

Chas. L. May

DR. LOWELL'S DISCOURSE,

AUGUST 3, 1845.

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A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE WEST CHURCH IN BOSTON,

AUGUST 3, 1845.

BY

CHARLES LOWELL,

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE WEST CHURCH.

"Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years."
DEUTERONOMY viii. 2.

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1845.

DISCOURSE.

“REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS; AND AGAIN I SAY, REJOICE.”—
Philippians, iv. 4.

THERE are seasons in the life of every one of us, when a retrospective view of life, of what we have done for our own good or the good of others, as well as what of duty we have left undone, comes home upon the mind with peculiar force. These seasons often occur in the life of a minister, and, though he should avoid a too frequent recurrence to them in the pulpit, yet an occasional reference may be neither uninteresting nor useless.

HAD it pleased GOD that I should have been with you a sabbath or two since, I should have told you that, in the week previous, forty years had been completed since I first preached in this parish. What I then intended to say I purpose now to say, in the freedom of colloquial address, rather than in the language of a labored discourse. To this the circumstances and recollections of this occasion naturally impel me. They lead me to consider myself as in the midst of my family, speaking to familiar friends, with many of whom

I have been long connected; a large portion of whom have grown up under my ministry, are as my children, and, till lately, have known no other as their minister. I may not dwell on the happiness I feel in the new relation which they and myself sustain to an associate pastor.

It was in a small wooden edifice, occupying indeed the spot on which we are now assembled, but then standing almost alone, in the outskirts of the town, with few buildings between the church and the river, that I preached my first sermon here. It had much the aspect, as far as I now remember, of a country church, within and without, with a few houses in its neighbourhood, and others, scattered here and there in the fields, in what was then called "New Boston."

It was to a parish consisting, I think, of about forty proprietors, and less than a hundred families, that that sermon was preached. Yet it was a parish to whom, at my ordination, it was said, — "Your history has been illustrious, and we honor you, whilst we venerate your pastors."

I well remember the day, and something, it may be, of my emotions, as I ascended the green eminence on which the church stood, by one of the many paths which, in seventy years, had been marked out by the footsteps of the worshippers who had gone up in company to the house of God. I had just returned from pursuing my studies abroad,* after an absence of two years. It was the place of my nativity to which I had returned; but in this parish I was an entire stranger.

* In Edinburgh.

I had probably had intercourse only with the officer of the church who was employed to ask for my services, who is long since numbered with the dead, — if they can be said to die, who truly live! — and whose memory (with that of how many others!) is very precious to me.

My predecessor was one of the last persons I had seen before I left my country. I have a vivid remembrance of the good old man, “simple, grave, sincere.” He said to me, “You will probably return to take the place of one of us.” It was appointed in the providence of GOD that I should take his place. Would that a larger portion of the spirit of the ascended Elijah had fallen, with his mantle, on his immediate successor!

Few, very few, are among the living on earth, who heard my first sermon. Of those who were recorded as proprietors, only two; both with us in spirit, though only one in person. May a life so honorable and so dear be yet far extended! Of the heads of families, of both sexes, five or six remain. Of those who were ministers in the town at that time, not one. I am the oldest in standing of the ministers of all denominations by more than six years. Of about a hundred who had preceded me in the ministry in the town, since its settlement, fourteen had as long a ministry as mine has been. Of the thirteen ministers who were on the council at my ordination, one only is living;* of those who officiated on that occasion, not one. One of the earliest taken was the youngest, my classmate

* Dr. Pierce, of Brookline.

and friend,* who had breathed the wish, “that our gracious Master, who, when he was on earth, sent forth his seventy evangelists, by two and two, to preach the gospel in Judea, would send us forth together by his authority, would permit us to travel in company through a useful ministry, and would enable us to return to his presence at last, rejoicing to find that our names had been written, with the names of our people, in the book of life.” How short was our journey together! How brief, yet how brilliant, was his ministry on earth! In the best portion of his devout aspiration, may it yet be fulfilled!

“*Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice.*” Such was the theme of my discourse on the day to which I have referred; such the text of the first sermon which I preached in this parish. It was my object, in that sermon, to portray the beneficial influence of religion on the character and happiness of man; and the concluding exhortation was in the spirit of the text, “*Rejoice in the Lord always,*” — in joy and in sorrow, in prosperity and adversity, in riches and poverty, in health and sickness, in life and death. As I then presented religion, — in the garb of cheerfulness, and not of melancholy, as the inspirer of peace and hope, and not of wretchedness and despair, — so, you will bear me witness, I have always presented it. As I then exhorted those who heard me to rejoice in the Lord always, so have I exhorted you to do in all the varied circumstances of your lives. I have directed you to GOD as

* Mr. Buckminster, who died June 9th, 1812.

your Father and your best Friend, and — as our religion presents him to us — as GOD in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. I have exhorted you to go to him, through Christ, as your only secure refuge, and have assured you that none who went by that way should in any wise be cast out.

