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A

HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF THE  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

IN MASSACHUSETTS,

FROM 1620 TO 1858.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

BY

JOSEPH S. CLARK, D. D.,

SECRETARY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.

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## P R E F A C E .

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THE materials of this historical sketch—for it claims not the dignified name of History—began to accumulate on the writer's hands nearly twenty years ago. Called, in 1839, to the Secretaryship of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, which at that time had eighty feeble churches under its patronage, I found a necessity laid upon me to investigate the causes of their weakness, in order to know how to meet their wants,—to look into the *sources* of their troubles, the better to relieve them. In doing this, the history of at least eighty churches in Massachusetts was disclosed, and the leading facts penned down for practical use; while many of the disclosures revealed antecedent facts of equal interest pertaining to the history of other churches, from which these had sprung. By an habitual use of pencil and paper, with a natural fondness for compiling statistics, and the almost daily occasion for consulting them, it was found, at length, that the origin and general progress of nearly all the Congregational churches in the State had been jotted on these papers with more or less fulness and exactitude. A complete list, chronologically arranged, was made out several years ago, with a view to exhibit at one glance the comparative progress of church extension at different periods; and very important help it

afforded in studying the causes which have hitherto promoted or impeded the growth of our churches.

Without the least idea that these researches could be of any practical use to the public beyond their original aim, — to wit, a more capable discharge of my official duties in the service of home missions, — I was requested by the publishers of the *Congregationalist* to furnish a series of articles for that journal, giving a historical development of the Unitarian Controversy, which, after long repose, was then passing under review in the *Christian Examiner*. It was evident, on the slightest reflection, that some of the remoter causes of that schism lay so far back that it were quite as well to begin with the first plantation of churches in New England, and trace the stream down from its source, — which was accordingly done in monthly numbers covering just ten years each. By request of many friends, whose judgment is wiser than mine, these are now re-committed to the press in their present form.

The whole has passed through a careful revision, many errors corrected, and copious foot-notes added. The large amount of statistics brought into the sketch, and which are essential to its leading design, has rendered it necessary to condense them into the smallest possible compass. It would have been easier, and much more agreeable, with the stock of materials on hand, to spread the account of each church-gathering over a larger space; but this would have swollen the volume — already too large — to an unreadable size. Instead of giving these monotonous details for the sake of clothing the nakedness of dates, — which, after all, to some readers, will possess a higher value, as they have cost the writer more labor than any thing else in the volume, — it has been thought best to insert oc-

casional notes, where noteworthy facts transpired in connection with the founding of a church. Sentences have also been stricken out, and paragraphs inserted, in the body of the book, wherever additional light seemed to demand it.

The author is under great obligations to those ministers and laymen in various parts of the State who have kindly furnished him the correct names and dates, which he had either omitted or erroneously stated in the newspaper articles which fell under their eye. Especially deserving of grateful acknowledgments are the favors received from J. WINGATE THORNTON, Esq., and Dr. J. B. FELT, of Boston, in the loan of rare books and manuscripts. But it is to the collections of the Congregational Library Association that he is most deeply indebted for aid in preparing this sketch. Probably there is no place in New England where *statistical* information — particularly such as relates to the Congregational churches — can be found in equal fulness; for, in addition to its own appropriate store, it has also, on deposit, the entire library of the American Statistical Society.

The volume, such as it is, the author commits to the public with the earnest prayer and devout hope that it may subserve the Redeemer's cause, by "showing to the generations to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done, — that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." It has been his honest aim to "stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way;" and, to omit nothing which may induce the churches to "walk therein, and find rest to their souls," he has been particular to set up a finger-board at the entrance of each devious path, so far as the spot can be pointed out.



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## HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

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### CHAPTER I.

1620-30.

Design of the author. — Origin of John Robinson's church. — Removal to Holland and America. — Churches planted in Salem, Dorchester, Boston, and Watertown. — Dr. Fuller's agency in giving them a Congregational form. — Mode of covenanting. — The state eliminated from the church.

It is proposed, in the following pages, to sketch the origin and progress of the Congregational churches in Massachusetts, with particular reference to the causes which have contributed to their growth, decline, and recovery. Every one knows that the religious and ecclesiastical history of New England, and more especially of this State, is greatly diversified. Lights and shadows flit across our path, as, commencing with the plantation of these churches, we follow them through a short, bright day of Puritan development into Antinomian fogs and fens, from which, soon emerging, they sink, by slow degrees, into spiritual slumber. Then comes the "great awakening," which is followed by a great declension; and this by a great recovery, as the process may well be called, through which a covenant-keeping God has been bringing back their captivity during the last thirty years. The circumstances, or rather the causative conditions, on which the changing

fortunes of these churches have turned, cannot be studied without profit. No theorizing about the fitness or unfitness of the Congregational church polity, no dogmatizing about the moral tendencies of Calvinism or its opposites, is half so helpful to a practical mind searching after truth on these points, as the simple historical facts which such a study would unfold. The design of this sketch is to aid such minds, by presenting a summary view of these facts in the order of their occurrence.

As the gathering of a Christian church in a world like this is an epoch of vast importance, not only to all succeeding generations of its members, but also to the whole fraternity of churches with which it affiliates, the date of each organization will be inserted, as far as it can be, together with whatever noteworthy facts stand connected therewith. In this feature of it, the sketch will be found to exhibit a chronological view of church extension among us, and, in some sense, the genealogy of the churches.

But inasmuch as questions of doctrine and duty, of church polity and religious worship, have entered largely into the life-history of these churches, affecting their essential character and condition, these will be noticed as they arise, and their influence shown, so far as facts will show it. And if any of these questions, of earlier or later times, have run into controversies which have ended in quarrels and schisms, it is hoped that a truthful statement may be given without offence. The great purposes of Providence in the history of this world would be but half answered, should the historian record only the better side of it, — holding up such examples before us as are worthy of imitation, and skipping such as ought to be shunned. *Inde tibi tuaque reipublicæ, quod imitare, capias; inde fœdum inceptu, fœdum exitu, quod vites.*

There are plenty of people in our day who know, or seem to know, just what our Puritan fathers would be, were they to live in this age of the world; just what they would do and teach, could they but return to earth,

and resume their functions amid the light of the nineteenth century. But it very much lessens the value of such knowledge to find hardly any two exactly agreed about it; and, especially, to find that each one's own peculiar notions of morals and religion and theology are just the notions which he is sure those fathers would now adopt and teach. If any one wishing to exercise his imagination is pleased to try it on such subjects, let him do so. Let him fancy (if he can) the stern virtues of Elder Brewster and Gov. Winthrop relaxing into the easy morals that suit him; or their hard-twisted, five-ly theology transformed into the slazy texture of his own. But in this harmless reverie, pray let him not forget that it was the real, and not the imaginary, Puritan whose achievements now challenge the admiration of the world, and make a chapter in its history. Whether the early settlers of New England, and founders of her Congregational churches, were of a make to veer about with the changing winds and currents of the times, the veritable facts will show, without the aid of fancy; as also, whether this facile disposition (in rather sad contrast with their fixedness of principle) be not found among some of their descendants.

New England owes its settlement, and the Congregational churches of New England their type and character, to that purely religious movement which brought to these shores a portion of Rev. John Robinson's congregation in quest of "freedom to worship God." Constituted a church by solemn covenant in 1602,\* at

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\* This is the year assigned by Morton (*N. E. Memorial*, p. 9), though Bradford, whom he closely copies, mentions no date. Prince accepts it in his *Chronology*, and supposes that "Mr. Secretary Morton had the account either from some other writings of Gov. Bradford, the journals of Gov. Winslow, or from oral conference with them, or other of the first planters; with some of whom he was contemporary, and from whence, he tells us, he received his intelligence." (p. 100.) The statement of Bradford, after alluding to the tyrannous exactions imposed by the "commission courts" on such as "began to reform their lives and make conscience of their ways," is in these words: "So many, therefore, of these professors as saw

the little town of Scrooby, in the north of England, they had been harassed for six years by fines and imprisonments in their native land, and had afterwards

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the evil of these things, in these parts, and whose hearts the Lord had touched with heavenly zeal for his truth, they shook off this yoke of anti-Christian bondage, and, as the Lord's free people, joined themselves (by covenant of the Lord) into a church estate, in the fellowship of the Gospel, to walk in all his ways, made known or to be made known unto them, according to their best endeavors, whatsoever it should cost them." (Bradford's Hist. Plym. Plantation, p. 9.) It should be observed, that this first confederation embraced the nuclei of two churches; the distance which some of the members, scattered over the adjacent parts of three counties, lived from Elder Brewster's house, where they all met for worship at first, rendering it necessary at length to divide. One of these bodies, under the pastorate of Rev. John Smyth, emigrated to Holland in 1606, and soon after disappeared. The other, known as Mr. Robinson's congregation, without any apparent change in their ecclesiastical organism, continued to meet for worship at Mr. Brewster's, in Scrooby, Basset-Lawe, till, in 1607 and 1608, they, too, found refuge in Holland.

"It is certainly a very remarkable circumstance (apart from the consideration of the very important consequences which ensued upon it), that there should have arisen among such a population as that of Basset-Lawe, a spirit so strong and so determined, or that it could have been induced to enter such a field of controversy at all. And it becomes the more remarkable, when we observe how few persons in those times had, in any part of the country, separated themselves from the church, and formed themselves into single, self-directed communities. Not but that in most other parts of the kingdom the Puritan objections to the ceremonies were felt by many minds, and many were the persons who would gladly have seen the yoke of ceremonies removed; but there is a great difference between the uneasiness in a forced acquiescence, and the actual withdrawing from all communion, throwing off the authority of the church, and the authority of the State too, as far as respected affairs of religion. The Separatist was a Puritan, but the Puritan was not necessarily a Separatist; and the extraordinary feature in this case is, that the Puritanism of Basset-Lawe was so deep a sentiment that it urged so many to the act of separation, and afterwards to the desperate measure of emigration, while in other parts of the country, with few exceptions, though there were Puritan emigrants who sought relief from the ceremonies and subscriptions, there were few or none who had, while at home, entered into church union, as the Scrooby people did, and then took their departure, a compact and united body."—Hunter's "Founders of New Plymouth," pp. 26, 27.

sojourned twelve years in Holland as "strangers and pilgrims," when they landed on Plymouth Rock, December 22,\* 1620; the *first church* in Massachusetts, the first in New England; and for the space of nine dreary years, the only Protestant church throughout this western hemisphere, excepting perhaps the remains of an Episcopal organization in the almost deserted plantation at Jamestown, Virginia.† Their beloved pastor, who

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\* An unfortunate mistake of one day has lately been discovered by learned chronologists, in translating "Dec. 11, 1620," old style, into the corresponding date of the new; and attempts are being made to change *Forefathers' Day* from the 22d to the 21st. But, like the error of four years in the Christian era, the *Twenty-Second of December* has become so embedded in the memory, — so sacred in the hearts of millions, — that it seems a profanation, almost, to give it up, though it be satisfactorily shown that it is one day after the real "Landing of the Pilgrims." The event itself will be commemorated as long as the world revolves; and so should be the incidents of the day preceding. Mr. Prince, quoting Bradford, gives the following brief but suggestive account of those incidents: "December 9 [Saturday]. In the morning they find the place to be a small island, [viz. Clark's Island, at the entrance of Plymouth harbor, upon which they were thrown during the stormy night preceding,] secure from the Indians. And this being the last day of the week, they here dry their stuff, fix their pieces, rest themselves, return God thanks for their many deliverances; and here the next day keep their Christian Sabbath." (p. 167.) Why has no painter immortalized his name, by transferring to canvas this Sabbath scene, the first ever witnessed on the shores of New England? As an illustration of real Puritanism, nothing can exceed it. We see them now, in imagination, grouped in devout posture around a forest fire, while "Deacon" Carver, the newly elected governor, reads from his pocket Bible an appropriate chapter, and "lines" a favorite psalm, which gives vent to full-hearted and high-sounding praise. We hear the fervent prayers and earnest prophesyings of Bradford and Winslow, who, though yet young men, are much experienced in these exercises. We behold the solemnity that rests even on the sailor's rough countenance, as, silently musing on the perils recently passed, he participates in the service, while not a rising cloud, nor breaking wave, nor frightened sea-gull, escapes his ever watchful eye.

† The settlers of Jamestown were as exclusively Episcopal, as those of Plymouth were Puritan, and appear to have had preachers of that order sent among them from time to time, prior to this date; but the most diligent search has not disclosed the existence of any ecclesiastical organization, properly so called.



staid behind, "as a man divided in himself with great pain," till the remainder of his flock could come, was never permitted to accompany them. To their unspeakable grief, he died in Holland, March 1, 1625, after a short sickness, at the age of fifty. As Moses was released from his charge, when he had conducted the children of Israel within sight of Canaan, so fell the leader of this pilgrim band, when through long wanderings and many perils he had brought them within a step of their destined home. Nor did the tide of his influence, more than that of Moses, stop at his death. It has been rising ever since, and will never ebb. The practices and opinions of *John Robinson*, more than those of any other man, have shaped the institutions of New England, though he never set foot on her soil. So deeply had his congregation drank at the fountain of his wisdom, and so fully had they imbibed his spirit, that the Plymouth church, without his presence, and for a long time without any resident pastor at all, still preserved the polity which he had prescribed, and was the model after which the others were formed, as will appear in the sequel of this sketch.\*

The second church that sprang up on these shores was gathered at Salem, August 6, 1629. A small company, with Roger Conant at their head, had located on this spot some three years before; which was increased by the arrival of Gov. Endicott and his associates in

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\* They had their ruling elder, it is true, whose office combined the preacher's duties also when occasion required, in accordance with Mr. Robinson's interpretation of 1 Tim. 5: 17; but he was not authorized to administer the sacrament. This privation became grievous, at length, to the Pilgrims in their lone wilderness home, and very naturally suggested the idea of adding that much to the functions of the elder. But the pastor objected. In a letter to Mr. Brewster, dated March 20, 1623, Mr. Robinson says: "Now touching the question propounded by you, I judge it not lawful for you, being a ruling elder, as Rom. 12: 7, 8, and 1 Tim. 5: 17, opposed to the elders that teach and exhort, and labor in word and doctrine, to which the sacraments are annexed, to administer them, nor convenient if it were lawful." — *Young's Chron.* p. 477.

1628. But a much larger accession was made a few weeks prior to the organization of this church, in company with Messrs. Skelton and Higginson, who were ordained the same day, — the former as pastor, the latter as teacher. There is ample evidence that these Salem planters, Puritans and Nonconformists as they were, had no thought of separating from the church of England when they left home. But the Plymouth doctor, Mr. Samuel Fuller, was sent for at a time of prevailing sickness among them; and being a deacon, as well as a doctor, in such a church as Mr. Robinson's, he was not unqualified to prescribe for spiritual ailments also, where there was need. On his return from Salem, Gov. Endicott wrote to his brother governor at Plymouth, "I acknowledge myself much bound to you for your kind love and care in sending Mr. Fuller amongst us, and rejoice much that I am by him satisfied touching your form of outward worship; it is no other, as I can gather, than is warranted by the evidence of truth, — being far from the common report that hath been spread of you." (Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. III. 66.) And even Mr. Higginson, who, on his voyage hither, wrote, "We do not go to New England as separatists from the church of England, though we cannot but separate from corruptions of it," in less than six weeks after his arrival, was drawing up a "Confession of Faith and Covenant" for a separate and independent church. (Felt's Hist. Vol. I. 110, 116.)

On the 6th of June, 1630, the first church in Dorchester, having been regularly organized in March preceding, at the new hospital of Plymouth, England, as a preliminary step to their emigration (Felt's Hist. Vol. I. 129), fixed their residence in that place, called by the natives Mattapan. Before leaving England, they chose Messrs. John Maverick and John Warham\* for their ministers, who, though they both had received Episcopal ordina-

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\* "The first preacher," Cotton Mather supposes, "that ever preached with notes in our New England." — Mag. Vol. I. p. 399.

tion, were reordained. The ministers and members of this Dorchester church appear to have been sufficiently Congregational in their outward form. But the Plymouth doctor, going among them to "let blood," soon after their arrival, found enough to do in getting them right on another point, which tried him sorely. "I had conference with them," he says in a letter to Gov. Bradford, "till I was weary. Mr. Warham holds that the visible church may consist of a mixed people, godly and openly ungodly; upon which point we had all our conference, to which I trust the Lord will give a blessing." The sequel shows that he was not disappointed, for nothing more was heard of this mixing up of godly and ungodly members in the church of Christ. (Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. III. 74.)

The next two churches were gathered on the same day, July 30, 1630, out of Gov. Winthrop's large company of fifteen hundred souls, who arrived in the early part of June,—the one at Charlestown, over whom Rev. John Wilson was duly installed on the 27th of August following; the other at Watertown, with Rev. George Phillips for their pastor. But as Shawmut, the Indian name of a peninsula directly across the river, was thought to be a healthier location than Charlestown, the church that had been planted in this latter place, including the governor and all the principal inhabitants, removed thither in the course of three months, and thus became the *First* church in Boston,—a name given in honor of Rev. John Cotton, then a minister of Boston, England, but soon to be driven from his home there to a new home of the same name here.

