



HISTORICAL SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

50th
Anniversary
Centennial

CELEBRATION

OF THE

NORTH BAPTIST CHURCH,

OF NEW YORK CITY.

BY THE PASTOR.

REV. JOHN J. BROWNER.

JANUARY 7, 1877.

TOGETHER WITH

LETTERS OF CONGRATULATION FROM FORMER PASTORS.

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Psa. xc, 16 and 17.—“Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.”

These pleading words of fervent prayer were born in the heart, and fell from the lips of Moses, the man of God. And whatever were the peculiar circumstances under which the prayer was offered, it breathes a spirit of humble dependence upon God, it throbs with a sincere desire for the Divine glory, it glows with a solicitous love for the cause of God, it looks out upon the future, it pleads with an enlarged heart for generations yet unborn, it burns with the vehemence of a twice uttered desire for Jehovah's blessing on the work of his servants' hands, and for the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth.

Reviewing, as we do to-day, all the way in which the Lord our God has led us, and tracing the gracious dealings of God in all our history as a Church during the past fifty years, how can we help feeling and believing, that it was in the spirit, if not in the language of this prayer, that our fathers gave themselves first to God, and then to each other, in the work of organizing this Church of Christ? Is not our history as a Church the monumental answer to the prayer of the text? *God's work has appeared unto his*

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servants, and as our grateful hearts raise their Ebenezer of praise amid the joys of the Jubilee, we are constrained to say, "What hath God wrought?" Verily God's work has appeared unto his servants in the planting and in the nurturing, in the fruitfulness and in the perpetuation of this Church. *Children and children's children have seen God's glory, and felt his power in the sanctuary.* The Shekinah of His presence has made the place glorious. Here he has clothed his servants with salvation, and His word with power. Within these walls the harps of nearly a thousand souls have been tuned to the new song of redeeming love. Voices that have been hushed and silenced in death have joined the choral songs of the Church Triumphant. Here the oft-told story of a Saviour's love has cheered many a sad heart, and helped to wipe sorrow's tears from many a mourner's face; it has brought hope to the despairing, succor to the tempted, and help to the struggling; it has girded the weak with strength, and brought new courage to the fearful, and the hearts of many sons and daughters of God all over the land turn lovingly to this house as their spiritual birth-place. *The beauty of the Lord our God has been upon us.* Through truth believed, through discipline endured, through affliction sanctified, the hearts of believers have gained new accretions of spiritual strength, new adornments of spiritual beauty—Faith has brought forth fruit in heart and life. The brave deeds of a manly Christian courage, the good works that grow out of a knowledge of God's will, the grand victories of self-control, the sweet fragrances of a Christ-like patience, the silent but potent influences of godly living, the attractive beauties of brotherly kindness, and the crowning glories of heaven-born love, have adorned grace-renewed hearts with all the beauties of holiness. Character has worn the ornaments of grace and the garlands of truth. Souls have ripened into the beauty of Christliness, like summer fruit beneath a summer sun, and many have come down to "the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." The beauty of the Lord has shone in upon their hearts, and out upon their faces, lighting the gloom of the dying chamber with the radiant glories of the better land. *God hath also established the work of his servants' hands upon them.* Surely it is *only* because we have obtained help of God, that we continue to this day. God with us, is the only solution of the problem of our continued existence.

Through changes and trials, through winters of declension and through summers of revival, through dark days of trouble, and through bright days of peace, through the fightings of faith against unbelief and of hope against fear, through narrow straits of financial embarrassment, and through gloomy paths of spiritual difficulty, through the strangely mingled discipline of adversity and prosperity, the Lord our God has been with us, to establish the work of our hands upon us. He has established us in faith, in doctrine, and in labor. He has established the Church in the love and in the prayers of its members, and in the confidence and respect of the community around us. We come this morning to adore and magnify the establishing grace, the preserving power, and the ever-watchful care of God as manifested to us in our first half century of labor in the Lord's vineyard, and we gladly welcome home to-day, our first pastor and many beloved brethren and sisters who, in former years, have been associated with us in works of faith and labors of love. "Thou shalt remember all the way in which the Lord thy God has led thee," is a commandment by no means grievous. Our grateful hearts hasten to obey it, delighting to recount the Lord's mercies from the beginning until now.

The circumstances which gather around the origin of the North Baptist Church are as follows: In the last week in June, 1826, brethren Seth Smalley, a licentiate, Peter Relyea of the South Baptist, and James H. Townsend of the North Beriah (now the McDougal St.,) Baptist Church, distributed the following circular from house to house in the streets of Greenwich Village, as this part of the city was then called:

"NEW YORK, June 29, 1826.

"On the first Sabbath morning in July, public service will commence in the school room now occupied by Messrs. Flint & Kidder, (formerly by Mr. Parker,) in Amos St., between Hudson and Herring Streets, and will be continued at the usual hours of public worship every Sabbath morning and evening. As soon as practicable a Sabbath School will be established at the same place.

(Signed) "PETER RELYEA."

One of these circulars is still in existence, cherished as an eloquent memento of our early days. The old schoolhouse, too, is still standing on the rear of the lot No. 235 West 10th St., between Hudson and Bleecker Sts. In response to the above call, a small

congregation assembled on Lord's Day morning July 2, 1826, and listened to the Word of Life from the lips of Bro. Smalley. The faith of the little band of earnest Christian workers must have been cheered and strengthened, for it was there and then decided not only to continue to meet regularly for worship, but also to organize a Sunday School on the following Lord's Day morning. Accordingly on Sabbath morning, July 9, 1826, a Sunday School was organized. Peter Relyea, of the South Baptist Church, was chosen as Superintendent; James H. Townsend, of the North Beriah Baptist Church, as Secretary; and Elizabeth Ackerman, of the Mulberry Street Baptist Church, as Superintendent of the Female Department. With what prayerful anxiety must they have watched to see the result of that first session of the school!