So did I begin, and so would I end, my preaching. "*Rejoice in the Lord always.*" And what abundant cause have we for rejoicing in the Lord! What an abundant source of rejoicing is opened to us in that religion which teaches us to rejoice in GOD! How often, — little as it seems to me that I have been instrumental in effecting in this already long ministry, — how often have I seen the influence of this religion in refining, purifying, sanctifying, elevating the soul of the believer; in soothing sorrow, sometimes indescribably great, and which nothing else could soothe; in reconciling, and more than reconciling, to death, where there was every thing to inspire the wish to live! But religion — faith in GOD and in Christ — had given the hope of a better world, and death was "swallowed up of life." Blessed hope! Hold it fast, my friends. Do not let it go. If we deceive you, we are ourselves deceived. And — were it so — blessed delusion! But it is *not* so. We do not deceive you, and we are not deceived. We have a sure and firm foundation for our hope in Christ. We *have* this hope. Without it, we should indeed be miserable.

In my preaching, I have dwelt but little on points of doubtful disputation. The opinion I gave many years

ago,* in reference to a minister's duty in this respect, I repeat as my opinion now. "He is bound to elucidate, as far as he is able, and may deem useful, the doctrines of the gospel; but the gospel itself, as a comprehensive whole, is *a doctrine according to godliness*, and no elucidation need be attempted by which this is not promoted." To me it seems that the essential doctrines of religion are few and simple. I confess I consider religion itself as a very simple thing; as consisting much more in practice than in theory; as having much more to do with the affections than with the understanding; with the heart than with the head. The Christian religion treats, indeed, of truths the most sublime. It furnishes scope for the exercise of the highest intellectual powers. It has shed light on the most interesting subjects of speculation, and thereby greatly enlarged the limits of human knowledge. It has been the great instrument for raising the intellectual as well as the moral condition of mankind; for enlightening as well as reforming the world. Its service, too, is a *reasonable* service. Its exercises and its exhibitions must be under the control and guidance of reason; but, in my opinion, it does consist much, very much, in exercises and exhibitions, — in the exercise of holy affections, and the exhibition of a holy life. Of the truth and importance of the distinction I have heretofore made between theology and religion † I am more and more convinced. However important may be theology as an instrument, — as the means of promoting religion, — it is

* Sermon at an ordination in 1820.

† Sermon at an ordination in 1829, and sermon at an ordination in 1831.

not our theology, but our religion, that will save us, — the religion of the heart. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and then with the tongue maketh confession to salvation.* “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.”

It was a moral kingdom which Jesus Christ came to establish on earth, a kingdom in the hearts of men. *The kingdom of God is within you.* He declares the first commandment to be *love to God*, and the second commandment to be *love to man*, and that *on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*. Often — how often! — have I witnessed the efficacy of this love, when all the labor I could exert could give little or no distinct notion of what are commonly called the doctrines of religion, and where what was learned to-day was forgotten to-morrow. But there was love to GOD and love to man, there was a hope full of immortality, — a hope which *entered within the veil, and was therefore an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.*

I came into the ministry unfettered and unpledged, except to do what I might, by the blessing of GOD, to promote the interests of religion, and the virtue and happiness of this society.* I came into a church strictly independent. I know not that I have done any thing, in word or deed, to bring the church or myself in bondage to any one. I came here at a period when the churches were at peace. Parties have been formed; war has raged. I have joined none of

* Letter accepting the call of the parish.

the parties ; I have had no share in the contest ; unless, indeed, in essaying to throw oil on the waters of strife, and in lifting, now and then, my feeble voice to say, “ *Sirs, ye are brethren ; why do ye strive ?* ”

If I have joined no party, it was because I remembered the words of an apostle, — “ It hath been declared unto me that there are contentions among you. Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided ? Was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ? Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed ? Let no man glory in men, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. Ye are Christ’s, and Christ is GOD’S.” It was, further, because in some things I agreed with all parties, — in all things, with none ; and, adopting not their creed, I took not their name.* As I have understood the doctrines and precepts of the Bible I have taught them, not concerning myself, in this matter, about the opinions or practice of others, and holding myself amenable only to my people, my conscience, and my GOD. I have not sought for dominion over other men’s faith, and I have suffered no one to have dominion over my own faith, — *no, not for an hour.*

Within less than a year after my first sermon here was preached, the old church, consecrated by so many prayers, and hallowed by so many sacred recollections, was taken down, and the church in which we now worship erected in its place. Dear to my remem-

* The reasons for this course are given at some length in a dedication sermon, published in 1828.

brance is that modest structure, associated with my first consecration to the service of God in his church, and with the memory of those who gave me so united and earnest a welcome to that service. Fain, if it might have been, would I have still retained it, and preached my last sermon where I preached my first, here, in the desk of which, in the eloquent service at my ordination, * it was said, "The desk in which Mayhew and Howard have stood is privileged above the common walks of public instruction."

There was a large accession of worshippers on the erection of the new church, and the parish, during a great part of my ministry, consisted of from three to four hundred families. Circumstances also brought under my care the largest part of that portion of the population who were destitute of a stated ministry; so that, for several years, I was the minister at large (and the first minister at large) in fact, though not in name, having, at the same time, the care of a parish as numerous, at least, as any in the town. The burden was greater than I could bear, and the impaired state of my health led, by the advice of the parish, to my fixing my residence in the country. The number of churches, in the mean time, had multiplied, and there was less necessity for my extra services.

