



PRESENTED TO THE 549083



By Rev. Geo. P. Pinchard.
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S E R V I C E S

AT THE

BOWDOIN STREET CHURCH,

— O X —

Closing their House of Worship,

MAY 4, 1862.





REMEMBERED BLESSINGS.

A

S E R M O N ,

PREACHED TO THE

BOWDOIN STREET CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY,

B O S T O N ,

ON CLOSING THEIR HOUSE OF WORSHIP,

MAY 4, 1862.

BY

NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D.

Pastor of the Essex Street Church, Boston.

B O S T O N :

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN & SON, 42 CONGRESS STREET.

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At a meeting of Bowdoin Street Church, held Friday evening, May 9, 1862, it was

Voted, That a Committee be appointed to request, for publication, a copy of Dr. ADAMS'S Sermon, delivered in the morning of the last Sabbath, and of Dr. BLAGDEN'S Remarks at the Communion Table, in the afternoon.

The Committee attended to this duty, and the requests have been kindly complied with.

S E R M O N .

ISAIAH LXIII. 7.

I WILL MENTION THE LOVING-KINDNESSES OF THE LORD.

REMEMBERED BLESSINGS is the subject with which I would occupy your thoughts on this interesting occasion. There is no more amiable nor profitable frame of mind, than that expressed by the poet Blackmore, in words which are a good illustration of the text:

“Though now He frowns, I'll praise the Almighty's name,
And bless the spring whence past enjoyments came.”

God is always as good, just and wise, as when his new gifts filled us with gladness. He should be loved and praised, and we should serve Him with the same alacrity, in the recollection of past benefits, as when we were at a loss for words to express his goodness.

Here is an invalid, seemingly incurable. The world has put on a sad look, as though reminding

him of lost enjoyments. Every glad sight and joyous sound seems but a pall and knell to remembered blessings. He says with him who wrote the 'Lamentations:' "He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out." "He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone." "Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission." Or with Hezekiah: "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave." "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent." Or David: "I am tossed up and down as the locust;" and with Job: "So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto me." It would be vain and would seem like mockery to say, 'Remember what health you have enjoyed, and be quiet.' Such remembrance aggravates the pain. But the same thing can be expressed with a different look and tone, and it makes a world-wide difference. Think that God, who now afflicts you, is as wise and good as when he blessed you with health; find pleasure, not in recalling your former happiness, but in loving and serving Him who girded you with strength. How beautiful your former freedom, when you went and came at pleasure; when you could ascend the stairs as in youth, and in going down passed two at a time, and perhaps leaped the

last three. Once, all varieties and extremes of the weather were alike indifferent; health bounded in your veins; no distances, no heights, no protracted labor exhausted you, except for a time, and that only to remind you of the elasticity in your constitution, which it seemed could never fail. It was good in God to bestow upon you such a measure of health and strength. Was he not as kind and good then as he would be now, if he should confer these blessings upon you? If he should do this now, you would say with Hezekiah, recovered from hopeless sickness, "We will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life." You would be ready to stop every friend whom you met in the street, with the story of your wonderful restoration. Now, instead of mourning over lost health and strength, it would please God should we rehearse to him with grateful hearts, his former mercies and loving-kindnesses; for he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

Many have lost their property. The time was when they had no ungratified wants. Gains flowed in upon them; and it seemed as though every thing which they touched, prospered. Adventures were successful. Strangers came, without any traceable cause, and bought of them; old debts were now and then unexpectedly paid; wind and

tide conspired in their favor. No worthy applicant asked alms of them in vain; rich was the joy with which they made others unexpectedly happy by gifts. People respected them, or made them feel so, which was the same in effect. The prospect of a competence in old age, and for their children, relieved them of care; there were many things which were not mere necessaries, but which gratified their tastes and added greatly to their happiness. And now these sources of happiness are like a dried and parched brook. But the God who gave them and continued them is as good now as then, and he did as really show loving-kindness then, as though he should cause all these blessings to return. It is worth to us now, and will be hereafter, more than riches, to mention before God, not in a complaining way, but with gratitude and love, his exceeding kindness; to dwell on particular instances of it, and to feel and express as real pleasure in speaking of it to him as though it had not passed away.

