most signal
blessings, the unbroken unity and peace that have prevailed
in this body during the whole fifty years of her existence.
To be sure, peace is not always an occasion for congratula-
tion. If it be the result of stagnation and spiritual inertia it
were better that it should be disturbed by some rude shock
of conflict, lest it prove the peace of death rather than of
life; but such is not the peace which God gives. That is
beautifully described by the prophet as a “peace which is
like a river.” The limpid flow of crystal waters hastening on to
the sea,—it is the picture of peacefulness; but it is equally
the picture of power and of progress. That peaceful river
moves the wheels of ponderous machinery as it goes; it
bears upon its bosom the vessels of a nation’s commerce; it
brings life and fertility to all the banks along which it sweeps.
Happy is the church whose peace is like a river,—harmony,
and yet the power of God working in saving manifestations;
unity, and yet progress towards higher attainments and nobler
conquests; peace, but the peace that brings quickening and
life and blessing to all it touches.

Well, we believe that the peace which has been enjoyed by
this church has resulted in its growth and power, and that on
the other hand it has been the result of a true life of love
and self-sacrifice on the part of the members. In glancing
at some early records of the church I judge, that in former
days at least, there was not merely an agreement to disagree
when any points of difference should arise, but a determina-
tion to agree. I find in one instance the record of a member
brought before the church on the ground of his having a dis-
agreement with another, and admonished to be reconciled
to his brother lest scandal should come upon the whole body.
And so I judge that the church in those days not only
enjoyed peace when it came to her, but labored to make
peace when her unity was threatened with disturbance.

The sharpest controversy of which I can find any trace was
upon a singular question, as it would seem to us, viz., the
question of putting an organ into the meeting-house. Bass-
viosi and violins and trumpets had held peaceful and undis-
puted sway for a long time in the musical service; but the
thought of an organ staggered many a devout and sturdy
defender of the old ways. But I know not which the more to
admire in the advocates of the organ, their peace-making spirit
or their artless shrewdness. For they proposed, so it is said,
to put the organ into the church at their own expense, and if,
upon a six-months’ trial it was not acceptable, to take it out.
Wise men and intelligent innovators were they! For who does
not know how much easier it is to keep an innovation out, than
to get it out after it is once in? When the first rude shock
against prejudice and custom is past, half the battle is won.
And when, in later years, we proposed to introduce the cus-
tom of reading together the Psalms of David, just as they
were composed to be read, and as they were read in the
primitive churches,—the minister leading and the people
responding,—there were some, no doubt, who feared that such
a departure from old ways might end in ritualism; yet, when
the silence was broken and the voices of the great congrega-
tion had once been lifted up together, in the response, “For
his mercy endureth forever,” the crisis was past, and I think
that many who cannot sing, but who can read, would be as
unwilling to-day to part with the privilege of lifting up their
voices in a psalm of praise as they would be to be robbed of
the sweet and mellifluous tones of our magnificent organ. May
God grant that with purity of doctrine and purity of life there
may reign unbroken for the fifty years before us the peace of
God! And I think I should draw an obvious and a useful
lesson from the past, if I added that the attainment of such
a peace must be the result of mutual concessions and kindly
tolerations among brethren. In doctrinal conflicts, if such
shall ever arise, the chances are, that the truth will lie mid-
way between violent extremes; and toleration, that cardinal article of Baptist faith, will always find the middle ground and stand on it fearlessly and faithfully.

Then, again, in the fourth place, we record among the especial blessings of this church her perpetual interest in the great work of foreign missions and her intimate connection therewith. Her history almost overlaps the era of American Baptist missionary effort. That great work has two departments to be manned. At home there is the work of counselling and planning, of devising ways and means for maintaining the missions. This is a work demanding the ripest wisdom, the largest exercise of faith and patience and skill and prudence. Who has been more usefully and honorably identified with this department of the work than Baron Stow and Heman Lincoln and John N. Murdock, the present efficient Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Union?

