
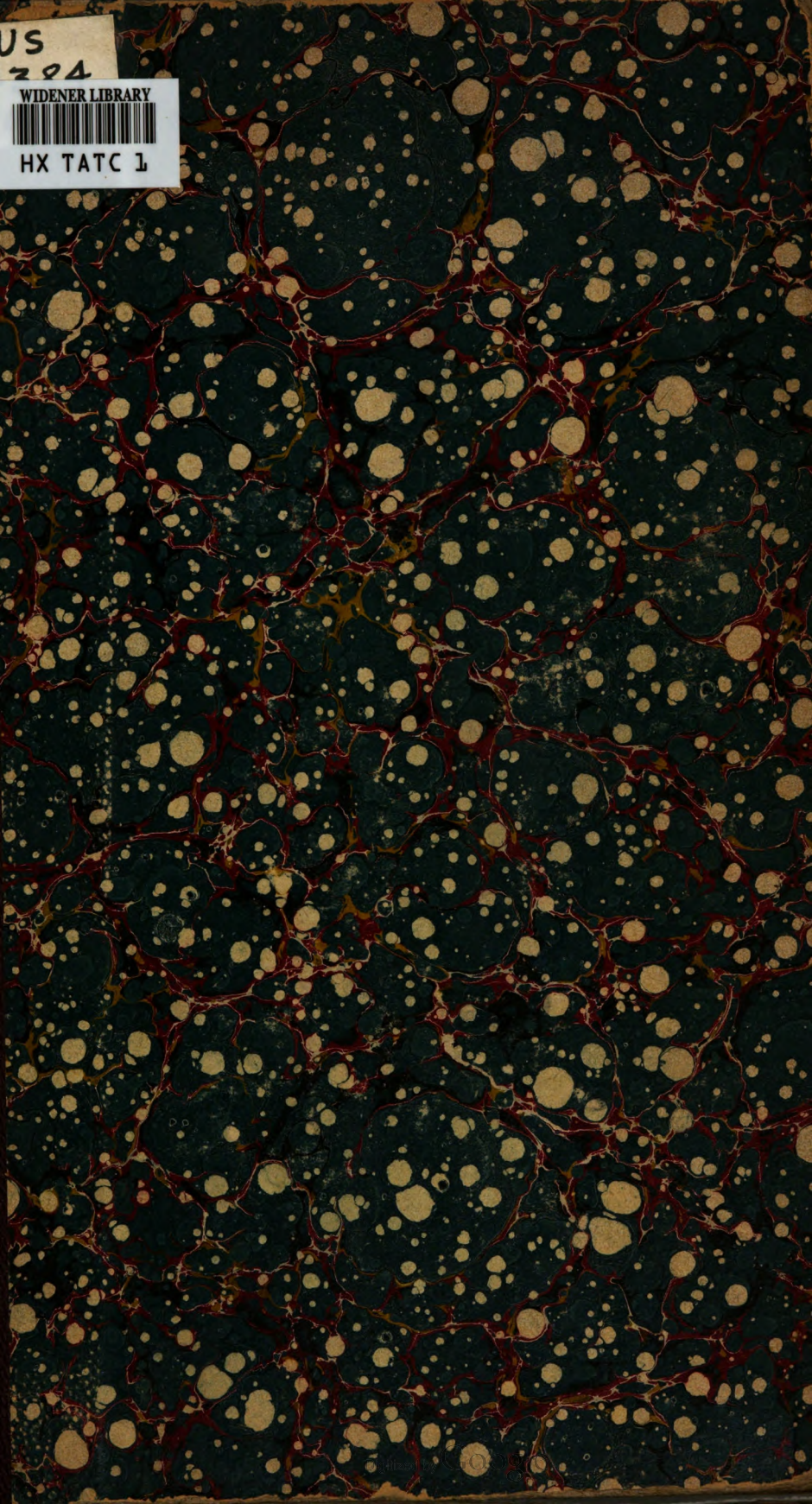


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THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