And it is deserving of notice, that (as at the beginning of Salem and Dorchester) the Plymouth Church, through her indefatigable and ubiquitous Dr. Fuller, had an important influence in shaping the form and character of these churches also. Separation, not from the church of England, but from its corruptions, was all that Governor Winthrop and his company of Puritans

were intending, when they took leave of their friends at home, as is rendered certain by their parting address on that occasion. (Hubbard in 2 Massachusetts Hist. Coll. Vol. V. 126.) It was not without painful surprise, therefore, that on arriving at Salem they found their friends, who had preceded them, turned "separatists," — as the followers of Robinson were still called in England, — a Congregational church already organized on the principle of non-communion with non-reformed churches, and reinvesting with the sacred office, ministers who had been Episcopally ordained. They even sent back complaints, which, on coming to Mr. Cotton's ears, called forth a reproofing letter from him to Mr. Skelton, in which he says: "You went hence of another judgment, and I am afraid your change hath sprung from New Plymouth men, whom I esteem as godly and loving Christians; yet their grounds, which they have received for this tenet from Mr. Robinson, do not justify me, though the man I reverence as godly and learned." Mr. Cotton had guessed the true source of this change. As before intimated, Dr. Fuller, who had been so helpful to Endicott and the Salem folks, was called to prescribe for the sick and inquiring among Governor Winthrop's company also; and in a letter to Bradford, written as early as June 28th, scarcely a month after their arrival, he reports, with much apparent satisfaction, "one Mr. Phillips (a Suffolk man), who hath told me in private, that if they will have him stand minister, by that calling which he received from the prelates in England, he will leave them." In the same letter he adds, "The governor hath had conference with me, both in private and before sundry others." About a month later, when they were trying to settle upon some ecclesiastical basis, he and two other Plymouth brethren being on hand, "they would do nothing," says he, "without our advice; requiring our voices as their own, when it was concluded that the Lord was to be sought in righteousness." (Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. III. 74.) The result, as we have seen, was, in the main, a Congregational platform, which Mr. Cotton himself, after his

arrival, was more instrumental than any other man in perfecting.\*

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\* In that bitter dose which Robert Baylie administers to the Independents, in his "Dissuasive from the Errours of the Time," wherein it is not easy, nor very important, to determine whether *fallacy* or *falsehood* is the larger ingredient, there are mixed some grains of truth. Here is one: "Master Robinson did derive his way to his separate congregation at Leyden; a part of them did carry it over to Plymouth in New England; here Master Cotton did take it up and transmit it from thence to Master Goodwin [of London], who did help to propagate it to sundry others of Old England first, and after, to more in Holland, till now, by many hands, it is sown thick in divers parts of this kingdom." (p. 54.) Although Mr. Cotton, in his reply, modestly declines the unintended honor of exerting such a mighty influence over England, Holland, and America, yet he produces no facts to show that Baylie is not essentially correct in this "pedigree," as he calls it, of our denomination. It is quite clear from the facts above given, that the New Plymouth church did "leaven all the vicinity;" and scarcely less so, that Congregationalism in England owed its permanent establishment, if not its origin, to the able teachings and practical illustrations derived from this side of the water. Speaking of "The fruits of Congregational discipline in our churches in New England," Mr. Cotton says, in his reply to the aspersions of this writer (p. 102), "Fourthly, it hath been also a testimony from heaven of God's blessing upon our way, that many thousands in England, in all the quarters of the kingdom, have been awakened to consider of the cause of church-discipline, for which we have suffered this hazardous and voluntary banishment into this remote wilderness: and have, therefore, by letters conferred with us about it, and been (through mercy) so far enlightened, as to desire an utter subversion of Episcopacy and conformity; yea, and the honorable houses of parliament, the Lord hath been pleased to help them so far to consider of our sufferings, and of the causes thereof, as to conclude a necessity of reformation of the ecclesiastical state (amongst other causes), so by reason of the necessity put upon so many English subjects to depart from all our employments and enjoyments in our native country, for conscience's sake." To the same purpose, though under another head, namely, "*The fruits of Congregational discipline in England*," the writer adds: "If books and letters and reports do not too much abuse us with false intelligence, the great and gracious and glorious victories, whereby the Lord hath wrought salvation for England in these late wars, have been as so many testimonies of the blessing of God upon our way. For the chiefest instruments, which God hath delighted to use herein, have been the faith and fidelity, the courage and constancy, of Independents. And when I say *Independents*, I mean not those corrupt sects and heresies which

As the gathering of these five churches, during the first ten years, was the foundation-work of the whole superstructure, civil and religious, that has since risen up among us, let us glance back and group together in one view the characteristics of this foundation. We shall the better understand some peculiar phases of our ecclesiastical history. We find here several different companies of men, come from different parts of England, with differing views on many other subjects, but all united in the one fixed purpose of seeking a purer worship and a holier life. Drawn or driven into the same wide wilderness by the force of this one idea, they combine in separate and independent bodies for its development, each company according to their own free choice; and yet these new and separate organisms all have one marked feature alike, namely, a mutual covenant, written and subscribed, binding the members severally "to walk according to the rule of the gospel," or "to walk in all the ways of God made known, or to be made known unto them, according to the best of their endeavors, whatever it may cost them;" or, "to believe in, love, serve, and obey him sincerely, according to his word, against all the temptations of the devil, the world, and their own flesh, and this unto death;" or, "to renounce all idolatry and superstition, all human traditions and inventions whatsoever in the worship of God, and serve him faithfully in all matters concerning our reformation;" for all these different modes of expressing the same general idea are found in their covenants. And none were received into the sacred compact who could not produce satisfactory evidence of a work of grace on the heart, — unless the Dorchester church, for a short time, formed an exception.

As to their particular manner of coming into cove-

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shroud themselves under the vast title of Independency, and in the mean time cast off all church-government, and churches too; but such as profess the kingdom of Christ in the government of each holy congregation of saints within themselves." (p. 103.)

nant, there was sufficient diversity to show that while all the churches were moved by the same spirit, and aimed at the same point, each was led along as an independent inquirer after the right way. The members of the Plymouth and Dorchester churches were embodied before their emigration, probably all who were prepared to unite joining at the same time. In regard to the Salem church, thirty individuals were designated "to begin the work," and thirty copies of Mr. Higginson's confession of faith and covenant were written out beforehand for their use. These having entered into solemn covenant, and thus become a church, received others on examination. The Boston church was constituted of only four original members, namely, Gov. Winthrop, Lieut.-Gov. Dudley, Mr. Isaac Johnson, and Rev. John Wilson. After two days five more "subscribe the sacred compact." Very soon their number increased to "sixty-four males and half as many females." The Watertown church began with forty members. These various methods of procedure are interesting, as showing the independent processes of thought and inquiry, through which the great principles of our Congregational polity were evolved,— "diversities of operations, but the same God working all in all." And this remark will apply also to the early methods of ordaining pastors and teachers.

These five churches, thus constituted, took into their own hands the selection and settlement of their ministers. However much of a common-sense and matter-of-course aspect this circumstance may have, as seen from our stand-point, it was at that time a new and important step, and led to others still more important. How long could these independent and self-gathered churches go on choosing their own pastors, prescribing their own rules of discipline, and managing their own affairs in their own way, before this democratic spirit would show itself in other relations of society?— especially when all these other relations were supposed to exist solely for the sake of the church. It is an unquestionable fact, that the right of popular suffrage found

its way to these shores from the north of England, through Holland, in Mr. Robinson's congregation, and crept into our civil government through the preëstablished usage of the Congregational churches. (Baylies' Hist. I. 30.) Our great republic owes its origin, not to Greece nor Rome, nor to the immortal George Washington, even; it sprang up spontaneously from that system of church polity which our New England fathers deduced from the Bible; and was in practical operation, so far as colonial dependence would allow, a hundred and fifty years before the name itself was announced to the world.

And here, in these first developments of republicanism, we find the solution of a vexed point in our early legislation, — the strange confusion, as it strikes many, of things sacred and things secular, which has given rise to so many bitter sarcasms against our fathers, for attempting to unite church and state. Any intelligent person who will look at the facts will see that it was not the church allying itself to the state, but *a state growing out of the church*, which occasioned the seeming jumble of ecclesiastical and civil affairs, — a condition of things almost inevitable while the great interests of religion, as centred in the church, were about the only subjects requiring legislation; and while the state, as such, was in its nonage. And when the two, in subsequent time, became distinct, as we now see them, the thing which actually happened was not a divorcement of the church from the state, but an elimination of the state from the church. This fact must be borne in mind as we proceed, or we shall never come to a right understanding of our fathers or their institutions.



## CHAPTER II.

1630-1640.

Gathering of twenty-four churches. — Character of their founders. — Gradual development of the Congregational polity. — Scriptural model copied. — Uniformity, how secured. — Jealousy of the brotherhood about the liberties of churches. — Antinomian controversy. — Harvard College founded.

DURING the next period of ten years, — from 1630 to 1640, — twenty-four churches were organized within the present limits of Massachusetts, on the same general basis with the preceding five, and in the following order.

The First church in Roxbury was embodied in July, 1632, with seventeen male members dismissed from the Dorchester church for that purpose, having Rev. Messrs. Thomas Weld and John Eliot for their first ministers, — the former ordained as pastor, the latter as teacher, according the custom of that day.\*

The church in Lynn commenced in August, the same year (1632), with the arrival of Rev. Stephen Bachellor, seventy-one years old, and six members of his former charge in England, whom he constituted a church with but little formality, and became their pastor with still less. This occasioned a questioning afterwards whether they were a real church; which at length was settled

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\* According to the Cambridge Platform, "the pastor's special work is to attend to exhortation, and therein to administer a word of wisdom; the teacher is to attend to doctrine, and therein to administer a word of knowledge; and either of them to administer the seals of that covenant unto the dispensation whereof they are alike called." All this appears to us like a distinction without a difference. Practically these two officers were colleague pastors, as we should now call them.

affirmatively, on the principle that "after consent and practice of church estate" had supplied all defects in the organization.

The church in Duxbury was formed out of the Plymouth church during the same year, though without any settled pastor till the arrival of Ralph Partridge, in 1636.

The South church in Marshfield was also gathered from the Plymouth church in 1632, being supplied in part with preaching by Rev. Richard Blinman, from Wales, and in part with "prophesying," by "a few gifted brethren," till the ordination of Rev. Edward Bulkley as their first pastor, in 1642.

The church that was gathered at Charlestown, July 30, 1630, having soon after removed its place of worship, and become the First church in Boston, where the inhabitants of both places had ever since assembled for worship, thirty-three members living on the Charlestown side were regularly dismissed, and formed into the present First church in that place, November 2, 1632. On the same day, Rev. Thomas James, recently come from England, was elected and ordained their pastor.

On or near the 11th of October, ~~1623~~ <sup>1633</sup>, a church was gathered at Cambridge (then Newtown), composed chiefly of Rev. Thomas Hooker's flock in England, who had preceded him in their flight to these shores. Immediately after his arrival, they took measures to secure his resettlement as their pastor, with Rev. Samuel Stone for teacher.

The church in Ipswich was gathered in May, 1634,—possibly at an earlier date, for we learn from Winthrop, that his pastor, Mr. Wilson, went there to preach on the 26th of the preceding November, because they had no minister; and that subsequently, for the same reason, he (the governor) went there to "prophesy." The labors of their first minister, Rev. Thomas Parker, commenced in May, and of their first ordained teacher, Rev. Nathaniel Ward, in June, 1634.

The same year (1634) on the 27th of September, a

majority of that celebrated church, gathered by Rev. Henry Jacob, at Southwark, London, in 1616, emigrated to these shores (about thirty in all), under the lead of Rev. John Lothrop, their pastor, and located in "the wilderness, called Scituate," where thirteen of the former members, who had joined the Plymouth church, reunited with them soon after their arrival.

The First church in Newbury was gathered in 1635, and Rev. Thomas Parker (released from the Ipswich church), and Rev. James Noyes, were invested with the offices of pastor and teacher.

The church in Hingham was gathered in the month of September, 1635, from a company of immigrants, who commenced a new settlement there on the 18th of that month, under the lead of Rev. Peter Hobart, of Hingham, in Norfolk, England; and he was ordained as their pastor the same day.

The same year (1635), about twenty families located in Weymouth, from which the First church in that town was constituted, and Rev. Joseph Hull settled over them.

The Cambridge church having decided to emigrate in a body to Connecticut, with their ministers, Hooker and Stone (which they did in the summer of 1636, and became the founders, and First church in Hartford), another company of newly arrived pilgrims stood ready to take their places, and were embodied on the 1st day of the preceding February, with Rev. Thomas Shepard for their minister. The same is now the "Shepard church" of that city.

The church in Concord was gathered at Cambridge, July 5th, 1636, and had Rev. Peter Bulkley for their pastor, who, with twelve other families, recently come from England, removed soon after to this ancient home of the Indians, and were the first white settlers there.

A large portion of the Dorchester church having removed in a body to Connecticut, and planted the town and church of Windsor, the residuum, joined by other new-comers, were organized August 23, 1636, into

the present First church of Dorchester, and Rev. Richard Mather was ordained over them the same day.\*

The First church in Springfield was probably constituted in 1637, as the labors of their first minister, Rev. George Moxon, are known to have commenced then, in pursuance of a compact entered into by the first settlers, May 14th of the preceding year, an article of which was: "We intend, by God's grace, as soon as we can, with all convenient speed to procure some godly and faithful minister, with whom we propose to join in church covenant, to walk in all the ways of Christ." The founders of this new enterprise in the wilderness were among the most influential members of the Roxbury church.

The First church in Taunton is supposed to have been constituted the same year, with Rev. William Hooke for their minister. The original settlers were chiefly emigrants from Taunton, in England, led on by the dauntless Elizabeth Pool, a Puritan lady of rare enterprise, whom Winthrop calls "a gentlewoman, an ancient maid."

The church in Sandwich was gathered in 1638, from a number of families that came there the preceding year from Lynn, and had Rev. William Leveridge for their minister.

The church in Salisbury was gathered also in 1638, from among pious families that were settling the place, with Rev. William Worcester for their first minister, who came from Salisbury, in England.

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\* An organization was attempted in March preceding; but Mr. Shepard of Cambridge, who was on the council, took exception at the Christian experiences narrated by several of the candidates. Consequently Mr. Mather and his people were advised "by the general vote of all the churches" to postpone the act of confederation, — which was consummated, to the satisfaction of all parties, at the date above named. The original correspondence that ensued on the subject between Mr. Shepard and "his loving friend and brother, Mr. Mather," is in possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and will richly repay a perusal. A copy may be found also in Shepard's Autobiography, by Rev. N. Adams, D. D.

The church in Dedham was organized November 8, 1638, from a company of emigrants, consisting of "about thirty families, come together from several parts of England, few of them known to one another before," and Rev. John Allin was ordained on the 14th of the next April.

The church in Quincy was gathered September 17, 1639, with Rev. William Thompson for their first pastor.

Probably the church in Yarmouth was organized also in 1639, as the labors of their first minister, Rev. Marmaduke Mathews, are known to have commenced then.

On the 11th of October, the same year, the majority of the church which emigrated from London to America in 1634, and located at Scituate, made one more move, and settled in Barnstable, where it is now the West church in that town. The residue immediately reorganized, and called Rev. Charles Chauncy to become their pastor. This, therefore, must be regarded as the date of the present First church in Scituate; as also the beginning of church ordinances in Barnstable.

The church in Rowley was formed December 3, 1639. The company who settled that town came from England the year before, under the lead of Rev. Ezekiel Rogers, whom they chose for their first pastor, and gave to their new settlement the name of the town where he was minister before coming to America.

In August, 1640, the church in Sudbury was gathered, and Rev. Edmund Browne was ordained the same day.

Thus at the end of the second decade of years, twenty-nine churches had been planted, two of which had removed in a body to Connecticut. Of the twenty-seven remaining on the ground, nineteen were located in the Massachusetts patent, and eight in that of Plymouth.

