

**A DISCOURSE
COMMEMORATIVE OF A FORTY
YEARS'
MINISTRY; PREACHED ON THE
TWENTY-THIRD OF MARCH, 1865**

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A Discourse Commemorative of a Forty Years' Ministry; Preached on the Twenty-third of March, 1865 by Nathaniel Bouton

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NATHANIEL BOUTON

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COMMEMORATIVE OF A FORTY
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A

DISCOURSE

COMMEMORATIVE OF A

FORTY YEARS' MINISTRY;

PREACHED

ON THE TWENTY-THIRD OF MARCH, 1865,

BY

NATHANIEL BOUTON,

Pastor of the First Congregational Church and Society,

IN CONCORD, N. H.

CONCORD:
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1865.

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Lawrence S. Mayo

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS.

At a meeting of members of the First Congregational Church and Society in Concord, to consider the subject of the observance of the Fortieth Anniversary of the settlement of Rev. N. Bouton, D. D., as Pastor, a Committee of five was appointed to make arrangements for suitably observing the same. Whereupon the Committee, in behalf of the Society, issued the following notice:

THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Of the settlement of Rev. N. Bouton, D. D., as pastor of the First Congregational Church and Society in Concord, will be observed on Thursday, the twenty-third day of March instant; at which time a Commemorative Discourse will be delivered in the Church, by Dr. Bouton, commencing at 11 o'clock, A. M.

The Society will hold a Reception for social intercourse and local reminiscences, at the City Hall, at 7 o'clock, P. M.

All present and former members of the Church and Society living in town or elsewhere, and all other residents of Concord interested in the occasion, are respectfully invited to attend.

Respectfully yours, &c.,

J. B. WALKER,
C. E. STEWART,
JOHN BALLARD,
S. SEAVEY,
C. A. ROBINSON,
Committee of Arrangements.

Concord, N. H., March 1, 1865.

DR. BOUTON--DEAR SIR:--At a meeting of the 1st Congregational Society, held April 18, 1866, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be tendered to Rev. Dr. Bouton for his highly interesting discourse, delivered on the 23d day of March last, upon the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of his ordination as pastor over the 1st Congregational Church and Society in Concord, and that a copy be solicited for publication.

Very respectfully yours,

EDWARD A. MOULTON,
Clerk of Society.

ORDER OF SERVICES IN THE CHURCH,

March 25, 1865, 11 o'clock, A. M.

1. Invocation and Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. ASA P. TENNEY, pastor of Congregational Church, West Concord.

2. Original Hymn, by Miss EDNA DEAN PROCTOR, of Brooklyn, N. Y., formerly a member of the Congregation.

O LORD ! within this temple met,
Our fervent hearts go up to Thee ;
On all the past thy seal is set ;
Thy present care we grateful see.
Alike through gladness and through tears
Thy love has shaped these forty years.

In summer's heat and winter's cold
The peaceful sabbaths here have flown ;
Our burdens on thy strength been rolled,
Our needs upon thy bounty thrown.
Year after year, this day of seven,
Our souls have found the gate of heaven.

Half of our band have gone from earth,
And we who linger, side by side,
Do but await our glorious birth
Into thy likeness -- satisfied !
And soon, within this sacred door,
Pastor and friends shall meet no more.

Yet other feet shall tread these aisles,
While other shepherds feed the flock,
And turn their feet from dangerous wiles,
And lead them to salvation's rock.
Thine is the work, the temple thine,
And here thy light shall constant shine.

We thank Thee for thy mercies past ;
We bless Thee for thy graces to-day ;
And pray that richly, to the last,
Thy love and joy may cheer our way,
Till in that realm the church is one,
Where is no need of moon nor sun !

3. Prayer, by Rev. HENRY E. PARKES, pastor of South Congregational Church, Concord.

4. Commemorative Discourse, by Dr. BURTON.

ORDINATION HYMN.

" Father, how wide thy glory shines !
How high thy wonders rise !
Known through the earth by thousand signs,
By thousands through the skies."

350th SAB. HYMN-BOOK.

5. Prayer, by Rev. WILLIAM B. JEWETT, pastor of Congregational Church, Fairville.

6. Singing, 86th Hymn -- read by Rev. E. O. JAMESON, East Concord.
" Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing."

7. Benediction by the Pastor.

DISCOURSE.

DEUT. II: 7. "THESE FORTY YEARS THE LORD THY GOD HATH BEEN WITH THEE; THOU HAST LACKED NOTHING."

I COR. 1: 4. "I THANK MY GOD ALWAYS ON YOUR BEHALF, FOR THE GRACE OF GOD WHICH IS GIVEN YOU BY JESUS CHRIST."