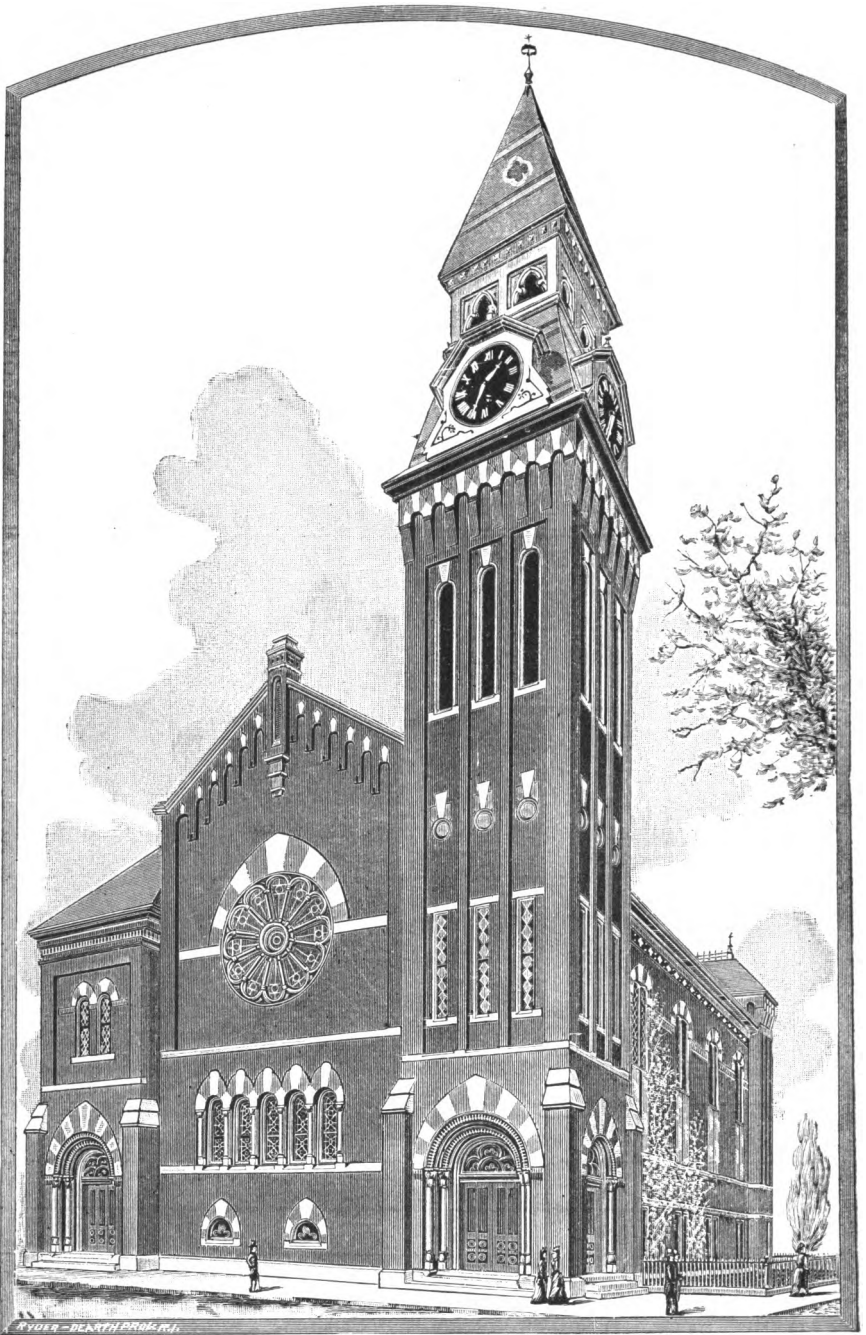
OF THE

**PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,**

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

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JUNE 2, 1889.



The Pilgrim Congregational Church, Providence, R. I.

①  
THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

Pilgrim Congregational Church,

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

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SERMONS

BY

REV. THOMAS LAURIE, D. D., PASTOR EMERITUS,

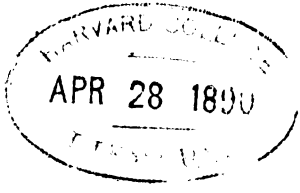
AND

REV. JAMES M. DICKSON, D. D., PASTOR.

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2) *Thomas L. ...*

THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, R. I., was observed June 2, 1889, with large audiences at all the services.

The platform was profusely adorned with plants and flowers, while on the wall back of it appeared in evergreen the dates 1869 and 1889.

The selections in music were admirably rendered by the choir: Mrs. Minnie H. Vaughan, soprano; Miss Nettie L. Clark, alto; Mr. William Allen Dyer, tenor; and Mr. Robert L. Spencer, bass; Mrs. Adelaide W. Alexander, organist.

A letter was read from Rev. N. H. Harriman, a former pastor, expressing his inability to be present on account of engagements in evangelistic work elsewhere. Rev. Dr. Laurie delivered the historical sermon in the morning, and Rev. Dr. Dickson preached in the evening.

The Sabbath-school, meeting at 12.15 P. M., entered heartily into the occasion with song and brief addresses by the superintendent, Mr. Henry C. Bangs, Drs. Laurie and Dickson, the former dwelling particularly on the labors in the School of deceased Brothers

Joseph T. Snow and Jonathan L. Spencer, Mr. Charles E. Hubbard, one of the original members, Mr. E. M. Thurston, also one of the original members and the second Superintendent, and by Ex-Superintendents Messrs. Frederick E. Keep and James E. Alden. A letter of regret was read from Mr. Charles A. Hopkins, another Ex-Superintendent.

On Monday evening there was a reunion of the present members of the church and society, and of the original members in so far as possible, which was much enjoyed. The pastor presiding, the meeting was opened with prayer, scripture reading and song. The roll of the church was called by the clerk, Mr. H. E. Thurston, and the original members present were asked to rise. A large number of both were present notwithstanding the rain. Refreshments and general and genuine sociability closed the evening. Altogether it was an occasion long to be remembered by those who participated in it.



# HISTORICAL SERMON.

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By REV. THOMAS LAURIE, D. D., Pastor Emeritus.