The grave has closed over those who were a part of your very existence. But there was a time when it seemed that the day was not long enough in which to praise God for his goodness manifested in those objects of your love.

Once you sought the affections of another, and

when you had gained them, you were in your opinion the happiest being on earth ; or, if you would speak within bounds, no one ever had more occasion to exult. So you passed along, while the spring time of your love became summer, and golden autumn ; and it will be safe to say no one ever had more to enjoy. The grave cannot annihilate all this, any more than it can blot it from your memory. The places, the persons, the letters, the gifts and memorials, which seem to you like head-stones with direful inscriptions, are as truly records of God's loving-kindnesses ; and it seems hard that we should forget how good he has been to us, now that his favors, lent for a season, have been taken away. When a musician leaves the instrument with which he had entranced us, or the song dies away which had held us spell-bound, we do not fall to upbraiding the performers. But our remembrance before God of past blessings is apt to be an obituary notice of his love.

Is the family circle greatly reduced through the devastating hand of death or painful separation ? There have been times when that circle was full, and the voice of joy was in that tabernacle ; and the mention or silent remembrance of others who were bereaved, were shadings which by contrast enhanced your own happiness. Let but that full

circle re-appear to-day; let the past restore its buried or scattered treasures; the joy and gladness you would feel would be no more appropriate than your grateful mention now before God would be, of the days in which his candle was in your tabernacle, and when in your prosperity you said, 'I shall never be moved.'

We seldom hear churches recounting before God past spiritual blessings. When there has ceased to be the same flow of prosperity which once attended them, they are apt to dwell too exclusively on the real or supposed second causes, and they are tempted to murmur, like Israel, at the failure of their supplies in the desert. The happiest way of spending such a season of dearth is to keep in mind former blessings, thus sustaining our faith in God, and encouraging ourselves in those frames of mind and labors which God was pleased to own as the channels of former blessings.

No church has more occasion to be grateful for its influence in a community than you. The doctrines of the Reformation here, in a time of need, found an advocate whose eloquence was, (according to his own favorite definition of eloquence,) "logic set on fire," and it was used by the

Almighty Spirit to persuade many persons of understanding into a heartfelt acceptance of the soul-humbling evangelical system; and they, by their influence in society, caused evangelical religion to make good that word of Paul to Timothy, "Let no man despise thee." If this church is to be scattered, and if this house is to be demolished, they have not existed in vain. "That life is long which answers life's great end." Bless God that he has used you to glorify him; and now with love and confidence say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

You have been blessed with four able and faithful pastors, who still survive. That lion-like man, whose voice once filled this whole region, and weakened the hearts of adversaries, while it strengthened the hearts of all who loved the old paths, gave you the best of his days, and by the blessing of God made you pre-eminently useful as a church. Your second pastor was among you a great lover of the souls of men; your third pastor proved himself here, as elsewhere, an ardent lover of your divine Lord and Saviour,—which two things are convertible, if not identical; for one seldom exists without the other. And if a pure and holy zeal, with simplicity and godly sincerity, ever actuated any minister of Christ, these were

seen conspicuously in him whose pastorate has just closed.

In view of your great blessings, you should take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. Is there one of you who has lived through these four ministries and not obeyed the gospel? Let me say to him, with sincere love and concern for his soul, that if he should fail at last to be saved, it will be 'more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for him.' Let the wonderful goodness of God lead you all to repentance, ere you leave this place of witness between you and God. We are told that the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from following the Lord, "which had appeared unto him twice." How many times has God appeared to you here? And "who knoweth the power of thine anger," if we turn away from thee, who, year after year, through a whole generation, hast spoken to us from heaven?

