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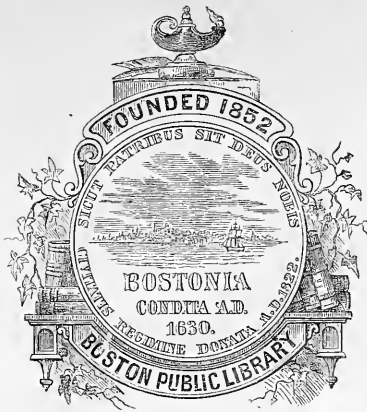
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PAMPHLETS.

*Baptist churches
of
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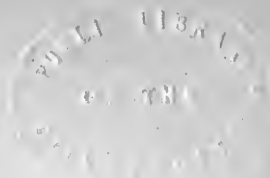
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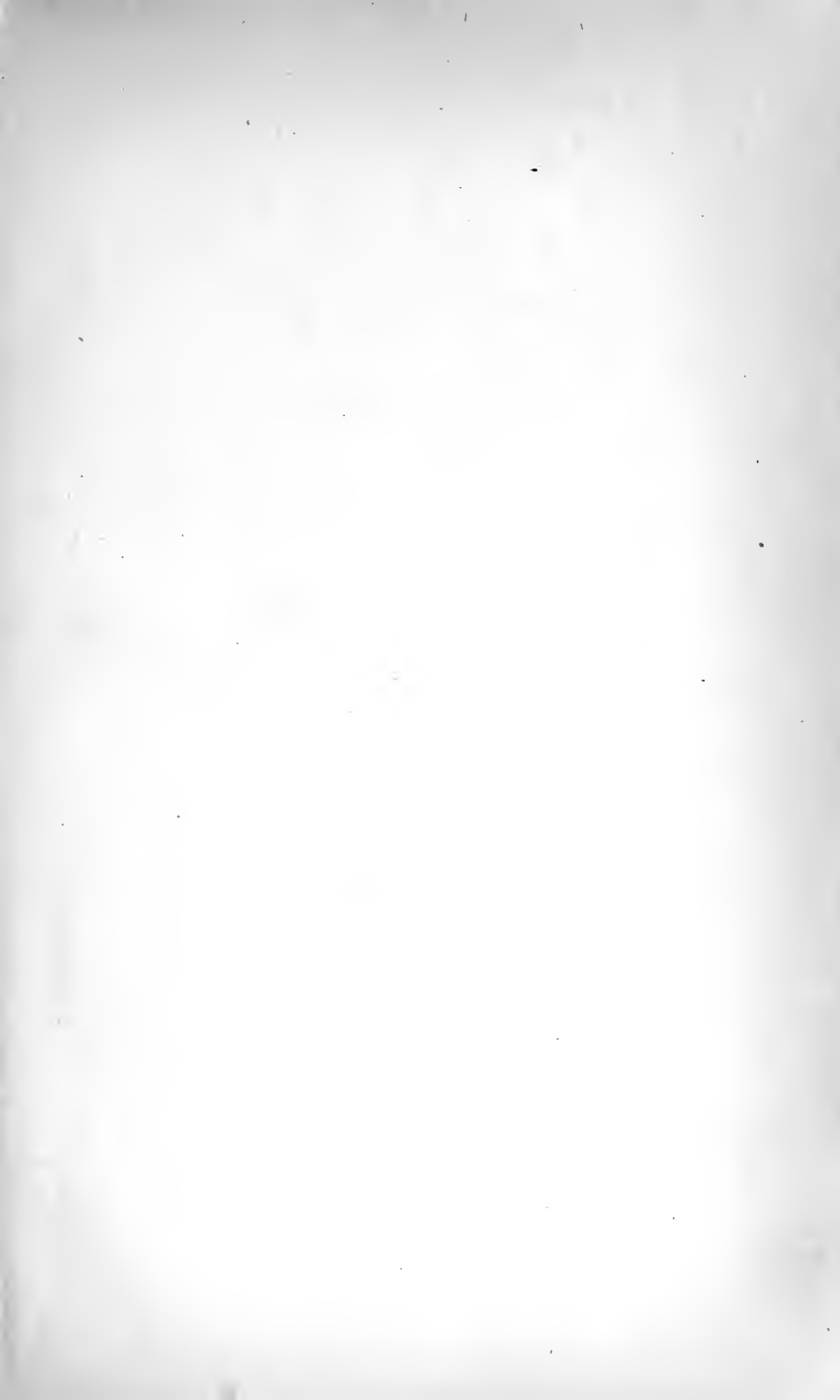
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Boston June 10. 1880.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BOSTON.

BI-CENTENARY COMMEMORATION,

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 1880,

OF THE

REÖPENING OF THE FIRST BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE IN
BOSTON, AFTER ITS DOORS HAD BEEN "NAILED UP"

BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL

OF THE COLONY OF MASSACHUSETTS,

MARCH, 8th, -1680.

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

By THE PASTOR,

CEPHAS B. CRANE, D. D.,

WITH

OTHER EXERCISES.

BOSTON:

TOLMAN & WHITE, PRINTERS, 383 WASHINGTON STREET.

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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

On the 31st day of October, in the year of our Lord 1517, the old town of Wittenberg in Saxony was startled by the resounding blows of a notable hammer. A sturdy monk, Martin Luther by name, with eyes whose beams were like bars of steel, with a ponderous and resolute face, with a massive neck like that of a bull, was nailing to the door of the "Schloss-Kirche," the church which the Elector had built and filled with relics, his famous ninety-five theses against the doctrine of indulgences. Not alone was the door of the church in Wittenberg shaken by the blows of that hammer: the foundations of the scholastic philosophy, the foundations of the Papal throne, the foundations of the Roman Catholic establishment, the foundations of many a royal dynasty, were also mightily shaken. The prophetic dream of Frederic, the good Elector of Saxony, was fulfilled; the long pen, with which the sturdy monk wrote his theses, reached even to Rome, "wounded the ears of a lion (Pope Leo X.) that was couched there," shook the triple crown of the boasted successor of St. Peter, and threw into convulsions all the States of the holy Roman Empire.

Our monk had sufficient occasion for the writing and publishing of his theses. Pope Leo X, a scholar and a voluptuary, "having little knowledge of religion and no inclination for piety," maintaining an expensive establishment and feeding an army of parasites, "was in great want of money." By the advice of a cousin, the astute Cardinal Pucci, he proclaimed "a general indulgence, the product of which should be appropriated, *he said*, to the building of St. Peter's Church, that splendid monument of ecclesiastical magnificence." But the needy pope, justifying himself I know not how, appropriated to his own uses a considerable portion of the revenue that accrued from this audacious operation in "the devil's stock exchange."

It should be understood that the traffic in indulgences had been prosecuted for five centuries with the sanction of the church, and

that the present sale was ordered by the reigning pope. The doctrine of indulgences had therefore on its side the *authority of both church and pope*.

It should also be understood that John Tetzel, the man who had charge of the present traffic, was well known to the ecclesiastical authorities, and had received high honors at their hands. He was Bachelor of Theology, Prior of the Dominicans, Apostolical Commissioner, Inquisitor. For fifteen years he had been engaged in the business which now occupied him. Let us listen to him, as in the market-towns of Germany he hawks his wares. "Draw near, and I will give you letters, duly sealed, by which even the sins you shall hereafter desire to commit shall be all forgiven you. . . . There is no sin so great that the indulgence cannot remit it; and even if any one should (which is doubtless impossible) do the supreme wrong to the Holy Virgin Mother of God, let him pay—let him only pay largely, and it shall be forgiven him. . . . But more than all this: indulgences save not the living alone, they also save the dead. . . . The very moment that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies free to heaven."

Martin Luther ascends his pulpit in Wittenberg, and proclaims: "The only duty that the justice of God imposes on the sinner, according to the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures, is a true repentance, a sincere change of heart, a resolution to bear the cross of Christ, and to strive to do good works. . . . God ever pardons sins *freely* by an inestimable grace."

