

A D D R E S S E S.

by

MAJOR-GENERAL O. O. HOWARD & REV. EDWIN JOHNSON,

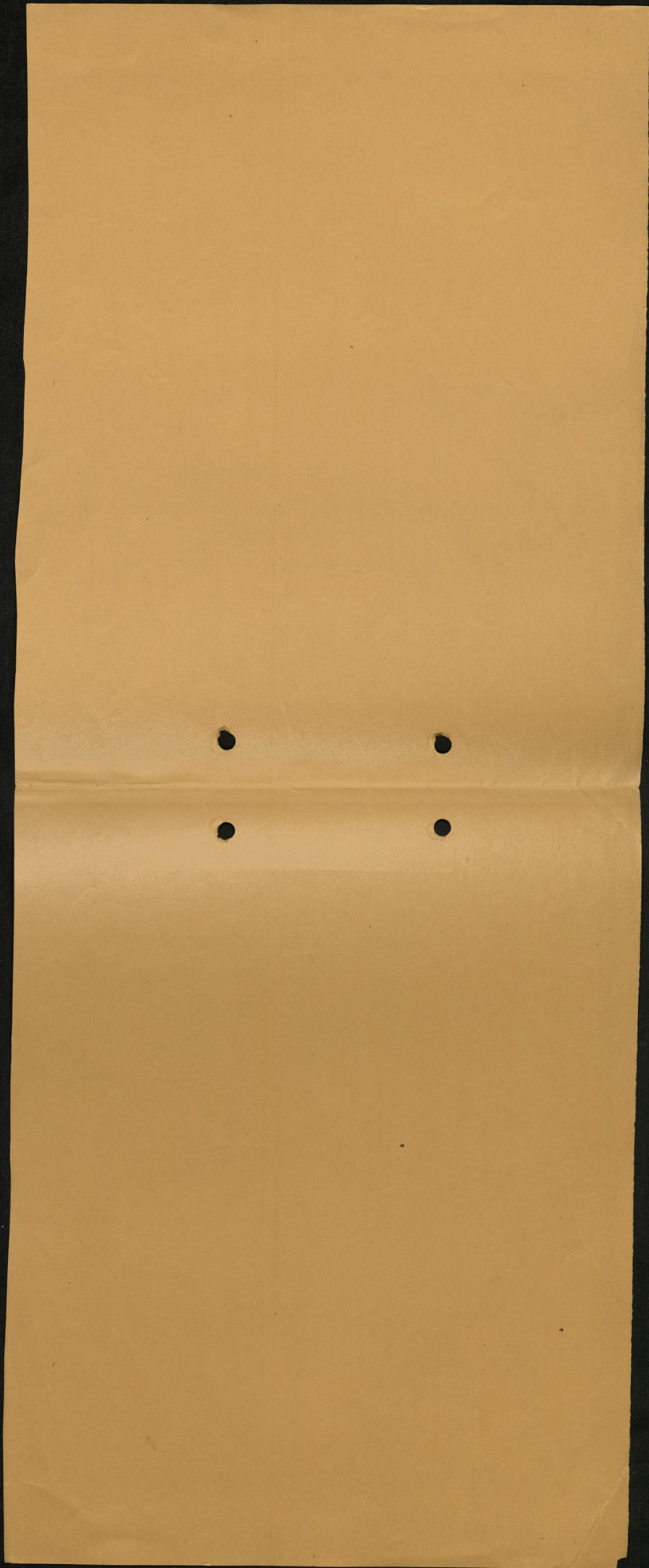
at the

LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

WASHINGTON, D. C.

VOL. 7 NO. 9





ORDER OF EXERCISES

OF THE

Laying of the Corner-Stone

OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

CORNER OF TENTH AND G STREETS, IN WASHINGTON, D. C.,

On Thursday, October 4, 1866.

SINGING.

ADDRESS BY MAJOR-GENERAL O. O. HOWARD.

DEPOSITING THE BOX AND LAYING THE CORNER-STONE.

CONSECRATING PRAYER BY J. C. HOLBROOK, D. D., OF HOMER, N. Y.

ADDRESS BY REV. EDWIN JOHNSON, OF BALTIMORE, MD.

DOXOLOGY.

BENEDICTION BY REV. C. B. BOYNTON, D. D.

List of Articles Deposited in the Corner-Stone.