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Ps. cxi. 2. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

THE mention of the great works of the Lord may suggest to some the heavenly bodies, their size, their number and their majestic movement through space, but the dealings of God with his church are not less glorious or less sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

It is now twenty years since this church was formed, and this morning we commemorate its twentieth birth-day. Should we seek its *divine* beginning we must go back to the time when the true believers in it were given to Christ, or to use another scripture phrase, were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. As we cannot do that, let us content ourselves with tracing out its *human* origin. Even that we cannot do in the first thoughts and prayers of its founders, so we must rest satisfied with its *tangible* beginnings.

The first visible sign of its coming was a little meeting in Andrews Hall, over No. 563 High street, December 24, 1865. It was a raw and stormy day, and seven persons had met, hoping to commence a Sabbath-school, but no scholars came, and they gath-

ered around the stove for prayer. Two of the seven are no longer on earth, and one of the other five is at least a thousand miles away. Not then only has the Master taught us submission by "stormy winds fulfilling his word." Often each step in advance was marked by a storm. A social meeting was appointed in December, 1872, and after two adjournments, on account of storms, only a handful could get together January 17, 1873. We have been *taught* that success does not depend on numbers and fair weather. Whether we have *learned* the lesson I am not so sure.

The school commenced with about twenty members, and left Andrews Hall September 1, 1866, taking about one hundred pupils to an unattractive home on Knight street, then a school room, and now a shoemaker shop, where it dwindled down to twenty-eight in February, 1867. It then migrated to the Chapel opposite, which had been built for it at a cost of \$4,000, by some members of the old High street church. For that Chapel the school was mainly indebted to Dea. A. C. Barstow, who first suggested it and secured the lot at a low rental from Mayor Doyle. Mr. Andrew T. Rogers, of Brown University, had been Superintendent, and now Mr. E. M. Thurston was elected in his place. The school rose at once to one hundred and fifty members. In July, 1868, the hour was changed from afternoon to forenoon, to prevent scholars attending two schools, and was not changed back again till July, 1881.

Mr. Thurston continued in office till 1872, when Jonathan L. Spencer was put in charge of the school

three successive years. Joseph T. Snow succeeded him in 1875, and was annually reelected till 1878. Frederick E. Keep then followed for two years, and in turn gave place to Charles A. Hopkins in 1880. Next year Mr. Spencer was chosen again, followed in 1882 by James E. Alden, who remained in office five years, longer than any other Superintendent. In 1887 Mr. Keep was recalled, and continued in office till he left the city in April, 1888, when Mr. Alden filled out the year. Mr. Henry C. Bangs is the present Superintendent.

The school increased from 250 in 1869 to 409 in 1871, and then went down to 315, 351 and 335. After entering this building it rose in 1875 to 527, the high-point it ever reached. In 1880 it had diminished to 379, and after reaching 449 in 1884, was only 357 in 1888. This record of the school calls for thoughtful consideration. No doubt, thoroughness should never be sacrificed to numbers. It is better to have a small school doing conscientious work, than a large one whose only excellence is its size. On the other hand, if our school is good, we should not leave any to grow up without religious training whom we can induce to enter it.

In 1875 only one Congregational Sabbath-school in the State exceeded our own in size; now it stands the seventh<sup>1</sup> in point of numbers. The explanation of this diminution may be that some teachers failed to retain the scholars they had, or we may have been

<sup>1</sup>The six larger schools are Park Place, Pawtucket, 913; Union, Providence, 555; Beneficent, Providence, 500; Plymouth, Providence, 457; Central, Providence, 434; Central Falls, 382.

wanting in efforts to bring in neglected children, for here it is only steady and persistent toil that tells. The field may now be even larger than it was when our numbers were largest, but only experiment can determine whether others have so preoccupied it that we cannot recover the ground we have lost. Be that as it may, the magnitude of the interests at stake call for a faithful and thorough effort in this direction.

Prayer meetings were occasionally held on Knight street, but not with any regularity till the school entered the Chapel. This was more than two years before the formation of the church, and they have continued ever since. On stormy nights the attendance has been small, but at such times the few present can bear witness that the Master is always one of the few. No unusual methods have been used to increase attendance, and so the meetings have been made up mainly of those who love to pray. Their numbers and their readiness to take part in the service compare well with other churches, so that those who have been called elsewhere for a time are always glad to get back.

As soon as the school and prayer meeting were established, money was needed to carry them on, and the ladies formed "a mission circle" to provide the needed funds, or as they expressed it, "to promote the advancement of the mission school." This motherly care for the school extended to the church, also, as soon as it came, for then they stated their object thus: "to help forward the interests of the Pilgrim Church, and clothe the destitute children in its Sab-

bath-school." So the same willing hearts and busy hands that in February, 1867, paid \$100 for the rent, and in May voted \$150 for the benefit of the school, twenty days after the church was formed gave \$150 for a communion service, and in December of that year \$200 for improvements on the Chapel. Three years later they subscribed \$2,000 for this sanctuary, and five years after that \$1,000 for the debt. Nor was it mere subscription, but it was paid promptly, according to promise, with more besides, while neither the social interests of the church nor its poor were overlooked. No wonder an Apostle wrote, "Help those women, for they labored with me in the gospel, . . . whose names are in the book of life." In 1873 the Mission Circle became the Social Circle, and under that name still pursues its useful course.