And now, in the presence of the people, he boldly nails to the door of the "Schloss-Kirche" his immortal theses. Let me read to you from three of them: "Every Christian who feels true repentance for his sin has perfect remission from the punishment and from the sin, without the need of indulgences." "To hope to be saved by indulgences is to hope in lies and vanities; even although the commissioner of indulgences, nay, even though the pope himself, should pledge his own soul in attestation of their efficacy."

"The true and precious treasure of the church is the holy gospel of the glory and grace of God."

What have we in this sermon, and in these theses, of Martin Luther? The doctrine of a free and gracious remission of sins: the doctrine of justification by faith: the doctrine of private judgment in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures: the doctrine of

the rights of the individual conscience as against civil and ecclesiastical authority. In a word, we have the germs of Protestantism. I know that Martin Luther, at this time, imagined himself to believe in the authority of Church and Pope; but in point of fact he had unconsciously thrown off that authority, and he builded more wisely than he knew.

The interpretation of the blows of that notable hammer, whose echoes filled the world in 1517, is this: the rights of private judgment in the interpretation of revealed truth, and the rights of the personal conscience as confronted by civil and ecclesiastical imperialism.

That hammer was in the hand of a man; but the might with which it was wielded was given of God.

On a certain day, probably the 8th of March, 1680, one hundred and sixty-two and a half years after Martin Luther nailed his theses to the door of the "Schloss-Kirche" in Wittenberg, there were heard, in this city of Boston, the blows of a hammer which has not gained deserved celebrity. That hammer did a double work. It nailed up the doors of the first Meeting-house of the First Baptist Church of Boston. It also affixed to them the following document: "All persons are to take notice, that by order of the Court the doors of this house are shut up, and that they are inhibited to hold any meeting therein, or to open the doors thereof, without license from authority, till the General Court take further order, as they will answer the contrary at their peril. Dated in Boston, 8th March, 1680. By order of the Council, Edward Rawson, Secretary."

You suspect at once, as very soon you will clearly perceive, that the inarticulate language of this second hammer was exactly contradictory to that of the first. The first rung out the rights of private judgment and personal conscience: the second rung out a veto upon private judgment and personal conscience. In 1680, an effort was made to undo what, in 1517, had been nobly done. The Puritan magistrates of Massachusetts sought to nullify the memorable deed of the Protestant Reformer of Germany. The wheel of history seemed to have reversed its direction of revolution.

This nailing up of the doors of the First Baptist Meeting-house in Boston is not an isolated event. It has its antecedents, with which it stands in the relation of cause and effect. We cannot understand it, except we view it in its historical connections.

The religious reformation in the sixteenth century, of which Martin Luther was the most conspicuous champion, very soon extended to England. Though it was at the first denounced by the King, and by the nobles who sunned themselves in his terrible smile, it was welcomed by a great number of the common people. The preaching of John Wycliffe and his followers was not yet forgotten; so that in the heart of the English nation there was a preparation for a more thorough Protestantism than that which, in process of time, would be fashioned and proffered by the King and his counsellors. This is a fact which we cannot too carefully keep in mind, if we would understand subsequent events.

The formal, and only partial, conversion of England to the Protestant faith had for its occasion the strong desire of Henry Eighth to be divorced from his wife, Catharine of Aragon, that he might marry Anne Boleyn, with whom he was desperately enamoured. Undoubtedly, the King had occasional misgivings as to the rightness of his conjugal relation with Catharine, since she had been the wife of his deceased brother. Moreover, since he had ceased to hope for a son by Catharine, he easily convinced himself that the political exigencies of his kingdom required the divorce. But the principal motive by which he was urged was his passion for Anne Boleyn. Failing, after protracted negotiations, to obtain from the Pope a decree of divorce, he boldly separated himself and the nation from the Romish Communion. Meantime, having obtained from many learned men and universities a favorable opinion, he put away his wife, and espoused her rival.

Henry had now on his hands the task of reconstructing the Church of England. It did not once occur to him that it could be any other than a national church. Since the Pope was no longer its head, the office of headship naturally fell to the King. The Episcopal constitution of the church was retained; the prayer book kept its place; the bishops and priests continued to wear their official vestments; the creed was but little reformed, and faced toward the Romish, rather than toward the Protestant, doctrine.

It is not difficult for us to realize the profound dissatisfaction with which multitudes of the English people looked upon the national church thus summarily established. The indomitable spirit of John Wycliffe still ruled them. The brave words of Luther fired their hearts. Not long hence, John Calvin, from Geneva, and John Knox, from Edinburgh, will further inflame their ardor.

We have now, in this dissatisfaction with the Established Church, the visible and conspicuous beginning of that great religious movement in England which is known under the general name of Puritanism. This is not the place, nor have we the time, to trace its historical development. That at one time, in the form of Presbyterianism, it very nearly became the established religion of England: that a little later, in the protectorate of Cromwell, Independency supplanted Presbyterianism: and that, at the restoration of the Stuart dynasty, Episcopacy was reëstablished,—is well known to many of you.

But it is important that you obtain a just conception of that process of development which had for its result the separation of the Puritans into two parties, the one being known in history as *Non-Conformists*, the other, as *Independents*. This separation began in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, though not till a later period was it fully accomplished. The Non-Conformists accepted the prevailing opinion that religion should have civil establishment; that a national church is a necessity. In a word, they believed in the union of Church and State. Though they could not conscientiously conform to many of the requirements and usages of the Established Church, they did not feel themselves at liberty to separate from it, and form independent congregations. They remained in the church, and suffered the penalty of non-conformity; looking forward, hopefully, to the time when the church would reform itself after their notions.

The Independents, on the other hand, declared, with more or less of unanimity and emphasis, that national churches have no rightful existence; that each local church must govern itself. “The Church of England, in its national form, was not a true church; but the separate parish churches organized under it might be true churches of Christ.” Still, with an inconsistency which ought not to surprise us, the most of them were slow in coming to the conviction that the civil magistrate ought never to use coercion in matters of religious belief, or that the State ought never to aid in the support of the ministry. When the Independents ventured to go apart from the national church, and form congregations of their own, they received the name of *Separatists*.

We have now reached the period of the settlement of Massachusetts. There are in England many Romanists, of whom I have no present occasion to speak. There is also a growing number of

Baptists. But the more conspicuous figures on the stage are the Established Church, the Non-Conformists and the Separatists. The authority of the Established Church is felt to be tyrannical and oppressive ; and many in its communion, and many out of it, are longing for deliverance. As things are, deliverance can be gained only by voluntary emigration and exile.

On the first day of last August, the railway train by which I was proceeding from York to Lincoln, paused for a moment at the obscure station of Scrooby. Here was formed, probably in 1602, the Independent or Separatist Church, which is better known as the *First Church of the Pilgrims*, associated with which are the immortal names of Bradford and Brewster and Robinson. This church "escaped from persecution in England, under circumstances of great difficulty and hardship, and found an asylum in Holland." A hundred of its members, at a later period, returned to England, set sail for America in the "Mayflower," and in December, 1620, began the settlement of Plymouth. You should observe that the founders of the Plymouth colony, the "Pilgrim Fathers," as we name them, were not Non-Conformists, but Separatists. Because they were Separatists ; because they had had the courage to establish themselves as an independent congregation, and to endure the penalties of separation ; they were ever afterwards distinguished for a comparative toleration of opinions which were not conformable to their own. They found it in their hearts to cherish religious liberty. They received Roger Williams kindly, and made him their teacher in religion. Even Obadiah Holmes, afterwards scourged in Boston for his religious opinions and practices, did not suffer violence at their hands. Yet we must not suppose that they had attained to the light in which it is our privilege to walk. They were not consistent advocates of "liberty of conscience." They believed that religious orthodoxy ought to be protected by the civil magistrates. They did not fully respect the rights of the individual. And more than once, by the intrigues and persistence of a minority, and by pressure from without, they committed acts of oppression, against which their own voluntary exile from their native land was a memorable historical protest. The political establishment of religious liberty was effected, not by the founders of Plymouth colony, but by Roger Williams and his associates. But we shall certainly fail of wisdom and fairness, if we refuse to acknowledge that the separatism of the pilgrim fathers faced towards religious

liberty, and that Plymouth in Massachusetts lay in the direction of Providence in Rhode Island.