1. New York Herald, April 18 and 20, 1865.
2. Report of Freedmen Schools, by Rev. J. W. Alvord.
3. Howard Record, (monthly temperance paper.)
4. Appeal and Plans of Young Men's Christian Association of Washington.
5. Chronicle, January 25, 1865.
6. Gen. Grant's Report on the War.
7. Seventh Annual Report Boston Tract Society.
8. The Freedman. (Sabbath School paper by Boston Tract Society.)
9. Oration by Senator Sumner before Young Men's Republican Association, Brooklyn, N. Y.
10. First Annual Report of National Freedmen's Relief Association.
11. A manuscript Sermon, preached at Rehoboth, Mass., over one hundred years ago.
12. Plymouth Hymn Book.
13. List of all who have contributed, here and elsewhere, to our Church Building.
14. List of all who have contributed towards defraying our expenses.
15. List of Church and Society Members.
16. Covenant, Articles of Faith, Rules and Regulations.
17. Copy of Discourse preached on the first National Thanksgiving, by Rev. C. B. Boynton, D. D., at Hall of House of Representatives, December 7, 1865.
18. Various Coins.
19. Sundry Newspapers of October 4, 1866; interesting relics, etc., etc.

GEN. HOWARD'S ADDRESS.

BRETHREN,—

Having been selected to present a few facts with reference to our church, on an occasion of so much interest, I should be pleased to have done so in a more acceptable manner than my time will allow.

With reference to the organization of the church, I will make a few quotations from an able and complete history, furnished to the public last year by one of our most active members.

The present Congregational church seems to have taken visible shape, or rather to have been initiated, in 1864. In the words of the historian:—

“The vast increase of population which has been brought to this city during the war had early turned the inquiries of the people of the Congregational faith to the subject of establishing a church of their own, and in March, 1864, Rev. Mr. Powell, of the State of New York, came to this city, and after consulting a few earnest friends of the denomination, commenced ministrations in Willard's Hall. The place of meeting was changed after one Sunday's service to the Union League Rooms, on Ninth street.

“After worshipping here for some months, it was decided to suspend exercises until the autumn; and a committee, consisting of L. Deane, E. W. Robinson, and R. H. Hooper, was appointed to make such arrangements for then recommencing services as might, after deliberation and consultation, be deemed best. This committee was unable to mature any satisfac-

tory plan for this purpose; but in May, 1865, they prepared an appeal, addressed to the National Council, then soon to assemble in Boston, which was signed by some sixty persons, presenting the condition of things to Northern Congregational friends. On the 10th of June, 1865, a meeting was held at the office of Geo. W. Woolley, over the Union League Rooms, on Ninth street, the object, as stated, being ‘to promote the interests of Congregationalism in Washington.’ Rev. E. W. Robinson was chairman, and C. H. Bliss secretary. Rev. B. F. Morris and W. R. Hooper were chosen as a committee to present the condition of this field and its claims to the National Congregational Council, which took place on the 14th of that month. At a second meeting, August 17, Rev. Mr. Morris, who had attended the National Council in Boston, reported verbally that he was cordially received and his mission favorably entertained by the Council, and that all encouragement that could be justly desired was extended by the members to their project. The following resolution was thereupon unanimously adopted, on motion of Mr. Hooper:—

“Resolved, That in our opinion measures should now be adopted to inaugurate a Congregational Church and Society in the city of Washington.

“On the motion of C. H. Bliss, a committee of seven members, C. H. Bliss, L. Deane, W. A. Thompson, D. G. Blakesley, C. H. Torrey, B. F. Morris, and E. W. Robinson, was appointed to secure the

names of those desirous to embark in the enterprise, and to carry into effect the spirit of the resolution. This meeting consisted of nineteen persons. At the next meeting, August 31, the last mentioned committee reported favorably to the enterprise, and presented a code of rules for the society, which were adopted. Twenty-one persons present. At the next meeting, September 14, Major General O. O. Howard and Hon. E. H. Hodges were elected members of the committee, in place of Messrs. Torry and Blakesley, who had permanently left the city.

"The first sermon was preached by Rev. Charles B. Boynton, D. D., formerly of Cincinnati, in the Unitarian Church, which, not being occupied by the Unitarian people during the autumn, had been rented by the committee for three months, ending with November.

"On the 20th of September, pursuant of notice from the pulpit, a public meeting was held in the church for the purpose of perfecting the organization of the society, and of taking measures for permanently supplying the pulpit.

"On motion of Mr. Daniel Tyler, it was unanimously voted to invite Dr. Boynton to continue his ministrations. The invitation was accepted, and Dr. Boynton has continued with great acceptance to preach to a crowded congregation. At this meeting, which completed the organization of the society, the committee was specially authorized to act till January 1st, 1865. Thirty names were added to the rolls of the society, making at that time seventy members in all.