One good effect of remembered blessings, is to make us feel our entire dependence upon God. Nothing is more common than to forsake God in prosperity. "And it came to pass when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the

Lord, and all Israel with him." God says of himself, "I am a jealous God." Idols are special objects of his jealousy. The commandments begin with this: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." When we look on our earthly happiness, the heart of Nebuchadnezzar is apt to show itself in our thoughts of the great Babylon which seems to have risen through our own efforts. Man's proper place before God is in the dust, with the feeling that we have forfeited everything, are less than the least of all the mercies of God, receiving every good thing as having been redeemed for us, and given back to us, by our infinite Friend and Saviour. Anything that makes us humble and keeps us so, anything that prevents pride and vain glory, anything that makes us exalt God over ourselves and over all, is a blessing, though disguised in a great sorrow. When we remember what blessings we once possessed, and the Lord who gave hath taken away, it is the richest blessing of all, if we can say, "— blessed be the name of the Lord."

Remembered blessings excite love and adoration toward God, in view of his power and disposition to bestow blessings. We invest remembered blessings with almost a celestial brightness, and perhaps

instead of its being an exaggerated view which we then take of them, it approaches nearer to truth than our appreciation of them while they remained. They are now like fair visions, glimpses of things above and beyond us, too good, too unearthly to last. They seem like wonderful phenomena in the heavens gone by, remembered orchards in blossom, autumnal leaves before the winds have scattered them, and like a pleasant tale that is told. What a form and what features they were which were lent, not given; what powers and faculties, what sources of gratification, in those now taken away. The goodness of God seemed inexhaustible, blessing upon blessing, grace for grace. How wide that benevolence which prepared things for us far apart, and brought them together in so easy and peaceful a way. We are led to think of the infinite variety in the schemes and purposes of God, who plans for all, and we are made to feel that such a God is better than all his gifts; that it is better to have God without health, or property, or friends, or a country, than to have all these things without God; that to commune with him, to be conscious of loving him, to serve him and to feel that you are doing and suffering his most holy will, puts gladness into the heart, more than in the time when the corn and the wine increase.

Remembered blessings create in us a sense of justice in our relation to God. Many would be rich, could they have all which is due to them. It is so with God. If he could only get from us even a moderate proportion of that which we owe him, he would have a large revenue. Some live in expectation that those who owe them may possibly be so situated as to make payment. It would be just and excellent if we would all apply this to our accounts with God.

Remembered blessings lead us to transfer our hopes and expectations to heaven. They are only visitors from heaven to allure us there, giving us an idea of our capacity to enjoy, and the infinite source of delight which will there be opened. The glow of health, and that consciousness of existence which is sometimes bliss, will be perfect and perpetual; the powers of our bodies and minds will no doubt forever increase, bringing fresh delight. There your dwelling will not be low, and dark, and poor. Its roof may command a view of all the firmament; at its base the river from the throne of God be clear as crystal; its apartments be fit to entertain all the companies of friends whom you ever had, or desired to have; sequestered places in it give you opportunity for

converse with the angel and the redeemed friend ; and Christ himself will be your guest. And yet that dwelling may in no respect be distinguished from others.

As to Christian society and love, we have all enjoyed it here, in the acquaintance which we have had with one and another who bore the image of Christ ; for the best people here will be the ordinary type of character there, being not only just men, but made perfect. All who have ever belonged to this church, and to your circles of Christian friendship, all whose example, or names, or influence of any kind, have been dear to you, with a multitude which no man can number, supplying exhaustless treasures of varied excellence, will constitute one department of future blessedness never to be exhausted. Most wonderful, it will then seem to us, that we, so unworthy and sinful, even we ourselves, are each perfect and are really and fully loved, because Christ will at last be reflected from us without a shade or stain.