Can we not imagine the gratitude and joy with which they saw the boys and girls come flocking in, until eighty scholars were enrolled, and ten teachers were pledged to the blessed work? Little, perhaps, did these faithful founders realize that they were sowing seed that should bring forth such an abundant harvest, long years after many of them should be gathered home. Rev. Mr. Smalley continued to labor among them for about two months. He was succeeded by Rev. J. W. Gibbs, who preached for them until the organization of the church.

So thoroughly convinced were the little pioneer band that God was calling upon them to go forward and occupy the field that already gave promise of harvest, that they met on the 1st day of January, 1827, and, after prayerful deliberation, organized themselves into a regular and independent Baptist Church. Services appropriate to the occasion were held in the Meeting-house of the Dutch Reformed Church on Bleecker Street, the use of which was kindly granted by the Rev. Dr. Merselus and his brethren. The same house of worship now stands in Waverly Place, and is the Sabbath Home of the Abyssinian Baptist Church, of which Rev. Wm. Spelman is the devoted and successful pastor. Rev. C. G. Sommers, Elon Galusha, Johnson Chase, Samuel Eastman, and John W. Gibbs, participated in the services of organization.

The church was organized with twelve constituent members, namely, Rev. John W. Gibbs, William Wilson, Martin Dubois, James H. Townsend, Martha Wilson, Elizabeth Eldridge, Rachel Dubois, Hannah Boss, Elizabeth Gibbs, Patsey Wilson, Euphemie

Wilson and Elizabeth Ackerman. Five of them, namely, Rev. J. W. Gibbs and his wife Elizabeth, James H. Townsend, Euphémie Wilson and Elizabeth Ackerman Vincent, are still living, spared of God to see the Jubilee year of the Church, to rejoice in its past history, and to pray for its future usefulness. All of the survivors of that company are present with us excepting sister Vincent. When on October 22d, 1873, the Stanton Street Church, of this city, celebrated its Semi-Centennial, not one of its sixteen constituent members was living to grace the occasion by his presence.

At the time of our organization, this now densely populated down-town ward was a little suburban settlement known as Greenwich village, whilst between it and the city proper were open fields and blooming gardens. The entire population of the city, according to the census of 1825, was a little over one hundred and sixty-six thousand, which is about one-sixth part of the present number of inhabitants. The new body adopted the name of the North Baptist Church, expressive of the fact that it was the northernmost Church of our faith on Manhattan Island. There are now but six other Baptist Churches in the city whose organization dates further back than that of the North Church, namely, the First Church, constituted in 1762; Oliver Street, recently called the Madison Ave., in 1791; the Abyssinian, in 1808; the McDougal Street, in 1809; the South, in 1822; and the Stanton Street, in 1823. Mighty men of God, able and eloquent, were filling the Baptist pulpits of this city—Rev. Drs. Parkinson, Cone, Maclay, Somers and Perkins were in the full tide of usefulness and power.

Among the first acts of the new Church was the election, on January 7, 1827, of brethren Martin Dubois and William Wilson to the office of deacons, and of James H. Townsend to that of Church Clerk. Bro. Townsend served the Church faithfully in this capacity for 38 years, resigning the office January 24, 1865. It is to him, more than to any other, that the Church is indebted to-day for the complete record of our history from the beginning. We believe that his mantle has fallen already on our young brother James H. Hopper, our present Clerk. Surely it is a matter of gratitude that we have our record so perfectly kept, so legibly—nay, so handsomely written.

On January 9, 1827, Rev. J. W. Gibbs was unanimously called to the pastorate of the little Church. It was voted to give him the

Sabbath collections for his salary. Evidently the youthful pastor had no occasion to pray for deliverance from the deceitfulness of riches. The work of the Lord appeared unto his servants. The congregations increased. The little schoolroom became too strait for them, so that in the month of May, 1827, the growing church removed to the Greenwich Village Watch House, corner of Hudson and Christopher Streets. The first Sabbath in the new quarters was a day of joy in Zion. Elder Gibbs resigned the pastoral office April 3, 1828, having served for sixteen months. Six persons were received into the Church during his pastorate, two of whom were received by baptism, three by letter, and one by experience—making, with the constituent members, eighteen in all. His are the honors of the first pastorate, and we rejoice to-day to welcome him and his companion home to the field of their early labors.

During the months of April, May and June, in 1828, Elder Jacob H. Brouner, the former pastor of the Baptist Church, at Sing Sing, N. Y., supplied the pulpit with such acceptance, that on July 3, 1828, he received a call to the pastorate at a salary of five hundred dollars. He accepted the call and entered at once on his duties. The tokens of divine approval were soon manifested in the enlarged attendance, and in the increased seriousness of the hearers. The infant church was now about to pass through the tears and joys, the labors and blessings of its first revival. The Spirit of the Lord came down in power. The glory and the beauty of the Lord appeared unto his servants and unto their children to establish the work of their hands upon them. The preached gospel became the power of God unto salvation. Conviction of sin was deep and pungent. Conversions were clear and satisfactory, and frequent. The first 18 months of Elder Brouner's pastorate witnessed the large increase of the Church. Ninety-three persons were added to the Church, fifty-three of whom were received by baptism, thirty-two by letter, and eight by experience. As might be expected, the Watch House was crowded. To arise and build was a necessity. Although no active steps were taken in this direction until during Elder Brouner's pastorate, yet it is a singular and pleasing fact that as early as February, 1827, when but one brother had united with the Church, it was "resolved, that subscription papers be drawn up for the purpose of collecting money to buy ground to build a meeting house on." They evidently meant to live. It is

also evident that Brethren Faintheart and Littlefaith had not yet united with the Church. Amid the joys of a revival season, they were cheered and strengthened to undertake what must have seemed the gigantic enterprise of building a house of worship. The pastor gave his heart to the undertaking. The brethren stood nobly by him.