"The first meeting for forming a church was held at the Unitarian Church, October 11th, 1865, when a committee of five — Dr. C. B. Boynton, Rev. B. F. Morris, E. W. Robinson, H. O. Brewster, and Wm. Russell — was selected as a committee to prepare and report a Covenant, Articles of Faith, and Rules for the Church. Another committee of five, viz: Silas E. Hodges, L. Deane, W. R. Hooper, Wm. Wheeler, and Leonard Watson, was ap-

pointed to arrange for a Council of Churches, and make all needful arrangements for the meeting and sessions of that body. Twenty churches were invited to act in the Council. 'The First Congregational Church of Washington' was adopted as the name of the church. Subsequent meetings were held on the 18th and 24th October; and, after much consideration and discussion on the latter-named meeting, the Articles of Faith, Covenant, and Rules, were adopted. At a meeting on November 1st, the church voted a confirmation of the call of an Ecclesiastical Council, and at the same time invited Dr. Boynton to occupy its pulpit as their religious teacher for the same period (six months) as had been designated by the action of the society. At a meeting for that purpose on Sunday evening, November 12th, of the committee to examine the credentials of those proposing to unite in the membership of the church, a list, consisting of nearly one hundred, was reported.

"The Council referred to assembled November 15, at 10 o'clock, A. M., in the Unitarian Church, and were organized.

"After some discussion of an able and interesting nature in regard to the Creed, Covenant, and Rules, a resolution presented by Rev. Dr. Thompson, declaring them, as well as the manner of the organization of the church, satisfactory, was unanimously adopted by the Council; the same resolution also declaring that the Council would proceed to the public services of recognition in the evening.

"A full and free discussion of the plans and prospects of the church in the matter of erecting a house of worship and sustaining the ministry succeeded. The scheme of building on leased land was not entertained by the Council. The following preamble and resolution were adopted: —

"Whereas, a special recommendation was made to the churches by the National Council, at Boston, that a Congregational Church should be organized and sustained at the Nation Capital:

"Resolved, That this Council recommend the First Congregational Church of Washington to the Congregational Union and to the churches for immediate and liberal aid in the erection of a permanent and solid church edifice.

"It was stated that the church was amply able to meet all the expenses which they were now incurring for worship,—\$3,800 a year,—and that without extraordinary effort, and that they were ready to contribute largely to secure a place of worship."

The interesting ceremonies of the recognition were held in the Unitarian Church, on Wednesday evening, November 15, 1865.

Since the organization of the church its membership has steadily increased, and now numbers one hundred and sixty four. The congregations are large and regular, both at the Sunday services and at the weekly prayer meetings. During the last session of Congress our pastor officiated as chaplain of the House of Representatives, and the church attended his ministrations in the morning at the Hall of the House, and in the evening at Metzger's Hall. We have a flourishing Sabbath School at the same hall, before the morning service, numbering about twenty teachers and a hundred scholars on an average. All our services during the past year have been of a most edifying and satisfactory character.

The members of the church have been unusually zealous and active in the work of its Master; while our pastor has been faithful and fearless in proclaiming to us the truth, declaring the whole counsel of God.

Our church early put itself in cordial communication with many of the great benevolent organizations of the day, particularly the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Missionary Association, and the Congregational Union, and has contributed willingly and generously to the funds of these

Societies, besides having made special donations to Sabbath School enterprises.

With regard to our contemplated church edifice, I should be pleased to present you a detailed history of the work of your Committee, but will let it suffice at this time to give a brief summary.

Our church and society decided to construct a building here at the capitol of the nation, not only to meet their present wants, but owing to our peculiar position, to provide for the transitory population that comes and goes at this place, more perhaps than elsewhere; having particular regard to the demand of Congregationalists who have heretofore had no house of worship of their own in Washington. Our plans have been matured, the site for a church edifice has been purchased, at the corner of Tenth and G streets, at a cost of little above twenty three thousand dollars (\$23,000), towards which the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), has been paid, and the title secured. The estimated cost of our proposed building is about sixty-five thousand dollars (\$65,000). Towards the entire cost the treasurer and finance committee have received already, from various sources, by subscription and contribution, about thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000). The Building Committee have had their plans and specifications completed, the proper excavation and preparation of the ground effected, the stone foundation nearly laid, and have made all the necessary arrangements to proceed with the work of construction. I need not say to you that we are looking with a steady confidence to our brethren throughout the United States to aid us in finishing what we have begun; but, in the words of the *Boston Recorder*, "the members of this church are not rich in this world's goods. They gave to the Council assurance of their ability to meet the current expenses of the enterprise out of their own resources, but they must look to wealthier Christians for aid to erect a suitable meeting house."