We now come to the formation of the church. The movement in that direction was entirely spontaneous. No prelate issued an order, and the mother church had no internal quarrels calling for separation in the interests of peace. The movement originated with the people themselves, and some who stayed in the old church gave largely for the establishment of the new.

At the same time the movement was deliberate. It was no sudden impulse. For two and a half years it was uppermost in the thoughts of its founders. It was the goal of their endeavors. Moreover they were not idle waiters for a future good, but they pressed toward it as fast as they could. First, they set up the Sabbath-school, and then the prayer meeting ; so

when the church came, they needed only to move on in the same line.

The movement was also harmonious. During these twenty years I have never heard of any leader. There were a number of godly men and women, and all moved on in harmony. Each had influence according to the excellence of his or her character, and each was called to those duties for which their gifts qualified them as servants of the Lord, and where He had endowed more than one with adaptation for the same work, they were called to perform it each in their turn.

The movement was also judicious. They moved so carefully as to cause no friction either among themselves or with those they left behind. On the twentieth of April fifty-four persons asked for letters to a council to be convened the twentieth of June. Later, fifteen more joined in the request, and on the Sabbath evening before the council met, six others cast in their lot with them, at the last moment, making seventy-five in all from the old High street church. This shows how the enthusiasm of the leaders diffused itself, deciding one after another to join them. To these were added six from other churches, eighty-one in all, and it shows the comprehensiveness of our church polity, that two of them brought letters from another denomination.

The organization itself was an interesting manifestation of our simple and scriptural polity. Some denominations make more of the *man* than of the work. *He* must receive honor whether work is done

or left undone. With us the actor is overshadowed by the service rendered.

That the churches might feel sure the new comer entered heartily into their views of truth and duty, a council was convened. That reviewed the proceedings of the brethren, examined their creed, approved their course and the spirit in which they acted, and then simply resolved that "it is expedient to form the church." That was all. They did not arrogate power to form it. They simply furnished an orderly opportunity for the brethren to enter into covenant with God and with each other in the presence of delegates from sister churches. And so perfectly satisfied was the new church with what was done, that in its records it did not make mention of a council at all, but only of "its organization," thus accepting the action of the council as a complete and satisfactory performance of the work for which they had called it. Could the friction of ecclesiastical machinery be less? or the work of the kingdom performed more effectually?

If one generation passes away every thirty years, two-thirds of these eighty-one original members should now be deceased. Instead of that only twenty have died in twenty years, showing that piety is still conducive to longevity. Only forty-eight of them, however, are still resident among us.

Our first pastor came in August, 1869, and was installed November 23. He continued in office till July 13, 1885. At that time three hundred and ninety-five members had been added to the original

eighty-one, making four hundred and seventy-six in all, though only three hundred and forty-three then remained in the church,—so rapid is the change constantly going on. The Lord Jesus Christ promised to be with his people always, even unto the end of the world. And it shows the absoluteness of this promise that though this church remained more than a year without the regular ministrations of a pastor, everything went on as though nothing was lacking. The regular meetings for prayer were well sustained. It seemed as though the church felt its need of the divine blessing, and sought it in every appointed way. The ladies' prayer meetings were never more full of interest. And if additions to membership are evidence of the presence of Christ, eighteen were added during that time, fourteen on confession of faith, and nine of these at one communion.

After fourteen months, Rev. Nathan H. Harriman was installed pastor September 15, 1886, and continued till the close of 1888. He found the four hundred and ninety-fourth member on the list, and left the five hundred and seventy-first, giving the unusual increase of seventy-seven in two years and three months. Deaths and changes then also left only three hundred and seventy-two connected with the church, an increase of twenty-nine over the membership at the close of the first pastorate.

March 6, 1889, witnessed the beginning of the labors of the Rev. James M. Dickson, D. D., our present beloved pastor, and may it be many, many years before the historian shall record their close.



But you will want to hear something more than a bare record of the coming and going of pastors. As early as November 20, 1870, a sermon was preached on building churches for God,—just four years before we began to worship in this pleasant sanctuary. The labors and anxieties of those years cannot here be recounted. First of all we sought to do all in our own power, subscribing more than \$21,000, \$3,200 of which was from the ladies. Friends in the Union Church gave \$7,600. Of that Dea. Barstow gave \$5,000, the largest gift from one person. The Central Church came next with \$5,385, and the Beneficent followed with \$4,445. Mr. George H. Corliss, of the North Church, gave \$2,500, to which he afterwards added \$600 for the debt, and friends in the city outside of the churches gave \$3,100; \$100 came also from Mrs. Rogers, of Bristol, \$100 from a friend in Newport, over \$100 from Scotland, and more than \$560 from Boston; \$24,830 in all from friends outside our own congregation. Talking of gifts from a distance—one member who had gone to England and never expected to return, though he was not rich, yet pledged and paid \$1,000.