Abroad, there is the toil and hardship of evangelistic effort; preaching the word, pushing out into new fields, teaching and translating the Scriptures. Who has been more honorably identified with this work than those revered missionaries who have gone forth from this church, John Taylor Jones, Lyman Jewett, Elizabeth Lincoln Stevens, and Mary Rice? May the chain of sympathy that has bound us to this great cause be strengthened by added links in years to come, in the persons of consecrated men and women who shall joyfully give their lives to this noble service! Twenty ministers, two of them missionaries to the East, have gone out from us. May the Lord multiply laborers both for home and foreign fields!

And, lastly, this church numbers as her crowning blessing that of frequent and gracious revivals of religion. What were a church without revivals? They are the very seals and credentials of Christ's presence with his people. To fail of them were the sign of swift apostasy and spiritual decay. What were crowded congregations, and an intelligent auditory, and eloquent preaching and exquisite music, if these great tokens and testimonies of grace were wanting in the history of the church? The Hebrew Rabbis tell how the shekinah cloud, the visible symbol of God's presence with his people, was at last withdrawn from the temple on account of Israel's apostasy, and with what sorrow the pious Jew witnessed its departure and mourned over the desolations of Zion which ensued. If ever the cloud of the Spirit's converting presence shall rest for the last time upon this church, then let her ministry cease, and let her ordinances be suspended, for Ichabod will be written on her banners, and her glory will have departed.

But, by the grace of God, this token of the divine favor has been frequent and marked in the history of the church. What gracious years were 1831, and 1838, and 1842, and 1852 and 1858! Scores of Christians are still with us, who remember these seasons as their spiritual birthdays. They were the returning Pentecosts of the church, coming in times of depression, when the voice of testimony had grown feeble, to refresh the saints, and cause them to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The year 1831 witnessed the largest ingathering of any of the periods named. There were one hundred and thirteen added to the church during that season; one hundred in 1838, ninety-six in 1842, eighty-five in 1852; forty-nine in 1858. And these are not largely out of proportion with many ordinary years, when the additions came up towards a hundred.

I speak with the profoundest gratitude to God and with the deepest sense of my unworthiness of such a blessing, when I add that the present year, 1877, has witnessed the largest addition of any in the history of the church, one hundred and twenty-three having been added to our number since it opened. I repeat what I said in the beginning, that the Lord has stamped this truly as a year of jubilee. He has hallowed it as a year of his right hand.
And now, brethren, as we look out into the future, let it be our prayer and our endeavor to make that future worthy of the past in which such history and such inspirations lie. Young men and young women, I have shown you your exemplars and forerunners in this church of your adoption. Follow them as they followed Christ. Elders and fathers in the Lord, I have spoken—alas, how imperfectly!—of your brethren and companions in the service and fellowship of Christ. Long may you abide with us to bless and gladden us by your presence; and when you go hence, carry this message to the sainted ones who have departed: Tell them that, by the grace of God, we will keep untarnished the heritage of peace which they have left us; and that all we have of life and strength and talent we pledge to the service of “Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

SEMI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
CLARENDON-STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

SERVICES.

On Sunday, Oct. 21, 1877, notwithstanding the day proved very stormy, a congregation assembled, composed of past and present members of the church, which completely filled the house. The pastor was assisted in the introductory services by Prof. Heman Lincoln, of Newton Theological Seminary. The historical sermon followed, which is given in the preceding pages. Of the subsequent services of afternoon and evening, and the Monday evening following, we can perhaps give the best impression in the following substantially accurate report, which appeared in the “Boston Daily Journal”:

SEMI-CENTENNIAL OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

The exercises incident to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Sabbath school connected with the church occurred yesterday afternoon. The beauty of the floral decorations was enhanced by the addition of a beautiful array of flowers, prominent among which was a pyramid of bouquets, one of which was presented to each of the scholars. On each side of the pastor’s desk stood a basket of choice flowers, one of which was presented to Deacon John Putnam, the first Superintendent of the school, and the other to Eben. Shute, the present Superintendent. It was a joyous occasion to the children, their parents and friends, who together filled nearly every seat in the church.