The history of Massachusetts colony began in 1628, eight years after the pilgrim fathers landed at Plymouth. The founders of it were not Separatists, but Non-Conformists. They had continued to hold communion with the national church while they were in their native land. They had bitterly denounced the Separatists as guilty of schism, of rending the body of Christ. While on shipboard, John Winthrop and his companions wrote and sent off an address to their friends at home, in which they called the Church of England their "dear mother;" acknowledged that they had received the hope of salvation in "her bosom and sucked it from her breasts;" and declared their purpose to remain in her fellowship. In a word, they were firm, and undoubtedly sincere believers in the necessity of a political establishment of religion, of the union of church and state.

But when they found themselves on the continent of America, thousands of miles away from England, and separated from it by a terrible ocean, they felt themselves at liberty to establish religion in such a form as seemed to them most agreeable to the word of God. Taking from the Independents their idea of Congregationalism, while at the same time rejecting their idea of Separatism, they established the Congregational Church. The colony was a religious commonwealth, a theocratic state. "All political power was placed in the hands of members of the church." Only members of the church enjoyed the right of suffrage. All persons were obliged by law to contribute to the support of the church. Excommunicated persons were forbidden to unite themselves with other religious congregations, and were required to effect a speedy reconciliation with the church. Schismatical churches were to be coerced into conformity. These requirements and prohibitions, which appear to us unjust and odious, were enforced by penalties of disfranchisement, fine, imprisonment, scourging and banishment.

The founders of the colony of Massachusetts professed to find in the New Testament their religious *doctrine*; but it was in the Old Testament that they found their religious *polity*. They were blind to the fact that their theocracy was a vain experiment; that they were sewing new cloth to an old garment; that they were putting new wine into old bottles. A spiritual church cannot be a national church, except the entire nation be spiritual, and all men

be of one mind. Not till all are holy, and truth is one and the same to all, will there be a perfect union of church and state.

Against the political establishment of religion in Massachusetts colony, there was immediate protest. Two brothers, John and Samuel Brown, holding the office of counsellor, ventured to institute, in company with others, a religious service according to the prayer-book. They were at once denounced as troublers of Israel, and sent back to England.

At a subsequent period, the Quakers were taken in hand; and, possibly because of their exceptional inoffensiveness, were treated with exceptional severity. They were condemned for heresy, suspected of witchcraft, imprisoned, banished. Four of them, three men and one woman, venturing to return after banishment, were hanged.

It is a fact, not without interest to the most of us, that, during the past three centuries, the fires of religious persecution have rarely been lighted where Baptists, few or many, have not been found among the sufferers. It is sometimes said of them that they have a natural affinity for water; with equal justice it may be said of them, that, in periods of persecution, they have a natural affinity for fire. When there is a call for martyrs, the Baptists are always found conveniently at hand, and they respond with fine promptitude to the call.

I have no ambition, like that of many of my brethren, to trace a historical succession of Baptists from the time of the apostles, to our own time; discovering them in the dissenting sects of the patristic and mediæval periods. You may find among the teachings of those sects, opinions which now distinguish the Baptists; but you will not find Baptist churches. Confucius and Buddha and Plato anticipated in part many of the sayings of Christ; but the organized doctrine of Christ was all his own. It is possible to place too heavy emphasis upon the idea of historical succession. The true succession is not from antiquity, but from God and truth.

When Martin Luther gave to the people an open Bible, translated into their own tongue, Baptists immediately appeared, as if they had risen out of the ground. They read in the Bible that justification is by personal faith, and that in baptism personal faith is professed. Straightway they abjured infant baptism, and proclaimed that the church must be a spiritual body, a body of regenerate believers. It is a significant fact that Melancthon, the

theologian of the German reformers, and Zwingli, the Swiss reformer, were troubled by the questions which arose respecting the adjustment of the rite of infant baptism, "to the personal faith required by Protestantism." Those questions they never fearlessly and consistently answered.

Looking upon the church as a spiritual body, the Baptists soon discovered that it must be an independent body; it must not be in alliance with the State, nor must it submit to civil jurisdiction over its doctrine and practice. Moreover, since the State has its own sphere and function, the church must not presume to claim for itself exclusively the right of suffrage, and the office of the civil magistrate.

Finally, since baptism is always one and the same, and was given by the Master for all time, the primitive baptism, the immersion of the believer in water, must be maintained.

In a word, the Baptists, having before them an open Bible, and seeking to reëstablish the Apostolic Church, reached the following conclusion:—

The Church is a spiritual body, and therefore a body not to be united with the State, nor to be governed by it in matters of religious doctrine and practice, nor to presume to govern it after the fashion of a theocracy; baptism is to be administered only upon profession of personal faith; the original rite of baptism is to be maintained.

We are accustomed to think of the Church as oppressed by the State, forgetting that the State has often been oppressed by the Church. It was the Papal Church that placed States under interdict, crowned and discrowned Kings, required civil magistrates to burn heretics at the stake. It was the Puritan Church of Massachusetts that wrested from the State the civil magistracy and the right of suffrage. To the honor of the Baptists be it said that, while they have claimed for the Church its rights, they have also claimed for the State its rights. Emblazoned upon their banners has always been the legend: "*a free Church and a FREE STATE.*" They have been the champions of both *civil* and *religious* liberty.

Judge Story, speaking of the Baptist founders of Rhode Island, says: "In the code of laws established by them, . . . we read for the first time, since Christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars, the declaration that conscience should be free, and men should not be punished for worshipping God in the way they

were persuaded he requires." But Judge Story might have added that, in the declaration by the founders of Rhode Island that the *Church* must be free, there was necessarily embodied another declaration, to wit, that the *State* must be free. The supremacy of the Church over the State would be as disastrous as the supremacy of the State over the Church. The Baptists have protested against both the one and the other. The patriot, therefore, as well as the saint, should rise up and pay them homage.

The Baptists, born with the Reformation, appeared in Germany. They also appeared in England. They troubled the dreams of Henry Eighth. "Bloody Mary" may have smiled grimly while they burned. Imperious Elizabeth would gladly have "stamped them out." Pedantic James could not confute their logic. Charles First could not terrify them, nor could Oliver Cromwell silence them. They flooded court and parliament with appeals for "soul liberty." They infused new vigor and liberality into the English constitution. They even got some of their opinions expressed in the English Prayer Book.

When the Non-Conformists sailed over the sea to Salem and Boston, it is not conceivable that they were wholly destitute of the Baptist leaven. We have already seen that they brought with them the Episcopal leaven; why not the Baptist leaven also? The spirit that is in the air will elude the most vigilant quarantine.

The founders of Massachusetts Colony established Congregationalism; and immediately there was heard an Episcopalian protest. A little later, a Baptist protest was heard. This was inevitable; for an open Bible was brought over from England to America. There would have been Baptists in the new world, if not a single one had emigrated from the old world. They would have sprung into life out of the very bosom of established Congregationalism. The principle of Protestantism, like the rod of Aaron, buds and blossoms with them.

In 1631, three years after the founding of Massachusetts colony, Roger Williams lands at Nantasket. He is a Separatist, but not yet a professed Baptist. He condemns the union of Church and State, and is following step by step the path which leads from his premises to their necessary conclusion. Boston rejects him; Plymouth and Salem receive him. At last he is banished; and journeying through the wilderness, institutes on the shore of Narragansett Bay his renowned commonwealth.