The Sunday school in this parish — and which I deem a blessing to it — is the oldest in the city. Its germ was our charity school, which, though dead, yet works for good, by the funds which had accumulated

* Mr. Buckminster's right hand of fellowship.

through the judicious conduct of its managers, and the benefaction of that excellent woman * to whom, as a parish, we are indebted for our largest pecuniary legacy.

Other societies have, doubtless, been as harmonious as ours. None could be more so. What I said twenty-five years since,† I can repeat to-day, — and may it still be repeated to the end of time! — “No vote is on record, either in the church or society, that indicates the smallest deviation from perfect good-will.”

Whilst I *remember*, as I trust with devout gratitude, *all the way which the Lord hath led me these forty years*, I remember, too, — how can I forget it, or fail to speak of it? — your undeviating kindness and liberality, the forbearance you have exercised towards my infirmities and deficiencies, the confidence you have reposed in me, the affection you have shown me, the kind sentiments in regard to my ministry you have entertained and expressed, the generosity you have exhibited, far dearer and more grateful to me than any pecuniary compensation by which that generosity has been manifested. God, who knoweth all things, knoweth how much I have you in my heart to live and to die with you; to do what I may, in the little time that yet remains to me, for your best good.

I have ever felt, and have been anxious you should feel, that there is a close and intimate connection between a minister and his people, and that, as he should never be inattentive to the lowest whisper of distress,

* Mrs. Derby.

† Note to Historical Sermon, 1820.

or the feeblest demand for pastoral duty, so they should never hesitate to ask for any service they may desire at his hands. There is no apology to be made to him for calling upon him for the discharge of his duty, and no thanks to be given him for that which, if he feels as he ought to feel, is his highest happiness. Never take it for granted, in your sickness or your sorrow, that your minister must needs have been informed of it. If he had been, he would have been with you to express the sympathy he feels, and to do you whatever service he might.

Is it amiss for me, in this connection, to say that I am not conscious of having ever heard of sickness or trouble in any of your families, that I have not gone to do what it became me, as your minister, to do; or, that I have ever known of any considerable accession to the sources of your happiness, that I have not rejoiced with you in your joy, and endeavoured to lead you to a grateful improvement of the goodness of GOD to you? One thing more I may claim to say, that my pastoral visits have never been spent in idle gossiping. I have aimed to make them useful, however much I may have failed to do so. A minister of religion, I have felt that it became me to teach religion, not only "publicly," but "from house to house," — to "watch for souls," — GOD forgive me that I have not been more faithful! — "as one who must give an account."

And now, my beloved friends, let me remind you that *God requireth that which is past*. Of me, an account of how I have taught; of you, of how you have

heard. It is a solemn thought. Solemn?—it is almost overwhelming. With deep repentance and humiliation for our past neglect, let us carry this thought into the future with us, to excite us to more fidelity for the time to come.

There was a time when, both in the morning and evening service, these seats were filled. There was a time when scarcely a head of a family (if, indeed, there was one) was habitually absent during either part of the day. They came up in company to the house of God, bringing their families, strengthening the hands and encouraging the heart of their minister, setting an example of the observance of an institution, I will not say important, but essential, to the well-being of society. Many of these are now spending a sabbath in heaven. As their hallowed images come up, at this hour, in pleasant, yet mournful remembrance, they seem, from their high abode, to be beckoning us upward. Yes, blessed spirits! by the grace of God, we will join you. Such, in this sacred hour, is our solemn purpose. Holy Spirit of God! help us to fulfil it!

APPENDIX.

IN the newspapers of 1737 we find an account of the gathering of the West Church more full than is contained in the records of the Church. As it has not been inserted in the historical notices of the Church already printed,* and may be interesting to some readers, it is thought best to insert it here.

“ *Thursday, January 6th, 1737.*

“ Monday last, in the afternoon, a new Congregational Church was gathered in the westerly part of the town ; and as the method of gathering such churches here may not be known abroad, we shall give the public a brief account of this particular transaction.

“ A number of Christians, belonging to several congregations in this town, judging it convenient to build a house in the westerly part thereof, and having carried on the building to a considerable state of forwardness, thirteen † of their number, being brethren in full communion with five several churches here, and one in full communion with the First Church in Cambridge, having applied to their respective churches, obtained letters of dismission to incorporate a new church by themselves. Three others, who had not been in full communion with any of our churches, offered to join them, and there being no objection either on account of doctrine or conversation, but being known and agreeable to them, the others accepted their offer ; and, consulting with several ministers to whom they belonged, prepared a covenant of incorporation, in which they could all agree ; and then applied to some of those who had been their pastors, to assist them in the solemnity of their confederation.

* 1821, 1831.

† The names have been given in a note to the Historical Sermon, printed in 1821.

Accordingly, on said Monday, at three in the afternoon, being the time appointed, two of these pastors, namely, the Rev. Mr. Prince * and Foxcroft, † met. with said seventeen persons, and having received the evidences of their said dismissions, made some inquiries of the three proposed members, and the others testifying their acceptance of them, Mr. Prince, the moderator, beginning with a premonition concerning the solemnity of this transaction, they proceeded to pray. Mr. Foxcroft then discoursed from Matthew xviii. 20. Then all the company standing up, the moderator deliberately read their covenant, which they had written fairly in their church record; to which, at his proposal, all the seventeen lift up their hands in token of their consent, and then subscribed their names. The moderator then addressing them in such terms as these:—‘ We must now own you to be a true church of Christ, and invested with all the privileges belonging to such a one: And we pray you may have grace to keep this holy covenant, and that you and your offspring may enjoy the blessings of it.’ Mr. Foxcroft then made the closing prayer, and the moderator pronounced the blessing.”