And what a country we shall have, “even an heavenly.” There we shall have Empire States, and Key Stone States, and Bay States, like the stars of heaven for multitude, and Georgias, and Carolinas, and Floridas, which can never be alienated from us. The Government will not be

elected with convulsive efforts every four years, nor hereditary crowns rest on the heads of incompetent heirs to the throne, but the Theocracy of Israel will be a remembered blessing which will be consummated, and be forever celebrated in the song of Moses and of the Lamb. No matter,—if we be counted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection of the dead,—no matter though our households should be sundered, our churches broken up, our substance melt away, our outward man perish, the power of Christianity in human hearts turn to acrimony, and the nation belabor itself to death, like the right arm of the human body beating the left into bloody fragments, to recover it from a disease or paralysis; no matter though civil war be brought nearer yet to our own doors, and a man's foes be they of his own household. We have only to do our duty, stand in the evil day, in the strength of God fear neither human nor infernal malice, be like Christ in our tempers and dispositions, be patient toward all men, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, and for those new heavens and new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. Some are swallowed up in the shifting, floating sands of politics; some are in agony to see one favorite object accomplished, and another hated object

overthrown; some wish to establish this or that party or man, or to destroy some opposing interest. They are as much to be pitied for their inordinate and absorbing passion, with its ostensibly great and important object, as the painted devotee of fashion, who rules for the hour in the realm of pleasure, and straightway turns to dust.

There was a man to whom God gave every form of earthly power and source of pleasure, and opportunity to gratify every natural and every invented desire; and by him God has illustrated the emptiness of every thing below the sun. This man places in one heap of ruins our 'love,' and our 'hatred,' and our 'envy,' and teaches us not to make the things which are the objects of these passions our chief end and aim. We shall soon be through with these agitating scenes, and enter upon a new life, where the rich experience of divine love which we have tasted here will have prepared us for a perpetual experience of fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

Imagine yourselves then to meet, a thousand years from to-day, after such experience and observation of God's goodness as we shall have had in heaven. One of your number rises to address you. Let the first words which fall from his lips be: 'I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord.'

Whereupon memory unfolds her ever brightening scroll ; and well it is that there is no sun to go down, nor darkness to chide the lengthening story. Forever and ever it will perhaps be an unsettled question, whether the pleasures of memory or the pleasures of hope, in heaven, be the sweeter ;—its joys to come, or its remembered blessings.

In this world, the memory of the purest joys is always tinged with sadness. No pleasant scenes, no rich experience of past blessings, can occur to the thoughts without a tincture of melancholy. Not so hereafter ; no changes will be sad ; there will be no losses ; departures will be associated with certain and safe returns, and with accumulated bliss ; nor will any consciousness of imperfection, nor any regret, mar the retrospect of life in heaven. Let things present enhance, by contrast, our joyful anticipation of things to come. Life on earth, however, will not seem to us then, as now, a succession of trials and sorrows, nor a failure ; every road-side, every turn, almost every step will seem to have been marked with the care and love of God.

A company of Huguenots, pursued by their enemies, fled on horseback by night into the mountains, during a great tempest. With the return of day, they retraced their steps, and wondered and

adored, as they saw how miraculously God had led them, in the darkness, through unseen dangers, along the edges of the precipice. Each of us may say,—

“When I stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o’er life’s finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,—
Not till then,—how much I owe.”

Changes and war are upon us; attachments, relationships, things once hallowed and sacred, all are feeling the hot wind of passion and hatred. This is only one form of the destruction to which every thing earthly is doomed. See what goodly stones and what buildings are these,—domestic, Christian, private, social, national. ‘Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.’ The chief thing which remains to us, and will remain, is, to desire a better country, a ‘city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.’ No private aims inconsistent with the general welfare, no mistaken efforts to do good in one direction, prejudicing other great, important interests, will then weaken our hands nor discourage our hearts. The subordination of heaven, with its strong government, seems infinitely desirable. “I am going,” said a father of the early church, “to leave a world

disordered and a church disorganized, for a world and a church where every angel and every rank of angels stand in the very post which God has assigned them." There the summit of bliss will be to have fought a good fight, to have kept the faith, in such a world as this; and he will be the happiest who finds that he owes most to the rich, free, sovereign grace of God, and whose remembered blessings bear the deepest impress of loving-kindness to the chief of sinners.

If there be one thing which will make ministers peculiarly happy in heaven, it will be that they should ever, for any reason, be counted by you, whom they have endeavored to serve with all humility of mind and with tears, among your remembered blessings; while the chief remembered blessings of those ministers will be those whom they shall have assisted to reach heaven.