The first proposition was to buy the entire block, now bounded by Hudson, Bank, Greenwich and West 11th Streets. The next, to lease three lots corner of Commerce and Bedford Streets. At last our present site, corner of Christopher and Bedford Streets, was chosen, and purchased for \$3,500. We have not time to speak, as we should like to speak, of the struggles that preceded the erection of this sanctuary. The pastor collected the greater part of the needed money, and labored with his own hands on the new building. The brethren gave liberally, and some, who were unable to give money, gave days of hard but loving labor. At length the foundations were laid and the walls were raised; before the roof could be put on, the funds gave out, and it seemed as if the work must cease. The unsupported walls were braced, and the passers-by were reminded of the Scripture saying, "This man began to build, but was not able to finish." More money was raised, and the building inclosed. The eager flock entered their house of worship while it was yet in an unfinished state, the walls were not plastered, and temporary seats, made of pine slabs, were provided; and on the 14th of November, 1830, the house was dedicated to the service and worship of God. Rev. Dr. Cone preached in the morning, and Rev. Dr. Maclay in the afternoon. On the following Sabbath there was preaching by Elders Duncan Dunbar and C. G. Somers.

The increase of the Church rendered necessary the choice of additional deacons. Accordingly, on February 2, 1831, Brethren E. H. Lacy, Edward Clover and James H. Townsend were ordained as deacons. Brother Townsend is still serving the Church, and proving the wisdom of their early choice. The precious revival, to which reference has been made, continued with signal power, unhindered by the anxious care of building.

June 27, 1832, was observed as a day of fasting and prayer, in view of the approach of the Asiatic cholera, by which the city was afterwards devastated. The deaths from this cause dur-

ing that plague-stricken summer were numbered by thousands, yet only two of the members of the North Church fell victims to the disease.

Brother Samuel Duxbury, a licentiate of this Church, was ordained in this house, July 25, 1832.

On the second Lord's Day in March, 1834, Brethren Sam'l W. Kirby, Samuel Vincent and John B. Acker were ordained as Deacons. Brother Kirby, though deprived of his hearing, is still serving us. During the year 1834 the church was deeply afflicted in the severe and protracted illness of the pastor, yet in answer to prayer he was restored to health and to the duties of his office.

David Sampson, another licentiate of this church, was ordained in this house to the work of the ministry, October 6, 1834. In August, 1835, Brother John Hatt, father of Revs. William, George and Josiah Hatt, was licensed to preach. During Elder Brouner's ministry quite a number of brethren requested license to preach. The church kindly gave them opportunity to exercise their gifts, and in some cases as kindly told them that they did not discover indications of a special call to the work. The young brethren had evidently overheard the Lord calling some else to preach.

The revival, which had continued with more or less power from the beginning of Elder Brouner's labor, was now followed by a season of declension. In the month of October, 1837, the pastor's hands began to hang feebly down, and his hopes of further usefulness to fail. The meetings were poorly attended. It was a dark and trying season. The pastor tendered his resignation Oct. 11, 1837. But the church, who still appreciated his labors, at once declined to accept his resignation. They attributed their present inactivity and want of prosperity to their unfaithfulness in prayer and co-operation, and began to examine and humble themselves in the sight of the Lord. They began the year 1838 with a week of prayer. These meetings were continued from evening to evening until April, and resulted in a precious revival. Fifty happy young converts strengthened the Church and gladdened the discouraged hearts of pastor and people. The resignation was withdrawn, the pastor's salary increased, and a season of general prosperity followed.

On the second Lord's day in January, 1839, Bro. John Remsen was ordained to the diaconate. In 1841 and 1842 the Church again was visited with a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In March, 1843, Bro. Wm. Hatt was licensed to preach. In the month of August, 1846, Deacon Samuel Vincent was suddenly deprived of his reason, and continued in this afflicted state until he was removed by death. The vacancy in the diaconate was filled in April, 1847, by the election of Brother Henry P. See, who still discharges the duties of his office.

Elder Brouner continued in the pastorate until Sept., 1848, when he was suddenly called to his reward, dying, as he had often expressed the wish he might die, with the harness on. The closing scene of his long-continued labor was remarkable. On the second Lord's day in Sept., he entered this pulpit with uncommon vivacity, passed through the opening exercise with apparent ease, announced his text, James iv, 3, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts," and was happily proceeding with his introductory remarks, when suddenly his eyes became dim, his voice feeble, his general appearance strange and confused. The deacons immediately entered the pulpit to assist him; but in vain—the Master had called. Stricken with apoplexy, he fell like a sentinel at his post, like a watchman on the wall of Zion. The last words that fell from his lips on earth were uttered in this pulpit. He lingered without apparent suffering until Tuesday morning, Sept. 12, when he fell sweetly asleep in Jesus. His funeral sermon was preached by Rev. C. G. Somers in this house where he had so often spoken words of comfort to sad and bereaved hearts. Devout men carried him to his burial, and a second service was held in the Baptist Church at Sing Sing, where he had so pleasantly passed the first fourteen years of pastoral labor. He was laid away among the friends of his early ministry, in the Baptist Church burying-ground in Sing Sing, on the Hudson. During his pastorate of twenty years and five months, five hundred and seventy-eight were added to the Church, of whom three hundred and thirty-four were by baptism. His name is held in lasting remembrance by those who sat under his faithful ministry. As I was but nine years of age at the time of my father's death, though I have a distinct remembrance of him as a kind, loving father, yet I am unable to speak of his distinguishing characteristics as a preacher and pastor. I therefore make the following extracts from a biographical sketch written by his successor, Rev. A. C. Wheat:

"Rev. Jacob H. Brouner was born in this city, January 1, 1791.