In 1639, the General Court at Boston orders one John Spur, who has become infected with Baptist sentiments, to be bound in forty pounds for the payment of twenty pounds the first day of the next Court.

About this time, Mr. Chauncy of Plymouth, "a great scholar and a godly man," declares his opinion that children ought to be immersed and not sprinkled.

In 1644, the Baptists were increasing and spreading in the country. There were also many, not calling themselves Baptists, who discountenanced "infant baptism, and the use of secular force in religious affairs." The General Court, therefore, in November, 1644, framed an act sentencing to banishment those who should oppose infant baptism, or leave the congregation when it was administered, or deny the authority of the civil magistrate to punish outward breaches of the first table.

In 1645, a petition for the suspending of the law against the Baptists, was presented to the General Court. The Court voted that "the law should not be altered at all, nor explained." In 1646, "divers of Dorchester, Roxbury, etc.," presented a petition for the continuance, without weakening or abrogation, of the orders against the Baptists. The petition was granted.

In 1651, we find in Lynn, one William Witter, an aged and infirm man, and blind withal. He is a member of the Baptist Church in Newport. The pastor of the church, John Clarke, with two of the members, John Crandal and Obadiah Holmes, visits him with purpose of ministering sympathy and consolation. While engaged on Sunday in a simple religious service at his house, they are arrested, compelled to attend the meeting of the Established Church, and afterwards consigned to the prison at Boston. Being brought before the court, Crandal is sentenced to pay five pounds, or be well whipped; Clarke to pay twenty pounds, or be well whipped; Holmes to pay thirty pounds, or be well whipped. The sentence of Crandal is lightest, because he is the least prominent of the three. The sentence of Clarke is heavier, probably because he is a preacher, and in other respects a man of note. The sentence of Holmes is heaviest, because he has been a member of the Established Church at Salem and at Rehoboth, and because he has been leniently dealt with by the Court at Plymouth for the crime of baptizing. The charges against them, upon which these sentences are based, are as follows: they held at Lynn a separate

meeting on the Lord's day ; they disturbed the peace of the congregation into which they were dragged, by a brief statement of reasons why they could not fellowship some of the doctrines and practices which it maintained ; they were suspected of having their hands in the rebaptism of one or more of the people of Lynn ; and, in contempt of authority, they administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to persons who were not worthy to receive it.

The fines imposed upon Crandall and Clarke were paid by their friends, without their consent, and were received without objection by the magistrates. The fine imposed upon Holmes, would have been paid by his friends, even against his protest, but the magistrates, for reasons of their own, refused to accept it without his consent. So Obadiah Holmes was whipped, "whipped unmercifully," according to Bancroft, so that for "many days, if not some weeks, he could take no rest-but upon his knees and elbows, not being able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereon he lay." But while he was being whipped, he prayed the Lord not to lay to their charge the sin of his persecutors ; and when the whipping was ended, he said cheerfully to the magistrates : "You have struck me with roses."

I was saying to you, a little time ago, that many who were not professed Baptists were unable to countenance Infant Baptism. Dr. Mather, in his *Magnalia*, testifies that many most worthy Christians, even some of the planters of New England, though welcomed into the communion of the Established Church, shared in this scruple, but endeavored to keep their particular opinion to themselves. Of course, this was not possible. Conscience refuses to be dumb. The scruple found expression, sometimes in verbal protest, sometimes in the turning of the back when the rite of infant baptism was administered, sometimes in withdrawal from the congregation. Dr. Mather confesses that "Some of our churches used, it may be, a little too much cogency toward the brethren who would weakly turn their backs when infants were brought forth to be baptized." "A little too much cogency!" Reprimand, suspension, excommunication by the Church : trial, condemnation, fine, imprisonment, scourging, threat of banishment by the Court.

The Rev. Henry Dunster, first president of Harvard College, a man of great learning and piety, having renounced and publicly disapproved infant baptism, was obliged to resign his office, and retire into the rocky solitudes of Scituate.

It should be observed that when a man utters a conscientious protest against infant baptism, he is faced toward the complete system of Baptist doctrine and policy: he is faced toward a spiritual church, toward the separation of Church and State, toward the rights of conscience and private judgment, toward the authority of the Holy Scriptures in the determining of the ordinances of the house of God. Let him go straight forward, and he will find himself on the banks of the Jordan. Meanwhile, demanding a free Church, he will also demand a free State. For, since baptismal profession of faith must be a voluntary and intelligent act, and may be delayed till one is well along in life, it is not expedient that his political rights and responsibilities, any more than his business or parental rights and responsibilities, be withheld from him until the baptismal profession of faith is made. The State, like the family, must exist, and exercise its functions, even though those who compose it have not yet gained citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

We have, then, in the Colony of Massachusetts, let us say about the year 1665, the unorganized materials of Baptist churches. We have men who have been reprimanded and suspended by the Established Church for their religious opinions, and are convinced that they can never again fellowship it in a visible communion; we have also Baptists from the old country who have never united themselves with the Established Church. Out of these materials there was formed, in Charlestown, May 28, 1665, what is now known as the First Baptist Church of Boston.

The Court of Assistants promptly charges the members of the church to desist from what it is pleased to name their schismatical practice. A little later the General Court disfranchises certain of them, and threatens imprisonment in case they go on in their evil ways. The County Court, at Cambridge, fines and imprisons them. I find that for a considerable period these Baptist fathers of ours had much business in the courts and in the prisons. Persons who ventured to present petitions on their behalf were fined.

In one way or another, however, the church manages to get on, meeting for worship at private houses in Charlestown, Noddle's Island (East Boston), and Boston.

Meanwhile, Philip Squire and Ellis Callender have been quietly building a meeting-house for them "at the foot of an open lot running down from Salem street to the mill-pond, and on the north side of what is now Stillman street."

I suppose we must acknowledge that the house was built, if I may quote the language of the street, "on the sly," and "under the rose." It was not well that the magistrates should have premature knowledge of what was doing. It was, moreover, so small a house that it would not be likely to attract attention. For the gratification of the antiquarians who may be in the congregation I will say, that the frame of the old meeting-house constitutes (in part) the materials of what was, until recently, the South Boston Baptist Meeting-house, on Broadway; and that the old pulpit, where Wayland and Winchell and Stillman preached, was in the vestry of that house.

When the meeting-house of the Boston Baptists is completed, the church purchases it, and on the 15th of February, 1679, occupies it for worship. In the following May, the General Court enacts a law forbidding the erection and use of a house for public worship without the consent of the freemen of the town, assembled in public meeting, and license of the County Court; or, in defect of such consent, without a license by special order of the General Court; the penalty of violation of the law being forfeiture of such house, with the land on which it stands, to the use of the County. This is plainly enough an *ex post facto* law, not entitled to the approval of either angels or men.

In unwilling obedience of this law, the Baptists forbore for a time to occupy their new meeting-house. But when the King, having in view the interests of Episcopacy at home, wrote to the Massachusetts rulers, requiring them to allow to all Protestants liberty of conscience, the Baptists, taking heart, "met again in their house." Summoned before the Court of Assistants, which paid little regard to the letter of the King, they presented a temperate and dignified petition, the answer to which was the order of the Court, dated March 8, 1680, under which the doors of their house were nailed up. The General Court, in the May ensuing, answered their petition for relief by prohibiting "them as a society by themselves, or joined with others, to meet in that public place they have built, or any public house except such as are allowed by lawful authority."

It appears that, on the Sunday after the doors of their house were nailed up, the Baptists held a meeting for worship in their yard. During the week ensuing, they "prepared a shed therein for the purpose." When they came together the second Sunday,

they found the doors open ; and considering, say they, “ that the Court had not done it legally, and that we were denied a copy of the constable’s order and marshal’s warrant, we concluded to go into our house, it being our own, having a civil right to it.”