“ *May 19th, 1737.*

“ Yesterday the Rev. Mr. Wm. Hooper, a gentleman from Scotland, brought up at the University of Edinburgh, was ordained pastor of the new and West Church in this town, lately gathered, when the Rev. Mr. Foxcroft began with prayer. Mr. Hooper preached from 2 Cor. iv. 7. The Rev. Dr. Sewall then prayed. The Rev. Mr. Prince read the church-covenant, &c., and prayed, gave the charge to Mr. Hooper, then prayed again, and gave another charge to the church; the Rev. Dr. Colman gave the right hand of fellowship, and then the Rev. Mr. Hooper appointed the 23d Psalm, and, after singing, dismissed the congregation with a blessing.”

The names of the pewholders in the West Church, 1737, were Frazier, Vail, Rix, Dupee, Copeland, Parker, Adams, Blanchard, Messenger, Henderson, Guttredge, Winslow, Watt, Gray, Dorrall, Watson, Barton, Waldo, Allen, Tyler, Pemberton, Storer, Kilby, Cheever, Jackson, More, Bradford, Daniels, Peirce, Vintonon,

* Of the Old South Church.

† Of the First Church.

Young, Sprague, Mason, Allen, Russell, Erving, Traill, Smibert, Spooner, Jenner, Lee, Wells, Blackador, Gooch, Stoddard, Hall, Greenleafe, Keyes, Blinn, Scollay, Bemis, Stratton, Barrett, Signourney, Kilcup, Fitch, Strangers, Welch, Billings, John Gooch, H. Berry, Dan Berry, Dennie, Fairfield, Eb. Berry. At an early period (previous to 1750), we find Winter, McNeil, Cragie, Bruce, Turner, Mackay, Vassall, Scott, Gridley, Fletcher, Edwards, Brown, Vincol, Gerrish, Fowle, Nichols, Deming, Jarvis, Whitworth, Thwing, C. Tilden, Emes, Avery, Freeman. From 1750 to 1790, we have the additional names of Atkins, Sanders, Sewall, Rouse, Coffin, Call, Francis, Prince, Fleet, Cranch, Cushing, Fitch, Gill, Jones, Foster, Hunt, Carnes, Price, Patten, Inches, Bruce, Cazneau, Salter, Palmer, Eliot, Barrett, Brigden, Buckman, Edwards, Bryant, Edes, Brigman, Broaders, Shepherd, McKown, Viburt, Bourne, Barrett, Quincy, Belcher, Moffatt, Blodgett, Chapman, Coney, Draper, Homer, Langdon, Young, Clark, Swan, Phillips, Walley, Gore, Revere, Green, Kneeland, Ridgway, Furness, Morrill, Winthrop, Hudson, Boit, Todd, Ivers, Torry, Hurd, S. A. Otis, Skinner, Tyler, Coolidge, Baldwin, Procter, Putnam, Parkman, Larkin, Freeman, Lepar, Tisdale, Farrington, Carter, Baty, Henshaw, Gay. From 1790 to 1805, inclusive, Simons, Harmer (now Hammond), Powars, Kuhn, Davis, Redman, Simpson, T. Tilden, Humphries, French, G. W. Otis. These, it is supposed, were pewholders, and probably most of them proprietors. There are many others who had their children baptized, but do not appear as pewholders.

Mr. Hooper left the society November 19th, 1746, and went to England to receive Episcopal ordination, having accepted an invitation from Trinity Church to become their minister, after the death of Mr. Davenport. He was suspected by his Congregational brethren of unsoundness on some points of theology, — a sermon of his at the Thursday lecture gave especial offence, — and this circumstance probably led to the change in his pastoral relations. I infer this from a correspondence which I find in manuscript in the cabinet of the Historical Society. The west parish at this time, according to Douglass,* stood second in the town in respect to ability and numbers.

* Douglass's *Summary*, Vol. I., p. 542. The society was dispersed

Among the churches enumerated by Douglass is the "French Church," now extinct. This church worshipped in a small brick building in School Street, "erected by some French Protestants who came hither in 1686, after Louis the Fourteenth had revoked the edict of Nantes, and many thousand Huguenots were obliged to leave France. The descendants of the founders of this house, as they formed new connections, gradually dropped off. Those who remained were few in number, and the support of a minister was an expense they could not well continue. The Rev. Andrew Le Mercier, a worthy character, desisted from officiating as minister, and the house was for some years unoccupied."* In 1748, the building was purchased by some persons who separated from other churches in the town, formed a Congregational church, and settled Mr. Andrew Croswell, then minister of the church in Groton, Connecticut. His church in Boston was not acknowledged as a sister church by the other churches in the town and neighbourhood. Its minister claimed a seat in the Board of Overseers of the College, but it was denied him, — I think unjustly. He died in 1785.†

It is a curious fact, in the history of God's providence, that, on the dissolution of this Congregational church, the house came into possession of the Roman Catholics, the persecutors of the original builders, and was used by them as a place of worship till 1803, when the "Church of the Holy Cross" was consecrated. Thus the persecutors themselves, — many of them, at least, — persecuted and exiled for their religion by those who had no religion, were compelled to worship in the humble edifice which the victims of their oppression, in *their* exile, had erected and abdicated. I

in 1775, and a number of the members did not return again. Dr. Howard himself was for a time at Annapolis, in Nova Scotia.