The exercises commenced with the singing of a hymn entitled
"Our Glad Jubilee," after which the Superintendent read an appropriate selection of Scripture, and prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Gordon. A select choir of the older members of the school sung the hymn, "It is better farther on." The entire school united in singing the hymn, "While the days are going by," after which Mr. G. F. Underwood read his report.

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The report embraced a history of the school from the formation to the present time. It was first started as a mission-school in 1825, on Broad street, and afterward removed to a room over the Old Ship Market in Purchase street, and again to Julien Hall, corner of Milk and Congress streets, where public worship was held until the completion of the first church on Federal street, when the school was regularly organized Oct. 21, 1827, with John Putnam as Superintendent, Charles A. Macomber as Secretary, and Joseph Converse as Treasurer. The school numbered at its formation twelve teachers and seventy-five scholars. In 1829 the membership had increased to eighteen teachers and one hundred and thirty-one scholars. In September, 1830, the infant class was established as a separate department, through the efforts of Mrs. Malcom, wife of the first pastor.

When the encroachments of business forced the removal of the church from Federal street, the school held its sessions in Amory Hall, corner of West and Washington streets, whence it was removed to the Melodeon, where it remained until the dedication of the church, corner Bedford and Rowe streets. In 1853 the records of the school showed a membership of over four hundred scholars. Large numbers were added to the church and Sabbath school during the revival of 1857 and 1858. When the church and Sabbath school bade adieu to the edifice in Rowe street the invitation of the Baldwin place, now Warren-street, Church, to occupy their houses of worship, was accepted, and this they continued to do until the completion of the vestry in the present church, in 1869, when the school was reorganized under the name of the Clarendon-street Baptist Sabbath School, with Eben. Shute as Superintendent, and Heman W. Chaplin as Secretary.

The school flourished until 1874, when, on the morning of the new year, the house of worship was partially destroyed by fire. The school was invited by the neighboring churches to occupy their houses of worship, and that of the Union Congregational Church was accepted, and their edifice occupied till June, 1874, when the school returned to the present church. It has continued to increase, till now it has reached a membership of four hundred and eighty-six. The infant department numbers about seventy-five. During the history of the school there have been ten Superintendents, sixteen Secretaries, eight Directresses, at least six hundred teachers, and about five thousand scholars.

The contributions of the school have amounted to ten thousand dollars. Many of the scholars have entered the gospel ministry; some have gone out as missionaries to foreign lands, and others have become Superintendents of other schools. For the last few years the collections of the school have been devoted entirely to missionary objects, the church defraying the expenses of the school. The collections for the past seven years have averaged five hundred and forty dollars annually.

After the report of the Secretary, the Superintendent addressed the congregation, complimenting the Secretary upon his devotion to the interests of the school, and impressing upon the members the importance of its benevolent work. He related that upon the death, five years ago, of one of the young Christians connected with the school, his father gave the Superintendent the contents of the boy's bank, saying that he wished it contributed to some benevolent object. He now exhibited the package of money, and said that, never being able until now to devote it to any purpose, he wanted it to be made the beginning of a permanent fund to be known as "The Judson Blanchard Fund for Poor Children." One of the pleasant features of the occasion was the presence of the first Superintendent, who did not feel too old to be in our Sabbath school, in which he was now a scholar.

DEACON JOHN PUTNAM.

He said that fifty-three years ago, under the ministrations of Rev. Dr. Sharp, he took a class of boys in the Charles-street Baptist Church. As there were at that time no primary schools
in Boston, it was left to the Sunday schools to teach the poorer classes of children to read. It was not expected in those days that children would be converted, but many were. About that time the American Sunday School Union was formed. The Charles-street Sabbath School claimed to be the first in America, but one was established in the latter part of the last century in Rhode Island by Rev. Mr. Collyer, which was the first, and now no church was considered perfect without this important adjunct. He was one of the original members of the Federal-street Church and Sunday School, and referred to those who were active in its maintenance.