We will say to our friends throughout the country, we have been diligent, we have done what we could, we have laid the foundation of a noble enterprise; we propose to put a veritable church of the Puritans at the Capitol of our Nation, and we ask from you a generous support. We have already pledged or collected among ourselves above sixteen thousand dollars (\$16,000), which evidences our unwillingness to be merely passive recipients. We hope to have continuously what we have now, a living, working membership, thoroughly loyal to Christ, knit together in the closest ties of Christian relationship, and striving to benefit

and bless all with whom we come in contact.

We hope to preserve the same fervent spirit of patriotism that our Congregational brethren elsewhere have almost invariably manifested. We look to the Christian churches of this city for friendly co-operation, and trust we may aid them and they us, in making unceasing inroads upon the territory of our common enemy, and engage continuously with them in giving a helping hand to the poor and the lowly. And perchance God may see fit to pour out untold blessings upon Washington and upon the nation of which it is the head, in answer to our united prayers.

ADDRESS AT THE LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE OF THE FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C., Oct. 4, 1866.

BY REV. EDWIN JOHNSON, BALTIMORE, MD.

It was a part of Paul's declaration to the Athenians as he stood upon Mars-hill, surrounded with the altars, shrines, and temples of idolatry, that "God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." And John, the Revelator, in his description of the New Jerusalem, says, "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." It is a testimony alike to our own limited faculties and to the imperfect conditions in which we live that we are called upon to erect houses of religious worship; while nevertheless it is true that, as we are and where we are, this work is one of sacred duty and of enthusiastic delight. God does not need the sheltering roof, nor can He be hemmed within the space which any walls protect; but we need the protection, and not alone from burning heats and chilling winds and falling showers, but likewise from disturbing sounds and distracting associations. The ideal state, realized in heaven and destined to be realized on earth, is where all scenes and associations shall be full of the felt presence of divine purity; where no differences of forms nor of denominational faith shall separate into parts the vast congregation of worshipers, and where worship shall be the one thread upon which all life's activities shall be strung,—with whose vibrations they all shall thrill. But here and now we are fain to produce, in miniature, types of the city celestial. The church edifice, builded with strength, adorned with grace, and pointing away from traffic and turmoil, from sordid deeds and sordid thoughts, to the pure and peaceful heavens, is an object of desire and love

to devout hearts; its existence in some more or less suitable form, is an almost indispensable requisite for the existence, stability, and efficiency of the associated body of believers,—that *living house* which is God's real abode.

Fitting it surely is, at the beginning of such an enterprise as this, when the foundation first emerges to public view, that with public ceremony we should dedicate the work to God, acknowledge our complete dependence upon Him for the consummation of what has been begun, and at the same time set forth some of those leading ideas and principles that lie at the base of the moral and religious enterprise in whose behalf the material structure is to be built. Invited to perform this latter service, I will speak with the freedom of individual conviction, while I hope not to misrepresent either these brethren or that great cloud of witnesses whom we may well reckon as interested parties to the present transaction. Congregationalism recognizes no such thing, properly speaking, as a national church. It exalts each local church in respect of independent rights and responsibilities. Yet in an important sense this First Congregational Church of Washington is national. Planted within a district which belongs to the States in common; carrying in its title the name of one concerning whom every loyal State and citizen can say, "He is ours"; composed in large part of those who are here temporarily and representatively,—standing at this center, at once as a resultant of forces that have radiated from without, and as a reservoir whence we hope that currents of good influence are to flow over all the land, the interest of this movement is not local, but wide-

spreading as the branches of the sacred tree which the Pilgrims planted, almost two centuries and a half ago, "on the wild New England shore," and of which we may truly say: "It hath taken deep root and filled the land. The hills are covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof are like the goodly cedars. It hath sent out its boughs unto the sea, and its branches unto the river."