But the founding of so many churches of Christ—always, and everywhere important—hardly suggests the importance which attaches to the founding of these. One must study the character of their founders, the

great principles of church polity which they established, and the seeds of other things which were sown in connection with this church-planting, in order to understand the momentous bearings of the transaction. When it is considered that nearly all the members of these churches, and their ministers (to use a royal but coarse expression), had been "harried out of the kingdom" on account of their Puritanism, and come to these shores for conscience' sake, it can be believed that they were more thoroughly winnowed from worldliness than any others then on earth. When we remember that it was not as schismatics in their mother church, nor as seceders from its communion, but simply as reformers of its worship "according to the primitive pattern," that they found themselves gradually growing into Congregational churches, we may be sure that the Congregationalism which they were here developing, was free from every thing sectarian, or even denominational in its spirit, and assumed the shape it did, merely because, in their application of Scripture principles, it would assume no other. And when it is borne in mind that nearly all the first ministers and magistrates were not only men of pure hearts, but of gifted minds, having been trained in English universities, it cannot be doubted that they were qualified for the work to which they were called, of laying foundation-stones in church or state. The wilderness never saw such a sight before, — so many and such eminent civilians and divines flocking to the wildest of her howling wastes, — the highest style of mental and moral culture finding a home amid the ancient haunts of barbarism. Such magistrates as Carver and Bradford and Winthrop and Dudley; such ministers as Higginson and Cotton and Norton and Ward and Shepard and Eliot and Hooker and Mather, with most of their associates who took part in shaping the course of our civil and ecclesiastical affairs during this formative period, would have matched the best English minds of that age in their respective walks of life, had they been allowed to exercise their functions at home. And we may be sure

that the enormous tax levied upon their mental powers in originating the plans and proceedings demanded by this new and difficult position did not permit those powers to rust. It is an unparalleled fact, that at the end of twenty years from the arrival of the Mayflower, and when the entire immigration to this State could not have exceeded twenty thousand souls, sixty-three non-conforming ministers had landed on her soil; four of whom had died, and six removed to other plantations, leaving fifty-three still here. And not less than fifty of these were liberally educated, and experienced preachers when they left England. We may go even further, and say that they were eminently popular preachers. So strong was their hold on the popular mind, that their devoted hearers followed them to these ends of the earth; and forgot the sorrows of an exile life while listening, by the hour, in a cold meeting-house, without furnace or stove, to the gracious words that proceeded out of their mouths. There were those who would walk twenty miles to attend a Thursday lecture in Boston, and feel well paid for their toil by hearing Norton preach, or Shepard pray.

It is certainly worth our while to observe the foot-marks which such men left on the world while passing through it. And if, at this point (1640), we look around to notice some of the leading characteristics which, under such influences, were given to the twenty-seven churches already located within the limits of Massachusetts, and to see what spirit animated the age, we discover, first of all, a marked approximation towards uniformity in the general aspect of these churches, and a growing tendency to affiliation; while at the same time there was a vigilant guard at every turn, against the surrender of their individual rights and proper independence. The custom had become prevalent, but not universal, of asking the advice and assistance of "neighbor churches," when a new church was to be formed, till, in 1636, the general court ordered "all persons to take notice, that this court doth not, nor will hereafter, approve of any such companies of men as shall

hereafter join in any pretended way of church-fellowship, without they shall first acquaint the magistrates and the elders of the greater part of the churches in this jurisdiction, with their intentions, and have their approbation herein." (Rec. Mass. Colony, Vol. I. 168). The law was aimed at certain excesses of independence which were beginning to appear (is it strange that they should?) among a people bursting suddenly from bondage into boundless freedom. Nevertheless, among the well disposed, there were some who, mistaking the end and scope of this order, thought they saw in it the "seeds of usurpation on the liberties of the Gospel." As an illustration, the settlers of Dedham lately arrived, and, about to form into a church state, sent a deputation to Governor Winthrop for more light on the subject before they could ask leave of magistrates or ministers in a case like that. The governor explained that the "court or law did no way intend to abridge such a liberty of gathering into church-fellowship privately, as if it were unlawful, or as if such a church were not a true church, rightly gathered; but the scope was this, that if any people of unsound judgment or erroneous way, etc., should privately set up a church amongst them, the commonwealth could not so approve them as to communicate that freedom and other privileges unto them which they did unto others, or protect them in their government, if they saw their way dangerous to the public peace." (Dedham church, Rec. in Felt's Eccl. Hist. Vol. I. p. 369.) This explanation satisfied the Dedham folks, and should satisfy all else who can excuse another law then in force, conferring the right of suffrage exclusively on church-members. (Rec. Mass. Colony, Vol. I. 87.) If church-members were to be the sole depositories of power in the commonwealth, it certainly behoved the commonwealth to consider what sort of people should be gathered into churches. The passage of this latter order was rendered necessary by passing the former; and that former, which enacted that the body politic should embrace only members of churches, finds an ample apology in the fact, that the



maintenance of a pure Christianity, as developed through reformed churches, was the one great object of our fathers in attempting to found any body politic at all. Not to admit into that body at first, those who stood in antagonism to it, was simply not to abandon that object in the outset, nor to make provision for its defeat afterwards. The intent of the law is thus stated in the preamble: "To the end, the body of the commons may be preserved of honest and good men." Those who ridicule this legislation as aiming at a union of church and state among men, who had just fled their country to escape the intolerable evils of such a union, make themselves ridiculous. It was the church founding a state. This is what was actually done; and this was their way of doing it. If, like an overfond mother, the church impaired her own strength by holding the infant state in her arms too long, or by extending this tutelage too far (as was undoubtedly the fact), that is quite another thing, which will be looked at when we come to it. But up to this time it was an artless and intelligent proceeding, based on a well-considered principle. That principle, as announced by Rev. John Cotton, whose opinion on all questions relating to civil or ecclesiastical government in New England was more potential than that of any other man in his day, is briefly stated thus: "It is better that the commonwealth be fashioned to the setting forth of God's house, which is his church, than to accommodate the church to the civil state." Whether this be a safe principle in its practical issues, let the work of their hands bear witness. The world knows something about the commonwealth which was thus founded, and can form their own opinion.\*

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\* Since the above was written, the North American Review for April, 1857, in an article on "Oliver's Puritan Commonwealth" (pp. 453 and 457), has given the following strong testimony on the same point. "In Winthrop's Reply to Vane's Answer to his Defence of an order of Court, 1637, forbidding habitation without allowance of the magistrates, occurs a most remarkable sentence, giving us a

Not only in the gathering of churches, but in the ordination of ministers also, there was an approximation towards uniformity. The calling together of pastors and delegates from other churches was fast growing into a custom; though the inherent right of each church to ordain their own officers was constantly affirmed. In answer to a question propounded to the ministers of New England by their Puritan brethren across the water in 1636, "Whether do you hold it lawful for mere lay or private men to ordain ministers in any case?" they replied, in substance, if churches have the right to elect, much more have they the right to ordain, — the less being involved in the greater; in the exercise of this right, however, the church should ordinarily act through their officers, if they have any. "But when a church hath no officers, but the first officers themselves are to be ordained, then this ordination by the rite of imposing hands may be performed for the church by the most prime, grave, and able men from among themselves, as the church shall depute hereunto." (Felt's Eccl. Hist. Vol. I. 385.) The calling in of councils to perform the ordination services was understood to be, in theory, nothing more nor less than the church itself performing them by proxy, on the principle, *qui facit per alium facit per se*. In their reasonings on the subject, to leave the ultimate decision of the question to other churches, whether a company of believers should be a church and have a pastor, would be to adopt the Presbyterian rule, which they

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key to the singular ecclesiastical policy of the Puritans. The sentence would appear to have been incidentally written, but it is of emphatic importance. 'Whereas the way of God hath always been to gather churches out of the world, now the world, or civil state, must be raised out of the churches.' This explains every thing to us in the religious institutions of our ancestors. The English Magna Charta restricted the right of suffrage in the choice of their own representatives in the commons to *freeholders*. Puritanism restricted the right of suffrage to *Christians*. It tried to evolve a state out of a church. There have been many more fanciful, many less inspiring aims than this proposed in the great schemes of men."

had no thought of adopting; to leave it to the good pleasure of neighboring ministers, would be to resume the yoke of prelacy, which they had just thrown off. Every step taken towards uniformity and affiliation, during this period, was taken with the utmost caution, and not till it was clearly seen that the fundamental principle of their ecclesiastical organism — independence, or self-government — was not endangered thereby. So that these seeming restraints, which the usages of the times were throwing upon their liberty, they regarded as merely the bonds of fellowship, which did not trammel their freedom.

One thing which, in the end, greatly strengthened these bonds of fellowship and affection, threatened for a while their utter disruption. It was the Antinomian Controversy. As this affair belongs to the period now under review, it may here be remarked, in brief, that the Antinomian, or Familistic, or Perfectionist doctrines — for they have been known by all these different names — appear to have been brought to these shores by Mrs. Ann Hutchinson, who came from England and joined the Boston church in 1634, where her husband, Mr. William Hutchinson, was afterwards elected deacon. Governor Winthrop, who took a lively interest in suppressing the heresy, says: "She brought over with her two dangerous errors; that the person of the Holy Ghost dwells in a justified one; that no sanctification can help to evidence to us our justification. From these two," he continues, "grew many branches, — as our union with the Holy Ghost, so as a Christian remains dead to every spiritual action, and hath no gifts nor graces, other than such as are hypocrites', nor any other sanctification but the Holy Ghost himself." (Winth. Jour. Vol. I. 239.) So prolific, however, did this error prove, that when a general synod convened at Cambridge, in the summer of 1637, to take the matter in hand, its branches had grown to eighty-two. A list of eighty-two "erroneous opinions" were charged upon Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers, with an addenda of nine "unsafe speeches."

Mrs. Hutchinson at first propagated her views chiefly through weekly female meetings, held at her own house. But her brother-in-law, Rev. John Wheelwright, who arrived in Boston in 1636, was soon found ready to preach in public what she was teaching in private. It was not long before a majority of the Boston church, with one of their ministers, the renowned John Cotton, were lending their countenance to the newly-broached views, — a sufficient proof that this woman possessed, at that time, some rare excellences of character. Legalists and Antinomians were the terms which the two contending parties hurled at each other, like bombs interchanged by hostile batteries. It is sad to think of Wilson and Cotton, in the highest ranks of the ministry, and of Winthrop and Vane, among the chief magistrates, assailing each other with such missiles. Yet so it was till the synod of 1637, comprising “all the teaching elders throughout the country, and some newly come out of England, not yet called to any place here,” after learned discussions which lasted twenty-four days, pronounced their judgment against the new views. Hitherto, when questions of doctrine or duty had divided the members of a church, a discussion, more or less private, had generally bridged the chasm, and brought the parties together; for in those days, and among that people (incredible as the fact may seem in our times), argument produced conviction, and conviction ended strife. But in this case all the usual appliances seemed to fail. Nevertheless, in the end, even this deep Antinomian slough was crossed in the same way. Arguments, solid scripture arguments, were the stepping-stones on which the bemired errorists mostly were led over, though modern prejudice has invented for their use a Puritan inquisition. “Thus saith the Lord,” was the only authority employed; and it was found sufficient. One who appears to have been an eyewitness, says, as quoted by Hutchinson, the historian, “they who came together with minds exasperated, by this means depart in peace.” And in “New England’s First-Fruits,” written a few years after, it is remarked,

"the matter came to such a happy conclusion that most of the seduced came humbly and confessed their errors in our public assemblies, and abide to this day constant in the truth. And from that time not any unsound, unsavourie and giddie fancie have dared to lift up his head, or abide the light amongst us." (Hist. Coll. Vol. I. 247.) It is true that Mrs. Hutchinson and her brother-in-law, with several other leading Antinomians, for contumacious and insurrectionary proceedings, exposed themselves to civil penalties.\* Some of them were even imprisoned, and finally expelled from the jurisdiction,—all which matters are fully set forth in a rare old book, entitled "The Rise, Reign, and Ruin of Antinomians," ascribed by some to Rev. Thomas Weld, by others to Governor Winthrop. The fact, however, is, that Winthrop wrote the book, and Weld the preface.

Whatever there was of severity in the treatment which these parties received as disturbers of the peace

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\* The assertion that these "civil penalties" were visited upon them for their heretical opinions has often been asserted, but always in face of the clearest and most authentic testimony to the contrary. Mr. Cotton, whose uncomfortable position throughout the whole proceeding would have inclined him to take that view, if it could be truthfully taken, makes the following clear discrimination. "The synod [was convoked] to agitate, convince, and condemn the errors and the offensive carriages then stirring. Whereat the magistrates being present, they saw just cause to proceed against the chief of those whom they conceived to have bred any civil disturbance; and the churches saw cause to proceed against their members whom they found to be broachers or maintainers of such heresies. For though the errors were condemned, yet they were not fastened personally upon her [Mrs. Hutchinson], nor had we any two witnesses that would affirm it to us that she did broach or maintain such errors or heresies till after her sentence of banishment by the general court; and then, indeed, as she was more bold and open in declaring her judgment, before many witnesses, so the elders of the church of Boston called her to account before the church, and convinced her of her errors, and, with the consent of the church, laid her and one or two more of her abettors under the censure of an admonition even for those corrupt opinions which were charged upon her and proved against her."—Way of Congregational Churches Cleared, etc. p. 85.

(and this was the sole ground of their punishment), the candid will find a sufficient extenuation in the perils with which the churches and the Commonwealth alike were then threatened. Archbishop Laud, reversing King James's policy towards the Puritans, of "harrying them out of the kingdom," was punishing them for leaving.\* There was unmistakable evidence of his settled purpose to execute upon all these fugitive non-conformists the threat which he uttered against Davenport, when told that he had escaped to America — "my arm shall reach him there." The plan of subjecting all New England to the rule of one governor-general, of his own appointment, armed with that dreadful engine of despotic power, the "Court of High Commission," was known to have received the royal sanction; and our fathers were making preparations quietly, but efficiently, to resist it. Nothing but the civil war which broke out at home, and cost both the prelate and his monarch their heads, prevented the American Revolution from coming into the world's drama then, instead of a century later. Under these circumstances the legal enactments which disarmed, arrested, imprisoned, or banished those who proclaimed their disaffection to the

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\* Eight ships lying in the Thames, and bound to New England, were stopped by a royal order, May 1, 1637, which Neale says were "filled with Puritan families, among whom (if we may believe Dr. George Bates and Mr. Dugdale, two famous royalists) were Oliver Cromwell, John Hampden, and Arthur Hesselrigge, who, seeing no end of the oppressions of their native country, determined to spend the remainder of their days in America." Chalmers, in his *Political Annals*, adds three more names, scarcely less renowned, — Sir Matthew Boynton, Sir William Constable, and John Pym. Had these been suffered to depart, the king and his archbishop might have saved their heads. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." It is a singular instance of, — the fickleness of fortune, shall we call it? or of retributive justice? — that in less than five years from the date of Laud's proposal "to send a bishop over to them [in New England] for their better government, with forces to compel, if he were not otherwise able to persuade, obedience" (see Heylyn, p. 369), it was moved in the house of commons to send Laud himself there, as an exile, to endure their scorn, in lieu of hanging him! — *Hanb. II.* p. 541.

constituted authorities, were the dictates of necessity, and no more deserve the name of religious persecution, than similar inflictions on the so called tories of 1776. In both cases the great law of self-preservation was simply obeyed.

There is one more feature of that age to be noticed as an eminently characteristic one. It is that which was developed in the founding of Harvard College. At first thought it seems strange that such an institution should have sprung into being amid the tumultuous scenes of a war with the Pequots, an expected war of a still more formidable character with Archbishop Laud, and an actual controversy among themselves on a theological question, whose then uncertain issue excited more painful apprehensions in leading minds, than both the others together. And yet when we consider the object for which the college was founded, we can readily see how the impelling motives for such an undertaking must have been strengthened and quickened by the perils that pressed upon them on so many sides. All the records, testimonies, and traditions that have come to us, confirm the fact that Harvard College was originally the embodiment of a strictly religious idea. From the foundation to the top stone, it was regarded as the grand bulwark of truth and righteousness, which they were erecting, — that form of truth, that type of righteousness of which the single word, Puritanism, was a full and exact definition. In "New England's First-Fruits," published about the year 1642, where the motives, means, and ends of the founders are laid bare (Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. I. 224), we are told that such a thing had been "longed for and looked after," ever since the settlement commenced, but without any practical issue, till "it pleased God to stir up the heart of one, Mr. John Harvard (a godly gentleman and lover of learning), to give the one half of his estate (it being in all about £1,700) towards the erecting of a college, and all his library. After him, another gave £300; others after them cast in more; and the public hand of the State added the rest." On the 17th of November, 1637, the

general court fixed the location at Cambridge, — influenced therein, as Cotton Mather supposes, chiefly by the stand which the pastor of that church, Rev. Thomas Shepard, had taken against Antinomian errors, and “because of his enlightening and powerful ministry.” Having made it one of the rules of college, that “every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well that the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning,” Harvard University could not have had a more favorable location.

If this view of the origin and early surroundings of the institution shows us the faith of its founders, and the religious type of their times, a glance at the prescribed course of studies will illustrate their literary tastes and attainments. To gain admission into the Freshmen class the applicant was expected to show his ability to “read any classical author into English, and readily make and speak true Latin, and write it in verse as well as in prose.” (Math. Mag. Vol. II. 9.) It is easy to imagine the consternation that would come over the countenance of many an aspiring tyro in our times, to be met at the threshold of college life with such a requisition. And after matriculation, it would not be surprising if some of our nineteenth century boys — not the dullest ones either — should find it difficult to “read a chapter out of Hebrew into Greek from the Old Testament in the morning, and out of English into Greek from the New Testament in the evening,” as the undergraduates at Harvard were accustomed to do at college prayers. These exercises, however, came in by the by, in addition to a prescribed course of severe mental training, which required twelve hours of hard study, — that much of time being then reckoned a student’s day.\*

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\* In “New England’s First-Fruits,” referred to above, are printed the “Rules and Precepts that are observed in the College,” of which the following are the first four, namely :



"1. When any scholar is able to understand Tully, or such like classical Latin author extempore, and make and speak true Latin in verse and prose, *suo ut aiunt Marte*, and decline perfectly the paradigms of nouns and verbs in the Greek tongue, let him then, and not before then, be capable of admission into the college.

