

**THE SECOND CHURCH IN BOSTON;
COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES HELD
ON THE COMPLETION OF TWO
HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS SINCE
ITS FOUNDATION, 1649-1899**

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The Second Church in Boston

Committee of Publication.

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THE SECOND CHURCH
IN BOSTON

Commemorative Services

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1649-1899

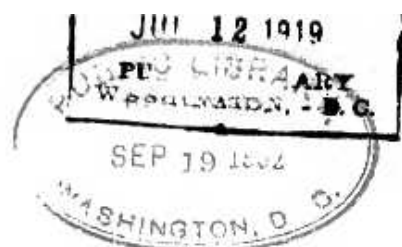
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN order most fitly to commemorate the series of events which have marked the organization, the continuance, and the present life of THE SECOND CHURCH IN BOSTON, the Committee appointed by the Standing Committee have made a permanent record of the services held on the 19th. and 20th. of November, 1899. The place which this Church has occupied in the history of Congregationalism, in education, in literature, and in public affairs, the distinguished ministers who have occupied its pulpit, the vicissitudes through which it has passed, make its story most interesting. Upon the unanimous adoption of their plans by the Proprietors and members of the Society the Committee of Arrangements proceeded to carry them out in a manner which merited and received the cordial approval of all. The announcement of the programme at once called the attention not only of the immediate members of the Church, but of the many friends, former parishioners, and descendants of the old families, and, still more, of a numerous company who are ever interested in the ecclesiastical and local history of the city. The exercises were held in the meeting-house, and were attentively listened to, at every session, by crowds which taxed the auditorium to its utmost limit. For assistance in bringing the occasion to a successful issue the Committee of Arrangements were indebted to many persons who, by their public services, their advice, and in other ways, took important parts. More than all, perhaps, did they recognize the continued and devoted loyalty of every member of the Parish, both man and woman, for the heartiest co-operation in every way.

Before entering on the formal account of the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the

Church, it seems well briefly to outline its history and to recall the succession of its devoted ministers. In the same connection it will be interesting to study the evolution of the music employed in its service,—a history which applies equally to the musical forms of other Congregational churches of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This gradual development was brought out in the Puritan service of Sunday evening, which is given elsewhere in this volume. For a faithful and intelligent search through the records, and the gathering of facts there and elsewhere, the committee are indebted to Miss Mary Phillips Webster, of Cambridge.

The beginning of the Church dates from 1649, only nineteen years after the first settlement of Boston, when Michael Powell and six others signed the Covenant,—a document remarkable for its absence of dogma and its emphasis of practical religion and true Christian spirit.

The first preacher was the Rev. Samuel Mather, who, however, soon left for England. After inviting several other ministers, without success, the Church asked Mr. Powell to become their teacher. He was not permitted to serve them in that capacity, the all-powerful civil authorities interfering because he was "illiterate as to academical education. He might have talents and a fine spirit," they argued, "and still not be competent to instruct the educated, explain the Scriptures, and convince the unbelieving. . . . If any exception should be made in the case of Mr. Powell, by reason of his peculiar gifts, it might establish a dangerous precedent." A remarkable letter addressed by Mr. Powell, to the "Governour and Magistrates" tells the story and at the same time reveals the character of the man who was most prominent in founding the Church and who, though not permitted to become its minister, was allowed to serve in the important position of Ruling Elder, where no doubt his "peculiar gifts" and gentle and noble spirit were a great influence in that little community whose members were striving "to walk together as a congregation and church of Christ, in all the ways of his worship, and of mutual love."

The first settled pastor of the church was Rev. John Mayo,