Still, after so great effort on our part, and such liberal help from others, this sanctuary had to be mortgaged in 1875 for \$25,000 more. We staggered under this burden till in the autumn of 1878 another discourse on “owing no man anything,” let loose the flood that had been waiting for an outlet. Several thousands were pledged to the pastor before he left the church. No one present at the meetings which

followed will soon forget them. Men and women, those in the church and out of it, old people and children in the Sabbath-school, were all eager to have a share in the work. Seven children, four boys and three girls, who gave \$28 that day, have since then become members of the church, and one boy, too young to come alone, got his mother to bring him to the house of the pastor that with his own hand he might give his \$5, which was his all. To-day Bertie Reed is not here, for God has taken him and his mother also.

It was proposed to raise \$10,000 in five subscriptions of \$2,000 each. Two men volunteered at once. Mr. Joseph Carpenter, who belonged to the Beneficent congregation, had set aside \$2,000 for us, feeling that the load was more than we could carry, and his was the third. Another among ourselves became the fourth, and the fifth subscription was a curious composite. One man gave \$1,000. Another who intended to give \$500, made it \$750 on condition that a third, who had already subscribed \$500, should make up the last \$250, and so the five subscriptions were all secured. Are any troubled by the mention of those days because the Lord has taken away the power to fulfill the pledges which then they made? Let such feel assured that this church thanks them for all it was in their heart to do, and rejoices that the Lord also accepts according as a man hath, and not according as he hath not.

And here must be recorded the help so cheerfully rendered by the pastors of our larger Congregational

churches. One gave \$100, and two \$150 each, for the original subscription, and another \$100 for the debt.

Meanwhile great care was taken that this pressure of the home work should not prevent our promotion of the kingdom throughout the world. The church was formed on a Wednesday, and the next Sabbath evening it observed the missionary concert of prayer, and took up a collection of \$10.67. In September it was \$17.22. At first the annual gifts of the church were small, \$295 in 1870, and \$389 in 1874.

On February 21, 1875, the church commenced the system of weekly offerings, a part of them being devoted to home expenses, and a part to benevolence. That year they amounted to \$1,666.40, \$1,015 being spent at home, and only \$651.18 going abroad. Still even that was a large increase from the \$389 of the year before. The following is a classified list of the amounts from that date till now:

	Home Expenses.	Benevolence.	Total.
1876 . .	\$865 88	\$1,020 34	\$1,886 22
1877 . .	1,499 74	899 90	2,391 64
1878 . .	1,278 65	1,337 33	2,615 98
1879 . .	1,110 44	1,160 15	2,270 59
1880 . .	240 81	1,336 71	1,577 52
1881 . .	316 98	1,391 52	1,708 50
1882 . .	622 15	1,319 14	1,941 29
1883 . .	620 87	1,584 59	2,205 46
1884 . .	533 86	1,446 00	1,979 86
1885 . .	527 86	1,127 94	1,655 80
1886 . .	486 79	1,156 45	1,643 24
1887 . .	553 33	2,141 66	2,495 09
1888 . .	1,318 77	1,721 77	3,040 54

That shows that the largest amount for home expenses was in 1877, \$1,491, \$969 of that being for the debt. Manifestly even then there was the feeling that unless it was reduced we were in danger of financial failure. The largest sum for benevolence was in 1887, viz.: \$2,141. And that column rose from \$1,160 to \$1,336 shortly after the payment of the debt, showing what an incubus it had been on our benevolence. Our gifts rose to \$1,584 in 1883, nor did it go below \$1,300 again till we were without a pastor. The largest sum total was last year, viz.: \$3,040, made up of home expenses \$1,318.77, and benevolence \$1,721.77.

But you are growing tired of statistics.

Then let us gratefully recognize that whatever we have attained to has been through the grace of God. If we were moved at first to provide the means of grace for this part of the city, that was His work in us. If we were led to give of our substance to the building of this house for God, it was only of his own that we gave Him, and that wholly through his grace. If others helped us with open hand, it was God who opened both their hearts and hands, but all this was only the scaffolding for a greater work. Even the gift of pastors,—and they, too, were from Christ,—was only a means to this higher end, of leading men to find the portion of their souls in God, and then grow up into his likeness. Viewed in one light, this work was done by each believer when he believed and purified his soul in his obedience to the truth. But that man has a very dim conception of the greatness

of this work who can stop there. Viewed in another light it was the work of ministers, and the Bible speaks of "the work of the ministry." In what I must regard as a yet higher view, it was the work of the church itself, as scripture teaches when it says that from Christ "all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." I said this was a higher view, because it shuts us up to see that it is all from Christ. When we regard it as the work of ministers, we are apt to think of their learning, or eloquence, or something else in them that fits them for its performance; but when we regard it as the work of the whole body of the church, we see at once that it can be their work only as Christ works in and through them. And as to the work of ministers, surely none knew more about that than St. Paul, and he is very careful to tell us that Christ wrought it all through him. I know that such views are looked on as the opinion of one school of theology, nothing more, showing how blind many are to the glory of this truth. It seems as though one could not read of man's being created in the image of God without a thrill of joy. And yet even the statement that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as he is, awakens very dim anticipations of that glory. But the whole of this from first to last is the work of God. For what is Paul? In answer, one may say this and another that. But God moves the Apostle to reply,