"2. Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life (John 17:3); and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all such knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of him. (Prov. 2:3.)

"3. Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day, that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein, both in theoretical observations of the language and logic, and in practical and spiritual truths, as his tutor shall require, according to his ability; seeing the entrance of the word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple. (Ps. 119:130.)

"4. That they, eschewing all profanation of God's name, attributes, word, ordinances, and times of worship, do study with good conscience carefully to retain God and the love of his truth in their minds, else let them know, that (notwithstanding their learning) God may give them up to strong delusions, and in the end to a reprobate mind. (2 Thes. 2:11, 12; Rom. 1:28.)"

The remaining "Rules and Precepts," four in number, enjoin diligence in study, avoidance of bad company, punctual attendance on college exercises, and prescribe penalties for disobedience. Following this is the four years' course of study, and a brief account of the first commencement;—all which is a sufficient warrant, no doubt, to the "friends in London who desire to be satisfied on these points," that the infant college will prove a perennial fountain of sound learning and sound orthodoxy.

## CHAPTER III.

1640-1650.

Fifteen churches added. — Lay ordination discontinued. — New England habits become settled. — Character of the ministry. — Catechizing the children. — Salaries of ministers, how raised. — Cambridge Platform constructed. — Presbyterian tendencies derived from the Westminster Assembly. — Fundamental principle of Congregationalism asserted.

BETWEEN the years 1640 and 1650, notwithstanding the ebb-tide of immigration occasioned by the rising fortunes of Puritanism in the father-land, fifteen new churches were added to the twenty-seven already gathered within the bounds of this State. They arose in the following order, and on this wise.

When Governor Mayhew removed from Watertown to Martha's Vineyard in 1641, he found the remnants of a few families, supposed to have landed at Pease's point from an English vessel bound to Virginia (2 M. H. Coll. Vol. III. 81), who, with others of his own company, were soon after embodied in a church at Edgartown, and the governor's only son, Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr., became their pastor.

The church in Woburn was gathered August 14, 1642, and Rev. Thomas Carter, from Watertown, was ordained on the 22d of the following November. Captain Edward Johnson, one of the fathers of the church and town, in his "Wonder Working Providence" (chap. xxii.), has given us a circumstantial account of the proceedings in this case, which, as it illustrates the ecclesiastical usages of the times, deserves a passing notice here. Messengers from all the surrounding churches, and one of the magistrates, with a large congregation of others from far and near, "assembled together in the morning about eight o'clock. After the

Rev. Mr. Symmes (pastor at Charlestown, from which the new church colonized) had continued in preaching and prayer about the space of four or five hours, the persons that were to join in covenant, openly before the congregation stood forth and confessed what the Lord had done for their poor souls, by the work of his Spirit in the preaching of his word and providences one by one," — the ministers and messengers questioning them on any doubtful point to their full satisfaction, and then "holding out the right hand of fellowship in the name of the churches to which they belonged." The ordination service, which took place some three months later, "in presence of the like assembly," was conducted thus. After the pastor elect "had exercised in preaching and prayer the greater part of the day, two persons in the name of the church laid their hands upon his head, and said, We ordain thee, Thomas Carter, to be pastor unto this church of Christ. Then one of the elders, being desired of the church, continued in prayer," which, in this instance, seems to have comprehended the charge and right hand of fellowship also. As this is one of the boldest cases of lay-ordination that our history affords, so it proved to be a culminating point from which the usage, not in theory, but in practice, gradually subsided till lay ordinations went entirely out of use. Referring to this Woburn ordination, Hubbard says (chap. xlviii.): "There was some little difference about the manner of it; for in regard they had no other officer in their church besides, nor any of their members that thought themselves fit to solemnize such an ordinance, they were advised by some to desire the elders of other churches to perform it, by imposing hands on the said Mr. Carter; but others, supposing it might be an occasion of introducing the dependency of churches, and so of a presbytery, were not so free to admit thereof, and therefore it was performed by one of their own members, though not so well to the satisfaction of some of the magistrates and ministers then present; and since that time it hath been more frequent in such cases to desire the elders of neighboring churches, by

virtue of communion of churches, to ordain such as are by the churches and people to be their officers, where there are no elders before."

In the same year, 1642, Rev. Richard Blinman and several Welsh families, who had recently located at Marshfield, removed to Gloucester, and uniting with a small colony of fishermen already on the ground, were formed into a church under his pastoral care.

A schism that occurred in the Scituate church on account of the settlement of Rev. Charles Chauncy, whose views of baptism and the Lord's Supper were unacceptable to a large minority, resulted in the organization of the South Scituate church in 1642, though their first pastor, Rev. William Witherell, was not ordained till September 2, 1645.

In 1644, Hull became a town, with "twenty houses and a minister," — a more flourishing state than Hull has been in for the last hundred years. Mr. Savage supposes that the church was gathered in July of the same year, and that Rev. Marmaduke Mathews was the minister.

The church in Wenham, an offshoot from the Salem church, was constituted on the 8th of October, 1644, with Rev. John Fiske for their pastor. An attempted organization the year before was relinquished, by advice of ministers and magistrates, on the ground that there had not been a sufficiently thorough preparation.

During the same year, 1644, Rev. Samuel Newman\* removed from Weymouth with about thirty families of his former charge, and commenced a settlement, and gathered a church in Seekonk — a tract then in dispute between the several colonies on which it bordered.

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\* Baylies, in his Historical Memoir of Plymouth Colony, referring to the early literature and literary men of New England, says of Mr. Newman, "He was a man of great learning and an indefatigable student. His great work, the Concordance of the Bible (the basis of the celebrated Cambridge Concordance, printed in England), was completed at Rehoboth — now Seekonk — and so intent was this learned and pious man upon this work, that, being destitute of other lights, he wrote in the evenings by the light of pine knots."

In October, 1645, two churches were gathered, the one at Haverhill, the other at Andover (North Parish), Rev. John Ward being ordained over the former, and Rev. John Woodbridge over the latter. A previous attempt at organization had failed, as "most of those who were to join together in church fellowship at that time refused to make the confession of their faith and repentance," on the ground that they had already done it in other churches. "Whereupon, the messengers of the churches not being satisfied, the assembly broke up before they had accomplished what they intended." (Hubbard, 416.) On further reflection they changed their views, and conformed to the prevailing custom.

On the 5th of November, 1645, the Reading church (now South Reading, but then Lynn Village) was organized, and Rev. Henry Greene ordained as their first pastor.

The same year, 1645, should probably be assigned to the churches in Topsfield and Manchester as the date of their embodiment, though the stated ministry commenced in both these places several years previous. The former was a colony from Ipswich, and had Rev. William Knight for their minister. The latter sprang from the Salem church, and sustained a kind of branch connection with it till the settlement of Rev. Amos Cheever in 1716.

The church in Eastham colonized from the Plymouth church in 1646, having among them "divers of the considerablest of the church and town," with Rev. John Mayo for their first minister. No pastor was settled till the ordination of Rev. Samuel Treat, in 1672.

The nearest conjecture that can be made as to the date of the Malden church is based on the vague but characteristic statement, found in Johnson's "Wonder Working Providence," that Rev. Marmaduke Mathews was settled there "about 1650," and that the church was gathered "some distance of time before." Pity that this worthy chronicler had not spent a moiety of the time in fixing important dates which he threw away in making bad verses.

The Second church in Boston, long known as the

"Old North," where the Mathers ministered, was gathered on the 5th of June, 1650, — driven to this measure by mere want of room in Mr. Cotton's meeting-house. The sermon on that occasion was preached by the youthful Samuel Mather, a recent graduate of Harvard College, who declined a pressing call to settle with them. Rev. John Mayo, of Eastham, was their first pastor, though not ordained till several years later.

We have now reached a point where it is especially fitting that we should pause, and try to form a correct estimate of the men and things that mark this period in our ecclesiastical history. The course of events, hitherto so variable, was fast becoming fixed. New paths were getting trodden out, in which subsequent generations have ever since walked with increasing satisfaction. The diversified aspect which this church-planting process has presented thus far, henceforth assumes a marked sameness. The differing usages in these distinct and independent churches had been gradually assimilating, when the adoption of the Cambridge Platform, in 1648, completed the fraternization and family likeness.

All the essential features of New England Congregationalism, and the religious characteristics of her Congregational churches, especially in Massachusetts, received a permanent shape during that period, which, in every subsequent age, has been looked back upon as the primitive pattern, when conscious degeneracy has waked up a wish to reform. Let us glance at a few of the more prominent objects that present themselves to our view from this stand-point.

In the first place, there appears to have been a winnowing out of the depraved and discordant elements of society, which a spirit of wild adventure had brought into these communities with the earliest settlers. This may be owing, in part, to the roughness of a wilderness life, and in part to the strictness of Puritan principles. Industry and frugality were the conditions on which alone a comfortable existence could be insured in New England at that time. Those who would not conform

to this condition could not long remain. And even were it not so, the quantity and pungency of preaching and prophesying rendered any one of these first settled towns a most uncomfortable place of residence for loose livers or mere worldlings; while at the same time, the magistrate, acting upon the clear conviction that he was "the minister of God for the punishment of evil-doers," felt no scruple in shutting up, or sending off, such desperate characters as were deemed unsafe to be harbored in the community.\* At any rate, to whatever cause we ascribe it, the moral and religious tone of New England was never so high, before or since, as at this period. Thomas Lechford, an Episcopal lawyer, who was hastening back to England about the year 1642, in disgust at the extreme Puritanism of every thing in Massachusetts, nevertheless drops this compliment in his "Plain Dealing" (3 Mass. Hist. Coll. 386). "Profane swearing, drunkenness, and beggars, are but rare in the compass of this patent, through the circumspection of the magistrates, and the providence of God hitherto." A more friendly but less competent witness (Johnson, 2 id. VII. 40), speaking of the religious habits of the people at this time, says, "It is as unnatural for a right New England man to live without an able ministry, as for a smith to work his iron without a fire."

As to the ministry itself, it was preëminently worthy the esteem of such men. The fifty-five pastors and teachers that were supported by these forty-two churches, were all men of unquestioned piety and evangelical

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\* Among the "remarkable passages of Divine Providence," which the writers of "New England's First-Fruits" think should engage them "still to wait upon his goodness for the future," they name this: "In giving of us such magistrates as are all of them godly men and members of our churches, who countenance those that be good and punish evil-doers, [so] that a vile person does not lift up his head; nor need a godly man hang it down; [so] that (to God's praise be it spoken) one may live there from year to year, and not see a drunkard, hear an oath, or meet a beggar." — Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. I. p. 248.

doctrine, — many of them profound, original thinkers and world-known authors. On looking over the catalogue of bound volumes and pamphlets and public documents which they prepared and put forth, — chiefly through the London press, — we instinctively ask how they ever found time for the performance of their ministerial functions; but on looking at the prodigious amount of preaching and catechizing and pastoral labor which they performed, we wonder how and when they found leisure to do any thing else. Yet, in addition to both these burdens, the civil government was, to a great extent, on their shoulders. For the first ten years, no important act was passed by the general court of Massachusetts, which was not first suggested in a sermon, or submitted to the inspection of the elders before its passage; while, in 1641, the "Body of Liberties," drawn up at the request of the legislature, by John Cotton and Nathaniel Ward (chiefly by the latter), was adopted as the code of the Commonwealth, and transcripts ordered to be made for each town.\*

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\* Dr. Turnbull, in his History of Connecticut (Vol. I. p. 28), gives the following sufficient reasons for the deference paid to the clergy, and their influence in civil as well as religious affairs, during these early days: "The governors, magistrates, and leading men were their spiritual children, and esteemed and venerated them as their fathers in Christ. As they had loved and followed them into the wilderness, they zealously supported their influence. The clergy had the highest veneration for them, and spared no pains to maintain their authority and government. Thus they grew in each other's esteem and brotherly affection, and mutually supported and increased each other's influence and usefulness. Many of the clergy who first came into the country had good estates, and assisted their poor brethren and parishioners, in their straits, in making new settlements. The people were then far more dependent on their ministers than they have been since. The proportion of learned men was much less then than at the present time. The clergy possessed a very great proportion of the literature of the colony. They were the principal instructors of the young gentlemen, who were liberally educated before they commenced members of college, and they assisted them in their studies afterwards. They instructed and furnished others for public usefulness, who had not a public education. They had given a striking evidence of their integrity and self-denial, in emigrating



It would be interesting to lift a loop here and there along the fringes of that misty cloud which shuts from our view the more private and parochial intercourse of such a ministry with such a people, as it was developed in their daily walks. But our means of doing so are small, and are ever growing less, as the tooth of time consumes one relic after another that might serve to inform us on these points. Yet we are not left entirely without data on which to ground a conjecture. From historical hints and reminiscences, and especially from the recorded penalties inflicted now and then on a graceless wight,—for such were among the Puritans, though not of them,—who scandalized an “elder,” it would seem that the faithful pastor moved among his flock like Samuel of old among the tribes of Israel, inspiring reverence and love, or exciting fear, according to the character or standing of those with whom he had converse. His almost universal habit of catechizing the young on Saturday afternoons, or at other stated seasons, was admirably adapted to pave his way to that supremacy which he generally attained in the hearts of his people, if he tarried long in a place. His salary, though not large, was probably as near the measure of his wants as it has ever been since. The whole subject of ministerial support was managed with great simplicity. The deacons were expected to gather up the free gifts of the people, and hand them over to the minister, if the stated contributions on the Sabbath were insufficient. These contributions, which came along weekly in some churches, and monthly in others, must have been models in their kind. Lechford thus describes the custom in the Boston church about the year 1640. After the regular Sabbath worship in the afternoon is over,

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into this rough and distant country, for the sake of religion, and were faithful and abundant in their labors. Besides, the people who came into the country with them had a high relish for the word and ordinances. They were exiles and fellow-sufferers in a strange land. All these circumstances combined to give them an uncommon influence over their hearers of all ranks and characters.”

and the assembly are about to disperse, "one of the deacons, saying, 'Brethren of the congregation, as God has prospered you, so freely offer,' the magistrates and chief gentlemen first, and then the elders, and all the congregation of men, and most of them that were not of the church, all single persons, widows, and women, in absence of their husbands, come up one after another one way, and bring their offerings to the deacon at his seat, and put it into a box of wood for the purpose, if it be money or papers; if it be any other chattel, they set it down before the deacons, and so pass another way to their seats again. I have seen a fair gilt cup, with a cover, offered there by one, which is still used at the communion." (Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. III. 77, 78.) This primitive method of providing for the support of the ministry, and other religious purposes, by a voluntary contribution, was inculcated by the ministers themselves. Winthrop records in his Journal, May 2, 1639, that Mr. Cotton, preaching from 2 Kings 8:8, "Take a present in thine hand, and go meet the man of God," etc., "taught, that when magistrates are forced to provide for the maintenance of ministers, then the churches are in a declining condition," and "that the ministers' maintenance should be by voluntary contribution, not by lands or revenues or tithes; for these have always been accompanied with pride, contention, and sloth." (Vol. I. 355.)

Such were the ministers who had the founding and training of these first churches in Massachusetts, and under whose guidance they had now taken their places, side by side, on one common platform of ecclesiastical principles, as a fraternity of *Congregational* churches.

A brief notice of the circumstances in which this important event was consummated seems due in this place. In Mather's *Magnalia* (B. V. 2 pt. § 1) the process is given thus: "The churches of New England, enjoying so much rest and growth as they had now seen for some sevens of years, it was upon many accounts necessary for them to make such a declaration of the church order, wherein the good hand of God had moulded

them, as might convey and secure the like order unto the following generations. Next unto the Bible, which was the professed, perpetual, and only directory of these churches, they had no platform of church government more exact than their famous John Cotton's well-known book of 'The Keyes.'

This language is intelligible, and the idea beautiful. A company of conscientious Christians, — fleeing from an oppressive hierarchy because it hinders the development of pure Christianity, making the wilderness their home, because it affords them "freedom to worship God," selecting their own religious teachers by popular vote, and these teachers taking the Bible as their "professed, perpetual, and only directory" in the administration of their affairs, — such a company commence their career in this secluded spot, free from all other restraint than that which Christ, their acknowledged sovereign, imposes. In these untrammelled circumstances, each body of believers assumes its own independent form; — a form which, owing to a similarity of sentiment and condition, will be very likely to have a sameness in its essential features, with considerable variety in its minor details. At length they come together, not to enact a code of ecclesiastical laws, not even to construct an original system of church polity; but simply to compare notes and usages, and commit to writing that system which had already sprung up into use among them, and thus make "a declaration of the church order wherein the good hand of God had moulded them." The declaration thus made was the Cambridge Platform, which has ever since been regarded as the ground-plan of New England Congregationalism.