* *Historical Collections*, First Series, Vol. III.

† Mr. Croswell had been previously invited to take the charge of a Congregational church in the town, formed July 18th, 1743, by persons dissatisfied with the doctrine or discipline, or both, of the other churches; but, after much correspondence, the connection did not take place, and Mr. Ephraim Clark was settled September 30th, 1748, and was their minister in 1751. Probably a portion of these separatists formed the germ of the society over which Mr. Croswell was settled. It is singular that we have no account of Mr. Clark's society in the histories of Boston, and that it has never been reckoned among the Congregational churches.

remember with profound respect the excellent ministers of this church, Drs. Matignon and Cheverus, whose spirit was truly catholic. With the latter I was well acquainted, and can never forget his warm embrace as we parted, on his leaving America. The Second Universalist Church now occupies the ground on which the French Church stood, or is very near it.

Dr. Mayhew, the second minister of the West Church, one of the ablest men our country has produced, was ordained June 17th, 1747, and died July 9th, 1766, aged forty-six years. Just before his death, on his departure to attend an ecclesiastical council at Rutland, he wrote a letter to James Otis, Esq., suggesting the plan of a correspondence or "communion" among the colonies, which was afterwards adopted, and conduced much to the happy result of their struggle for freedom. His discourse on the 30th of January, 1750, was republished at the suggestion of the first President Adams, to corroborate the claim of this State to the earliest expression of opinions which led to the national assertion of independence. Dr. Mayhew was a native of Martha's Vineyard. Dr. Howard, the third minister, a truly wise and good man, was ordained May 6th, 1767, and died August 13th, 1804, aged seventy-one years. He was a native of Bridgewater, West Parish. The fourth minister, a native of Boston, was ordained January 1st, 1806.* The colleague pastor, a native of Freeport, Maine, was ordained March 1st, 1837.

In the choice of the first minister of this church, the "church" first voted by themselves, and then again with the "undertakers," as the proprietors were termed. In the subsequent elections, the church and proprietors (in the choice of Mr. Howard "the church and congregation") voted together only; the records of the church stating, — in the case of Drs. Mayhew and Howard, and the present senior minister, — that the church "gave up the right to lead in the choice, and consented to vote with the proprietors." In the case of Mr. Howard, "congregation."

It does not appear that a confession of faith was required by the council, at the ordination of any of the ministers. At the ordination

* During his ministry, before the settlement of a colleague, the baptisms recorded are 1351, including 99 adults; the marriages 724; and the funerals 1146. Of the persons interred, 616 had reached the age of 21 years, 91 that of 70 years, and 6 of 90 years; — the oldest 93.

in 1806, there was much discussion on the subject, *pro* and *con*. It was finally voted, that, if the pastor elect had prepared any thing, and wished to present it, he was at liberty to do so. The parish requested that he would not do it, and he was thus fortified in his own determination not to obtrude it. He had prepared a general statement of his views of theology, which had been seen by his friends, Messrs. Channing and Buckminster, and, he believes, by his older friend, Dr. Eckley (at his own request), a man of a truly Christian spirit, an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.

At that period, it was customary for the moderator of the council (who on this occasion was Dr. Lathrop, one of the best men I have ever known) to inquire of the church and proprietors in public, at the commencement of the ordination services, if they still adhered to their call of the candidate, and the candidate signified anew his acceptance, usually in a short address.

It was also the practice of this church to send a special invitation to the ministers of all denominations to attend the services. There existed at that time a better feeling among the ministers of different denominations than now exists. In the Congregational church (to mention no others), so far as I know, the relative position of the parties is about the same, though both have materially changed from the faith of those who went before them. There are few, if any, whom the "Puritans" would recognize as their legitimate successors.

In Pemberton's "Description of Boston" (*Historical Collections*, Vol. III., 1st series, 1794), we find this description of the church edifice first erected at the west part of the town.

"1736, West Church in Lynde Street,* New Boston, the only church in that division of the town, is a well proportioned wooden

* This street, as I learn from S. F. McCleary, Esq., a connection of the family, has its name from Chief-Justice Lynde, who owned the land through which it runs, and which, before the laying out of the street, was called Lynde's pasture. The street has had the fortune to retain its name. Middlecott Street, in this neighbourhood, has been changed to Bowdoin Street, though there was a peculiar propriety in the former name, as Dr. Middlecott gave the land to the town for the purpose of a street. Chambers Street, so named for the maternal ancestors of Thomas Russell, who once owned the land, is in danger of being metamorphosed

building, with a handsome steeple, in which was a good bell. It was situated commodiously to give signals to the continental troops at Cambridge on the opposite shore. The British troops suspected it had been used for this purpose, and the steeple was taken down by them in 1775." The church itself they used as a barrack. It stood in a reverse position to the present house, and the principal entrance was from Staniford Street. There was a wide opening on the street, and the ascent to the church was over the green-sward.* The pulpit was on the west side of the church. The pews were the large square pews which were the fashion of that day.