In his eleventh year his mind was seriously impressed with religious truth. His conviction of sin was deep and pungent, and at the time of his conversion his heart was filled with unspeakable joy. In his fifteenth year he went before the First Baptist Church in this city to relate his experience. Being small of stature, he was requested to stand upon one of the seats, that he might be the better seen and heard. He was baptized by the Rev. Dr. Parkinson. His heart burned with the desire to tell others the story of a Saviour's love. He soon began a course of study to fit him for the gospel ministry, and pursued his studies under direction of Rev. Dr. Stanford. He was licensed to preach by the First Church of this city. He had but two pastorates—one of fourteen years in Sing Sing, the other of over twenty years, with this Church. As a preacher he was distinguished for solemnity, faithfulness, great sympathy and spirituality. He was a man of one book, and that book the Bible. As a pastor, few men were more faithful. In sickness, he was a sympathizing friend; in trial, he was patient; in counselling the delinquent, he was forbearing and affectionate; in the discharge of duty, he was courageous, fearless and prompt." From my own recollections, aided by the fond descriptions of those who knew him best and loved him most:

"I would express him, simple, grave, sincere,
 In doctrine uncorrupt, in language plain,
 And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
 And natural in gesture; much impressed
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
 And anxious, mainly, that the flock he feeds
 May feel it too. Affectionate in look,
 And tender in address, as well became
 A messenger of grace to guilty men."

I know that you will forgive me for having lingered so lovingly and so long over the history of early struggles, over the record of my father's earnest, loving and sanctified ministry among you. Filial love would not let me do otherwise; for who shall keep green a father's memory, or decorate a father's grave, if not his son and successor in the same blessed work?

The succeeding pastorates are more recent, and hence, to many of us, more a matter of memory than of history. The workman dies, but the work goes on. The bereaved Church betakes herself

to prayer and asks another shepherd from the Lord. The prayer is heard, and in November, 1848, Rev. A. C. Wheat accepted a call to the pastoral care of the Church, and entered at once upon his duties. Again the work of the Lord appeared unto His servants. Revival blessings crowned the united labors of pastor and people. The Church had long been burdened and discouraged with a floating debt of two thousand dollars; a final effort was made on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1850; the balance of the amount was raised, amid liberal benefactions and grateful rejoicings. The success of the undertaking was mainly owing to the noble generosity of that one man whose name is interwoven in all our past history, and whose donations to the Church's need, in the years of his prosperity, were as frequent as they were generous—James H. Townsend gave one-third of the entire amount.

Elder Wheat's pastorate was pleasant and peaceful; 103 were added to the church, of whom 54 were by baptism. It was during his ministry that a change was made in the Sabbath services, having two sermons a day, instead of three, as had been the practice from the beginning. Elder Wheat tendered his resignation in July, 1852. He is now living in Sunbury, Pa., unable to be present with us, owing to a recent stroke of palsy, from which he has but partially recovered.

Rev. Aaron Jackson was the next pastor. He began his labors with us in February, 1853. During his pastorate, which continued but one year and five months, a baptistery was built in this Church. From the day of organization until this time, the Church had repaired to the Hudson river to administer baptism; first at the foot of Bank street, then to the White Fort at the foot of Gansevoort street, and then to the foot of 30th street. The candidates were conveyed thither in Kipp & Brown's stages. Then, as now, most of the baptisms occurred in the winter, when the ice had to be cut—and the converts rode home in their wet garments, with icicles on their clothes and the warm fires of love in their hearts. It was a matter of regret and of necessity that this ancient and impressive custom of repairing to the river side had to be abandoned. Five were added by baptism and ten by letter during Elder Jackson's brief ministry. His faithful, earnest presentation of Gospel truth is still lovingly remembered by the older members. He resigned in June, 1854. He has since ceased from his labors on earth, and has gone to receive the faithful servant's reward.

In November, 1855, the Rev. John Quincy Adams accepted a call to become our pastor. He was installed January 10, 1856, Rev. Dr. Armitage preaching the sermon. The youthful pastor was greeted at the very threshold of his ministry among us with the tokens of the Divine favor. The gathering cloud of God's mercy broke in showers of blessing. The congregation rapidly increased ; crowds of youth flocked to the sanctuary. Awakening sermons made sinners tremble, and experimental sermons of searching power made saints that loved the truth rejoice. During the years of 1856 and 1857, the years that preceded the great revival of '57 and '58, the North Church was enjoying a season of gracious visitation. Every month witnessed the baptism of willing converts. Whilst other churches were cold and lifeless, this Church lived and rejoiced, and brought forth fruit in the summer glow of the Divine presence. Hence it is not strange, that when all the churches were refreshed and strengthened in the year 1858, we should receive yet more abundant blessing. During that year, Bro. Adams baptized 106 converts, the largest number ever baptized in any one year of our history. Your present pastor was one of that happy number, and he hopes this afternoon to celebrate the 19th anniversary of his baptism, by leading three converts down into the same baptistery. Bro. Adams' pastorate is signalized and honored by the number of young men, who, converted under his preaching, have entered the ministry. Among them are Albert G. Lawson, pastor of the Greenwood Baptist Church, of Brooklyn ; Crammond Kennedy, widely known as the Boy Preacher ; Frank Fletcher, settled at Middletown, N. Y., and the pastor of this church. Bro. Adams' pastorate was one of large success, in which 248 were added to the church, 181 of whom were by baptism.