Be not dismayed at the changes which in the providence of God have come upon you. Time and chance happen to all. Perhaps Christ now requires you to say, as he himself said at so early a period of life, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Your individuality cannot perish in these social changes. With your experi-

ence acquired here, you may severally go to other churches, and do far more good than though you remained here. Each should examine and see how far and in what ways he may have pleased or displeased God, (for what ‘man is there that liveth and sinneth not?’) and wherein you can do better in time to come. It is as individuals that we are to be saved or lost, do good or ill, be rewarded or punished, though we all are members one of another, and exert some positive influence in every direction, and upon everything with which we are associated. Our highest happiness is to be individually joined to Christ. ‘Rejoice not,’ said he to his disciples, ‘that the devils are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.’ While we must not be isolated in our feelings, “Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.” Let us make more of the blessings which God gives us in our personal, individual relation to him; let us say not only, “our God,” but, “my God.” Let us each notice the hand of God, leading, guiding, supporting, blessing him. Let us rejoice more in present good, make much of common blessings, see and feel the goodness of God in the daily experiences of life.

‘ He who sees providences, will have providences to see.’

Our present blessings, which fill our hearts with joy, will be in their turn remembered blessings. They may be so mixed with right feelings toward God and those whom we love, that though now, like green leaves, they are so many and so much alike that we do not dwell upon them individually, they will hereafter be like those leaves when autumn has printed all her glory and beauty upon them, and we cull them, one by one, and press them in our folios, and copy them on our walls. As this God is our God forever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death, so all the blessings which he gives to those who love him are chosen by him, counted by him, remembered by him, and are intended to be immortal in their influence upon us, as well as pledges of good things to come. Be sure that you are severally joined to Christ by a true faith, as branches to the vine. Then if called to part with this goodly edifice, and with these sanctuaries of public and more private worship, and with this noble organ, whose early melodies and harmonies, under the hand of a master, are with many of us among the happiest memories of former days ; and even if you should pass by and see these walls leveled, and the places

which knew them should know them no more,— while sadness covered you and tears flowed, the best relief and the wisest purpose will be to say with victorious gratitude and love, “I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord.” Shall any or all these public, social, private changes and trials hurt us, if we closely follow Christ? “NAY, IN ALL THESE THINGS WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM THAT LOVED US.” Amen.

R E M A R K S
AT THE
C O M M U N I O N T A B L E,
BY
R E V . G . W . B L A G D E N , D . D .
SENIOR PASTOR OF THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH.

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHREN :

It is impossible for us to come to the table of our Lord, at this time, without feeling deeply the solemnity of the circumstances in which we meet. This may be the last time in which, as a Church of Christ, you will all partake of the Supper, in this House, where your fathers have worshiped ; and the last time, possibly, in which you will partake of it, together, in any place. My first thought, respecting this occasion, was, of the manner in which the friends of Job acted, when they came to him, in his afflictions :—they “ sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him : for they saw that

his grief was very great." Silence, sometimes, is the most eloquent and appropriate expression we can make of our deep sympathy with those we best love. And the providence of God then speaks more effectively than any words that man can utter. And yet, even in such cases, whenever—as is the case with us now—any special occurrence seems to call for some words, which may assure us that we think and feel in unison, or, in speaking and hearing which, we may properly improve such an event,—it would be a disappointment and a trial to us, if they were not spoken. And our communion in the Lord's Supper, now, would not be full and heartfelt, if I did not say something appropriate to the circumstances in which we meet at his table.