In 1805, at the east corner of Lynde Street and Cambridge Street stood the double wooden house which now stands there, and has been recently purchased by the parish. The east tenement had been the residence of Dr. Mayhew, — the west, of Dr. Howard, who afterwards lived in a house on the north side of the church. On the other side of the street, opposite to Dr. Howard's residence, was the house of Seth Wells, Esq., then recently built. On the west corner of Lynde Street, fronting on Cambridge Street, was a new brick house, erected by Harrison G. Otis, Esq., who is now probably the only survivor of those who were baptized by Dr. Mayhew. On the west side of Staniford Street, where the house of her son-in-law, Dr. Shattuck, now stands, were the house and garden of Mrs. Davis, whose family was among the earliest in the parish; and on the opposite corner of the street, the house and extensive garden of Mungo Mackay, Esq., whose son is the present treasurer, and his grandson (son of S. W. Hunt, Esq.) the clerk of the parish. This house had been previously occupied by Richard Lechmere, Esq., a gentleman of fortune, highly respectable and estimable, who left the country in the Revolution, and died in Bristol, England. It is

into Chamber Street. Gooch Street, named for Deacon Gooch, who lived in the street, has been corrupted into Gouch Street. One person, now living (perhaps more than one), has lived in seven streets without changing his place of residence. The name of a street should not be lightly changed. It may be connected with some circumstance, the memory of which it may be interesting, not to say extremely important, to retain.

* Page 4th of the Discourse.

from him that "Lechmere's Point" derives its name. On the opposite side of Cambridge Street was the brick house now standing, then the residence of Thomas Dennie, Esq.; and next to this, the house of Mr. Ridgway. Mr. Wells, Mrs. Davis, Mr. Mackay, Mr. Hunt, Mr. Dennie, and Mr. Ridgway were all members of the parish, and their memories are honored. Between Hancock and Belknap Streets stood a large distillery, happily soon afterwards demolished, and its place supplied by a range of brick dwelling-houses. The aspect of this part of the city, as it may be supposed, is wholly changed. Whatever streets were laid out, they had but few houses in them, and the general appearance was that of a thinly settled place, with large unoccupied spaces, pastures, and marsh-land. Between "West Boston" and the "North End" was the mill-pond, into which the spirit of speculation soon after transferred Beacon Hill, a beautiful conical eminence, at the base of which the State House was erected, and which was alike conducive to the health and ornament of the town. A causeway extended from Leverett Street to Prince Street. The "New Almshouse" stood on the banks of Charles River, on or near "Bartön's Point." It was taken down in 1825. Near this point Mr. Blackstone, the first English inhabitant of Boston, resided in 1630.

The old church was taken down in March, 1806, and the new church* was opened for public worship November 27th of the same year. The services were performed by the pastor. The text of the sermon was Psalm c. 4, 5. It was the day of annual thanksgiving. The following hymn, written for the occasion by Mrs. Morton, was sung.

"In vain would mortal hands prepare
The TEMPLE'S bless'd abode,
Unless, supreme in mercy there,
DESCEND THE ACCEPTING GOD.

"In vain the warbled prayer we raise,
Though human, seems divine,
Unless the heart's responsive praise,
INSPIRING GOD, BE THINE.

* The expense of building the new church was \$39,984.99. The sum realized at the sale of the pews on the lower floor, which were first offered, was \$49,555.

“ Such was a MAYHEW’s soul of zeal,
 Adoring THEE with fear ;
 He taught the sinner’s heart to feel
 ‘TH’ ALL-SEEING GOD WAS NEAR.

“ With milder light a HOWARD shone ;
 To him persuasion given,
 He charm’d the hope to THEE alone,
 PARENT OF EARTH AND HEAVEN.

“ Such may our youthful PASTOR prove,
 The words of life to feel ;
 Be his a HOWARD’s pitying love,
 A MAYHEW’s heavenly zeal.

“ O THOU ! to whom the solar blaze
 Seems but a shadowy zone,
 To thee our sacred dome we raise,
 JEHOVAH ! — GOD ALONE ! ”

The proprietors of the church, at the time of the call of the present senior minister, as far as ascertained, were Messrs. *John Avery, *Joseph Blake, *John Carnes, *Andrew Calhoun, Jonas Coolidge, *Charles Cushing, *Thomas Dennie, *John Derby, *Ebenezer Eaton, *Samuel Eliot, *William Foster, *Jeremiah Gardner, *Martin Gay, *Samuel Gore, *Joseph Heard, *Ebenezer Herring, Jr., *John C. Howard, *Samuel W. Hunt, *John Hurd, *Thomas K. Jones, *John Kuhn, Caleb Loring, *Braddock Loring, *Jonathan Loring, *Mungo Mackay, *Asa Page, *James Prince, *Joseph Ridgway, *William Todd, *Samuel Todd, *John Tucker, *Bill Vose, *Thomas Walley, *Seth Wells, *Mrs. Carter, *Mrs. Davis, and *Mrs. Job Prince.

There is reference on the 5th page of the Discourse to an officer of the church. It was Charles Cushing, Esq., one of the purest and best of men. The other deacon at that time, John Avery, Esq., was for many years Secretary of the Commonwealth, having the confidence of all parties.