Speaking, then, for so large a constituency, while I am inadequate to voice forth the full grandeur of thought and sentiment that invests the occasion, and while for all that I shall utter I may not assume the unanimous consent of Congregational Christians in our land, let me declare, —

First, that the faith symbolized by this corner stone is that which is known as evangelical. We build a *church*, — not a lyceum, not a lecture-room for scientific, political, or literary purposes. It may perhaps at times be used for these, in harmony with its main end; but that end is the saving of souls through "the truth as it is in Jesus." We here signify that we have not lost confidence in the old Gospel. Old? Forgive the word, since God's written record can no more lose vitality and freshness than His works; and as nothing but madness would have the audacity to call these skies, with their changeful variety and glory, *old*; so nothing but the effrontery of ignorance can regard the sacred Scriptures as obsolete or antiquated. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "The same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The "twelve foundations" of the apocalyptic city had in them "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." We do not propose, instead of these, to write the names of any philosophers, sceptics, nor critics whatsoever. "The faith once delivered to the saints," whose witness is in its own records, in our hearts, and in the many wonderful works which it hath wrought in behalf of earthly weal and eternal sal-

vation, we would install upon a new eminence, even here in the capital of the great and growing republic, which has just laid aside "the weight and the sin that did so easily beset it," to run with new vigor a conquering race.

The oneness and personality of God, the depravity of man, the divinity of Jesus, and the redemption by his blood; the personality and presence of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of regeneration, and the remediless doom of all who persistently reject the offered Saviour, — these doctrines we hold, in common with the great evangelical brotherhood, as vital parts of the Christian system, deprived of which it ceases to be a power in the world. In doctrine, as the term is generally understood, we are not bringers in of anything strange and new. If it is asked, Why then do you come at all, as a denomination, and not rather leave the ground to others already occupying it? we might respond, Why should we *not* come? Assuming that our distinction from others is nothing but a matter of taste or of prejudice in favor of certain unessential forms of worship or methods of organization and activity, why should every other evangelical denomination be courteously entertained, or at least patiently tolerated, in these parts, except the one that took the lead in the successful settlement of New England, and by the impress of its faith and polity there, as well as by its active enterprise abroad, has in no small degree molded the national institutions, and determined the national destiny? Among the "many mansions" in the house of faith, surely one might be accorded to the Congregational family without disputing their right to occupy it, or wishing they would merge themselves in the ranks of their neighbors. But I apprehend that along with our agreements we bear certain distinctions, as compared with those neighbors, whereby we are endowed with a special claim, and are appointed to a special duty; for,

Secondly, along with the ancient faith,

we lay at these foundations the principles of progress, liberality, and catholicity. While we believe in the permanence of Christianity, and the final authority of its inspired records, we believe also that it is the province of prayerful study to elucidate more fully, and apply to present and practical affairs, the meaning of the Word. Conservatism and progress thus harmonize and work together, as in the office of the restorer of paintings. One might say he is trying to rub out the paint. But no, he is not seeking to destroy, but to fulfill. With utmost pains he withholds his hand from the least injury to the original, stopping at the invisible line between that and the superficial covering of gross matter. Look when his toil has extended far toward completion. Lo! where was only a cloud of smoke, beams a bright angelic face; where was a patch of dingy and meaningless color, now flows a rich robe that magically mimics reality. Lo! a master-piece, in place of a relic ready to be thrown aside as waste lumber.

The great work of reform is to cleanse away from the Divine Word the cobwebs of human speculation and the soot of prejudice, restoring the original contour and color of truth. Thus did Christ. He came not to destroy the law nor the prophets, but he scorned and scattered the burdensome and formal glosses wherewith Scribes and Pharisees had overlaid the primitive Word. So did Wickliffe and Zwingli and Luther. They raised the rallying cry, "To the Law and to the Testimony!" and trampling under foot the authority of mere tradition, they led the host of God's elect forth to new victories by the sword of the spirit, released now from scabbard and from rust. So did those later reformers to whom we proudly and gratefully trace back our order. Their devout deference to the Word of God, their direct study of its pages, and their denial of the right of human authority to interpose between conscience and the Scriptures, brought them forth from a corrupt church, made

them witnesses for God in a dark age, and led them hither to be the founders of a new political and spiritual empire.

Congregationalism has no book to swear by but the Book of Books; no human authority of saint or assembly to quote as the end of argument; but he who of men comes nearest to being our saint and master is he who enunciated with clearest accent and fullest emphasis the duty of this conservative progress. John Robinson, of Leyden, whose memorable words to his flock, about to embark for their unknown home over the unknown sea, let us reverently here recall. "He charged us before God to follow him no farther than he followed Christ; and if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of His, to be ready to receive it as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry; for he was very confident the Lord had yet more truth and light to break forth out of his Holy Word. He took occasion also miserably to bewail the condition of the Reformed churches, who had come to a period in their religion, and would go no farther than the instruments of their reform. The Lutherans could not go beyond what Luther saw, for whatever part of God's Word he had farther revealed to Calvin they had rather die than embrace it; and so you see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them. A misery much to be lamented, for though they were precious, shining lights in their time, yet God hath not revealed His whole will to them, and were they now alive they would be as ready to receive farther light as that they had received. He also put us in mind of our church covenant, whereby we engaged with God and one another to receive whatever light or truth should be made known to us from His written Word, but withal exhorted us to take heed what we receive as truth, and well to examine, compare, and weigh it with other Scriptures before we receive it. For it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such anti-Christian darkness, and that full perfec-

tion of knowledge should break forth at once."