The younger portion of the school sang the hymn, "Jesus is our Shepherd," after which brief addresses were made by Mr. B. W. Williams, a former member of this and afterward Superintendent of the Berkeley-street Sabbath School; J. B. Manning of Jamaica Plain, whose father, William Manning, was once Superintendent of this school; A. S. Woodworth, formerly superintendent of the Shawmut-avenue Baptist Sunday School. The addresses were replete with interesting reminiscences of the school, and at their close Rev. Mr. Gordon, in behalf of the school, presented one of the floral baskets to Deacon Putnam, and the other to Mr. Shute, the present Superintendent. Both the recipients were taken completely by surprise, but found words to express their thanks. The singing of several hymns, under the direction of Mr. S. A. Shannon, the chorister, a prayer and benediction formed the closing exercises of the afternoon.

EVENING SERVICES.

In the evening another large congregation assembled to listen to a continuation of the commemorative exercises, which commenced with an anthem by the choir, followed by an invocation by the pastor, and the responsive reading of the 122d, 133d, and 134th Psalms. The pastor read a portion of the second chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, and offered prayer, after which the congregation united in singing the 786th hymn of the Collection. Rev. Rollin H. Neale, D.D., was then introduced, and delivered an address upon

REMINISCENCES OF THE BOSTON PULPIT FOR FIFTY YEARS.

Dr. Neale said: That after the series of centennials in honor of the Fathers of the Republic, no apology need be offered for these commemorative services. The least we can do for those who have gone before us is to speak a kind word, and thus perpetuate, as far as we can, the inheritance of a healthy influence. The pastor, in his historical discourse this morning, has doubtless done full justice to your fiftieth anniversary. I was sorry that, being absent from the city, I was prevented from hearing it. Prof. Lincoln, who is to follow me this evening, comes as a loving child of your own, to speak of his spiritual birthplace and early home.

I, too, have been long acquainted with this church, and should take pleasure in recalling the names of its early members,—the Lincolns, the Goulds, among whom was my beloved physician, Dr. A. A. Gould, and others that are so familiar and sacred in this community. I should love to refer again to the Bible class I taught here when I was a student at Newton, and to that interesting circle of young people of fair promise and subsequent usefulness, most of whose names I now read at Mount Auburn.

You have requested me to speak of the Boston ministers of the last half century. In the time to which I am necessarily limited I could do no more than simply mention their names, and this indeed will be sufficient. Their names, most of them, I am happy to say, are surrounded with pleasant associations and hallowed memories.—Dr. Neale then referred to the pastors of the Baptist churches in Boston and vicinity fifty years ago: Dr. Sharp, Thomas Paul, Bela Jacobs, Joseph Grafton, Charles R. Train, Lucius Bolles, Wm. Leverett, Jonathan Going; and of other denominations, Wm. E. Channing, John Pierpont, Ezra S. Garnett, Francis Parkman, Henry Ware, Charles Lowell, W. F. Greenwood, Alexander Young, Alonzo Potter, Bishop Griswold and others among the Episcopalians; Lyman Beecher, B. B. Wisner, Wm. Jenks, and others among the Orthodox Congregationalists; John Lindsey, Joseph A. Merrill, John N. Maffit, Daniel Webb, Solomon Sias, Abraham D. Merrill, Father Taylor, and many others among the Methodists.

The outside world, said Dr. Neale, went on then as now. Co-
gress had its sessions. Webster and Everett, Calhoun and Hayne, were the great attractions in the National Legislature. John Quincy Adams was President of the United States, and the proclamations for Thanksgiving were issued with the usual flourish and official air, signed Levi Lincoln, by his Excellency the Governor; Edward D. Bangs, Secretary. God save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Dr. Neale then spoke of the pastors of the Baptist and other churches in Boston at the time his own pastorate began with the First Church in Union street, such as George B. Ide, George W. Blagden, C. A. Bartol, William Croswell, Thomas M. Clark, now Bishop of Rhode Island, Nehemiah Adams, and others. Dr. Neale stated that over seventy pastors had been settled with the different Baptist churches in Boston during his own pastorate. With most of them he had been intimately acquainted and taken part in their public recognition.