Another sentence from the Bible, which has occurred to me as applicable to this occasion, is that which Jesus spoke to his disciples, in saying, "Ye have been with me from the beginning." It will not be improper for me here to speak of myself so far as to say, that, in the good providence of God, I was led to come to this city, for the sake of studying the more practical parts of the Christian ministry with your first pastor, late in the fall of 1826, now thirty-five years ago. Your church had been gathered then, I believe, not more

than a year, or, it may be, only in the previous summer or spring. For a time, I was your fellow-worshiper in the House in Hanover Street. And it occurs to me, as I speak, that the only place of worship, in which I have ever paid for a sitting, was the one in which I then went "in company" with you. To a number of you, therefore, who with me saw that first House in its glory, I can say, almost literally, "Ye have been with me from the beginning." For, I have been near you, and more or less connected with you in promoting the gospel, in this city and its immediate vicinity, ever since. I have traced your progress. I have witnessed your great and happy influence as a church, in this city, and commonwealth, and country; and, considering your liberality and activity in the foreign missionary enterprise, it will be no exaggeration to say,—your good influence in the world. Many, who are now among the best members of other churches, have gone out from you. And to this day, you are an influential church. If you shall be disbanded, a source of much good will be dried up, and cease to exist among us. But you are not yet disbanded.

This fact has led me to recur, with great interest, to another passage in the Word of God, particularly appropriate to this communion season. I

allude to those remarkable words of the Apostle Paul, to the members of the church in Colosse, in which he said of himself, as a minister to them : “ Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body’s sake, which is the church.” The words are applicable to every member of a church of Christ, whatever relation he may sustain to it ; and they are appropriate, therefore, to each member of this church, in its present circumstances. They teach that there is an important sense, in which the work of Christ for men is not yet complete. An atoning sacrifice for sin has been made, and a way been opened through which God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. But the proclamation of this truth, and the fulfillment of all the blessed effects of it in the world, are to be insured by the self-denying efforts and sufferings of all, and each one, of the disciples of the Saviour ; each working in his own sphere of duty, in the church, or body of believers, of which each is a member. And so, each shall know Christ, “ and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death.”

Notice, my brethren, two facts contained in the words to which I have called your attention. The

first is, the joy there is in thus filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ. It is the peculiarity of Christian joy, that it springs out of godly sorrow. And therefore Jesus said to his disciples, "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy." The habit of mind which denies self, and takes up the cross, and follows Him, is one which, in beings like us, must be filled, at the same time, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And every one who thus fills up that which is behind of the Redeemer's afflictions is blessed while he mourns, because he is comforted. Every tear of sorrow breaks in a smile of joy, as he looks unto Jesus, and is made conformable to his death.

Notice, secondly, the immediate end for which these afflictions are filled up—it is "for his body's sake, which is the church." How dear should this church of the Redeemer be to each one of its members, if he would rejoice in his sufferings for it, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for its sake! Every such member may, and ought to say of it, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." I trust, brethren, that every one of us

may be ever actuated by these truths, in his own course of action towards Christ and his church; and that we shall think of these things, as we take the cup, which is the new testament in his blood, shed for many, for the remission of sins.

BOWDOIN STREET CHURCH.

IN January, 1825, a number of gentlemen, principally members of the Old South, Park Street, and Union Churches, of Boston, united together for the purpose of erecting a Meeting-house in the northern section of the city, in which a new church and congregation might be gathered, under an Evangelical ministry.

A convenient site having been obtained in Hanover street, and the edifice commenced, the Building Committee, on the 12th of May, addressed a letter to the three churches above named, requesting each of them to appoint a committee of three brethren, to act jointly in determining the best mode of collecting a church, and to take the necessary incipient measures.

This committee so constituted, after consultation, recommended that certain brethren and sisters of the churches above mentioned, should be dismissed at their own request, and be embodied into a separate and independent church. Most of the individuals, thus designated, requested and received dismissions from their several churches for the purpose specified in the recommendation of the committee. On Monday, July 18, 1825, these individuals were organized into a church, by an ecclesiastical council convened in Park street meeting-house, and, soon after, took the name of THE HANOVER CHURCH.