For over three years, the Church had basked in the sunshine of uninterrupted prosperity. And now over against the day of blessing came the day of trial. The pastorate which began in the sunshine ended in the storm. On April 20, 1859, Pastor Adams called the Church together to tell them of a change in his doctrinal views. The Church, especially its older members, saw no Scriptural reason to depart from the faith to which they and their fathers, the founders of the Church, had subscribed. Meeting after meeting was held; the new doctrine was discussed on either side with more ardor, perhaps, than was seemly. The battle raged in all the heat of fervid,

earnest discussion, and the fight was fought, as it appears from the Church record, around and about the following resolution: "Resolved, that while we esteem Brother Adams as our pastor for his works of faith and labors of love among us, we cannot agree with him in the doctrine of entire sanctification and freedom from indwelling sin as he has presented it." After long discussion for nine evenings, on May 30, 1859, near midnight, the vote was called and the record stands, 46 Ayes and 49 Noes.

Immediately after the vote, Brother Adams resigned, and called for his letter. It also appears from the record, that from this meeting until the Church meeting in July following, twelve brethren and seventy sisters withdrew from the Church, and joined with Brother Adams in founding the Antioch Church, and upon the disbanding of that Church, a few years ago, many of these same brethren and sisters came home to the North Church, and are laboring with us to-day. Differing doctrinally now as then, I cannot refrain from recording my gratitude to the pastor whose faithful preaching was blessed to my conviction and conversion.

And now the Church, weakened by the withdrawal of so many members, turns in prayer to Him who had so often heard her cries and helped her in the hour of need. In July, 1859, Rev. Frank Remington was called to the pastorate of the enfeebled Church. He, too, gathered fruit unto eternal life, and many of our members rejoice to call him their spiritual father. He labored faithfully and well, and that too amid discouragements of no ordinary character. He came with the cherished hope and avowed purpose of removing the church to a better location. Steps were taken to secure lots on 14th Street near 6th Avenue, at a price which to-day seems incredibly low. He labored hard, and wisely too, but, failing to bring the Church into line on the subject of building a new house of worship, he resigned the pastoral office in September, 1860. During his brief stay of a little over a year, thirty-eight united with the Church, of whom 23 were by baptism, 13 by letter, and 2 by experience. Whilst he was with us, I yielded to my convictions of duty, preached my first sermon and entered upon my studies for the ministry. Brother Remington was my Mr. Greatheart, to direct my faltering steps and cheer my fainting spirit. My own father, had he been living, could hardly have give me greater encouragement or spoken more kindly words, or helped me more generously than did Brother Remington.

The next pastor was Rev. Howard Osgood, who began his labors in December, 1860, coming with us just as the dark clouds of war were gathering over the nation. He was a Southerner by birth and education, and yet no pastor in the city stood more firmly for the Union cause. He was intensely loyal and patriotic to the heart's core. The utterances of this pulpit in the dark days of our country's peril were of no uncertain sound. It is to Brother Osgood that we are indebted for that change which has contributed so much to our comfort and prosperity, namely, the change of the pulpit from the front to the rear end of the house, and the consequent change of pews. This was done at a cost of \$2,100, two-thirds of the entire expense being nobly borne by Brother Osgood. He took an unusual interest in the Sunday School, and spent both time and money in promoting its welfare. The faithful preaching of Christ crucified was blessed to the edification of God's saints and to the conversion of sinners. He was aided in his work by Brother Wm. Sheridan, acting as Church Missionary under the pastor's direction. Brother Sheridan's earnest labors are gratefully remembered by many who are yet with us. In March, 1861, your present pastor was licensed to preach the gospel, and on May 22, 1862, Bro. Joseph P. Brouner, the eldest son of Father Brouner, was chosen to serve the Church as deacon. Bro. Joseph P. Brouner has led the service of song in the Church since 1841, singing the same gospel so long proclaimed by his father and now preached by his youngest brother. To him it has been a labor of love, and many a voice that is now tuned to the praises of God in heaven, has learned the sweet songs of Zion through his instruction. Bro. Osgood continued to serve the Church as pastor until in October, 1865, when failing health compelled him to resign from a field where God had so abundantly owned and blessed his labors. The Church was greatly afflicted in the sundering of such pleasant and tender ties. Of Bro. Osgood it could be said, "When the ear heard him it blessed him, and when the eye saw him it gave witness to him, because he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." One hundred and forty-one persons were added to the Church under his ministry, eighty-six of whom he was privileged to bury with Christ in baptism. November 17, 1864, Rev. John J. Brouner was ordained to

the gospel in this house, in order to settle as pastor of the Mariner's Harbor Baptist Church, Staten Island. The ordination sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Weston.

The next leader of the Lord's hosts appears in Rev. A. Cleghorn, who began his ministry on the last Lord's Day in December, 1865. He who gives to every man his work, gave to Bro. Cleghorn a work much needing to be done, but yet by no means a pleasant one. His was the difficult task of adjusting the relations between the Church and the Sunday School, of bringing into harmony interests that ought never to have been separated. He found a strong Sunday School organization claiming an independence of its own separate from the Church. To overthrow this independence, and to make the Sunday School work a part of the Church work, subject to its control and to the supervision of its pastor, was the work to which he gave himself with all the force and fearlessness of his strong character. In doing this he stirred up much opposition, but the majority of the Church stood nobly by him, discipline was rigidly exercised. Where a man of weaker parts would have failed, Bro. Cleghorn succeeded. The relations of the Church and Sunday School were adjusted; the School became not an appendage but an integral part of the Church work. The present harmonious relations between the Church and the School are owing in large measure to Bro. Cleghorn's fearless facing of a long existing evil. The subsoil plough of a much-needed discipline prepared the ground for future harvests, both in the Church and School. Though Bro. Cleghorn came to the throne in troublous times, though his brief reign was by no means a peaceful one, subsequent events have proved that it was a profitable one to the Church. "First pure then peaceable," was the motto of his battle flag. He was a good preacher, with rare power to instruct. His clear and forcible expositions of Scripture, the results of his frequent delvings into the rich mines of Old Testament truth, are among the pleasant memories of his pastorate. He remained with the Church until October, 1869, when he resigned the pastoral office. Eighty-three persons united with the Church under his ministry, of whom forty-three were received by baptism.