Undoubtedly, these Baptist fathers of ours reëntered the courts of the Lord with joy and thanksgiving ; and, since I find no record of their later ejection, I gladly leave them in their sanctuary and at their altars.

And it is our privilege to-day to celebrate, not the victory of authority over private judgment and personal conscience, in the nailing up of the doors of the First Baptist Meeting-house in Boston, but the victory of private judgment and personal conscience over authority, in the reöpening of the doors that had once been nailed up. It is the victory of truth, and not of error ; of right, and not of wrong ; of liberty, and not of despotism, — that we celebrate to-day.

I said to you, near the beginning of this discourse, that the nailing up of the doors of our first meeting-house was not an isolated event ; but that it had its antecedents, with which it stood in the relation of cause and effect. Some of these antecedents, beginning with the religious reformation of the 16th century, we have been considering. We have been reviewing the long conflict which issued in the civil and religious liberty which we now enjoy. We have discovered that the principle of Christian Protestantism was not at first clearly apprehended ; that it was but slowly evolved out of the heterogeneous material of religious superstition, political and ecclesiastical absolutism, and confused convictions of the rights of private judgment and personal conscience. The essential principle of Christian Protestantism, as I understand it, is the supreme authority of the revealed word of God over religious faith and practice. When men substitute for the authority of the revealed word, either the authority of the Church, or the authority of the State, or the authority of human reason, they deny the Protestant principle. Martin Luther, in his acceptance of human traditions which had for their foundation the authority of the Church, was so far untrue to the Protestant principle. Henry Eighth, with those who followed him, in his subjection of the Church to the State, and in his Romanizing tendencies, was even more untrue to the Protestant principle than was Martin Luther. The Non-Conformists of England and of Massachusetts Colony, in

their belief in the necessity of a political establishment of religion, were not thorough-going Protestants. The Separatists of England and of Plymouth Colony, in their partial confounding of the functions of Church and State, and in their substitution of human traditions for divine commandments, contradicted the Protestant principle. And, I may add in passing, those who presume, on the authority of human reason, to deny any doctrine which is revealed in the New Testament, or to abrogate any ordinance which in the New Testament is prescribed for all time, fail of perfect loyalty to the Protestant principle.

I venture to say, though without the spirit of boasting, that the Baptists have endeavored to pay profoundest respect to the Protestant principle; that they have endeavored to submit themselves to the supreme authority of the revealed word of God. Accepting and practising and proclaiming the teachings of that word, they have always been the foremost champions of civil and religious liberty. The political constitutions of England and America are indebted to them for some of their noblest provisions in the interests of private judgment and free conscience in matters of religion. They proclaimed freedom; they offered themselves in sacrifice on its behalf. Often persecuted, they were never persecutors. In the establishment of the commonwealth of Rhode Island, they achieved a victory for truth and for man, the brilliancy of which has never been excelled. And when the doors of their first meeting-house in Boston, after their nailing up two hundred years ago, flew open, and remained open, the doors of all Christian temples shared in the triumph.

But let us pay homage to all who nobly wrought for the final and perfect establishment of the Protestant principle; who, according to the light which they had received, battled bravely for the right. Let us welcome to the fellowship of our joy to-day the stout-hearted German Reformers; the good men and true of the state church of England; the English Non-Conformists and Separatists, who submitted to the spoiling of their goods, and fled over the sea to a howling wilderness, for the sake of conscience and the God of conscience. Among them all, we shall find a goodly company of martyrs who sealed their testimony with their blood. They were all in the battle: they all share the glory of the victory.

I confess to you, friends, I hope that it will not be to the disappointment of any,—that I do not find myself at all inclined to pour

out the vials of my wrath upon the Non-Conformist founders of the colony of Massachusetts, who were careful not to allow our Baptist fathers to "be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease," but compelled them to fight "to win the prize," and sail "through bloody seas." I share the charitable impulses of James M. Winchell, one of my predecessors in the ministry of this church, who said that the cruelty of the New England Puritans was due, not so much to their disposition, as to the principles which they held; and that the persecution in which they grimly indulged themselves was the evil of the times. Like Saul of Tarsus, they thought they were doing God service. I cannot forget how much they had themselves endured for the sake of conscience and the God of conscience. And I am convinced that there was more of virtue and manliness and piety in their intolerance of dissent from what they conceived to be truth, than there is in our modern indifferentism and false liberality, which will cheerfully sacrifice any and every most sacred doctrine of religion for the sake of union and good fellowship. Better the honest and brave man with a bludgeon in his fists, than the imbecile who mixes truth and falsehood, right and wrong, in the cup of hospitality and communion. It is stout-hearted men, men who give and receive blows, that are used of God for the advancement of his Kingdom. I admire, as they look forth from the dingy canvas, the resolute faces of the New England Puritans, who had the courage to persecute, as well as to be persecuted, for the honor of their Master. I do not admire the effeminate faces of our modern advocates of a false and sentimental catholicity, who run up and down the earth, breathlessly entreating the disciples of our Lord to strike hands with those who deny Him.

Nevertheless, since the apostle Paul condemned himself for unrighteous acts which, as Saul of Tarsus, he had done with an honest purpose to glorify God; let us be assured that the New England Puritans, when they entered into the purer and clearer light of the New Jerusalem, deplored and confessed their misdeeds in Lynn and Cambridge and Boston. They have condemned themselves; why shall I put on the black cap of the judge, and add my own words of condemnation?

But, while we deal tenderly with them, let us not presume to justify their misdeeds. Let us not say, as some in these days are venturing to suggest, that the prosperity, and even the preserva-

tion, of the infant colony of Massachusetts, required that all religious dissent be "stamped out;" and that, in the circumstances, the persecution of the Baptists was necessary and right. For, by the same process of reasoning, we can justify the crucifixion of our Lord, the beheading of Paul, the burning of John Huss, the massacre of St. Bartholomew. To the State, as at the time constituted, vigorous religious dissent is always inconvenient, if not dangerous. But it is better that the State suffer some damage, than that truth and righteousness be trodden under foot.

Meantime, it is worthy of note that our modern apologists for the misdeeds of the New England Puritans, are flatly contradicted by the wrong-doers themselves. You have already heard the confession of Dr. Cotton Mather, as to the "little too much cogency" used by some of the churches toward those "who would weakly turn their backs when infants were brought forth to be baptized."

In 1718, Elisha Callendar was ordained and installed pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston, and the services were held in the very meeting-house, the doors of which had been "nailed up." The ordination sermon was preached by Dr. Cotton Mather, his father, the renowned Dr. Increase Mather, listening with interest and approval. The preacher, having denounced the attempts that had been made "to unite people in forms and terms that are not the pure maxims of living unto God," adds this humble confession: "New England also has, in some former times, done something of this aspect, which would not now be so well approved of; in which, if the brethren, in whose house we are now convened, met with anything too unbrotherly, they now with satisfaction, hear us expressing our dislike of everything that looked like persecution in the days that have passed over us."

Even William Hubbard, the not over-tolerant historian, thinks that the "more grave and serious Baptists," like Thomas Gould, and others, ought to have been dealt with more tenderly; though he adds, in language sufficiently racy, that they cannot be justified for "casting themselves into the mould of a particular church, under the specious varnish of a church in gospel order, consisting only of a few giddy sectaries that fondly conceit themselves to be an orderly church."

The men who did the wrong have made confession; it is worse than idle for modern apologists to justify deeds of which the confession was a voluntary, and the only possible, reparation.

Sir Richard Saltonstall, a Puritan, one of the settlers of Massachusetts, and a man as much in advance of his time as was Roger Williams, about the middle of the seventeenth century, wrote from England to two of the Boston preachers, a remarkable letter, which embodies our present convictions concerning the rights of private judgment and personal conscience in matters of religion. The non-conformist fathers of Massachusetts colony did not profit by it. Shall their modern apologists refuse the lesson which it teaches? This letter, eminently worthy of perusal and publication, will be found appended to this discourse, as printed.