Such is the true spirit of Congregationalism. We do not arrogate to ourselves the sole possession of it, nor deny that among us bigotry, intolerance, and fog-ism find any place. But it is simply just to say, that a system which recognizes and exalts the independence of the local churches, the rights and responsibilities of individual Christians, and the sole authority of the Scriptures, favors, far more than any prelatic system can, progress toward the solution of the problem, What is truth?

By reason of the same flexibility and freedom, it enjoys a vast advantage in its power to promote that unity for which all intelligent Christians must long, and for which Christ himself prayed. Upon what principle can the unity of the church ever be realized except upon this, that they who accept the same essential doctrines of faith shall unite in self-governing organizations, agreeing or differing in minor matters of faith, and choosing such forms of worship as they deem fittest and best? Any other conception of union either implies the sacrifice of fundamental doctrine, the surrender of independence, or the postponement of union till that illimitably late day when diversities of philosophizing and of interpreting and of taste shall give place to the prevalence of absolute and unvaried sameness. Let those who will answer scornfully that our receipt for healing schism and promoting Christian union is to have all Christians become Congregationalists, we are yet bold to say, that, though we care nothing for the name, and hope it will one day be lost and forgotten, we do conceive that as the essential ideas of republicanism or democracy in the state are valid and vital, and will one day approve themselves to universal adoption, so the principles of Congregational or popular church government are those of Christianity itself, and will eventually crystallize believers into a harmonious and beautiful unity, knowing none other name than that which is

above every name in heaven and earth. For a testimony to this our faith, and for a rallying point to all who will with us accept it, do we, in the name of the Lord, set up our banner.

Thirdly, the law of human liberty, fraternity, and equality lies at the foundation of this enterprise. I have just now said that I care nothing for the name Congregational, and yet it is a good name as denoting that our government is not by pope nor bishops, nor a select and official few inside or outside of the Christian assembly, but "a government of the people, by the people, for the people." All our reasoning about matters ecclesiastical begins and ends with these two propositions, that each local church is self-governing, and that in each church every member stands upon the same platform with every other in respect of rights. So we understand our divine Master to have ordained when he said: "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." So we understand the primitive churches to have been organized and conducted, claiming and allowing no jurisdiction over each other but that of kind counsel, deciding all questions of business or debate by the suffrages of the members. Before the spirit of liberty and love thus recognized and installed as ruler of the new order, slavery melted away; the spirit of national prejudice and of caste, though obstinately contending the ground, was forced to yield; corrupt and cruel superstitions were forced back from their ancient domain by the missionary zeal of churches that were weak to worldly view, but whose strength, heaven-desired, was concentrated upon the work of evangelization. Degeneracy came, division and strife and weakness and shame and woe came, when the spirit of Diotrephes began to prevail. The long era of despotism in the church was the era also of civil tyranny, of popular ignorance and misery. Scarcely till the settlement of the New World was the primitive church order revived, and then was seen how the ideas of fraternity and freedom, cultivated

in the church and embodied in its very constitution, will work outward, and furnish the mold for the whole ordering of society. Every impartial and philosophic historian acknowledges that the church of the Mayflower was the matrix of the future republic. Slavery, though introduced into New England, could not stay there. The genius of religion drove it away. And now we note a phenomenon which, however strange and sorrowful at first view, will appear to further reflection natural and fortunate. Where slavery had obtained a firm footing, so as to forbid even a free discussion of its demerits, these Congregational churches could not live. Their testimony was too pronounced, their tendencies were too obviously and powerfully toward civil freedom and the rights of all men to allow of their being tolerated. And so it came to pass that across the line from free to slave soil, scarcely a church of this name existed, till, by the hand of God, that line was swept away. It was, I say, a fortunate thing that Congregationalism was, till that time, kept on the other side of the line, that its record in this respect might remain so nearly pure, and that it might not, by breathing slavery's atmosphere, be contaminated and left to enact the shameless hypocrisy of a practice at war with its professed and traditional principles. Fortunate, perhaps, that the attempts to found here, in the District of Columbia, a church of the Pilgrims, failed until the District was bequeathed to liberty. Yonder statue upon the dome of the Capitol ascended to its place opportunely; not while every honest observer, inquiring its name, would be compelled in his soul to pronounce it a lying symbol, but when it could look forth over a land redeemed from the curse and crime of bondage. Now, also, is it time to signify by a monument representing religious liberty — no monument of mere materials wrought into architectural shape, but a house fitted for worshiping assemblies and for the utterance of the whole Gospel — that the agency that has done so much to bless and beautify