In December, 1868, the Church called Rev. John J. Brouner, the present incumbent, to its pastorate. I began my labors with you on the first Lord's Day in February, 1869, and came to fill the

pulpit where nearly nineteen years before my dear father laid down the cross to wear the crown. It was not without much fear and trembling that I accepted the call, and with youth and inexperience assumed the care of this, one of the oldest and staunchest Baptist Churches in the city, a Church noted for its loyalty to truth and its earnest defence of the doctrines of grace. With hesitancy I consented to fill the rather hazardous and dubious vocation of a prophet in mine own country and among the friends of my early youth, to preach to a Church and people that for so many years had sat under my father's ministry, and had known his shepherding care over their faith and practice, to follow in the pastorate men of fine talent and fervent piety; and I take it that the fear and trembling were not all on my side, but in that fear and trembling many of you shared when I first came among you to labor in word and in doctrine. I came to you not as a stranger, but as your loved pastor's son, as one whose manner of living from my youth up was known to you. It was to the Sunday School of this Church that Christian parents led my infant steps. Here in boyhood's day I listened to the preaching of God's word. Here in my early youth the Holy Spirit opened mine eyes. These walls echoed the first glad songs of my new-born love as I rejoiced in the pardon of my sins. In the baptistery of this church I was baptized. In its pulpit I preached my first sermon. By your vote I was licensed, by your liberality I was educated. In this house I knelt to receive the laying on of hands in ordination, and I only added another strand to the cord already strong, the cord that bound my heart to yours, when I came home to be your pastor. For nearly eight years we have labored together, and God has established the work of our hands upon us. The outpourings of the Holy Spirit have been frequent. The Church has grown in liberality, in influence, and in numbers, until to-day our membership is larger than ever before in our history, 558 members being enrolled with us. We have not time to recount the way in which the Lord has led us. We have passed together through many a memorable scene. We have not even yet ceased to wonder at the ease and grace with which, one bright Sabbath in June, 1869, we raised \$2,500 in a single morning collection to pay for decorating our house of worship. How we sang together for joy, when we paid the last dollar of that \$5,000 mortgage, under whose heavy yoke both we and our fathers

groaned and staggered for over forty years! The new organ, as it leads our songs of praise, reminds us of the glad day of its purchase and erection. But, best of all, souls renewed by grace divine, souls won to Christ, have been the seals of our union. During the present pastorate 456 have united with the Church, of whom 240 have been buried with Christ in baptism. From the day of organization until now, 1,669 brethren and sisters have been added unto the Church, 967 of whom have been received by baptism.

As early as February, 1873, the matter of building a new house of worship was taken into consideration, and the Sunday evening collections were set apart to constitute a Fund, to be known as the Jubilee Building Fund, with the intention of purchasing or building a new Meeting-house as a memorial of our Fiftieth Anniversary. Notwithstanding the hard times and the depression of all monetary interests, this Fund has increased until to-day we have \$8,000 in bank drawing interest, and good and collectible subscriptions amounting to nearly \$3,000 in addition. We enter to-day upon our Jubilee year. Oh! that we might catch the spirit of our fathers, and amid the enthusiasm of our Jubilee, resolve to go forward in the noble and needed work of building another house for God in the same down-town field where for fifty years God has blessed us. Let us make it the memorial work of our fiftieth year. Let our faith be strengthened, to say with Nehemiah, "The God of Heaven, He will prosper us; therefore, we, his servants, will arise and build." Let us emulate the zeal and faith of our beloved Deacon Townsend, who nearly fifty years ago went back to the old homestead, and asked his father to give him a locust tree for pillars in this sanctuary. He believed they would be needed, and they were, and to-day they form a part of this house of God.

The Church in all its history has been noted for its adherence to sound doctrine, and for its firm, but kind advocacy of distinguishing Baptist principles. The articles of faith adopted on the day of organization have needed no alteration. She has held to the doctrine of three equal persons in the God-head; personal, unconditional and eternal election; original sin; particular redemption; free justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit's operation; efficacious grace in regeneration; the infallible perseverance of the saints; the immersion of believers only; the resurrection of the dead, both of the

just and of the unjust; and the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent.

Even in the days of her feebleness and poverty, the North Church has given liberally to all the various benevolent organizations that have appealed to her sympathy for aid and encouragement.

And now my task is almost done. It might have fallen into abler, but surely not into more loving hands than mine. The history of fifty such eventful years can only be partially written. The full record is to be found only in the books that not even the fires of the last day shall destroy. Reviewing, as we have, the years and the toils that are past, are we not reminded of the Master's words, "Other men have labored, and ye are entered into their labors." 'Mid tears and burdens, and sacrifices and discouragements, other men have labored in other years, and we to day are reaping the harvest sown by them. Let us sow in tears, that others, coming after us, may reap in joy. And now, looking out upon the future, facing as we do the first year of our second half-century, whilst we thank God for all that is past, let us pray, as did our fathers, "Let thy work, O God, appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." Amen and Amen!

SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

The North Baptist Church of New York celebrated the 50th anniversary of its organization on Lord's Day, January 7, 1877. The house was handsomely decorated for the occasion with evergreens, flags, flowers and ornamental gas-fixtures. The portrait of Elder J. H. Brouner was placed on the front of the pulpit, and the names of the nine pastors were tastefully arranged around the front of the gallery, in gilt letters framed with evergreens.

The services of the day were as follows: In the morning the pastor preached the historical sermon, taking for the text the 16th and 17th verses of the 90th Psalm. Brethren Alfred Farrant and Franklin D. Seward, and sister Melinda Stolte, were baptized at 3 P. M.