In 1805, there were nine Congregational churches in Boston,†

* Deceased.

† There are now twenty-nine. There were then ten churches of all the other denominations; there are now forty-four. This statement does not include the chapels of the ministry at large.

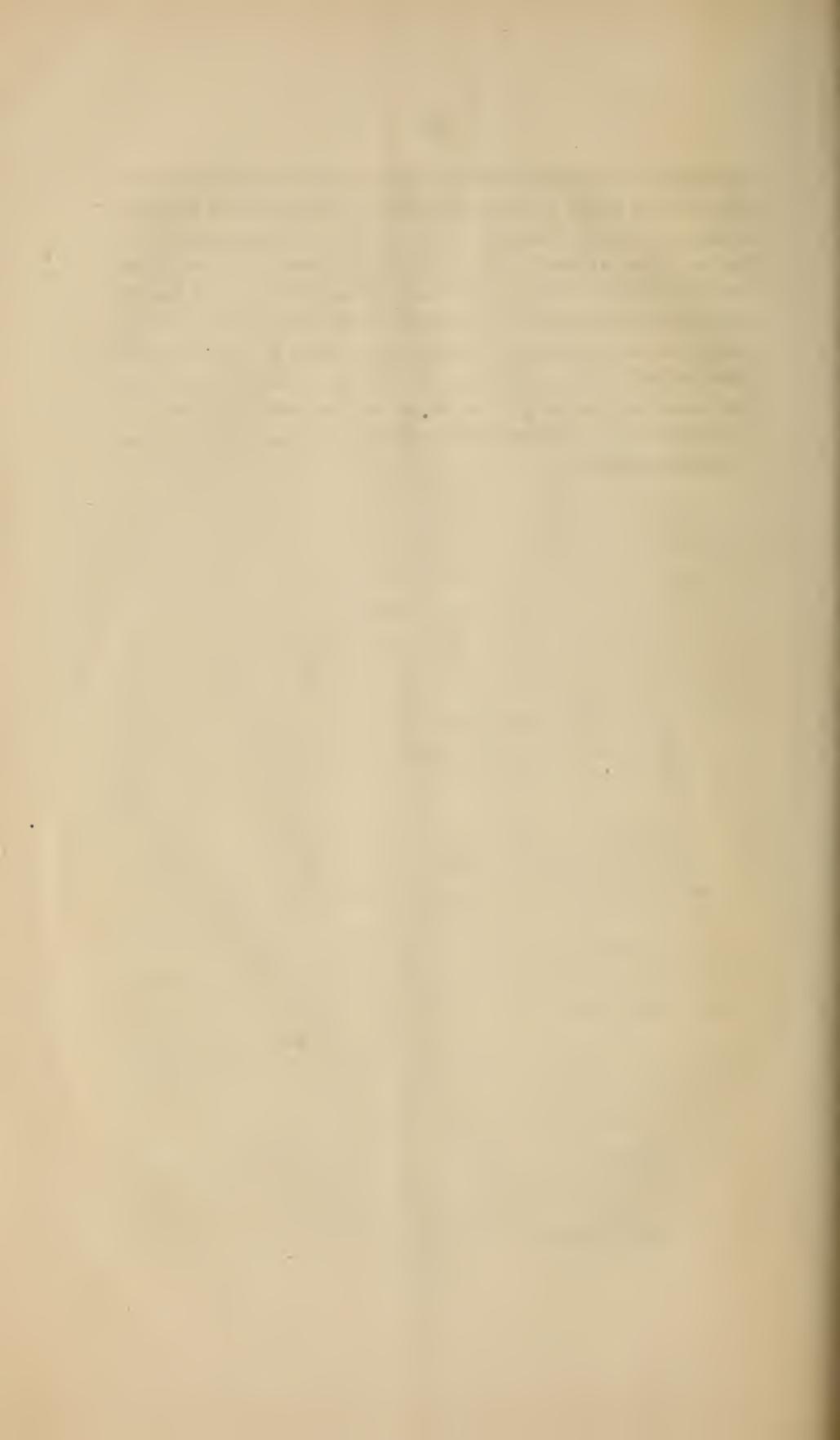
the West Church being ranked the ninth, though it was in fact the eighth, as the church in Federal Street did not join the Congregational communion till 1787. These churches were in fellowship, and their ministers exchanged with one another, and assisted each other in ministerial labors as occasion required. This fellowship was maintained between this church and the eight other churches till 1821. In that year an interruption of the fellowship between this church and the Old South Church took place,—not through the instrumentality either of the Old South Church or society, or the minister of this church, but of those ministers who had determined to separate the Old South Church from the “Unitarian communion,” and who thought, as was declared to him, that, from the relative position of the minister of this church to both parties, he would serve as a connecting link between them. In regard to the Old South society, he had been in habits of ministerial intercourse with them to that time, had paid a tribute in their church to the memory of their excellent pastor, then recently deceased, had ministered to the parish in their sickness and trouble during the absences and after the death of their ministers, and had been invited by a *unanimous* vote of the church to give the right hand of fellowship to their newly elected pastor, Mr. Wisner. The other churches in the town invited to this council were Park Street and the church in Green Street.