And when it is considered that this system of ecclesiastical polity was not concocted by any one man, nor body of men, but is simply a transcript of the usages which sprang up spontaneously among an intelligent, devout, and conscientious fraternity of churches, who had as yet no denominational preferences to consult, who went to the Scriptures for all their rules, even in the minutest affairs of life, it will be seen in what sense

it claims to be divinely authorized, and on what grounds it rests that claim. Coming up in this way, it gives incomparably better evidence of coming from God than if it had been devised and decreed by the wisest council of bishops that ever sat in Christendom.

The first public movement toward this event was as early as 1646; and the first measure attempted was a bill presented to the general court for calling a synod to consider the matter. This gave occasion for an unexpected development of the true Congregational spirit. The magistrates were willing enough to pass the bill, but many of the deputies demurred,—questioning the power of the general court to *require* the churches to send their messengers to such a convention. The order was modified into a simple motion to the churches, and thus passed, not without a jealous concern in the hearts of some, however, lest the liberty and proper independence of the churches should in some way be damaged. It was late in the autumn before all the preliminary steps could be taken; and after a short session of only fourteen days, the synod adjourned till the 8th of June, 1647. This proved to be a season of alarming sickness, which occasioned another adjournment till 1648. Meanwhile Rev. Messrs. Mather of Dorchester, Cotton of Boston, and Partridge of Duxbury, were appointed, “each of them to draw up a scriptural ‘model of church government,’ unto the end that out of these there might be one educed which the synod might, after the most filing thoughts upon it, send abroad.” The result was the Cambridge Platform, as we now have it. The modifications subsequently made will be considered in their proper place.\*

It may be remarked here, however, as an historical fact explanatory of some passages in this venerable doc-

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\* The synod of 1680, which adopted and sent forth a Confession of Faith, unanimously reaffirmed their approval of this platform, “for the substance of it.” In Mather’s *Magn. II. B. V.*, the reader will find what particular points were in question, or deemed unessential.

ument which seem not quite in harmony with others, that there was an extraordinary outside pressure upon our New England divines, from the Presbyterian members of the Westminster Assembly in England, just at the time they were engaged in this work. As early as 1643 Winthrop describes "an assembly at Cambridge of all the elders in the country," of which Cotton and Hooker were moderators; and Hutchinson informs us that it grew out of a movement "to set up Presbyterian government under the authority of the Assembly at Westminster." (Hutch. in Felt, Vol. I. 490.) Rev. Thomas Parker of Newbury, and one or two others, had early shown a proclivity in that direction, which the undenominational spirit of our fathers had indulged without let or hinderance; but coming up now in the form of an open attempt to shift the foundations of their polity, the elders took the matter into grave consideration, and "concluded against some parts of the Presbyterian way, and the Newbury ministers took time to consider the arguments."\* (Winthrop, Vol. II. 165.) Letters were sent over from England, and privately circulated; pamphlets were published, speeches made, and entreaties uttered. The wonder is, that in adjusting the platform to the times then passing, the framers had not got into it more discrepancies than they have. But so explicitly have they defined the matter, form, and power of a Congregational church, and guarded its independence against internal misrule and external control, that, whatever we may find there in seeming disagreement

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\* Mr. Parker, in a letter dated Dec. 17, 1643, addressed to "a member of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster," uses the following language: "I assure you we have a great need of help in the way of discipline, and we hope that we shall receive much light from you. My cousin Noyse and myself have seen such confusion of necessity depending on the government which hath been practised by us here, that we have been forced much to search into it." Then follows his version of the proceedings in "the convent or meeting at Cambridge," not materially differing from that of Winthrop.—*Hanb. Hist. Mem. Vol. II. p. 295.*

with these fundamental principles must be interpreted consistently with them, — as was long ago intimated by Pres. Stiles in his election sermon, and by John Wise in his “Churches’ Quarrel Espoused.”

Before the synod of 1648 adjourned, they passed a vote accepting “with much gladness of heart and thankfulness to God” the Westminster Assembly’s Confession of Faith; so that, at the expiration of the first thirty years from the landing of our fathers on Plymouth Rock, the forty-two churches which they had planted in Massachusetts were all *Orthodox*, according to the strictest and most approved standard.

## CHAPTER IV.

1650-1660.

Only four churches added during this decade. — Indian missions, an early endeavor. — The Mayhews on Martha's Vineyard, and Eliot on the main. — Their great success. — Society for propagating the Gospel formed in England to aid the work. — Home Missions. — Quaker troubles. — Ministerial support by law. — Brief biographic notices of the chief Fathers.

FOR reasons already intimated, there was a turn in the tide of immigration to these shores while the Long Parliament and Oliver Cromwell was in power; so that only four additional churches were gathered in Massachusetts between the years 1650 and 1660. These sprang up in the following order.

The church in Medfield was constituted with eight members from the Dedham church, in 1651, and Rev. John Wilson, Jr., eldest son of the renowned Boston minister of that name, was ordained over it the same day.

In 1655, the church which had been gathered in Wrentham eleven years before, removed, with their pastor, Rev. John Fiske, to Chelmsford, and thus became the founders and first church of that town.

The church in Beverly was separated from the Salem church, March 23, 1657, having sustained a branch relation to that prolific vine since 1650.

About the year 1659, the Hadley church originated in a dispute on the terms of communion which arose in Connecticut, and, spreading into Massachusetts, found an issue, but not an end, in the Half-Way Covenant, so called, which, a few years later, got the sanction of a synod. As that important subject will come under re-

view in another chapter, it is needful only to say here, that the question about baptizing the children of non-communicants was started first at Hartford. On the side against the proposed innovation, Rev. John Russell of Wethersfield took strong ground; and, in carrying out his views, was complained of to the magistrates for irregularity in excommunicating a member of his church. This was followed by a reprimand, which was warmly resented by a large portion of his church, who were in sympathy with him. In this state of things, an ecclesiastical council met to reconcile the differences, but without success. Mr. Russell, with many of his flock and some from Hartford, soon after removed to Hadley, under the appellation of "schismatics." As those who tarried behind were recognized by the proper authorities as the original church, the others took their date from the time of secession, though there is no date of their reorganization.

The church in Lancaster was gathered in September, 1660, and Rev. Joseph Rowlandson, of Indian memory, was probably ordained the same day, though his ministry in that place can be traced back to 1654.\*

In addition to these four Congregational churches, which sprang into life during this period, there were two others of the same faith and order, composed exclusively of converted Indians—the first-fruits of the Gospel among the heathen tribes of this continent. And here opens upon us at once a marked feature of the age, which challenges our notice. The missionary spirit of our Puritan fathers has never been duly appreciated. From the representations sometimes made, one would think that about the only thing they ever had to do with the Indians was to kill them off, and

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\* Lancaster was incorporated in 1653, fourteen years previous to any other town in the country. It was during Philip's war, February 10, 1675, that 1,500 Indians "invested the town in five distinct bodies and places." Mr. Rowlandson was then at Boston soliciting soldiers to protect the town. His wife and three children were carried into captivity.



root them out; and that in doing this abominable work they acted under a conviction that they were commissioned from the Lord, as the children of Israel were to drive out the Canaanites. But what are the facts? The Leyden Pilgrims, before emigrating to Plymouth, recorded among the reasons for their perilous adventure: "Fifthly and lastly, and which was not the least, a great hope and inward zeal they had of laying some good foundation, or at least, to make some way thereunto for the propagating and advancement of the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world, yea, although they should be but as stepping-stones unto others for the performance of so great a work." (Mort. N. Eng. Mem. 1855, p. 12.) The charter granted to the Massachusetts Bay Company recognizes "the gospelizing the natives," as the "principal end of this plantation," and "the adventurers' free profession." This profession was even engraved on the company's seal, in the figure of an Indian with the words, *Come over and help us*, proceeding out of his mouth. If in the first years of their wilderness life they did but little in accordance with these high purposes, we can easily account for it without supposing their original views to have changed. Their own hard struggle for existence, under the pressure which came upon them from all sides, including hostile conspiracies formed against them by those very Indians whom they were hoping to evangelize, would have entirely balked the benevolent aims of ordinary men. Nevertheless, individual ministers and laymen were all the while scattering seeds of Christian truth on heathen soil, and legislative enactments were getting passed, which really, though indirectly, prepared that soil for future harvests.

Coeval with his settlement on Martha's Vineyard, in 1641, Rev. Thomas Mayhew, Jr. commenced that series of missionary labors among the Indians there, for which the Mayhew name, through successive generations, became so renowned. Simultaneously with this movement on the Vineyard, Mr. Richard Bourne,

a prominent member of the Sandwich church, entered upon the same work at Marshpee, on Cape Cod; and his example was soon after followed by Captain Thomas Tupper, another layman of the same church, — both of whom, in due time, were regularly set apart to the missionary service, which they had first taken up of their own accord. But the most distinguished of all this pioneer band of preachers to the heathen was Rev. John Eliot, of Roxbury.\* At what time he began to

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\* It is a marked peculiarity in the history of these Indian missions, that the *missionaries*, whether clerical or lay, were self-appointed, and, to a great extent, self-supported — discharging all the ordinary functions of their respective callings in life like other men, while yet performing a prodigious amount of labor for the Indians. A gentleman, born at Southampton, in England, and bred a merchant, is found among the early settlers at Watertown, Massachusetts, pursuing a prosperous business, till some reverse in his mercantile affairs reduces him to the necessity of selling his property, "to clear himself from debts and engagements." Compelled to begin the world anew at the age of forty-three, he removes with his family to an unsettled island, overrun with savages, at the head of a small colony, under a patent that nominates him their governor. Here, with all his public and private cares, he finds leisure to look after the welfare of his Indian neighbors; and when his only son, their spiritual teacher, is suddenly removed by death, he rushes in to take his place — actually learning their language at the age of threescore years, that he may preach to them in it, which he does, with unabated zeal, till death discharges him at the age of ninety-three. Such was Governor Mayhew.

Mr. Richard Bourne and Captain Thomas Tupper were gentlemen immigrants, among the first purchasers and settlers of Sandwich, in 1637. Possessed of wealth, energy, and influence, they are no sooner located than they begin their labors for the civilization and salvation of the natives — the one purchasing a tract of land for their exclusive benefit, and the other building them a house of worship at his own cost; both, by degrees, turning preachers, — the former at Marshpee in Barnstable, to a "congregation of four or five hundred," the latter at Monimet, in the west part of Sandwich, to "three hundred and forty," — till called away by death in a good old age, they leave their missionary work to be carried forward by their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.

John Eliot was sole pastor of the Roxbury church (Mr. Weld, his former associate, having returned to England) when, at the age of forty-two, he entered upon his missionary labors at the two stations

study their language and modes of thought, with reference to his own personal labors among them, is not known. But the 28th of October, 1646, was the day, and a large Indian wigwam on Nonantum hill was the place, where he preached his first sermon in their tongue. The very next week, at the request of Eliot, an order was passed in the general court, authorizing a committee, of which he was a member, "to purchase such parcels of lands, which they shall conceive meet, for the encouragement of the Indians to live in an orderly way amongst us." (Mass. Col. Rec. Vol. II. 166.) The result was the repurchase of several adjacent estates, which the Indians had sold to white settlers (including a large part of Nonantum hill), and a gratuitous grant of it for their "encouragement." The subsequent exchange of Nonantum for Natick, and the grant of other reservations in various places, for a similar end; the labors of Eliot and his coadjutors, far and near, to Christianize the aborigines of this state and the neighboring islands; together with their surprising success, cannot be detailed in this brief sketch. The two Indian churches, to which allusion has been made, were embodied with much solemnity, after long probation, the first in 1659, on Martha's Vineyard; the second

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of Nonantum hill in Newton and Neponset river in Dorchester, where he preached weekly in the Indian tongue, released only from his stated Wednesday lecture at home, which Cotton, in his reply to Baylie, tells us (p. 77) "the ministers of neighbor churches take off by turns."

Messrs. Leveridge and Cotton of Sandwich, Treat of Eastham, and several of the Mayhews on Martha's Vineyard, were fulfilling all the duties of settled pastors over their own churches while laboring like apostles among the surrounding nations. In a letter of Mr. Treat to Increase Mather (Mag. B. VI. § 3) we learn that in 1693, he had within the limits of his ample parish—the whole of Old Eastham—five hundred Indians, to whom he preached in four different places, addressing one of the congregations each week in rotation; and that he had four native assistants, who repaired to his house once a week, "to be further instructed (*pro modulo meo*) in the concernments proper for their service;" thus preaching *by proxy* where he could not in person.

in 1660, at Natick.\* Beside these regularly constituted churches, there were also, at the close of the period now under review, some fifteen or twenty congregations of "Praying Indians," — as all the native population were then called, who renounced heathenism, and attended Christian worship, — from which other churches were subsequently gathered; as will be noticed hereafter.

From these few facts it is certain that Governor Hutchinson writes without his usual candor, or else is singularly careless, when he speaks of our fathers as waiting "six and twenty years," before looking after the spiritual welfare of the Indians; and thinks "the long neglect of any attempts this way cannot be excused." (Hutch. Hist. Vol. I. 150.) In place of this censure, he might have said more truthfully, that these were the first attempts ever made in Protestant Christendom to evangelize the heathen. It was these missions, thus started, and crowned with such success, that called into being the oldest missionary board in Great Britain — the "Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians in North America." Eliot's account of the early converts, which was published in London, under the title of "The Day-breaking, if not the Sun-rising, of the Gospel, with the Indians of New England," together with the personal influence of Governor Winslow, who was there at the time on public business,

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\* The intelligent perception which these native converts acquired of religious truth under such training is well illustrated in "a short but true story," which Gookin relates, "of certain Quakers, who, landing upon Martha's Vineyard, went to some of the Indian wigwams; and discoursing with the Indians that understood English, persuaded and urged the Indians to hearken to them; and told the Indians that they had a light within them, that was sufficient to guide them to happiness," etc. "The Indians heard all this discourse patiently; and then one of the principal of them gravely answered the Quakers after this manner: 'You tell us of a light within us, that will guide us to salvation; but our experience tells us that we are darkness and corruption and all manner of evil within our hearts. We cannot receive your counsel contrary to our experience. Therefore we pray you trouble us no further with your new doctrines.'" — Hist. Coll. of the Ind. Ch. IX. § 2.

awakened so much interest, that unsolicited donations were put into his hands in aid of the object. In these favoring circumstances, he had the wisdom to suggest a thought which, on the 27th of July, 1649, was shaped into an act of parliament, incorporating sixteen "persons of known piety and integrity," of whom Mr. Winslow was one, to "receive and improve the free contributions which might be made for the furthering of so good a work." It was also "enacted, that a general collection be made for the purposes aforesaid, through all England and Wales; and that the ministers read this act, and exhort the people to a cheerful contribution."

It was under the patronage of this venerable Society, whose charter was renewed when Charles II. came to the throne, in 1660, that Eliot's Indian Bible, and many other books for the use of Indian missions, were published, and missionary laborers sustained. The commissioners of the United Colonies, so long as that confederacy lasted, were employed as its disbursing agents and correspondents. When that arrangement came to an end, in 1686, "commissioners were specially appointed by the corporation, consisting of the principal gentlemen of the civil order, and of the clergy in New England," with power to fill their own vacancies. "Perhaps no fund of this nature has ever been more faithfully applied for the purposes for which it was raised." (Hutch. Vol. I. 155.)

Chronologically connected with these incipient efforts to evangelize the heathen, there was also a beautiful development of what, in our day, would be called "Home Missions," in the ready response given to an appeal, which came, as Winthrop words it (Jour. Vol. II. 77), "from many well-disposed people of the upper new farms of Virginia to the elders here, bewailing their sad condition for want of the means of salvation, and earnestly entreating a supply of faithful ministers, whom, upon experience of their gifts and godliness, they might call to office." The letter was read in Boston on "lecture day." All the neighboring ministers,

with more or less of their people, and the magistrates, were called together for prayer and fasting and consultation on so grave a subject. The result was, that Rev. Messrs. Knowles of Watertown, Thompson of Braintree, and James of New Haven (formerly of Charlestown), were "spared," as their churches had duplicate ministers, and were sent forth to the service, just as our western missionaries now go into Kansas or California; except that, instead of a commission from the American Home Missionary Society, it was ordered in general court, "that the governor should commend them to the governor and council of Virginia; which was done accordingly."

This occurred in 1642, and it raised high hopes of witnessing "the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in those parts;" which was their avowed and only motive for the undertaking. "But it fared with them," says Hubbard, who gives a much fuller account of this affair than Winthrop (pp. 410-12, 522-4), "as it had done before with the apostles, that the people magnified them, though the civil rulers of the country did not allow of their public preaching, because they did not conform to the orders of the Church of England; however, the people resorted to them in private houses as much as before." At length an order was passed, "that all such as would not conform to the discipline of the English church, should depart the country by such a day;" and these ministers came back in 1644, followed by a portion of their flocks, among whom was Daniel Gookin, who subsequently performed such important services for Massachusetts, in the capacity of a magistrate, major-general, and agent for Indian affairs.