It would be a grateful service, he said, to speak of dear personal friends — Dr. Sharp, Baron Stow, Phineas Stowe, George B. Ide, H. G. Nott, Robert W. Cushman, Thomas Ford Caldicott, S. R. Mason, Nathaniel Colver — who have gone before me. I should love to speak also of Wm. Croswell, First Rector of the Advent Church, and especially of my neighbor, Edward N. Kirk, with whom I travelled in Palestine; Thomas Starr King, too, a man of kindly heart as of eloquent lips. I might add also among personal acquaintance the late Bishop Fitzpatrick, who, notwithstanding his theology, was a genial, large-hearted man, not limited to church creeds, or ecclesiastical boundaries.

The ministers of Boston, I am happy to say, of all denominations, have been distinguished for their Christian courtesy. They have an experience very much in common, and certainly ought to be kind to one another. An outsider, looking in upon the Episcopal Convention now having its session in our city, might think those dignified men of the surplice and bands had very little sympathy with other ministers and churches. But they have, I see, trials, like the rest of us, grave difficulties and petty annoyances, and, I hope, as many comforts. However men may differ outwardly, they are more alike at heart than we imagine;

and their better nature is developed by a kindly and confiding spirit.

Allow me to congratulate the members of this church on the present occasion. God has blessed you greatly in the past, and your prospects were never brighter than now. I can say the same of the other churches of our denomination in this city. We cannot avoid a feeling of sadness as we think of departed friends.

But our faith teaches us, that all that is good of earth shall reappear, renewed and more glorious hereafter. This or nothing! As Whittier says:

"To this one state my spirit clings,
I know that God is good.
I dimly judge from blessings known
Of greater out of sight,
And with the chastened Psalmist own
His judgments, too, are right.

"And so, beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar,
Assured no harm will come to me
On ocean or on shore."

The address of Dr. Neale was followed by another by Rev. Heman Lincoln, D.D., of the Newton Theological Seminary, which was devoted to

INCIDENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS IN BOSTON DURING THE PAST FIFTY YEARS.

Dr. Lincoln began by an allusion to his boyhood, whose second remembrance is of the Sunday school in Julien Hall. He was one of its constituent members, and for six years was accustomed to go regularly twice on Sunday, though living a mile away. He has since been associated as pastor with early members and teachers of this school, and has found them true Christian workers.

Few churches have such a history,—with such noble founders, such a line of pastors, such a large number of young men called to the ministry, and such a constant accession of useful members. During his college life at Brown University, eight others who have
since been pastors and missionaries were associated with him in study.

Since the church was founded the growth of the denomination has been extraordinary, — in the city from four churches to twenty-one, in the State from one hundred and fifty three churches to two hundred and eighty nine, and in the country from less than five hundred thousand members to two million. At the same rate of growth for the next three centuries the number of Baptist members would equal the whole population of the land. He referred to the large increase of educated ministers. This church has sent out nearly as many as were to be found in all our churches when it was organized. He alluded to the singular harmony in the church from its origin, with perfect freedom of opinion, but the freedom always ruled by love for the whole body.

The denomination, as a whole, was noted for adherence to sound doctrine. Without strong creeds, it has maintained the unity of the faith better than other denominations, having fixed standards. He urged the younger members to keep the church in the next half century true to the spirit and aims of its founders.

The exercises closed with the benediction.

SOCIAL REUNION, MONDAY EVENING, OCT. 22.

The commemorative festival incident to the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Clarendon-street Baptist Church and Sabbath School was continued by a social reunion, which was attended by nearly five hundred persons, embracing old and young, past and present members. At least five generations of the children and parents of the church took part in one of the most joyous occasions in the history of the organization. The company assembled in the vestry at five o' clock, and passed an hour in reviving acquaintances long ago interrupted, the renewal of old friendships, and the recital of personal experiences,—some sad, some happy,—the presentation of the younger to the elder members of the church and Sabbath school. An hour was thus pleasantly spent, at the expiration of which the company was called to order by Rev. Mr. Gordon, and, being seated, the Divine blessing was invoked by President Hovey, of the Newton Theological Seminary, after which refreshments were served by a corps of young gentlemen and ladies connected with the Sabbath school.