Suffer me to conclude this long discourse with a word of exhortation to those of you who bear the name and profess the principles of the stout hearted Baptists who acted their part so nobly in the early history of this Commonwealth. You may well extenuate, though you ought not to imitate, certain extravagances of protest into which they fell, stimulated by consciences not perfectly civilized, and irritated by cruel persecutions. You are not called to put on your hats, nor to turn your backs, when the ceremony of infant baptism is performed; nor need you say with William Witter, "that they who stayed whiles a child is baptized, doe worshipp the dyvell," and "broake the saboath." Such emphasis of gesture and speech was characteristic of the times, and was limited to no religious sect.

But the great truths which, in the light of the Protestant principle, the early Baptists discovered, and to which they were sublimely loyal in extreme suffering, you should courageously maintain. If they were truths three hundred years ago, they are truths to-day: if they are truths, they are sacred. To betray them by any weak compliance and fellowship with error, is to prove yourselves unworthy of your heroic fathers.

Meantime, you are pledged by the past history of the Christian denomination to which you belong, to stand forth as the champions of those whose rights of private judgment and personal conscience in matters of religion are unrighteously denied. If the State presumes to discriminate against any religious sect, except there be, on the part of that sect, a transgression of the essential laws of morality, it is your business to protest against such discrimination. If any church attempts to coërcé into its own communion those who find it in their hearts to enter into a different communion, your voices should be heard in denunciation of the wrong. If misguided

parents require of their children that they yield submission to their will, rather than to the will of God, you should plead for the rights of those children, even as you would plead for your own. Tyranny over private judgment and personal conscience, be it civil or ecclesiastical or social or parental, you should oppose with might and main. Be it yours always to befriend the oppressed.

But while you champion the oppressed, you must be careful not to become yourselves oppressors. In the things of religion, pay respect to the convictions and consciences even of your young children. Beware of denouncing them if they honestly question the truth of the opinions which you profess, or if they honestly entertain opinions which contradict your own. Do not blast them with invectives, when you ought to convince them by arguments. And if ever your own children, or the children of others, hear the voice of their Lord bidding them walk in all the ways of his commandments, see to it that you do not refuse them opportunity of obedience.

Moreover, put your traditions, your Baptist traditions, to the test of the word of God; and if any be found that are inconsistent therewith, abjure them. Above all, forbear to bind your mere traditions upon any man. We are human, like other men; and like other men, we may be tempted to exalt our poor notions to the plane of the divine revelation. We may ascribe to our inherited regulations and *usages* the same authority which we rightly concede to the Sermon of the Mount. And so, because one does not walk in *our* narrow, and often crooked and absurd *rut*, we may unjustly accuse him of not walking in the *Lord's way*.

We are bound by our principles to stand always face to face with the Bible, to walk in the light which flows from it, and to welcome whatever new light may break forth from it.

Maintaining our loyalty to the inspired word, respecting the consciences of all men, dealing charitably with all men, we shall come at last, with all God's chosen ones, "unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

COPY OF A LETTER FROM SIR RICHARD SALTONSTALL TO MR. COTTON
AND MR. WILSON.

“ Reverend and dear friends, whom I unfeignedly love and respect:

“ It doth not a little grieve my spirit to heare what sadd things are reported dayly of your tyranny and persecutions in New England, as that you fine, whip, and imprison men for their consciences. First, you compell such to come into your assembles as you know will not joyne with you in your worship, and when they show their dislike thereof, or witness against it, then you styrrr up your magistrates to punish them for such (as you conceyve), their publicke affronts. Truely, friends, this your practice of compelling any in matters of worship to doe that whereof they are not fully persuaded, is to make them to sin, for soe the Apostle (Rom. 14 and 23) tells us, and many are made hypocrites thereby, conforming in their outward man for feare of punishment. * * * * * These rigid wayes have layed you very lowe in the hearts of the saynts. * * * I hope you doe not assume to yourselves infallibilitie of judgement, when the most learned of the Apostles confesseth he knew but in parte and saw but darkly as through a glass * * * * * Oh! that all those who are brethren, though yet they cannot think and speake the same things, might be of one accord in the Lord. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you thus to be mynded towards one another, after the example of Jesus Christ our blessed Savyor in whose everlasting armes of protection, hee leaves you who will never leave to be

Your truly and much affectionate friend, in the nearest union,
RIC. SALTONSTALL.

For my reverend and worthy much-esteemed friends, Mr. Cotton and Mr. Wilson, preachers to that Church which is at Boston in New England, give this.”

EVENING SERVICES.

[The following report of the evening exercises is from the Watchman.]

The pastor, Rev. C. B. Crane, D. D., took charge of the evening exercises, and with him upon the platform were His Excellency Gov. Long, the Rev. J. T. Duryea, D. D., of the Central Congregational Church, the Rev. S. F. Smith, D. D., author of the hymn “ America,” and Prof. E. B. Andrews, of Newton Theological Seminary. Baptist, Congregationalist, Unitarian, — there was nothing narrow here, except the house itself, in proportion to the people who gathered and were compelled to be disappointed of any place within its walls. Some time before the hour, every seat was taken, a line of occupied camp-stools marked each aisle, even the pulpit stairs were appropriated, and on every side the ushers were

besieged in vain. The decorations consisted of potted plants in front of the pulpit, and to the right and left, upon the wall, the dates "1680" and "1880" wrought in white carnations on shields of evergreen.

Of the customary devotional exercises with which the meeting was opened, the organ voluntary and choir singing merit particular praise. The new Governor being introduced, made a most agreeable impression on the audience, with his rather small figure, and youthful face beaming with health, intelligence, and a refined humor that crept into his address of its own accord, — an address scarcely enough in accordance with the name of Long, although in quality, perfectly comporting with his title of Excellency. At different points there was a general suppressed applause, evidently kept in check only by the place and the day.

He said as the representative of the power by which the church was closed against its owners, that he could not determine whether he and Dr. Duryea, in the characteristic generosity of the Baptists, had been called here to receive forgiveness for a former Governor and Council, or to be seated on the stool of repentance, and make the best defence they could of their predecessors; he would, therefore, waive the whole question. His Excellency struck a fortunate keynote with which all the speaking harmonized, neither he nor any one committing the blunder of abusing the memory of the Puritans to prove how far the age has advanced from their persecuting spirit. It was easy, he said, to characterize this action of two hundred years ago as bigoted and intolerant. But it was honest, and not inconsistent. The Pilgrim Fathers had no knowledge of religious freedom and tolerance. He preferred to look upon that act, and others of its kind, as in the cause of progress from still darker and more intolerant times, to the light and liberty of the present period.

In 1635 the magistracy of the State banished that good man, Roger Williams, whose fault was that he was two centuries in advance of his time. Looking over the crowded congregation, the speaker remarked, that from appearances, the Baptists did not all leave the State, as ordered. The recurrence of these manifestations of intolerance he deemed to be, in the enlightened era upon which we have now entered, impossible. Indeed, so much is said now-a-days in favor of biennial sessions of the Legislature, and of the impatience of the people under too much legislation, that he

thought it more likely public sentiment would call for the nailing up of the doors of the State-house, than those of the churches.

The honorable speaker testified to the services rendered by the Baptists throughout their history, in regard to maintaining freedom of worship and private judgment in matters of religious belief. So long as these churches continue their good work of disseminating truths of religion and temperance and pure morals, they will never have their doors locked by order of the Governor and Council.

The Rev. Dr. Duryea made an eloquent address of considerable length, in which he said that all religious persecution is the outgrowth of mistaken zeal, and he thought it better to be earnestly wrong, from rigorous fidelity to conscience, than be amiably indifferent in the presence of good and evil, lack all intensity of feeling, — smile weakly at the right and contend feebly against the wrong.