This quiet, unresisting compliance with the mandates of constitutional authority was in perfect consistency with the principles of the Puritans. They could not surrender their religion, at the dictation even of law; but when forbidden to hold it forth in one place, they could "flee to another." \* Had their constitutional

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\* This scriptural maxim, which had become a *principle* with every New England Puritan, may be offered as a plea in mitigation of

authority been respected in like manner, the historian would not have to record some events pertaining to this period, which will ever awaken the reader's sorrow; namely, the conflicts which our fathers had with the Quakers and Baptists. As the controversy with these last named did not come to an open issue till a later period, their case will be considered in another paper.

The Quakers made their first appearance on these shores in the persons of Mary Fisher and Ann Austin, during the month of July, 1656, only four years after the sect arose in England; and in a few weeks they were followed by nine others. Anticipating their advent, the general court had passed an order two years before, imposing a fine of ten pounds on any person having in his possession the books of "John Reeves and Lodowick Muggleton, who pretend themselves to be the two last witnesses and prophets of Jesus Christ,"—which books are declared in the order to be "full of blasphemies." (Mass. Col. Rec. Vol. IV. 199.) The arrival of eleven Quakers, and any quantity of books and street preaching, and fierce denunciations of ministers and magistrates, law and Gospel, soon made business enough for the courts. On the 8th of September, they and their books were brought to trial. The Quakers were imprisoned for their insolent behavior, which they still kept up through the grated windows of their cell whenever they could set eyes on the governor, or any of the magistrates and ministers as they passed in the streets. Their books were reserved for the flames. After many fruitless efforts to bring them to a more sober state of mind and manners, which only developed more bitterness and blasphemy, they were sentenced to banishment, and the master of the ship who brought them was put under bonds of five hundred pounds "to carry them all away."

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sentence against their severe treatment of intruders. As they themselves would have regarded it no better than suicide, to expose their lives, even for their religion, when *both* could be preserved by simply following the Saviour's direction, it was charitable in them to suppose that others would act upon the same principle, if pressed to *the point*.

Thus far in this unpleasant business, no candid person, possessed of the real facts, will be disposed to censure the civil authorities, unless they are to be censured for not giving up all rule, and abandoning the entire object for which they had been most arduously and successfully toiling for thirty years. But when, under new provocations, severer laws were enacted, reaching the point, at length, in 1658, of affixing the death penalty for returning after banishment, no one, at the present day, can sanction the procedure; though the offences for which some of them were banished have ever been treated as capital. Four persons, namely, William Robinson, Marmaduke Stephenson, Mary Dyer, and William Leddra, suffered death; not, however, for their *religious opinions* (as some will have it), but "for their rebellion, sedition, and presumptuous obtruding themselves after banishment upon pain of death." Great opposition was made to the passage of this law in the general court, especially by the deputies; and it was finally carried by a majority of only one vote. Great odium has been heaped upon its framers and executors. But there were extenuating circumstances. Hutchinson observes, in palliation of these proceedings, "the most that can be said for our ancestors is, that they tried gentler means at first, which they found utterly ineffectual, and that they then followed the example of the authorities in most other states, and in most ages of the world." (Vol. I. 182.) In their own vindication, published at the time (see Hub. 573), they say, "our own just and necessary defence calling upon us (other means failing), to offer the point of the sword which these persons have violently and wilfully rushed upon, and thereby become *felones de se*, which, O that it might have been prevented, and the sovereign law, *salus populi*, been preserved!" Like insects in the evening, rushing into a lighted candle to their own certain destruction, in spite of all resistance, these infatuated beings were so bent on martyrdom, that they could not be restrained while a gallows was standing. It was an intensely trying time with our fathers, and



nobody can impugn their motives. These violent proceedings on both sides began to assume a milder type immediately after these appalling executions. The prisons were at length cleared of Quakers, who, after these first ebullitions of fanaticism were over, settled down by degrees into a more quiet state, organizing themselves into societies or "meetings" for religious purposes. They have long since taken rank among our most inoffensive and respectable citizens. If the penalties of that day would not be inflicted on similar outrages *now*, neither would the Quakers of our day have incurred such penalties *then*.

Closely connected with these Quaker disturbances, and growing out of them in part, came in the custom of raising ministers' salaries by taxation. The whole business of providing ministerial support, as we have had occasion to notice in another place, was left with the deacon, who generally found no difficulty in obtaining from door to door through the parish, such supplies as were wanted beyond the regular Sabbath collection. But these vehement and continual tirades against a learned and money-seeking ministry (which were getting vent among Antinomians and Anabaptists before the Quakers came) at length began to operate on many otherwise well-disposed persons, who could see no objection to the idea of having the glorious Gospel made more "free;" while some would even be content with what was a little less glorious and learned, so the cost be proportionably less. Contributions, therefore, were falling off, and the deacons' labor in making up the deficiency was increasing, as these views spread through the community. Ministers were beginning to leave their flocks for lack of support, when, in 1654, the general court of Massachusetts investigated the matter, and "ordered that the county court in every shire shall, upon information given them of any defect of any congregation or township within the shire, order and appoint what maintenance shall be allowed to the ministers of that place, and shall issue out warrants to the select men to assess, and the constable of the

said town to collect the same, and to distraine the said assessment upon such as shall refuse to pay." (Mass. Col. Rec. Vol. IV. 199.) The first law bearing on ministerial support in the Plymouth colony was passed the same year; and the reason for it was the same, namely, "railing and ranting" against the ministry. But the law proceeded no further than to authorize magistrates to "use all gentle means to upbraid" the delinquents "to do their duty therein," with discretionary power to use other means, in a small way, with such as "resist through plain obstinacy against an ordinance of God." As this law could not stop "railing and ranting," so neither did it cure the mischief which railers and ranters had already inflicted on the community by their ceaseless appeals to ignorance, envy, and avarice, stimulated and intensified as these appeals were by spiritual pride. Accordingly, in 1657, the general court undertook to enforce the support of ministers by the assessment of a tax, levied in "a just and equal proportion upon the inhabitants" of each town, who "refuse to clear their part with the rest of the church or town, in the due maintenance and support of the ministry, — this law to be in force only to them, but not unto others that do their duty."

Whatever may be said about the expediency of resorting to legal coercion in supporting public worship now, this law embodies in its preamble one reason for it which must have had great weight then, namely, "Inasmuch as the several townships were granted by the government in consideration that such a company might be received as should maintain the public worship and service of God there." (Plym. Col. Rec. 101-2.) It was merely requiring the inhabitants of a town to comply with the terms on which their land was given them, and their municipal rights secured. And here leaks out a secret, which hitherto seems to have eluded the historian's search, namely, the origin of towns, as that term is understood among us — these "little republics" which cover the entire face of New England, and are not found to any considerable extent,

out of it. They originated in the piety and church polity of our fathers, those punctilious men, who revolted at the idea of setting up a new plantation on a grant of land too small to contain settlers enough to support public worship, or too large for them all to meet conveniently in one place. The town corporation is the offspring of Puritan Congregationalism. The old custom of granting a "precinct" — a territorial section of a town whose population were deemed sufficient for the establishment of a second church, and the maintenance of another minister — accords with the view here given.

In approaching the end of this period, we take leave of the first generation of New England's worthies, or rather, in turning round to bid them adieu, we discover that most of them have already taken leave of us. That bright constellation of learned ministers and pious magistrates which appeared in this western hemisphere in the early part of the seventeenth century, presiding over the beginnings of Massachusetts, and shaping its destiny, had nearly set before the year 1660 went out; and their places in the firmament were occupied by stars of a somewhat different, if not of a diminished, lustre. The period embracing these first forty years began even then to be looked back upon for models and precedents, as it has been ever since. It was indeed a distinguished age. The leading actors in it were distinguished men — men of original ideas, of independent resources, who determined the type of New England character, and to whose teachings the world will ever refer for the principles, and what may be called the patology, of New England Congregationalism. A glance at some of their names and obituary dates, such as one catches in passing through an old grave-yard, and rubbing the moss from here and there a weather-beaten stone, seems a fitting close of this chapter.

John Robinson, who, though not permitted to come here in person, yet took a leading part in laying the foundation of the civil and religious institutions of Massachusetts, and of all New England, died at Ley-

den, March 1, 1625. Robert Cushman, the official agent and wise counsellor of the Plymouth Pilgrims, the preacher, too, of the first New England sermon ever printed, expired the next year. John Carver, their first governor, and the author, undoubtedly, of that celebrated compact which they subscribed in the cabin of the Mayflower, — the germ from which our great Republic has grown, — had departed still earlier in April, 1621. Doctor Samuel Fuller, whose medical and ecclesiastical prescriptions were alike sought for, and equally availing, died at Plymouth in 1633. Elder Brewster, the oldest of the Mayflower company, who took joyfully the spoiling of his goods in fostering the church before its exile from England, and for twenty-three years was its teacher and exemplar in their wilderness home, entered into rest on the 16th of April, 1643. Rev. John Lothrop, who was followed by his devoted flock from the Clink prison in London to “the wilderness of Scituate,” and thence, after a temporary sojourn, to the equally wild woods of Barnstable, ended his toilsome pilgrimage, Nov. 8, 1653, leaving behind him a reputation for “great learning,” and (still better) for being “of a humble heart and broken spirit, lively in dispensing the word of God, studious of peace, furnished with godly contentment, willing to spend and to be spent for the cause of the church of Christ.” Governor Edward Winslow, the Christian gentleman and discreet agent by whose influence “the attempts of many adversaries to overthrow the whole settlement of New England, were themselves wholly overthrown,” departed May 8th, 1655. Governor William Bradford followed him after two years, May 9, 1659, distinguished alike for his learning and modesty, his piety and patriotism. Both these Plymouth governors have done the world inestimable service as authors. Were it not for their journals, the most important chapter in our history could never be written. The heroic Captain Miles Standish, who “fell asleep in the Lord, and was honorably buried at Duxbury” in 1656, and his still more heroic pastor, Rev. Ralph Par-

tridge, who rested from his labors in 1658, are all the names that can be added to this list from the Plymouth colonists, without transcending the limits of a brief sketch.

In the Massachusetts colony, Rev. Francis Higginson, the founder and first teacher of the Salem church, distinguished for his strong mental powers and faithful preaching, died August 6, 1630. The devoted wife of Mr. Isaac Johnson, known as "the lady Arbella," departed the same month, who was followed a month later by her bereaved husband, "a holy man and wise." Rev. Samuel Skelton, the fellow-laborer of Higginson at Salem, as he had also been his "companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," was called away August 2, 1634. Rev. John Harvard, the honored founder of our venerable university, died on the 14th of September, 1638. Rev. Jonathan Burr, the "heavenly-minded" pastor of Dorchester, was taken August 9, 1641. Rev. George Phillips of Watertown, "better acquainted with the true church-discipline than most of the ministers that came with him into the country," departed July 1, 1644. Rev. Thomas Hooker, "the light of the western churches," located first at Cambridge, and then at Hartford, in the Connecticut colony, died July 7, 1647. Rev. Henry Greene of Reading finished his labors October 11, 1648. On the 26th of March, 1649, Gov. John Winthrop, the "American Nehemiah;" and on the 25th of August the same year, Rev. Thomas Shepard, "the model pastor and servant preacher," were removed by death. Rev. John Cotton,

"His very name a title-page; and next,  
His life a commentary on the text,"

died on the 23d of December, 1652, more lamented, probably, than any other of the fathers of New England, as his influence had doubtless contributed more than that of any other to settle the details of New England institutions. Governor Thomas Dudley of

Roxbury, and Rev. Nathaniel Ward of Ipswich, both departed the next year, 1653 — each distinguished alike for his profound knowledge of civil government, and Christian theology. The names of Rev. Messrs. Maverick of Dorchester, James of Charlestown and New Haven, Noyes of Newbury, Rogers of Ipswich, Bulkley of Concord, Hooke of Taunton, Norris and Peters of Salem, and Mayhew of Martha's Vineyard, together with many others which these will suggest, belong to the same cloud of witnesses, of whom we may say as the apostle does (Heb. 11 : 13) when grouping the Old Testament worthies, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

## CHAPTER V.

1660-1670.

Gathering of twelve churches.—Rise of the Baptists.—Apology for their intolerant treatment.—Synod of 1662.—Half-way covenant, its introduction, and mischievous effects.—The Regicides, and the protection they received from Davenport and Russell.—Colonel Goffe's journal and correspondence.

THE restoration of the English monarchy in 1660, and with it the prelacy, — now eager to make reprisals for the damage it had suffered from the temporary triumph of Puritanism — soon turned the stream of emigration back to New England, which, during the Protectorate, had flowed the other way; and church extension received a new impulse. In Massachusetts twelve Congregational churches were added, during the next ten years, to the forty-six already planted.

The first of these were gathered at Northampton, on the 18th of June, 1661, composed chiefly of colonists from Springfield; and Rev. Eleazar Mather was ordained the week following. He had been preaching there for the space of three years, preparatory to this step.

On the 11th of November, 1663, a church was organized in Billerica, and Rev. Samuel Whiting, Jr., son of the Lynn minister of that name, was ordained the same day. A meeting-house had been built, and the ministry sustained several years earlier, the church-members still retaining their relation to Cambridge, from which the town of Billerica was set off in 1655.

The present church of Wenham was constituted, and Rev. Antipas Newman ordained over it, December 10th of the same year (1663.) This was eight years after

the first organized church in that town had removed with their pastor to Chelmsford, as has been already noticed.

The original church in Bridgewater (now West Bridgewater) was gathered from the Duxbury church, February 18, 1664, and Rev. James Keith, "a young student" from Aberdeen, in Scotland, was settled at the same time. His parish then covered all the territory now embraced within the four Bridgewaters.

The church in Groton was formed July 13, 1664, and Rev. Samuel Willard, the first pastor, was ordained the same day. Some of the first settlers emigrated from Roxbury, among whom was Rev. John Miller, who is supposed to have supplied them with preaching for several years prior to the organization of the church.

The next week, July 20, 1664, a church was gathered at "Cambridge Village"—now Newton—and Rev. John Eliot, Jr., of Roxbury, was ordained over it at the same time. His father, eight years before, preached his first sermon to the Indians on Nonantum Hill, within the limits of this new parish, where the son, having acquired their language, had often assisted him in holding forth the word of life.

The organization of the First church in Marlboro' took place some time in 1666—probably October 3, when Rev. William Brimsmead, their first pastor, was ordained, who had labored there five or six years before a church was gathered.

The town of Mendon was incorporated in 1667, and a church was probably formed not far from that time. Rev. Joseph Emerson, the first pastor, was ordained December 1, 1669. The original settlers went from Braintree, Weymouth, and Roxbury.

It is supposed that the First church in Amesbury was gathered in 1668, the year in which the town was incorporated; but no ecclesiastical record is found prior to the settlement of Rev. Thomas Wells, in 1672.

The third church in Boston—the Old South—succeeded from the first May 12, 1669, on account of the call and settlement of Rev. John Davenport; and on the 16th



of February, 1670, Rev. Thomas Thatcher, formerly of Weymouth, was inducted into the pastoral office. A majority of the First church had taken ground against the action of the synod of 1662 in regard to the half-way covenant, which Dr. Davenport also strenuously opposed; hence the separation, which, in its sequel, formed an important chapter in that bitter controversy which agitated all the churches in New England for many years.\*

The church in Hatfield colonized from the Hadley church about the year 1670, but no surviving record tells the exact date.

The present Congregational church in Marshpee, originally composed of "praying Indians," was gathered August 17th, 1670, through the missionary labors of Mr. Richard Bourne, who was ordained over it by Eliot and others at the time of its formation.

It was during this period that the first Baptist church got established in Massachusetts; and as the rise of this sect had an influential bearing on the subsequent ecclesiastical proceedings of our fathers, some notice is due to the circumstances attending their advent and organization. For the space of forty-three years from the landing at Plymouth, the Congregationalists occupied the ground alone in respect to church organisms, unless we except the Newbury church, which for a while assumed the Presbyterian form, so far as any single church can. At length in 1663, a number of seceders from Rev. Mr. Newman's congregation in Seekonk were constituted a Baptist church by mutual covenant, and met for separate worship at the house of one of their number.

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\* "The dispute between the two churches ran 'so high, that there was imprisoning of parties and great disturbances.' 'Two parties were produced, not in the other churches only, but in the state also.' But the new church, and its friends through the colony, achieved a public and final triumph; a triumph to be regretted, as involving the consummation of a wide and pernicious departure from the primitive gospel discipline of the New England churches; to be rejoiced in, as confirming the rights of freemen to many who had been unjustly deprived of them." — Wisner's Hist. O. S. Ch. pp. 8, 10.