The exercise and the sociability engendered by the repast occupied the company until nearly eight o' clock, when prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Caldwell, of Newton. Mr. Gordon opened the intellectual entertainment with a brief address, in the course of which he related many incidents connected with the past history of the church. Among the blessings which they enjoyed was the presence of many of the original members of the church, and messages of congratulation from others. He read a letter from Rev. Dr. Howard Malcom, the first pastor, who rose from a sick bed to write it; another from Mrs. Mary L. O'Brien, of Beverly, one of the survivors of the constituent members of the church, who has given much of her life to the blessed work; and a telegram from Rev. Dr. Hague, a former pastor, and an interesting letter from Prof. John L. Lincoln.

Mr. Gordon then introduced Deacon John Putnam, who entertained his hearers with reminiscences of the Old Federal-street Church, and the early pastors, particularly Rev. Dr. Malcom, who had a remarkable way of saying terse things. On one occasion Dea. Putnam complained that the singing was poor; to which Dr. Malcom replied, "What do you think of me? I have to preach after it."

Mr. Gordon recalled the fact that the famous Hooker had a sexton who prided himself on knowing everything about theology, and as they had with them the first sexton, who knew everything about the Federal-street Church, he introduced Mr. Rankin. The pastor did not overestimate the contents of the storehouse of incidents which the old sexton had treasured up. For more than half an hour he dwelt upon the life and character of Rev. Dr. Malcom, of whose virtues he tired not to speak, and of Ensign Lincoln, whom he credited with having printed the first tracts issued in the United States.—"The Dairyman's Daughter," and "The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain," —from which arose the American Tract Society. No society had so many young people as the Federal-street Baptist Church, and of these, hundreds emigrated to the West, and laid the foundations of the religious insti-
of the late Rev. Baron Stow, D.D., which has occupied a place in the Meionon, and a portrait of the Rev. Dr. Malcom, were exhibited in the vestry during the festival. The occasion was replete with joyful incidents, which will be treasured by the older and remembered with pride and pleasure by the younger members of the church and Sabbath school.

Among those present whose names have not appeared, were Professor E. C. Mitchell, of the Chicago University; Professor Gould, of the Newton Theological Seminary; Deacon Levi J. Bradish; Rev. Dr. L. E. Smith, editor of the "Watchman;" Miss Catherine Mears, daughter of Deacon Elijah Mears; ex-Alderman Sands, and Deacon George S. Dexter. The portrait of that section. In conclusion, he recalled the pastorates of Ide, Nott, and Hague, for each of whom he had an affectionate recollection, and a kind word.

Mr. Gordon announced that several members of the choir which sang in the Rowe-street Church were present, who had expressed a desire to unite their voices once more in some of the old tunes which they were wont to sing. Accordingly seventeen gentlemen and ladies came forward and sang the 260th hymn, appropriately entitled "Federal Street," which effort was received with rapturous applause.

Deacon Hezekiah S. Chase was next introduced, and added his personal recollections of the early church and its founders. He remembered with delight and pleasure, not unclouded by sadness, those who had passed away. Referring to the survivors, he requested those present who were constituent members of the Federal-street Church to rise. Three persons responded. He then called upon all who were members of the church and congregation which worshipped in the same church to rise, and fifty-eight persons stood up. That congregation once numbered ten or twelve hundred, and only eight of the original members of the church are now living.

Deacon James W. Converse was the next speaker. He related that he came to Boston as a lad in 1821; was baptized by "Mister," afterward Rev. Dr. Sharp, in the water west of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and returning to the country was banteringly called a "salt-water Baptist."

The company were subsequently addressed by Hon. Wm. B. Spooner, a former Treasurer of the Society, and with the church at the beginning; Mr. Geer of Springfield, long an active member; and Rev. Wm. Howe, of Cambridge. The old choir sang "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the exercises closed with the benediction.