The church tried to manage a very gentle Spanish Inquisition. They believed that morality depended on religion. Their error lay in a mistaken appreciation of truth. Their conclusions were partly true, their practice was unfortunate. He related an anecdote of a clerical friend, who said of one of his church members, who got up disturbances, that he was “a man with a conscience,” — having zeal without discretion. Conscience misguided is a mighty, god-like power off the track. Persecution is a sword that has a handle that cuts as well as the blade.

There must burn within us a flame of indignation at evil and disloyalty, and yet we can sympathize with those who can apologize for the wrong of the past and condone it. He spoke of Carlyle as one whose denunciations against mankind were unmixed with pity, as one who thunders but never rains. Notwithstanding evil has been introduced into the condition of things in the world, we must have a hopeful view of the future, for a good day is coming when right will overturn wrong, and the kingdom of God be fulfilled. Jesus never complained of the moral government of the Father, was always able to say, “Even so, Father,” was always hopeful concerning the future. He closed by saying that experience has proved that persecution and coercion do not advance the cause of religion; that in this age, we have not even the poor excuse that the end justifies the means, for this means can never accomplish the end, and so it is out of court, non-suited at the beginning.

This was well followed by a characteristic, hopeful and congratu-

latory letter from Rev. Wm. Hague, D. D., who has been pastor of both the First Church and the Shawmut Avenue Church, now united in one. Dr. S. F. Smith, then read the following original poem :

Ay, "Close the doors, and nail them fast,"

"Shut out the faithful few,"

Who nailed their banner to the mast,

To Christ and conscience true;

Their motto, — "What the Scripture saith,"

With souls serene and brave,

And held unshrinkingly the faith

The Word and Spirit gave.

Ay, "Nail the doors," — bleak winds of March

Roared round the little flock;

But, peaceful as the heaven's blue arch,

Their zeal defied the shock;

Not theirs, made weak by coward fear,

The truth they loved, to yield;

Not theirs, compelled by scoff and jeer,

To hasten from the field.

One Sabbath, scattered through the town,

Barred from their house of prayer,

Crushed by the rulers' scorn and frown,

The people's taunt and stare;

And one, to God and duty true,

Met in their lowly shed,

They worshipped Him in tears, who knew

Not where to lay His head.

Ay, "Nail the doors," — the rulers deemed

Their act had power to bind

The sacred rights of men redeemed,

To crush the freeborn mind;

But who shall bind the beams of light

The sun at midday flings?

Or check the eagle's heavenward flight

By cobwebs on his wings?

Prisons and fines, and pain and death,

In vain assert control

O'er that free thing, the Almighty breath,

God's image in the soul;

Tyrants of earth, with mace and crown,

May make an empire cower, —

The soul — an empire of its own —

Defies their utmost power.

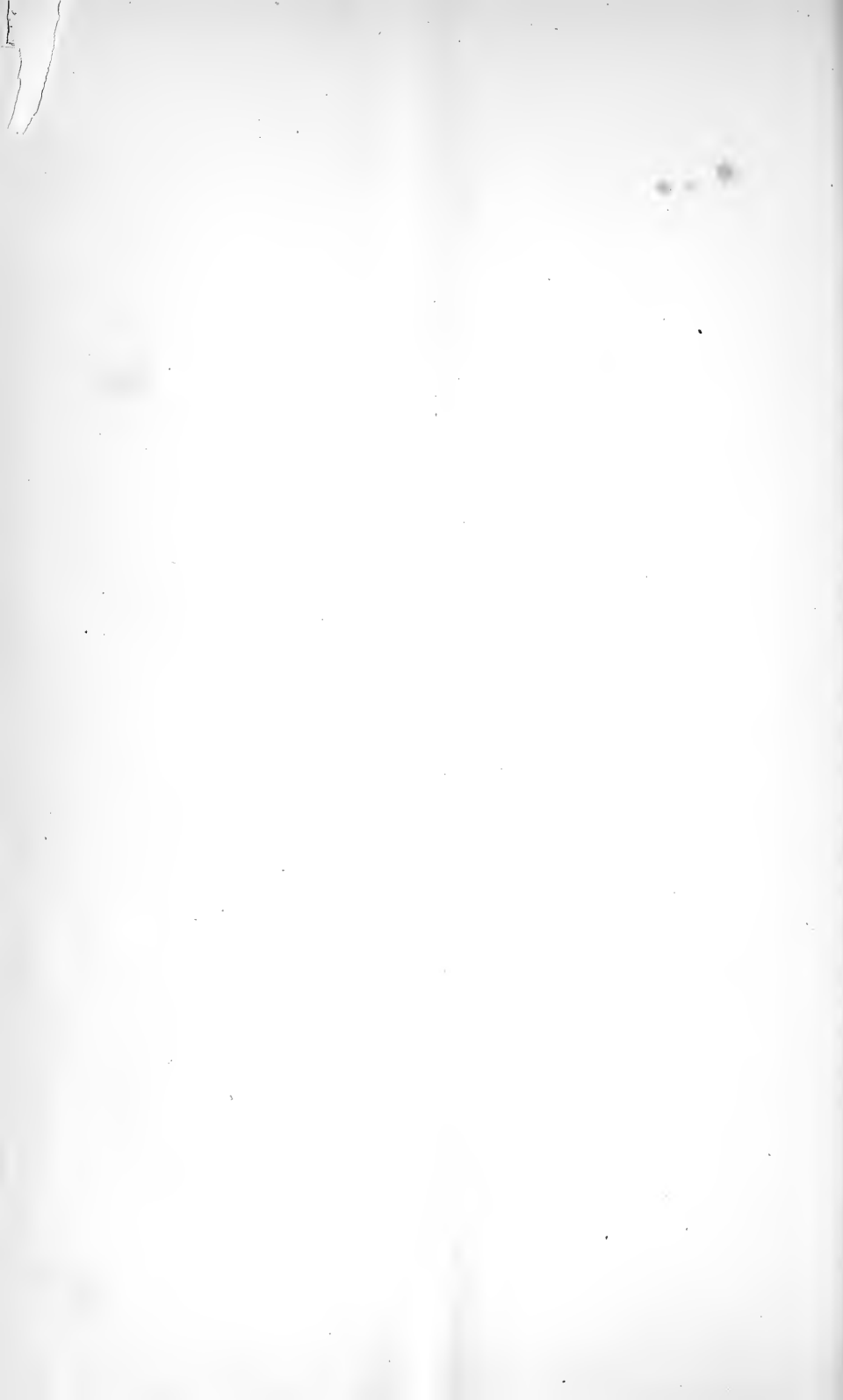
Can man o'er noontide's glory bring
 A pall of blackest night?
 Or grains of dust upon his wing
 Impede the seraph's flight?
 God's thought, unchecked by human rule,
 Shall hold its mighty sway;
 God's law shall found its lofty school,
 And love make all obey.