the East and the West is welcome to do its work in the South and in all the land. The entrance to new fields may not yet be so open as we could desire, and as we had a right to expect; but we will not require too easy conditions for our work. We will not refuse to do our part, whether by action or by suffering, to make the victory, which the sword of loyalty and liberty has won, complete.

In the great moral conflict that now remains, the system of slavery being abolished, Congregationalism can neither be silent nor doubtful which side to take. The first sharp encounter of Christianity in the person of Jesus and the apostles was with the spirit of caste. Against it, as developed in Jewish scorn and hatred toward their Samaritan neighbors and toward the poorer and under class among themselves, the former forged his most stern and stinging rebukes; and at the outset of the apostles' mission, they were taught, most impressively, that men of every race and condition are to be regarded as alike God's children, and as entitled under the Gospel to impartial rights and privileges. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was glad tidings, not solely as it undertook the work of reconciling man to God, but likewise as it provided a corner stone whereby the gaping walls of human society should be bound together, all unjust and unfriendly distinctions between the races and classes disappearing in the faith that adored and loved the Son of Man as Saviour and Lord of all. A Christian commonwealth must incorporate in itself this essential feature of a truly Christian church. This is the voice of immense numbers of Christian churches throughout the North; but in no denomination, perhaps, does the demand so nearly reach unanimity as in ours; and with good reason, since the primordial principles of our profession include the demand.

He must be blind who does not perceive that the grand characteristic of this age is the aspiration after freedom. This is the Enceladus of the Old World, that, long

crushed but deathless under the superincumbent weight of tyrannies and wrongs, ever and anon upheaves the mass with its writhings, and will yet emerge and reign where he has suffered. This is the rightful heir and destined ruler of the New World who already has dispossessed the son of bondage, and driven him into the wilderness. The church for the times, the church of the future, must have a pulse beating strong in sympathy with man as man, and must afford in her own economy and practice a high example of freedom from inhumane and ungenerous prejudice. The church, for whose inhabiting we would here erect a house, builds upon such a profession of faith. And,

Fourthly, upon this profession or principle, that the province of religious teaching includes, with all other matters of doctrinal truth and practical morals, the duties of rulers and subjects—especially includes the application of God's law and Christ's spirit to test the conduct of citizens in a republic where they are the real rulers. Instead of joining in the fatuous cry, "No politics in the pulpit," the great majority of Congregational ministers and church members hold that no themes have a more legitimate and important place in the ministrations of the pulpit, than those that relate to public policy, so far as these relate, also, to the question of right or wrong. It seems to us heresy, and that of a dangerous sort, to allow that politicians may warn off preachers from any part of the domain of morals, or that God's messengers may without great guilt decline to declare His counsel as concerning civil affairs. The larger part of our Text Book is occupied with such themes. Its histories and prophecies refer almost wholly to politics, if by politics is meant the policy of rulers and nations. Shall we pass these by, or content ourselves with showing, never so eloquently, how they applied to the magistrates and peoples of the past? The precepts of the New Testament have a direct bearing upon many of the matters that have occasioned difference and divi-

sions among the people of our own land, especially during recent years. Shall the appointed student of God's Word, and teacher of religious truth, lend no aid to enlighten the ignorant, to encourage the good, to rebuke and defeat the bad, lest he should step outside the range of his office? What device of Satan could be more cunning, yet what device more transparent? To adduce a single example: Bloody rebellion against a lawfully constituted and beneficent government having ended in defeat, the question arises, On what terms shall the rebels be restored to their forfeited place of privilege and power? Forthwith the claim is set up that they have not forfeited anything which they cannot at any moment resume as matter of right and not of grace; or if of grace, then it is argued—profanity not seldom subsiding into this pious strain,—that the divine government furnishes the fit model for our own, and that since God gave his Son to die for sinners, and the father received and welcomed home the prodigal son, and the precepts of Christianity require forbearance, kindness, and forgiveness, therefore it is a sin and a shame to demand the punishment of traitors, or delay their restoration to the prerogatives of loyal citizens. When politicians thus turn prophets, must the recognized prophets retreat to some ground that has not suddenly become political? Rather is it not their solemn duty to examine and expound the Word of God in this regard? I will drop the interrogative lest it seem to imply a doubt where the truth is level and plain to every perception. Religious teachers ought at such a time to show what are the real principles of God's administration; how His mercy and justice harmonize, as in that message from the Mount: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon children's children unto the third and