All this was "a breach of order," according to laws then in force, and the court of assistants "fined each of them five pounds," at the same time ordering them "to desist from the said meeting in that place or township within this month. Yet, in case they shall remove their meeting unto some other place, where they may not prejudice any other church, and shall give us any reasonable satisfaction respecting their principles, we know not but they may be permitted by this government so to do." (Plymouth Records.) In accordance with this last suggestion, at the next session of the general court, a large tract, called Wannamoiset, embracing the present town of Swanzey, where the church is now located, was granted them; and to that place they peaceably withdrew.

Some two years later, namely, on the 28th of May, 1665, several seceders from the Charlestown church, and four or five others, who had sustained a Baptist connection in England, entered into covenant, and became the First Baptist church in Boston. This, too, being "in defiance of a standing law," the actors were fined; and some of them refusing to pay were imprisoned. With many irritating annoyances they kept up their meetings, sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, but usually on "Noddle's Island," till, in 1680, they found themselves in quiet possession of a meeting-house of their own, near the spot where they ever after met for worship, till the erection of their present new and elegant house on Somerset street. While these things were going on, or a little earlier, three Baptists from Rhode Island, came to Lynn, where they were arrested, taken to Boston, and tried on the charge of "disturbing the peace of the congregation, and professing against the institution of the church, as not being according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ." They were fined various sums, and one of them, Obadiah Holmes, was whipped. In explanation of this last-named act, it ought to be stated, that the sentence of the court was "thirty pounds, to be paid, or sufficient sureties that the said sum shall be paid, by the first day of the next court of assistants,

or else to be well whipt." (Court Record in Backus' Hist. Vol. I. 231.) A contemporary minister of Boston, apologizing to Sir Richard Saltonstall, then in England, about this unpleasant affair, says: "As for his whipping, it was more voluntarily chosen by him than inflicted on him. His fine was offered to be paid by his friends for him freely, but he chose rather to be whipped; in which case, if his suffering of stripes was any worship of God at all, surely it could be accounted no better than will worship."

This is an epitome of the whole story about the persecutions which the Baptists suffered from "the standing order" in Massachusetts, during those early times; for the banishment of Roger Williams had nothing to do with baptism, pro or con. He was not a Baptist, and had no thought of becoming one, till after this event. The opposite of this has been often asserted, but never proved. It has been said that he would have been dipped sooner "could he have found an agreeable administrator." (Backus' Hist. Vol. I. 105.) But the only authority produced is a hearsay report, that when he removed from Plymouth to Salem, in 1634, Elder Brewster expressed to somebody the fear "that he would run the same course of rigid separation and Anabaptistry, which Mr. John Smyth of Amsterdam had run"—a suspicion which Williams at that time would have repelled as a slander. Indeed, it is not easy to see why Mr. Williams' name has come down to us as a Baptist in any sense of the word; for, renouncing his first baptism when he received the second, he shortly after renounced that second and went through life unsettled in his views, and professing to be a "seeker" after the right way. In all the troubles that befell him in Massachusetts he suffered as a Congregational minister of a Congregational church; or, in the literal words of his sentence, "one of the elders of the church in Salem," who had "broached and divulged diverse new and dangerous opinions, against the authority of the magistrates, as also writ letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and churches here, and that before any conviction, and

yet maintaineth the same without any retraction." He was not the only Congregational minister called to account, and compelled to retract, in those punctilious times. Marmaduke Matthews and John Eliot were both censured by the same court that were dealing with Roger Williams, and that too for opinions, either preached or printed; and both retracted. Even John Cotton barely escaped being brought to trial during the Antinomian controversy (Hutch. Vol. I. 74); while Endicott, the first governor of Massachusetts Bay, for cutting the cross out of the colors at Salem, as a "relique of antichrist," was arraigned, admonished, and disqualified for holding public office one year. Had he been as insolent and refractory under the treatment as Williams was, who instigated to the act, he would probably have been banished with him; and had he then turned Baptist, or Quaker, or Seeker, there would have been just as much reason for raising the cry of "religious persecution," as in the case of Roger Williams, and Samuel Gorton, and several others, who acquired a martyr fame simply by suffering as "evil-doers."

These remarks are made merely out of respect for historical verity, and can be accepted without excusing in the least degree the intolerance which our Congregational fathers really showed toward other religious sects. That intolerance, when we look at it from our stand-point, has an exceedingly rough and repulsive aspect; but as seen from theirs, it assumes quite another form, and admits of palliation. Transporting ourselves back to Plymouth rock in 1620, or to Salem in 1628, or to Charlestown in 1630, as we see companies of religious men and Christian ministers, with wives and children, and the scanty remains of their little earthly all, setting foot on the bleak shores of an unbroken wilderness, for no other purpose than to enjoy their own forms of religious worship, and to plant churches after a particular model (deemed by them the primitive), we cannot wonder that they should greatly desire to be left at liberty now to develop their religious ideas undisturbed, or even should speak out the earnest wish that their

fellow-sufferers of different ideas, coming into the same wilderness for a similar purpose, would be pleased to pass a little to the right, or a little to the left, along such a roomy coast, if they desire the same liberty. So far as the spirit of exclusiveness, or antagonism to other denominations, can be truthfully charged upon our Congregational fathers of that day, it has this extent — no more ; a fault, by the way, not yet entirely cured in any of the sects, nor deemed peculiarly heinous while confined to the simple expression of a *wish* to be thus let alone. But they proceeded further. Having the constitutional power to carry out their wish in such a case (as we have not), rather than fail of accomplishing the great object for which they had suffered so much, they resorted to legislative enactments.\* These enactments, so far as they bore heavily on other denominations, were merely self-protective, and were called forth by actual or threatened encroachments upon their own established order. Here we have the full extent of their religious intolerance both in spirit and practice. That oft-repeated couplet, on which every note in the gamut of denunciation has been sounded, —

“Let men of God in courts and churches watch  
O'er such as do a toleration hatch,”

(found in the pocket of Gov. Dudley after his death, and which unquestionably expresses the ruling sentiment of the age) means just this, and nothing more. Having a chartered right to make such “orders and laws within themselves” as they deemed their own welfare to re-

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\* Cotton Mather, alluding to the Quaker troubles, remarks, — and the remark will apply to the Baptists as well, — “It was also thought that the very Quakers themselves would say, that if they had got into a corner of the world, and with an immense toil and charge made a wilderness habitable, on purpose there to be undisturbed in the exercise of their worship, they would never bear to have the New Englanders come among them, and interrupt their public worship, and endeavor to seduce their children from it, yea, and repeat such endeavors, after mild entreaties first, and then just banishments, to oblige their departure.” — Magn. B. VIII. p. 24.

quire, restricted only by the clause "not repugnant to the laws of England," where toleration was a thing not known, they did as here said; and if we measure our censure by the real magnitude of their offence, we can easily pardon their wrong doings in this matter.\* Or, if they are to be condemned for intolerance toward the Baptists, let the sentence embrace all similar acts perpetrated against their own denomination also, in requiring them to ask leave of magistrates when organizing churches, and forbidding them to settle ministers who were offensive to the general court.

It is much to be regretted, though not to be wondered at, that our fathers ever fell into this way of subjecting religious and ecclesiastical matters to state control. It has been a fruitful source of mischief in many ways. It came about, however, not by any efforts to unite church and state, but by neglecting suitable and seasonable efforts to prevent it. We have already seen how the state of Massachusetts was born of the church, and grew up under its tutelage, — exercising its juvenile functions, as in duty bound, chiefly for the benefit and behoof of the church according to the original end and aim of its organic being. Its freemen at first were all members of the church. Its governors and magistrates were taken from among the pillars of the church; and their constant advisers were the ministers, who at that time were in fact *the rulers*, both in church and state. Mr. Hubbard says (Hist. N. Eng. 182), "Such was the authority they, especially Mr. Cotton, had in the hearts of the people, that what-

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\* As early as 1718, Cotton Mather, writing to Lord Barrington, says: "No church on earth, at this day, so notably makes the terms of communion run parallel with the terms of salvation, as they are made among this people. The only declared basis of union among them is that solid, vital, substantial piety, wherein all good men of different forms are united. And Calvinists with Lutherans, Presbyterians with Episcopalians, Pede-baptists with Anabaptists, beholding one another to fear God and work righteousness, do with delight sit down together at the same table of the Lord; nor do they hurt one another in the holy mountain." — M. H. Col. Vol. I. 105.

ever he delivered in the pulpit was soon put into an order of court, if of a civil, and set up as a practice in the church, if of an ecclesiastical, concernment." Viewed from whatever point of observation, the civil power during those early years was only a convenient, or perhaps we should call it a necessary, arrangement whereby a company of intelligent and pious people, grouped into a number of affiliated churches, were working out a great religious problem. They so understood it.\* And we are bound to interpret their acts in accordance with this view. Thus interpreted, the ecclesiastical character of their legislation was not unnatural nor inconsistent. Nor do their legislative acts strike us as very singular, considered as proceeding from a church in the orderly management of its own affairs, and designed chiefly to regulate the conduct of its own members. But this relation of the state to the church was still kept up long after the circumstances from which it originated had passed away, or were materially changed. And here was the great error. The infant state, all the while approaching the condition and capabilities of manhood, should have been permitted to enter on an independent manhood, invested with civil functions alone; while those which were purely religious and ecclesiastical should have remained with the church, in whose hands alone they belonged. It was the fault of the church that it was not so; and

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\* "Instead of blaming our fathers for establishing such a connection as they did between church and state, we have cause to wonder that they established so much of a distinction. *No instance of a nation without an established religion — of a complete separation between church and state — had ever yet existed.* Our fathers, moreover, as a body, came to this wilderness solely to obtain the unmolested enjoyment and exercise of what they considered Christian privileges and duties. With this object in view they had purchased the country, and procured a charter, and made so many sacrifices. In the mother country all their sufferings had proceeded from the tyrannizing of the civil power over the church. How natural for them to resolve when they came here, to keep the civil power subordinate to the churches, an instrument of promoting their prosperity." — Wisner's History of the Old South Church in Boston, p. 71.

dearly has it since been atoned for. But the character of the civil magistracy with which New England was then blessed rendered it desirable, and seemingly safe, to let the relation continue, and to allow the civil power authority in matters pertaining to the "first table," as well as the "second," in the familiar phraseology of that day. Thus by degrees, a union of church and state was at length consummated, which, though essentially unlike that from which our fathers fled in England, and embodying principles which would inevitably lead to a clear separation at length, nevertheless worked out many evils before that point was reached; evils, too, of worse portent to the Congregational churches than any which we have yet seen inflicted on the Quakers or Baptists, as will be developed in the progress of this sketch.

The period now under review is memorable for a warm and wide spread controversy on the relations and responsibilities of baptized children, which resulted in the calling of a synod, and the inauguration of a new style of church-membership, grounded on what has been significantly termed the "Half-way Covenant." This innovation, so far at least as respects the Massachusetts churches, came in through a pious desire to promote the spiritual welfare of their children. But its disastrous results, sweeping through successive generations like a constitutional malady in the human system, admonish us that innovations in religious things should have some better basis than pious intentions.

It has been already remarked, in describing the origin of the Hadley church in 1659, that the controversy began in Connecticut. From Trumbull's History (Vol. I. 297-99) it would seem that civil and political considerations entered somewhat largely into the merits of the question there; and that, through a desire to obtain "the honors and privileges of church-members," a considerable "party were for admitting all persons of a regular life to a full communion in the churches, upon their making a profession of the Christian religion, without any inquiry with respect to a change of heart."



This, however, was by no means the state of feeling in Massachusetts at the outset; nor did it predominate in Connecticut. The prevailing idea in both colonies was such as a Puritan grandfather might be supposed to have, whose children, baptized in infancy, had become parents themselves, and, remaining in an unconverted state, could not bring forward *their* children for baptism. To such a Puritan, such children were little better off than respectable pagans, — “being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise.” Still, the bulk of that third generation were outwardly correct, and serious-minded; though they could give no such account of their regeneration as would embolden them to come to the Lord’s table, or entitle them to do so if they would. “Wherefore,” says Cotton Mather, in summing up the reasonings of that day (Mag. B. V. part 3, § 1), “for our churches now to make no ecclesiastical difference between these hopeful candidates for those our further mysteries, and pagans who might happen to hear the word of God in our assemblies, was judged a most unwarrantable strictness, which would quickly abandon the biggest part of our country unto heathenism. And on the other side, it was feared, that if all such as had not yet exposed themselves by censurable scandals found upon them, should be admitted unto all the privileges in our churches, a worldly part of mankind might, before we are aware, carry all things into such a course of proceedings as would be very disagreeable unto the kingdom of heaven.” This appears to be a comprehensive and truthful view of the real dilemma into which they had come, and which they, strangely enough, thought they should exactly meet by instituting a sort of half membership, for the benefit of these half Christians.

The steps through which they reached this conclusion were taken on this wise. The Connecticut ministers who favored the measure, perceiving that “many of their people were very scrupulous about any innovation,” looked to the magistrates; who, after correspond-

ence with their brother magistrates in Massachusetts, prepared twenty-one questions on the subject, and then "mutually called together sundry of the ablest ministers of each colony," to consider them. They met at Boston in June, 1657. The result of their discussions did not get before the public in a printed form till 1659. It then came forth under the title of "A Disputation Concerning Church-Members and their Children," in which this ground was taken: "It is the duty of infants who confederate in their parents, when grown up unto years of discretion, though not yet fit for the Lord's supper, to own the covenant they made with their parents, by entering therein in their own persons; and it is the duty of the church to call upon them for the performance thereof; and if, being called upon, they shall refuse the performance of this great duty, or otherwise do continue scandalous, they are liable to be censured for the same by the church. And in case they understand the grounds of religion, and are not scandalous, and solemnly own the covenant in their own persons, wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire baptism for them, we see not sufficient cause to deny baptism unto their children." (Hubbard, 566.)

Other points were made, but this was the great one involved in the controversy. Those who had favored it in theory began now to put it in practice. But many of the churches, and some of the more influential ministers, resisted strongly; "yea," says Cotton Mather (who was a zealous apologist for the measure), "it met such opposition as could not be encountered with any thing less than a synod of elders and messengers from all the churches in the Massachusetts colony." (Mag. II. B. V. Part 3, § 4.) Accordingly the celebrated synod of 1662 was convened, in which the conclusion of the previous assembly, with slight modifications, making it more binding, was adopted "by a majority of more than seven to one." But this did not end the controversy; it rather opened it afresh. President Chancey of Harvard College came out against the inno-

vation in a book, entitled "Anti-Synodalia Americana," and Rev. John Allin of Dedham on the other side, entered the lists in its defence. "Another Essay for Investigation of the Truth," the most able of all the anti-synodalian pamphlets, from the pen of Rev. John Davenport, then of New Haven, with a preface from Rev. Increase Mather, was promptly responded to by Messrs. Richard Mather of Dorchester and Jonathan Mitchel of Cambridge. Nor was it merely a war of words. Actual secessions took place in the churches of which we have already noticed two,—the Hadley church, which seceded in opposition to the new doctrine, and the Old South church, Boston, in defence of it. The synodists at length carried the day, and the half-way covenant came into general practice in the Congregational churches throughout New England.

In reviewing the process through which this disastrous measure was introduced, one is surprised at the utter powerlessness of what seems to us the invincible arguments brought against it, and the easy conviction which seemingly trivial and irrelevant considerations produced in its favor. In the preface to Mr. Davenport's pamphlet, the writer says: "The synod did acknowledge that there ought to be true saving faith in the parent, or else the child ought not to be baptized. We entreated and urged, again and again, that this, which they themselves acknowledged was a principle of truth, might be set down for a conclusion, and then we should all agree. But those reverend persons would not consent to this." And in the disputations of the previous assembly of 1657, it seems to us very much like reasoning in a circle, or rather in an ellipse, to maintain that the "children of confederate parents are members of the church with them,—else no child could be baptized;" and then, in the next breath, to claim the rank of church-membership for these children's children, on the ground that their unconverted parents had been baptized!\* The subject of infant baptism must have

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\* The views of Davenport on this point were, that "the children of church-members, when they come to age, for not taking hold of

had some latent practical bearings in that age which it did not have in the age preceding, and which it does not have in ours. What were they? As these were more fully developed during the next period, some remarks upon them will be offered in another chapter.

Before taking leave of this synod, it should be remarked that there were two questions brought before it, namely, 1. "Who are the subjects of baptism?" (which received answer as above shown), and 2. "Whether, according to the word of God, there ought to be a consociation of churches, and what should be the manner of it?" The answer to this last question was in favor of forming a consociation, and a plan was drawn up. (See *Magnalia*, Vol. II. B. V. Part 3; Hubbard, 589-90.) But it never was carried out. The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Cambridge Platform make provisions which appear to have been very generally deemed sufficient for all practical purposes; and the churches, not without reason, had fears that their proper independence would be abridged by such an organization. In Connecticut the consociation scheme received more favor, and was ultimately brought into practice, as we now see it.