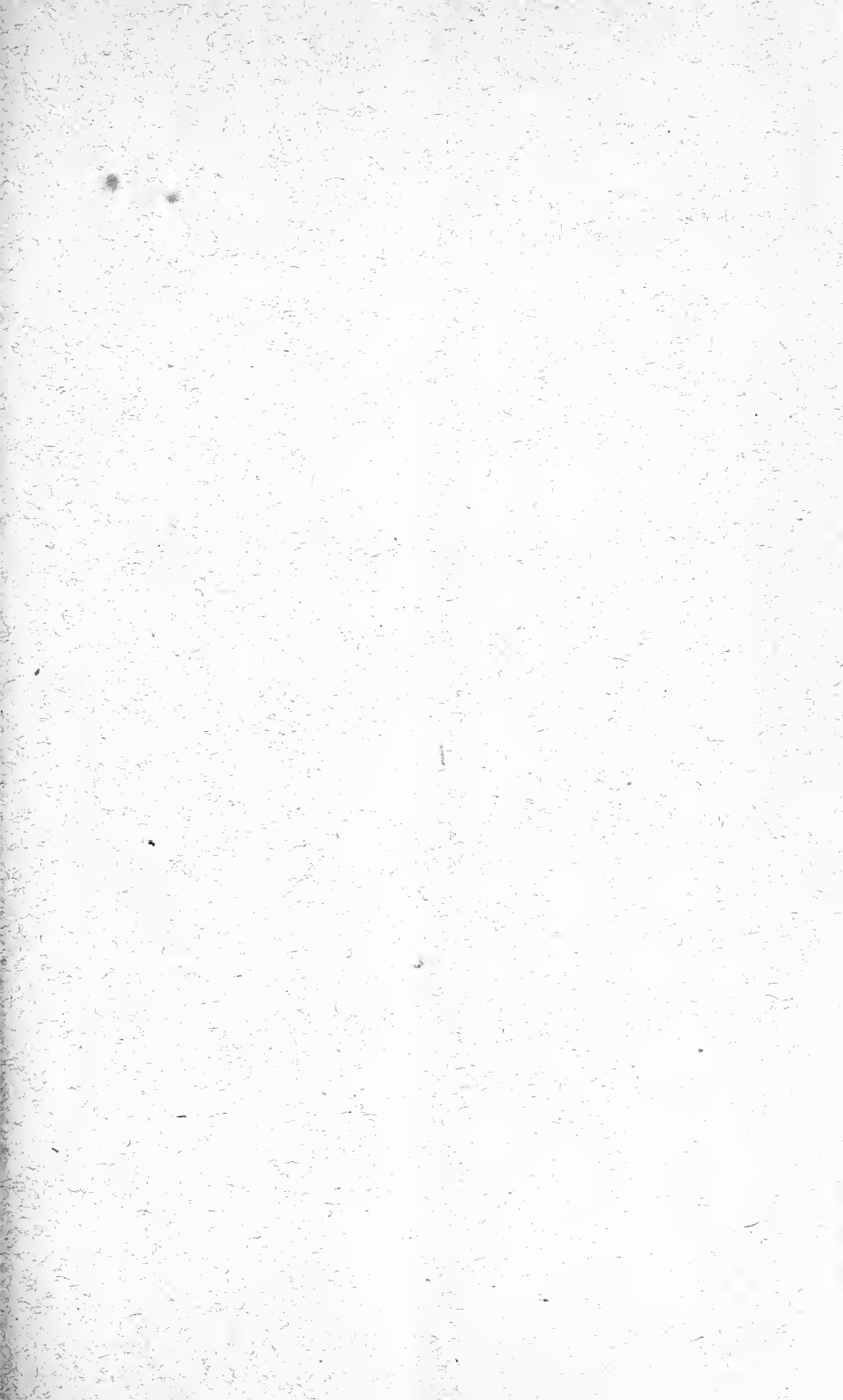
Ay, "Nail the doors," the mighty wrong
 The erring hammer wrought, —
 A seed, that day, — harvests, ere long, —
 With wondrous fruits was fraught;
 As ships, in ballast, oft depart,
 Yet, when they homeward sail,
 Bring wealth uncounted to the mart,
 Nor heed the stormy gale.

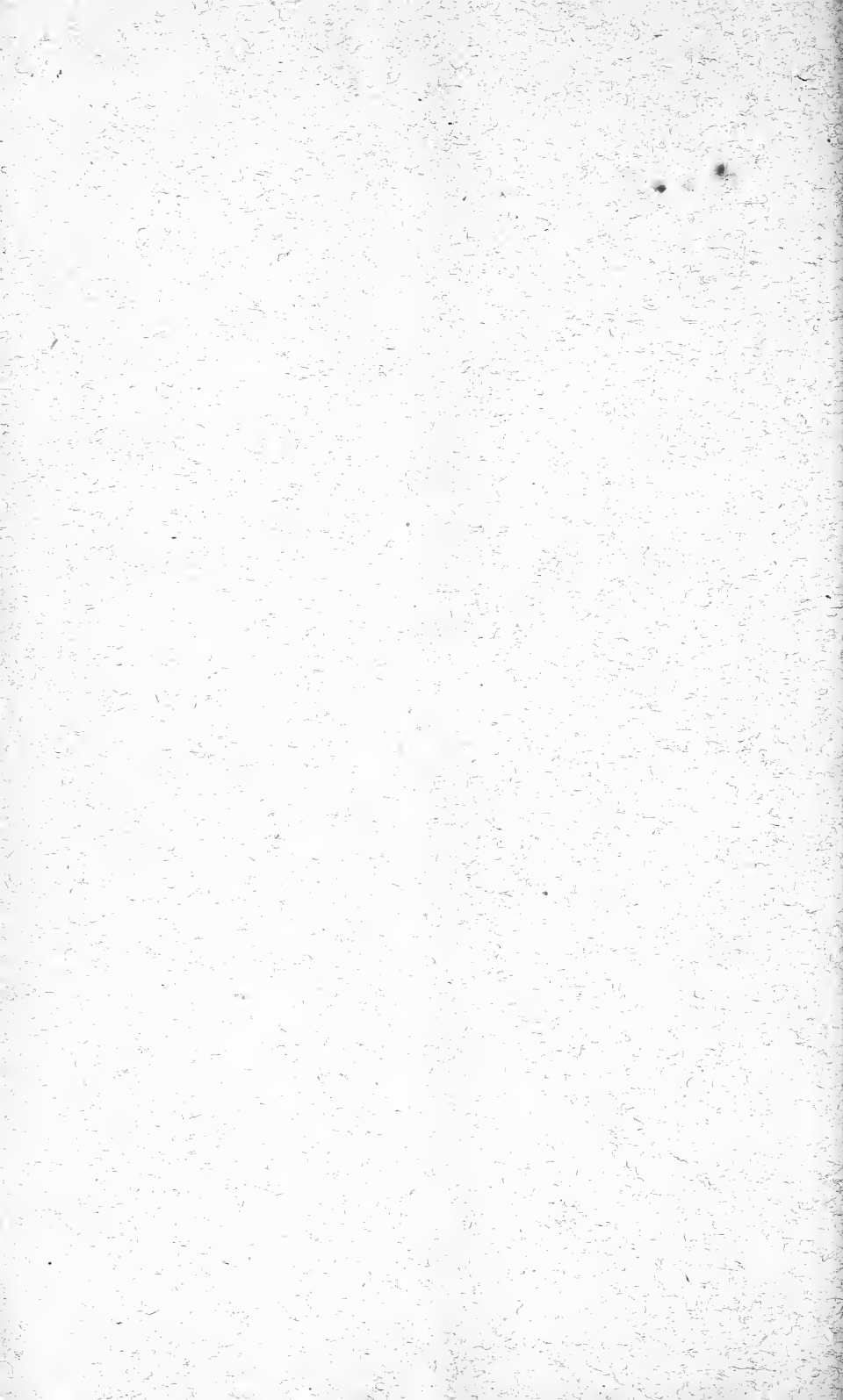
Ay, "Nail the doors," — yet God's true light
 From God's blest Word will shine;
 Conscience and truth will have their right, —
 'Tis human, 'tis divine;
 Hold in your leash the billowy sea,
 Fetter the waves of sound,
 Man's soul, — God's truth, — divinely free,
 By man cannot be bound.

Professor Andrews being called to speak, urged to be excused on account of the lateness of the hour. He was not excused, and had he been, the audience would have been great losers. His theme was the active part which the Baptists have always taken in advancing moral and religious truths. In a rapid review of events comprised in these two hundred years, he alluded to the Sunday school, which, he said, we cannot claim to have originated, though we do claim to have entered the open door, and no denomination has done more to adapt and render effective an institution which no church would be without. He spoke of the different ideas entertained at different periods with regard to the education of the clergy; made a happy connection between Cromwell's day and the battle of Bunker Hill; and, in concluding, inquired whether we were living up to the principles of the fathers, or retrograding.

The exercises closed a little before ten o'clock, with the singing of two stanzas of "America," and benediction by Dr. Duryea.











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