These passages of the word of God are an index of the thoughts and emotions which I cherish on this occasion. Whether the number forty—"forty days" or "forty years"—has any occult or mystical meaning in Scripture, may be worthy of inquiry. Moses was "forty years old when he visited his brethren and looked on their burdens;" "forty years" he was in Midian under a discipline preparatory to his great life-work; "forty years" he was the leader and lawgiver of Israel, and even then "his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated." "Forty years" God "suffered the manners" of his people in the wilderness, and fed them all that time with manna from heaven, so that they lacked nothing. Caleb, who was faithful found among the faithless, was forty years old when with Joshua and others he was sent to spy out the promised land. Under the administration of wise and pious judges—as is often recorded—the land had rest "forty years." Forty years closed the priesthood of Eli, and the reign of David, of Solomon, of Jehoshaphat and Joash in Jerusalem.

Forty years ago this day, and at this hour of the day, a scene was enacted in the ancient church-edifice of this town, full of interest to that generation, which a few now present witnessed, and which we have assembled to commemorate.

As that occasion installed me, by ordination, in the ministry of the Gospel over the First Congregational Church and Society in Concord, it will, I trust, be deemed appropriate to speak somewhat minutely, of the ANTECEDENTS, the ACCOMPANIMENTS and the CONSEQUENTS of that official transaction.

I. In regard to the ANTECEDENTS, however, I do not propose to detail the history of this Church and Society previous to the time referred to. Suffice it to remind you, that the Church had then been organized ninety-five years; that its first pastor, REV. TIMOTHY WALKER, who was ordained November 18th, (O. S.) 1730, fulfilled a ministry of fifty-two years, and deceased at the age of 77; that his successor, REV. ISRAEL EVANS, who had been a Chaplain in the Continental Army, under General Washington, installed July 1st, 1789, was pastor eight years and resigned his charge; that the REV. ASA MCFARLAND, D. D., ordained March 7th, 1798, was minister twenty-seven years, and at his own request was dismissed by the same Council that ordained the present pastor. Those three ministers lie interred in yonder ancient burying-ground.

Before I further proceed, let me beg the indulgence of my hearers, if, through a necessity to which I most reluctantly yield, I use the *first person* more frequently than would become an ordinary service. My humble apology is, "*Quorum pars fui.*"

It may then be gratifying to this audience to know how I became the pastor of the First Congregational Church and Society in Concord; and how it has come to pass, that to-day I am able to adopt the language of God to Israel, "These forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing."

In recognizing the agency and goodness of God in a ministry of forty years, I am carried back to the days of my childhood and youth. Blessed with godly parents, my mind was often and early impressed with religious duty. Being the youngest of fourteen children, my father proposed to give me one advantage in schooling which the older ones had not enjoyed; that is, to learn English Grammar. That proposal proved a sort of charm to me--awakening an aspiration for higher knowledge than could be gained in the district schools of my native town. (1)

(1) Norwalk, Ct.

At the age of fourteen, seeing in a newspaper an advertisement, "An apprentice wanted at this office," with my father's permission I rode fifteen miles on horseback to Bridgeport, and made application to the publisher (2) to be taken as an apprentice to learn the printing business. My simple thought was, it will give me a chance to read. Less than two years had passed, when my mind was tenderly and deeply impressed with religious concerns. In a visit at home about that time, my father had said, "My son, you are old enough to be a christian." The words could not be forgotten, and, with other influences connected with a revival of religion in Bridgeport, I was led, I trust, on my sixteenth birth-day, to make a consecration of myself to my Saviour Jesus Christ. The good Providence and Spirit of God, soon gave a new impulse and direction to my mind. I felt an irrepressible desire for an education;—only, however, for one purpose, and that was that I might be qualified to preach the Gospel. Then the Lord opened the way and led me. Honorably released, on payment of a price, from the obligation of my indentures, with my father's approval I returned to my native town, and immediately commenced the study of the Latin Grammar.

Urged forward by impulses within, aided by friends, encouraged and patronised by an association of ministers, (3) at the end of two years preparatory studies, I entered the Sophomore Class in Yale College, graduated in 1821, and at the Theological Seminary in Andover, Mass., in September, 1824, thus completing a course of eight years study. (4)

(2) Mr. Stiles Nichols, publisher of the Republican Farmer.

(3) Rev. William Fisher, of Darien; Rev. Roswell R. Swan, of Norwalk; Rev. Sylvanus Haight, of Wilton; and Rev. William Bonney, of New Canaan.

(4) My first recitations in Latin were with Rev. Mr. Fisher; next, with Rev. Mr. Swan; then, on invitation by Rev. Mr. Bonney, I attended the Academy in New Canaan, taught by Rev. Herman Duggett; thence, after six months, I went by invitation to the school in Wilton, taught by *Hoseley Olmstead, Esq.*, a gentleman eminently distinguished as a teacher, to whom I am under lasting obligations. Mr. Olmstead now resides at New Haven, Ct. During the whole preparatory course, I was in the practice of attending and taking a part in religious meetings one or two evenings each week. At Wilton, Mr. Jared B. Waterbury, of New York, was a fellow student, since distinguished as a preacher and writer. We took turns in conducting meetings in school houses and private dwellings; and as a result of our labors, instances of hopeful conversion often came to our knowledge.