to the fourth generation." It is their duty to set forth the distinction between the *spirit of forgiveness*, which is identical with benevolence, and should be exercised at all times, even toward the worst of offenders, and the *act of forgiveness*, or reinstatement in favor and trust, which in the Christian economy waits upon the act of repentance, as in the case of the prodigal. It is their duty to show that goodness or kindness is not identical with mercy, and may require that retribution and not mercy should be visited upon wrong-doers. On the other hand it is their duty to exhibit the hateful, unholy, unchristian character of retaliation, the spirit of hatred and revenge for personal injuries, and in anywise to rebuke that spirit, whether displayed in high places or low. Such political preaching, if the motive of it be right, is the preaching of Christ; in some places, at least, it is the preaching of Him crucified, since it brings after it reproach and scorn and persecution, as when, in proud Corinth, Paul preached the lessons and life and death of his Master.

And if anywhere it is important that the test of religious right be applied to political questions, this is the place. Here, within sight and sound of the national halls of legislation and of the executive mansion; here, where so many and calamitous influences tend to detone and demoralize the men who are sent hither to represent and to govern the republic; here, pre-eminently, there should be a pulpit fearless and free to declare God's sovereignty over nations, the certainty that the nation that will not serve Christ shall perish, the solemn and awful responsibility of rulers to rule justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with God, to defend the cause of the poor, and redress the wrongs of the helpless, and not merely in such general terms to preach politics, but to lay the plummet of truth to the counsel and work of the passing hour, even as David startled the complacent though guilty king with his "Thou art the man!" or as Jesus startled the complacent ruler by exposing the very sin

in which his hypocritical heart was hid. I do not imagine the pulpits of Washington have been all and altogether derelict in this duty hitherto. Honored instances of fidelity there have been, when, perhaps, more courage than now was needful. God bless and reward such fidelity wherever found; but it is true, I suppose, that there is room for another such pulpit, and here it is to be; and here, we trust, is the messenger whom the Master has appointed for the service.

Without naming other distinctive principles constituting the animus of the enterprise here inaugurated, these are enough to justify it, and to make its success a consummation devoutly to be wished. For myself, for a little church whose immediate neighborhood and whose obligation to this pastor for a similar service, most ably performed, has entitled me to speak on the occasion; for the sister churches here present by their pastors and delegates; for the churches of our faith in all the land, whether dwelling in the old New England home, or scattered through the great West to the far Pacific shore, or dotting, "few and far between," the newly-occupied South; yes, and for many who are not of this Puritan fold, and yet sympathize deeply with the principles of faith and freedom represented in the enterprise, I bid it God speed. May the amen come up from all quarters in the form of offerings to the work whose foundations these dear brethren have laid in faith, that the funds for the superstructure will not be withheld. Let them not be disappointed. We are accused as a denomination of lacking zeal in our own affairs, and of failing to accomplish needful things by reason of our disjointed organism, as contrasted with the mighty compactness and powerful machinery of great centralized sects. Let us dispose of the charge of a lack of zeal for that to which we are so greatly debtors, and to which we are so justly entitled. And let us demonstrate that it is not alone the standing army, drilled and officered and ready for marching orders, that is

qualified for effective service, but also the vast body of a people, prepared in mind to move where a territory is to be taken or a citadel to be built, even as they did move by tens and hundreds of thousands when this capital was to be saved, and the hosts of rebellion routed. In the book of Nehemiah, you remember, is a long chapter of the names and nativities of those who builded the wall of the restored capital, and the part that each accomplished is specified, as in the list of Homer's heroes. For centuries those names have stood in their niches of honor, and for centuries they will remain.

Here is opened a new list. May it speedily and gloriously be filled. The lines that General Howard will write, whose "right hand cannot know what his left

hand does," because it fell bleeding on the battle-field, a sacrifice to the cause for which its fellow is still glad to live and labor, will they not be copied above on a page which it will be gladsome to peruse?

Let it be written: Here labored the sons of Maine, and here of Massachusetts, and here of New York, and here of the other States by name and order, till the work is complete,—till they that have laid the foundation, hoping, yet anxious, shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings of Grace! grace unto it! yea, till the house within and without shall be finished, and, as when the temple of old was reared, the people shall fill the walls with hallelujahs, and their joy shall be heard afar off.