“A minister, through whom men believed, *each*, as *the Lord* gave unto him.” Then as Christians we are the work of God,—born of the Spirit ; nor that only, but the whole work of sanctification is wrought in us by the same Spirit. So true is this, that “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these (and these alone) are sons of God.” That is an amazing statement of this truth by the Master himself, where he says, “I am the vine, ye the branches” ; whatever of life is in you is both *from* and *in me*. Is that all? No. Not only am I the vine, but “my Father is the husbandman.” Then Father, Son and Holy Ghost, together, produce, maintain, increase and make perfect our salvation. No wonder the Psalmist wrote, “The works of Jehovah are great.” But a work may be really wrought and remain invisible. In the darkness of night place one by the side of the most beautiful statue ever wrought by human hands, and as he passes his hands over the sinuosities of the smooth surface, can he form any idea of its beauty? Is it, then, the work of the Spirit that lights up this hidden beauty? No. That is only the beginning of the dawn. That is only a pledge and earnest of yon clearer light, when we shall know even as also we are known. *Till then*, these works of the Lord are *sought* out of all that have pleasure therein. Note it well. Not, assumed to be thoroughly known, for he that thinketh he knoweth them, knoweth not one, as he ought to know ; not that, but sought out by those who see just enough of their glory to long for that perfect knowledge that is to come.

Thank God who has given us a pastor who thus knows and loves his truth, not because he can impart his knowledge to us, but because in sending him God intimates his intention that we shall be taught of the Spirit. We have often sat together in heavenly places in Christ, but all that only teaches us how great are the works of the Lord, and stirs us up to search them out. May the Master find us thus employed when He comes again to receive us to himself, that where He is there we may be also. As we gaze on them in the light of heaven, we shall be tempted to ask, "Can these be the same which we sought out on earth?" And still the glory of Him who wrought them shall through them shine out more and more forever.

# SERMON.

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By REV. JAMES M. DICKSON, D. D., Pastor.

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Psalm xlvi., 5; God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early.

OUR attention was this morning directed to twenty years of church life and church progress. The preacher was limited to some forty minutes, and in that time could give little more than a brief summary of what has been accomplished. But is not this what we find to be necessarily true in all written history? Even of the three and a half years' ministry of our blessed Saviour the apostle John says, near the close of his gospel: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." And enough of the history of the Pilgrim Church has been written to show the divine and the human coöperating for an end the most important that can engage our hearts and minds and lives. The preacher, one of the most important factors in the work in so far as human agency is concerned, modestly kept himself in the background. Turning to the fly-leaf of the magnificent Bible that lies open before me, this appears in beautifully illuminated letters:



Presented  
 BY  
 THE SOUTH CHURCH SABBATH SCHOOL,  
 WEST ROXBURY, MASS.,  
 TO  
 THE PILGRIM CHURCH,  
 PROVIDENCE, R. I.,  
 AS  
 A Token of Affection for their former Pastor,  
 REV. THOMAS LAURIE,  
 JUNE, 1873.

This gives the clew to much besides. Dr. Laurie's pastorate here of nearly sixteen years covered the church-building and debt-raising periods; and the necessary inspiration, the well-directed efforts and the financial success are largely to be traced to him. Thousands of dollars, contributed and permanently invested here, may well be inscribed "a token of affection for the pastor"; and thousands more may be credited to his self-denying toils and travels, to say nothing of the ingathering and spiritual upbuilding of the people. Eternity alone can disclose the debt of gratitude this church owes to its retired pastor. With much else on the part of the noble men and women who coöperated with him, this is all inscribed in God's book of remembrance, but it is well, in addition, to have our minds stirred up by way of remembrance.

There is one thing more that may profitably be said in this connection. Dr. Laurie has flung out a banner, as from the top of yon tower, which should con-

tinue to wave through long years for the benefit of all who hold or may come to hold office or to fill places of responsibility in this church. When his quickly sensitive nature felt, and that all too soon, that some other one might profitably take the main laboring oar, he resigned the pastorate, but *with no diminution of love for and interest in the people and the work*. No one has welcomed me more heartily ; no one has been more helpful to me in commencing my pastorate among you. May we long be blessed with his fellowship, his counsel and his prayers.\*

What has been accomplished here is but a part of Christ's kingdom in its development in the world — a kingdom which embraces more than the church, as the second chapter of the prophecy of Daniel and other scriptures clearly show. It has claims on civil governments as well, and all such will own allegiance to Him when society is sufficiently leavened with the power of the gospel. "He is Lord of lords and King of kings," "the prince of the kings of the earth"; and the fiat has gone forth: "Be wise now, therefore, O, ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

But God dwells in and works specially through his church for the salvation of souls, and for the amelioration of the condition and the uplifting of humanity at large; hence the vast importance of the church in its outlook upon the world.

All churches, however, have not continuance, as the sad fate of the seven churches of Asia clearly demonstrates. The candlestick may be removed.

What then is the church in which God dwells, and which he will speedily help?

The Pilgrim Church, whose history has been so well brought before us, may be taken as an illustration, and what I have to say this evening has in part been suggested by what we listened to in the morning.

Mistakes have, no doubt, been made during these twenty years. But even on the sun's disc there are spots; and notwithstanding all possible errors, there has been noble purposing and equally noble execution.