On the 19th of January, 1826, the Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., of Litchfield, Ct., was unanimously invited to the pastoral care

of the church. The answer of Dr. Beecher, accepting the invitation, was communicated in the following month, and he was installed on the 22d of March. The commencement of Dr. Beecher's labors was blessed with a revival of religion, in the course of which many were added to the church; and, during the whole of his ministry, there was more or less attention to the subject of religion, which led many to seek for peace and pardon through our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the morning of the 1st of February, 1830, at about one o'clock, the house in which the church assembled for public worship, was discovered to be on fire; and before the fire department was collected, the flames were so far advanced, that all efforts to save it were unavailing.

Soon after this calamity, the church and congregation adopted measures to repair the loss, and purchased a lot of land in Bowdoin street, for the purpose of building a suitable house for public worship. The present house was dedicated, June 15, 1831.

A charter having been procured from the Legislature of the State, uniting the stockholders and pew proprietors in a society, called the "Bowdoin Street Congregational Society," the said society, at a meeting held the eighth of June, 1831, passed the following vote, viz:—

"Whereas, the stockholders in the Bowdoin Street Meeting-house have been heretofore happily united with the Hanover Church, in sustaining and enjoying the privileges of the gospel, and are desirous still to continue the union, therefore,

"*Voted*, That the church lately called Hanover Church, be invited to take the name of Bowdoin Street Church, and to worship with us in the said Bowdoin Street Meeting-house, and there maintain and enjoy all the gospel ordinances pertaining to them as a church, and to become and act as the church con-

nected with us, in accordance with the plan of organization adopted by the society."

The Hanover Church, at a meeting held June 10, 1831, voted to comply with the request, and to accept the invitation of the Bowdoin Street Congregational Society.

In the early part of the year 1832, Dr. Beecher received a call to the presidency of Lane Theological Seminary, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and, after due deliberation, concluded that it was his duty to accept it. In this step, the church and society, with great regret at losing a pastor so much beloved, and whose labors had been so abundant, and so greatly blessed among them, cheerfully acquiesced; and by a mutual council convened on the 26th of September, 1832, he was accordingly dismissed.

On the same day, the Rev. Hubbard Winslow, having been previously invited to assume the pastoral and ministerial charge of the church and society, by the unanimous vote of both bodies, upon the dismissal of Dr. Beecher, and having accepted the invitation, was installed. On the 3d of April, 1844, Mr. Winslow was dismissed, at his own request, from the office of pastor, having sustained that relation for nearly twelve years.

May 12, 1846, Rev. J. B. Waterbury, D. D., of Hudson, N. Y., was elected to the pastoral office, and was installed, September 3, 1846. Dr. Waterbury retained his pastoral and ministerial office until June 16, 1857, when, by his own request, a mutual council was called and dissolved the relationship.

April 25, 1859, Rev. Edwin Johnson was elected pastor of the church, and on June 29th, following, was installed. September 18, 1861, at the request of the pastor, a mutual council was called, when it was 'voted that it is expedient, in the view of this council, that the pastoral and ministerial relation of

Rev. Edwin Johnson to the Bowdoin Street Church and Society should be dissolved.'

Notwithstanding these repeated changes, few churches have ever maintained more friendly relations with their pastors, and more harmony among their members, than has this.

There have been admitted to this church, since its organization, 883 members on profession of faith, and 644 by letters from other churches; making a total of 1,527. Of these, 971 have been dismissed to other churches. Through all its existence, it has been called upon to aid in establishing new churches. August 24, 1827, seventy-five of its members were dismissed to form the Salem church; and on the 9th of the following month, twenty-five to a new church in Cambridgeport. May 8, 1835, twenty-seven were dismissed to aid in forming what is now the Central church. On the 20th of May, 1842, twenty-two were dismissed to form, with others, the Mount Vernon church. Its members have also been numbered among the originators of the Pine Street (now Berkley Street) church in Boston, the church in Brighton, the Eliot church in Roxbury, and other neighboring churches.

These constant drafts on its membership, still further increased—and with special rapidity during the last few years—by the change of residence, or removal from the city, of a large number of its members, are the cause of the present depressed condition of the society. After much hesitation and great reluctance in coming to this decision, the conclusion seemed inevitable that the house must be closed, and the church disbanded, unless something new and encouraging should occur during the summer.