At 3.30 P. M. the church partook of the Lord's Supper, the communicants filling the entire lower part of the house. The hand of fellowship was given to the three newly baptized members, and to brother and sister Stout, who were received by letter. Rev. J. W. Gibbs, the first pastor of the church, and Rev. James Remsen, son of a former deacon, assisted the pastor in the administration of the Supper.

From seven until half past seven a delightful service of song was held, the large and overflowing congregation joining heartily in singing the hymns of the olden time and the new.

A reunion conference was held at half past seven, Rev. J. W. Gibbs presiding. The introductory services were led by Rev. Dr. John Dowling and the pastor. The following letters from former pastors were read in order as follows:

Sunbury, Pa., Jan. 5, 1877.

ELDER J. J. BROUNER.

Dear Sir and Brother: Your kind letter, informing me of your reunion conference of former pastors, &c., has been received. On the 12th day of April, '76, I received a stroke of the palsy, from which I have but partially

recovered. This will cover all regrets and disappointments. God is good; He never errs. Our family are usually well; we send much love to you all.

Affectionately,

A. C. WHEAT.

Mariners' Harbor, S. I., January 5, 1877.

MY DEAR BROTHER BROUNER:

The "cordial invitation" of your committee to attend the Fiftieth Anniversary of the organization of the North Baptist Church, accompanied by your kind note, was forwarded to me from Newburgh to this place, where you were formerly pastor, and where I am spending a few days, assisting Brother Hull in a series of meetings, and only reached me yesterday afternoon.

It would afford me very great pleasure to be with you on so interesting an occasion, if it were in harmony with the will of the Master. But that will, as indicated by His providence, seems now to demand the surrender of my wishes in that direction, and require my presence with my own people at Newburgh.

Please say to the brethren and friends who may be favored with the privilege of assembling with you next Sunday evening, that among the pleasantest recollections of my pastoral life and work, are the years spent with the North Baptist Church. It was from the kind criticisms and wise suggestions of judicious brethren in that church, that I was led to investigate more closely, and apprehend more clearly, and love more dearly, and preach more boldly, the precious "doctrines of grace," for the advocacy of which the North Baptist Church has always been distinguished. And if, in the subsequent experience of what is now technically known as "the higher Christian life," I have been preserved from the heresy of "Perfectionism," it is greatly owing, under God, to the fact that that experience was engrafted on such a sound doctrinal basis as I learned during my pastorate of that church—a basis on which my theology has ever since rested, and ever will, because it is so eminently Scriptural.

It was during my pastorate in the North Church that the gracious revival of 1857-8 occurred, in which over one hundred professed converts were added to the church in a single year, among whom was a noble army of young men; some of whom are now filling prominent positions in other churches of our denomination, and some of whom have been for years successful pastors. Among the latter are Rev. Frank Fletcher, pastor at Midletown, N. Y.; Rev. A. G. Lawson, pastor of the Greenwood Baptist Church, Brooklyn, and the present honored and beloved pastor of the old Church itself, Rev. JOHN J. BROUNER.

Since the severance of my relation to the church, I have watched its history with tender interest; sympathizing in its trials, and rejoicing in its prosperity; honoring it for its firm adherence to sound doctrine, its earnest exemplification of practical Christianity, and its continued occupancy and successful cultivation of the old field in which, half a century ago, God's own right hand planted it.

God bless the dear old North Baptist Church of New York City. May

her influence extend and her usefulness increase while time shall last. And, if it be the Lord's dear will, may the present pastor, like his godly and sainted father, occupy its pulpit until called home to glory, and other descendants of the same honored family succeed each other in the pastorate, till time shall be no more! Affectionately, your brother in Christ,

JOHN Q. ADAMS.

Cleveland, O., Dec. 29th, 1876.

REV. J. J. BROUNER.

My dear Brother: On my arrival to-day I find the "Semi-Centennial" circular of the "Old North Church," and your esteemed favor of the 25th inst., accompanying the same. Both have been noted with great interest, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to mingle with you and the dear Church, in celebrating the 50th anniversary of your organization, on the 7th January, 1877, but my business arrangements are such that I can not, I regret to say.

The occasion will, I know, be greatly prized by *yoursself*, by the remembrance that fifty years ago your dear sainted father gathered up a little band of faithful believers, organized them into a church, and spent so many happy years with them as their under shepherd, and falling, at the last, with the harness on, in the same pulpit where you made your first essay at preaching the precious Word, and which you have for so many years so honorably and faithfully filled! What a history! What reminiscences will crowd your mind, and the minds of those of your dear church who so affectionately remember your dear father, and tenderly bore his sacred dust, amid the breaking heart-strings of widow and children, to their last earthly home! What changes in the dear Church! "The little handful of corn planted on the mountain top waves like the cedars of Lebanon." It is a singular circumstance, too, that the names of the brethren which appear with yours on the circular, Townsend, See, Bailey, &c., were also associated with your worthy father, in those early days of the church's struggles, and in like manner gather about the *son*, aiding by their heartiest co-operation in every good word and work for the salvation of souls and the triumph of the dear Redeemer's kingdom. Personally, I shall always remember the many kindnesses myself and family have been the recipients of from the "Old North," and the delightful associations and friendships we have enjoyed among them. May the Lord Jesus continue to bless the noble church and beloved pastor, and *at the last, like the father*, may the beloved son fall at his post among the same dear people as the devoted father.

Remember me to the entire church, and be assured you are held in precious remembrance by yours fraternally,

FRANK REMINGTON.

Rochester, N. Y., Jan. 4th, 1877.

TO THE NORTH BAPTIST CHURCH OF NEW YORK.