It somehow got into print yesterday that my discourse this evening would be memorial in character. Such was farthest from my thought, and yet the grandest memorial of a church's past must be found in a living future, nobly realized, and in the grand results of after labors, and in the direction of these I shall endeavor to point you.

In the first place, then, the church of which it can be said "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her and that right early," in so far as government is concerned, may differ widely from other churches equally approved of him and equally blessed with his presence and the promise of his help. As I read the scriptures there is a manifestly intentional lack of precision as regards the minutiae of church order, which suggests the allowance of a wide latitude in practice. The evil just

here has been that men associating themselves together in the service of God, have adopted what seemed to them the most scriptural and the best suited to the times under providential direction, and then have built this up as an immensely high wall, shutting themselves in and all other Christians out, and claiming that they are the church of God, and that nothing else is, thus dividing the very body of Christ. For some of these walls of separation and inclosure hoary antiquity is claimed as an evidence that they have heaven's approval, and in the structures of some glaring perversions of the letter and spirit of the written word are but too apparent.

We, with Congregationalism at large and with several other sister denominations, occupy a liberal position, and in true Christian charity our doors are open for men and women of all denominations that come at all within the range of evangelical Christianity. We question no man as to his peculiar views of church polity. We ask only a willingness to worship and to work in harmony with us, thus making the body secondary to the spirit that dwells therein. When church polity is made the chief thing, spirituality must suffer.

Secondly, in the matter of doctrine, the church that would claim the divine favor must be loyal to Christ, ever emphasizing the truths that centre around him and his cross. It is his own declaration: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" The response from the renewed heart should ever be: "God forbid that I

should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." Even if it were not so fully expressed in revelation and so developed among men, there would be implied the dark back-ground of sin, in which all by nature are involved—man's lost condition from which unaided man can find no redemption. "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is precious." Christ a divine Saviour appears as their deliverer. He made himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and through him alone salvation is to be found. "With his stripes we are healed." The Holy Spirit accompanying the truth as it is in Christ, renews and sanctifies the heart and redeems the life, giving foretastes of heaven; and heaven is the ultimate goal. With these truths given so clearly in God's word, and embodied in our creed, no man or church has a right to trifle. They are central and essential. They are all summed up or implied in the simple sentence: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The question is not as to what will be flattering and gratifying to us, but what will be made of God effectual to salvation in us and through us.

But, thirdly, let us turn to the practical application of the truth without which there is no church life or proper church work. God's people, filled with the Holy Spirit, are full of love. They are realizing the promise of a divine power in the exercise of which they as naturally turn their faces to a lost world as

the sun in the heaven turns its face full of light and warmth and life to our earth, which would otherwise be dark and cold and barren. "God is love." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and "the love of Christ constrained us because we thus judge. . . . that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." One who has read the gospel fragmentarily has been brought into this new life with its aspirations and impulses. At length the great commission to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" comes to notice, and there is nothing of an arbitrary character recognized in it. The renewed soul responds joyfully to its call. Every Christian heart and every Christian community should reply, this is just what I feel impelled to participate in through the love of Christ within me. And as we investigate farther, we find that Christ has instituted ordinances just in keeping with this. There is not a burdensome feature in one of them. Look at the sacraments—baptism and the Lord's supper. Under the former administration of the covenant circumcision was administered at eight days of age, and at twelve years the child came up from distant parts of the land to partake of the pass-over at Jerusalem. In the redemptive love of Jesus the child has its parts still, but in simpler form, and both sacraments go with the word to the remotest ends of the earth; and the dying penitent, suffering

from whatever disease, may receive both as indicative to his cleansing by the blood of Christ and of his feeding by faith upon him. The loveliness of Christ shines brightly forth and shines through his people everywhere—the same mind in them which was in him. Blessed Jesus! Blessed provisions of grace! Blessed people! May it be ours to claim the blessedness.

But, as with a slight turn of the kaleidoscope, let us view the field in a somewhat different light. The particular church, organized in accordance with these principles, must have its local habitation, and this in itself should be attractive. In the early years of this organization this was felt and appreciated. Liberal hearts devised liberal things and built for the future, and this noble structure, with appointments so fine for work and for worship, was the result. It lays upon us, and all who shall come after, a responsibility, the grip of which should ever be felt. As we meet together, and as we invite others to meet with us, our parlors, where we receive our friends, may be our guide as to the nicety to be sought and observed. In building and furnishing, you acknowledged this. Let the acknowledgment be abiding. But we should remember, too, that this is the house of God. How often in directions as to the services of the tabernacle, did God say to his people, "There will I meet with you." "The tabernacle of the congregation" is in the revised edition "the tent of meeting," His meeting place with them. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name,"

said Christ, "there am I in the midst of them." This gives an additional plea for the nicety of the house even to the matter of dust. The place, in its acknowledged sacredness, should be suggestive of the fact that holiness becometh his house, and that our bodies are his temple not to be defiled.

