

After the destruction of the church edifice by fire in January, 1854, the corner stone, containing a sealed tin box, was preserved from the ruins. This box is still in existence and at the time of writing is in the possession of Deacon Edward Terry. Among other of its contents was a silver plate bearing the names of the deacons and trustees, and the name of the pastor Rev. J. J. Miter; a manual of the "First Congregational Church" which furnishes the information that the original members of the Church were nine males and fifteen females. Besides this is enclosed the following acknowledgement; "This Church was founded under God by the prayers and self-denying labors of Robert Love, Samuel and Daniel Brown, Benjamin Moffit, Lyman Stoddard, Josiah DeWolf and Otis Sprague. When in its infancy, and laboring under severe pecuniary and other embarrassments it was sustained by the friendly counsels and generous contributions of Alanson Sweet and Sylvester Pettibone. And, for the erection of the edifice whose corner-stone is now to be laid we shall be greatly indebted to the following gentlemen of the West Ward, not members of the Church: Byron Kilbourn, Jas. H. Rogers, Mr. Williams, Jacob L. Bran, and I. A. Lapham."

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

This church building, at the corner of Spring and Second streets, was occupied by the society until 1850, when the corner-stone of the present Plymouth Church was laid. The cause of this change of base from the west to the east side of the river is thus given by Rev. Mr. Miter:

"During the first three years of my ministry I had preached not far from two hundred sermons annually. This intellectual strain was continued for six years longer, in the endeavor to draw a congregation from the high ground which commands such a magnificent view of the lake, to the low, marshy ground, where our first house was located. It was under such severe and ceaseless labor that my health broke down. The conviction was forced upon me that our future progress depended upon a change of location. Accordingly upon my return in 1850, after a six months' leave of absence, I communicated this conviction to my brethren. Their minds had been ripening as fast as my own, in favor of the change. For not only the patience and faith of the whole Church had been severely tried, but the skill of our oldest and best financiers had been exhausted in a fruitless effort to raise a debt of \$2,000 from the old house. This was one of the stern facts and unanswerable arguments which prepared them for the new movement."

The new edifice was completed and dedicated May 24, 1851, the dedicatory sermon being preached by Dr. Kirk of Boston. The result fully justified all anticipations, new life was infused into the body and Plymouth speedily advanced to the front rank in wealth, influence and social position. In the words of Mr. Miter, on the occasion referred to above: "Twenty-five years ago, the society, as a corporate body, was not worth anything. To-day it has a property worth \$30,000, and an income of \$6,000. Twenty-five years ago it could not raise a salary of \$400. Now it is able to raise \$1,000."

The Rev. J. J. Miter, after giving to the Church, in the language of the Rev. Henry T. Rose, "fifteen years service in the prime of manhood" considered his work done and was succeeded by the Rev. G. M. Humphrey, whose ministry continued for three years. He was succeeded by the Rev. Charles Downes Helmer,