My dear Brethren and Sisters: I have received your very kind invitation

to be present at the fiftieth anniversary of the Church, but my duties here will prevent my attending it.

I look back to the five years of my pastorate among you with great pleasure; they were years of great grace to me, and of work which you very kindly received and cheerfully helped. I often taste again in memory the sweetness of speaking to you of Him "who so loved us as to give himself for us," of going to the shrouded room of suffering to minister consolation in Jesus' name, and coming away heavily laden with the sufferer's abundant testimony to the unailing grace of Him who in all our affliction is afflicted. These are precious memories of the way Jesus has led us here, and when we reach the home he has prepared for us, we shall never cease to marvel at his gracious providence in all our path.

I rejoice with you in your present prosperity. You have a pastor whom God has blessed, and whom you have great reason to love most deeply. Many souls have been brought to Jesus through your means by the Spirit of God. Your faithfulness to the word of God, and your zeal in his service is well known to your brethren. In this time when so many churches are well nigh crushed by debts, you are free, and owe no man anything but to love one another.

You have great cause to be thankful and to sing in joy of heart to Jesus who has led you. May every heart and every tongue among you glorify him, "for he hath done great things for you whereof you are glad."

May He stand over you, enthroned upon your praises, and from his pierced hands pour upon you every needed blessing. Above all may he fill you with his Spirit that evermore you and all who shall ever be enrolled in the North Church may choose him as your chief joy, and walk before all men, keeping your garments unspotted from the world.

Many whom I knew among you are now at home with God. The time for all of us here is short at best. Soon we must appear before the great white throne. Let us be earnest, redeeming the time, making known the grace of our blessed Lord, that we may through that grace enter into His gates with peace.

HOWARD OSGOOD.

Champaign, Ill., January 3d, 1877.

To Rev. J. J. BROUNER, Pastor North Bapt. Church, N. Y.

My Very Dear Brother :—Your very kind letter, so heartily inviting me to be present with you on the 7th inst. and contribute by my presence and words to your profit and pleasure on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the organization of the North Baptist Church, came duly to hand. I thank you for an invitation so cordial.

It would give me more pleasure to be with you than it would give your people pleasure to have me, but it is out of the question. A three months sickness, during which time I have been unable to do much work, compels me to be quiet, and to go no farther from home than duty requires. Were I as vigorous as I was when I left New York, I would try hard to be with you; but as it is, I must reserve what health and strength I have for necessary work here.

But I assure you that my heart and my best wishes are with you and the dear good people, young and old, who were so kind and good and true to me while I was their pastor. Their images come up before me with gladness; and I often recall and relate incidents connected with one and another with more than common interest. I often recall the patient continuance in well-doing of good Deacon Townsend, the amiable goodness and consecrated musical powers of Deacon Brouner, the noble-hearted Deacon Richards, whose pleasant face was but the index of the peace within his honest heart, and the wiry, nervous, unconquerable pluck of Deacon See, ever on the move and always planning for the "North Church" and "Our Pastor." I think of all these men and many more, with more than common pleasure; and since I have been west in this wild-goose country, I have often wished that we had such men here to work with; yet we have pretty good men here. I suppose Deacon See is as busy as ever? I think if he had always taken things as coolly as Charlie Hall, he might have been as portly as that brother, who has a large and generous soul, and was ever ready to contribute his money. I think Deacon See and Charlie Hall go well together. The Deacon can plan, and then off he goes to 10th street and says, "see here, Charlie, we must raise so much money, and you'll have to help us;" and Charles says, "how much do you want from me?" and immediately draws his check for the amount; thus it used to be. I congratulate you, my brother beloved, in being the shepherd of such a flock.

I cannot put on paper the reminiscences of my pastorate of the North Church, yet I cannot forget. It was short, but eventful. Had I fully known how matters stood, I would never have been pastor there; but I am now glad, for things out of joint were put right. I found a strong Sunday School organization that claimed an independence of its own, separate from the Church, and it carried this independence with a high hand. Of course, such an absurd claim and myself soon came into collision. But the collision—thanks to faithful men—was short, sharp and decisive, and ended most happily for all, and for the future well-being of the Church. This separate independence was blown to the winds, and the Sunday School work became the church work, under its control and the supervision of the pastor.

Then, too, we had some uneasy people who, I believe, were nearly related to the family of Diotrephes (III. John, 9). These left us; and we saw every element that hindered progress removed, the work of the Church consolidated, the truth of the 133d Psalm becoming realized, and from that day till now peace and prosperity has attended you. At this date I think of the few years I spent with the North Church with much pleasure, and have reason to believe they were not lost.

How many since then have left you for the

" Sweet fields arrayed in living green,
And rivers of delight,"

I know not, but I recall to mind good Bro. Hilliker, Sister Joseph Cole, and Sister Alfred Bailey. There doubtless are others that are gone home to

rest, but these I have named were of the salt of the earth ; and I feel sure that among you their memories will be ever green.

I trust the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ may be among you ; and that the next fifty years will be richer in the fruits of righteousness than the last fifty years have been among you. Accept my thanks for your kind remembrance of me, and believe me to be yours, in the Lord Jesus,

A. CLEGHORN.

P. S.—If good Deacon Kirby is yet alive, fail not to give the dear man my warmest love. How I would like to see you all.

Pleasant reminiscences of the past were given by Rev. J. W. Gibbs, Rev. Dr. Dowling, Deacons Townsend, See, Kirby and Brouner, and by brethren John T. Richards, B. C. Wandell, Ransom Parker, Sears Baldwin and Wm. Church. Bro. W. M. Glover, the Superintendent of the Sunday School, on the behalf of the teachers, presented a handsomely bound, flexible cover Bible to the pastor. The delightful services were prolonged until after ten o'clock, closing with the singing of the beautiful hymn, " Shall we gather at the river."