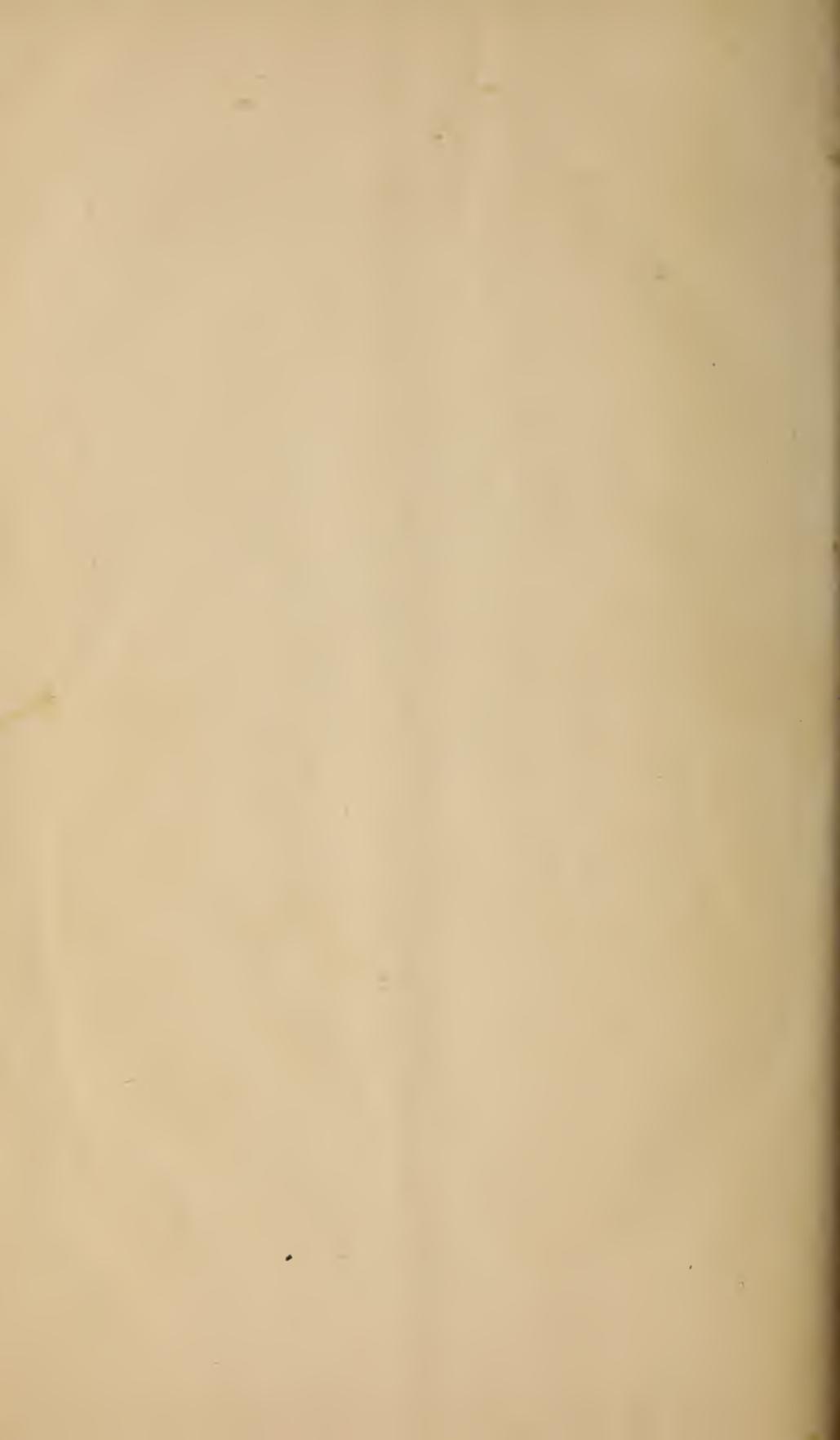
It may not be amiss to add, that, whilst they were engaged in the erection of a new church, the committee of the West Parish received a communication from the minister of the Old South Church and congregation, inclosing the following vote:—

“Voted, *unanimously*, that it would be highly gratifying to this society, if their brethren of the West Boston society would meet with them for worship, in *their house*,—the *two pastors* jointly leading in the public devotions.”

The minister of the West Church (now the senior minister) is a Congregationalist, as it respects the outworks of the house of God, but belongs to no sect as it regards the doctrines of theology, nor has any exclusiveness as it regards his Congregationalism. The Quaker, the Presbyterian, the Protestant Episcopalian, the Baptist, and the Methodist Episcopalian have all preached in his pulpit, and all, except the first, in the usual Sabbath exercise. It is

among the pleasant recollections of his ministry that it has been so. He certainly differs from his Unitarian brethren, as well as from others, on some important points, — to him, at least, important, — but he admits in *them* the right of private judgment which he claims for himself, and he has esteemed himself favored in having had an affectionate intercourse of so many years with such good men, and faithful, devoted ministers. He belongs neither to the “Pastoral Association” (Calvinistic), nor to the “Unitarian Association”; but he wishes well to both, in as far as they are adapted to promote the glory of GOD, and the interests of pure and undefiled religion, — and no farther.





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PAT. JAN. 21, 1908