In connection with this, it may be observed that in the business—the monetary affairs of the church,—the best business methods should be adopted and carried out, and the best business men, sanctified by the grace of God, should be brought to the front. The age is one of enterprise. Much that is objectionable is resorted to for the sake of what the world calls success. We want none of this here, but we do want the enterprise. It is essential if we would commend spirituality to the masses. But there is a stronger argument. We are workers together with God, and in all God's works and ways the best business principles are everywhere apparent. If I were asked to-day for the best book to guide to success in life, I would point to that book—God's book—in which with much else of similar import, we read, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before Kings; he shall not stand before mean men," over against which for present use, we may place "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully," *i. e.*, negligently. It is the King's business, and should be conducted according to the King's practice and the King's precepts.

These things are vastly important, but of paramount importance is Christian life manifesting itself



in Christian fellowship and sociability, and in the reaching out of Christian hands with the bread and water of life to perishing humanity, and through faith in God's word and spirit, we can reach to the ends of the earth. We must be earnest workers and worshippers, and in all things Christ, who is the brightness of the Father's glory, must be magnified to the utmost. There is much said in our day about reaching non-church-goers. I know of nothing so calculated to do this as a thoroughly live church. When they come to feel that we have to give and most joyfully do communicate what they so sadly lack, as they come to know themselves in the trials and disappointments of life, when they come to realize that Christ himself in all the fullness of his compassion and with life giving power is ours, and that this Christ is through us seeking their highest welfare, it will be no strange thing to see them fly "as doves to their windows." And this suggests what manner of spirit we are of if we are his. In the sermon this morning, and in some of the addresses before the Sabbath-school this afternoon, the early mission work in this field was brought before us—the sacrifices made, the delights in self-denying labors that are indelibly fixed in minds and hearts, and the results that were attained. These were simply causes and effects. The spirit that animated pastor and people, in the little chapel on the other side of the street, was what gave this edifice, with enlarged church membership and attendance. To regain that spirit, if it has been lost, and to conserve it, is the all

important duty. In another city, some years since, a similar mission was doing similar work in an up-town field, and doing it well. All was activity and lookout and the bringing in of sheaves. There were discouragements and struggles, but there were compensations in results. An old down-town church wanted the location as its members were moving in that direction. Propositions led to negotiations, and at length, what should have been a strong church occupied the ground with a fine edifice. The larger church had absorbed the smaller, and the spirit of the smaller was lost. The high respectability of the united forces had destroyed *the* force, the missionary force that before animated the mission enterprise, and when the first necessary enlargement was over, there was sad depletion. Alas for this church respectability that fails to keep close to a crucified Saviour and his open hand of benediction for the poor and the outcast! May God save the Pilgrim Church from this evil, so common and so evil in its fruits, or rather in its sterility.

Let it be remembered, in applying these principles of Christianity, that we are acting in the nineteenth century, the most important century in the world's history next to that in which the cross was erected at Golgotha and life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel, and that we are acting in the closing years of the century. Discovery and invention have since its beginning made marvelous strides. Nature's secrets have been unlocked and utilized as they had never been before.

Material progress has been so much a feature of the age, that the civilized world is on tip-toe of expectation as to what next will be developed. Fortunes, the vastness of which had hardly been dreamed of before, are held by many, and no doubt for a purpose in the providence of God.

During the same period, and but for this the age might have been almost hopelessly materialistic, the grand idea of missions has fired cultured and uncultured minds and has taken on practical shape till the church of Christ holds the strategic points of the world with the Bible, the preacher, the teacher and the printing-press. It requires no over-vivid imagination to conceive the possibilities of a speedy climax in the working of these forces in favor of the gospel; and it would be no miracle. It is said of one of the smaller of our northern lakes, that the ice frequently disappears in a single night. Darkness settles down upon it a frozen expanse and with the dawn of day it is the liquid element. But the work has not been done in a night. For weeks the sun and the breeze have been acting upon it above and the gradually tempered water beneath till the result has been almost a fixed fact, notwithstanding the general appearance. May not this be illustrative of much that appears untouched in heathenism to-day? At all events the work progresses, the promise is sure, the consummation may be early. Increased faith, with correspondingly increased prayer and benevolence and zeal are everywhere demanded. Shall we stand with others in close phalanx for the right? The

church that is true to itself and to the Master in its immediate field, will be true in the field of foreign work.

And then there is the domain of our own land in its length and breadth, devolving on us peculiar responsibilities in connection with the Redeemer's kingdom. The foreigner is here to be leavened or to leaven. Our prosperity, as a nation, has attracted to our shores from all nationalities, a population of the most heterogeneous character, with all sorts of religious beliefs and with much that is diametrically opposed to all religion. As they have planted themselves among us, many of them are seeking to strengthen themselves against us. The Indian knew to lay his ear on the ground, nature's great telephone, and detect the approach of a foe that he might prepare for the battle. We need no such expedient. The foe is in view and the conflict is in progress. This land is a battle-field. God grant that it may not be with "garments rolled in blood," yet it is the "battle of the warrior." It is between the people of God on the one side and infidelity and immorality and false forms of religion on the other. With his presence the power of Christ is in his church. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." The call is: "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." "The sword of the spirit is the word of God." The sects are coming together. We hear it virtually said "We didn't know we differed

on so few points and argued on so many." Union with faithfulness to Christ should be the watchword. God grant, that in these critical times this church may stand for him, hearing the summons to rise and shine her light having come, and at length receiving the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

The century hastens to its close.