This chapter shall close with the mention of one more incident, which, though it has the aspect of romance rather than real history, nevertheless illustrates the spirit of the age, and especially of the ministry. The same ship that, on the 27th of July, 1660, brought to Boston the news that Charles II. was proclaimed king, brought also two of the regicide judges. These

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the covenant with the church, do become non-members, and are so to be looked at by the church." "In such cases, they are not so much as implicitly members. Therefore their children are not to be baptized." "If infants should have this right in their grandfathers, where shall we stop? Shall it be extended to a thousand generations, as some misapply that promise in Exod. 20:6? That cannot be true; for then the children of the Jews and Turks and heathen, all the world over, have a right to baptism in some of their ancestors within that time."—(Hanb. Vol. II. p. 63, from "The Power of Cong. Churches Asserted and Vindicated.")

were Edward Whalley, and William Goffe, his son-in-law, who had both served as colonels in Oliver Cromwell's army. Being men of Puritan principles, and bringing letters of recommendation from their pastors to the ministers and magistrates here, they were kindly entertained, and took lodgings in Cambridge, openly attending public worship on the Sabbath and other days. Indeed they were hoping to share in the general pardon, till in the following February a requisition for their arrest came to Governor Endicott, who, whatever his private feelings might have been, was not disposed to incur the hazard of disregarding it. Understanding how the case stood, they fled to New Haven. Here Mr. Davenport, anticipating such an event, had been preparing the minds of the people for it, by a series of discourses from the pulpit. Although nobody was named, every one understood who were meant in his fervid expositions of such texts as these: "Take counsel, execute judgment, make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert for them from the face of the spoiler" (Is. 16:3-4); and the regicides, on their arrival, were received with great cordiality. But their pursuers soon got track of them, and they were obliged to abscond, taking refuge in some hiding-place through the day, and lying concealed at the parsonage during the night. For two years they were passed round from house to house and from cave to cave, through the minister's influence, no one attempting or wishing to betray them. The regicides, at length, fearing the consequences to Mr. Davenport, who began to be suspected by the royal functionaries, proposed of their own accord to give themselves up. This they were not allowed to do. But they were never seen afterwards in New Haven. From a journal kept by Col. Goffe,\* which Hutchinson

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\* "Goffe kept a journal or diary from the day he left Westminster, May 4, until the year 1667, which, together with several other papers belonging to him, I have in my possession. Almost the whole is

had when composing his history, it appears that the minister of New Haven found means of transferring to a brother minister this perilous charge. Up the quiet valley of the Connecticut river, within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts Bay, and at the then new town of Hadley, Rev. John Russell from Weathersfield, a particular friend of Mr. Davenport, had recently settled, to whose sacred custody the regicides were committed, and within whose walls they were kept concealed fifteen or sixteen years, till the day of their death. There is reason to hope that the minister lost nothing by his boarders, as remittances are known to have been made from time to time through a trusty agent. It is supposed by Hutchinson that nobody in Hadley out of Mr. Russell's family had positive knowledge, and but very few even a remote suspicion, that such distinguished characters were living in the parsonage. True, an unknown and oddly dressed figure made his appearance among them one Sabbath when the worshipping assembly was suddenly surrounded and assaulted by a band of armed Indians, all in sight of Mr. Russell's house,—which stranger, by his commanding presence and military skill, so arranged the forces of the village, that the Indians were repulsed. But as nobody saw whence he came, nor where he went, the people generally supposed that an angel had appeared for their deliverance.\* (Hutchinson, Vol. I. 201.)

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in characters or short-hand, not very difficult to decipher. The story of these persons has never yet been published to the world. It has never been known in New England. Their papers after their death were collected, and have remained near an hundred years in a library in Boston." (Hutch. Vol. I. 197.) Nobody knows where they are now.

\* A letter from Mrs. Goffe to her exiled husband, written in 1662, may be found in the appendix of the first volume of Hutchinson, which fully warrants the learned historian's remark, that "there is too much religion in their letters for the taste of the present day" [1764]; but this cannot justify the exclusion of such documents from historic use. For what end is history written? To gratify the reader's "taste," merely, or to make us acquainted with facts? Unfold-

ing a delicate feature of Puritanism,—the very existence of which has been called in question,—nothing could have been better suited to his purpose than that correspondence, if one may form a judgment from the solitary letter here preserved. The following extracts show that connubial love among the Puritans suffered no chill from their outward austerities, though in giving it a lover's warm expression they selected passages from the Scriptures rather than from Shakespeare.

“MY DEAREST HEART:—

“I have been exceedingly refreshed with your choice and precious letter of the 29th May, 1662. Those Scriptures you mention, through mercy, with many others, are a great support and comfort to me in this day of my great affliction. Through grace I do experience the Lord's presence in supporting and providing for me and mine in this evil day. The preservation of yourself and my dear father [Col. Whally, his companion in exile], next to the light of his own countenance, is the choicest mercy that I enjoy. Ah! what am I, poor worm, that the great God of heaven and earth should continue such mercies to me and mine as I at this day enjoy. Many others have lost their dear yoke-fellows, and out of all hopes to see them in this life; but that is not my condition as yet, blessed be his holy name, for he hath made me hope in his word. Zech. 10:9, ‘And I will sow them among the people; and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children and turn again. Persecution begins to be high here; the bishops' courts are up as high as ever. But we have the promise of a faithful God to live upon, and he hath said: ‘To you it is given not only to believe but to suffer.’ He hath also promised to lay no more upon his poor people than he will give strength to bear. Oh my Heart! I do, with my whole soul, bless the Lord for his unspeakable goodness to you, in that he hath been pleased to appear so eminently for your preservation. Oh that the experience that we have daily of his goodness may make us trust him for the future! We have seen that word in the 5th of Job, in some measure made good to you. Read the 12th verse; from the 11th to the end of the chapter there is much comfort to those in our condition; as also in 91st Psalm. O my dear, let us henceforth make the Lord our refuge and our trust, and then he shall cover thee with his feathers, and be a sanctuary to thee wheresoever he shall cast thee. I mention these Scriptures because I have found comfort in them, and I hope thou wouldst do so too. Oh, my dear, let our trust be in the Lord alone. I do heartily wish myself with thee, but that I fear it may be a means to discover thee, as it was to ———, and therefore I shall forbear attempting any such thing for the present, hoping that the Lord will, in his own time, return thee to us again; for he hath the hearts of all in his hands, and can change them in a moment. I rejoice to hear that you are so willing to be at the Lord's disposal; indeed we are not our own, for we are bought with a price, with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus;

and therefore let us comfort ourselves with this. My dear, I know you are confident of my affection ; yet give me leave to tell thee thou art as dear to me as a husband can be to a wife ; and if I knew any thing that I could do to make you happy, I should do it, if the Lord would permit, though to the loss of my life. It is an unspeakable comfort to me to hear of thy welfare ; yet I earnestly beg of thee not to send too often, for fear of the worst, — for they are very vigilant here to find out persons. But this is my comfort : it is not in the power of men to act their own will. And now, my dear, with ten thousand tears, I take my leave of thee, and recommend thee to the great keeper of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps, who I hope will keep thee and my dear father with thee from all your enemies, both spiritual and temporal, and in his own time return you with safety to your family. Which is the daily prayer of thy affectionate and obedient wife, till death.”



## CHAPTER VI.

1670-1680.

Only three churches gathered. — Indian war. — Character of "King Philip." — Perils of the Colonies. — Edward Randolph. — Controversy about the subject of Baptism. — Synodists and anti-synodists. — The half-way covenant goes into practice. — Reforming synod, its happy influence. — Various customs peculiar to the age.

RESUMING the details of church extension where we dropped them in the last chapter, at the close of 1670, the next Congregational church which arose in Massachusetts was that of Tisbury, on Martha's Vineyard. Rev. John Mayhew, grandson of Gov. Mayhew, began to preach in a small settlement at the southwesterly part of that town in 1673, and the probability is that the church now there was gathered about the same time; but no surviving record tells the exact date. Mr. Mayhew preached a weekly lecture also, in rotation, to four or five different Indian assemblies, in addition to his pastoral charge.

The Milton church was organized in 1678, but no pastor was settled till the ordination of Rev. Peter Thacher, son of Rev. Thomas Thacher, of Boston, June 1, 1681. He, too, labored much for the surrounding Indians, and was able to preach fluently in their own tongue.

The church in Westfield was gathered August 27, 1679, and Rev. Edward Taylor was ordained over it the same day. Public worship had been upheld for several years previously in this most western of all the settlements; but the disturbances occasioned by Philip's war

prevented the establishment of the pastoral office at an earlier day.

To this terrible visitation — the ravages of war — must be ascribed the fact that these three were the only churches planted in Massachusetts during the ten years from 1670 to 1680. Indian churches had been gathered in various places, and “praying Indians,” that is, such as renounced Paganism, and met stately for Christian worship, had greatly increased. Just before this war broke out, there were two native churches in the Massachusetts patent, one in that of Plymouth, and three on the islands of Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, containing in the aggregate one hundred and seventy-five members. Besides these six churches there were thirty-three villages of praying Indians, with an aggregate population of between four and five thousand souls. The magistrates in both colonies had entered upon a systematic course of measures for their civilization, and the ministers were extensively engaged in labors for their conversion. Eliot’s Indian Bible, and other books, had been printed for their use; a brick building had been erected in connection with the college at Cambridge for the accommodation of Indian students, and two were already matriculated; five others were preparing for college in ministers’ families; and nearly fifty teachers and catechists, English and Indian, were employed in the religious and educational training of these children of the forest. In Gookin’s “Historical Collections,” from which the above facts are derived, the disbursements in carrying on the operation for one year are given, amounting to £728 8s. 6d., with an intimation that “there is always more occasion to disburse than there is money to be disbursed.” (Chap. XI. § 6.)

Such was the progress which these Indian missions had made, and so cheering were the prospects of still greater advance, at the opening of the war which Philip of Mount Hope waged in 1674 against all New England. It was designed to be a war of extermination, and it raged with merciless barbarity for the space of two years. In that time it had given a check to this

missionary enterprise, from which it never recovered. The effects were less disastrous in the Plymouth Colony and on the islands; but the field of Eliot's labors was nearly ruined.\* The idea of Indian treachery took such entire possession of the public mind after the sacking and burning of some fifteen or twenty towns, that the designation of "praying" Indians did not place them beyond suspicion, nor screen them from enactments designed to bear on Indians in general. The Naticks, and others in their neighborhood, though under the care of Eliot himself, were hurried down to Deer island, where they were kept through the winter of 1675-6 in a state of seclusion and suffering, which even his own entreaties could not avert. These severe self-protective measures were probably necessary, but they alienated the Indians, and disheartened their teachers.

Equally disastrous, but not so enduring, was the influence of this war on the progress of church planting among the colonists. New settlements were deserted, and several newly formed churches disbanded. The distressing scenes of savage ferocity that enter into the histories of Brookfield, South Deerfield, Hatfield, Lancaster, Concord, Mendon, and Medfield were enacted during this period. The wonder is not that church extension received a check, but that it ever recovered; not that so many towns were ruined, but that any survived. Considered as a military hero, King Philip of Mount Hope deserves an even rank with his illustrious namesake of Macedon. His diplomatic skill in bringing mutually antagonist tribes into friendly alliance; his deep subtlety in concealing his plans from those against whom they were laid; his strategy in carrying them into execution; his personal prowess, presence of mind, celerity of movement, all mark him out as a most accomplished warrior and formidable foe. And if to

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\* He tells us that in 1684 "the praying towns" were reduced from fourteen to four, and in 1698 the commissioners reported but two hundred and five Indians in all Massachusetts Proper, which before the war contained 2,100.

these natural endowments be added the intimate acquaintance he had with the manners and customs of civilized life,\* it cannot be doubted that the perils which then hung over these defenceless settlements were truly appalling. There was a '76 in that century, as in the one succeeding, whose hardships were equalled only by the heroism they inspired. It was a struggle for existence, as in the following century it was for independence.

The death of Philip by a musket ball, on the 12th of August, 1676, put an end to the war, — an event which was celebrated in all the churches with thanksgiving, — and was followed by the rebuilding of burnt villages, the regathering of disbanded churches, and the restoration of Christian ordinances, as the decimated and impoverished people were able. But scarcely had the sky been cleared of these dark clouds, before it was again overcast. The same summer that Philip fell, there came to Boston another personage hardly less hostile to the colonists, and whom they, in their sore vexation, sarcastically described as “going up and down, seeking to devour them.” (Hutch. Vol. I. 288.) This was the notorious Edward Randolph, sent as a bearer of despatches from the king of England, including copies of complaints made to his majesty from all sorts of persons who had a grudge against any New England person or proceeding, either in church or state, — which complaints this functionary was expected to inquire into and report. The relish with which he entered upon the business of his agency, and the zeal with which he pursued it, may be inferred from the fact that in the course of nine years he crossed the ocean sixteen times (Hutch.

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\* Gookin, only two years earlier, says: “There are some that have hopes of their greatest and chiefest sachem, named Philip, living at Pawkunnawkeett (Bristol). Some of his chief men, as I hear, stand well inclined to hear the gospel; and himself is a person of good understanding and knowledge in the best things. I have heard him speak very good words, arguing that his conscience is convicted; but yet though his will is bowed to embrace Jesus Christ, his sensual and carnal lusts are strong bands to hold him fast under Satan’s dominions.” — Mass. H. Soc. Coll. Vol. I. p. 200.

Vol. I. 297), and succeeded at length in creating a rupture which terminated the charter government, as we shall have occasion to notice more particularly in tracing its influence on the churches.

But neither King Philip nor King Charles could turn the minds of the people away from the all-absorbing question then in controversy respecting the subjects of baptism. The synod of 1662, as we have already noticed, had decided that persons baptized in infancy, "understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereunto, not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the covenant before the church, wherein they give themselves and their children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the government of Christ in the church, their children to be baptized." Hitherto only communicants, or such as gave credible evidence of regeneration, could offer their children for baptism; now the decision was that these baptized children themselves, when they became parents, might do the same, if their outward deportment were blameless, though confessedly unregenerate in heart. How a doctrine so out of harmony with the spirit, and so contrary to the practice, of the first fathers of New England, gained such ready currency, and that, too, in spite of arguments seemingly invincible, urged against it by such powerful reasoners as Davenport and Chauncy, deserves a moment's consideration.

From a pile of old pamphlets ("the spoils of time," which the Congregational Library Association has rescued from oblivion) now lying on the table where this sketch is written, an irresistible impression is derived that our fathers, just then, were leaning backwards toward certain old notions which their fathers had renounced; and which renunciation was a part of their Puritanism. At any rate, the language which some of them employ, as now understood, teaches the doctrine of hereditary holiness with nearly as much exactitude as another formula of theirs teaches original sin. Sentences might be picked out, which one could translate almost literally into the Latin of Augustine's "*credit in*

*allero, qui peccavit in altero* — he who sinned in or through another, believes through another. The advocates of the half-way covenant, or synodists, as they were called, say that “the children of church-members have membership by birth.” To this the anti-synodist replies, that no such “meer members” can claim right to baptism for their children, inasmuch as they are not “believing members.” But the synodist parries this stroke by interposing the “solemn covenant” which they are to “own,” and the “doctrine of faith” to which they must give their understanding “assent,” and then asks how persons “thus qualified,” can be accounted “meer members;” to which the other responds, that if they are any thing more, if they are real believers, and on that ground may claim baptism for their children, “why not also admit them to the Lord’s table?” In answer to this most rational question, nothing is found in these pamphlets which would satisfy anybody in our day. And yet the new measure gained ground continually; insomuch that Mr. Mitchel of Cambridge, writing to Increase Mather in 1667, tells him, “you stand almost alone, while you are against the baptizing of such as are described in our fifth proposition,” and adds in conclusion, “I am not without hope that we may be yet of one mind before we die,” — a hope which was soon to be realized.

This easy work of gaining converts to a new measure so radical as the half-way covenant was, awakens the suspicion that the question in controversy had some latent bearings outside of its spiritual and ecclesiastical scope. Nor is it difficult to discover what those bearings were, when it is recollected that the law of 1631, limiting the right of franchise to church-members, was in force till two years after the new measure was adopted; and even then existed in fact, though repealed in form. (Hutch. Vol. I. 31.) The number resident in the commonwealth who could neither hold office nor vote for officers was large, and growing larger. A spirit of discontent had often arisen among immigrants who were either not qualified, or were not disposed, to join

these Congregational churches; and now the native born children of such as were members, having come to manhood, in a multitude of instances were no better off, and no better suited.\*

To relieve the difficulty, three possible expedients offered themselves; first, to enlarge the civil franchise by extending the rights of citizenship beyond church-members; second, to let down the terms of communion so as to admit the unregenerate to the fellowship of saints; third, to constitute an intermediate condition, which should confer upon the occupant so much of church-membership as would bring him fairly within the state, and so little as would leave him short of full communion in the church. The first of these expedients would have disjoined the church and State as we now see them, and might have been adopted long before with unspeakable advantage to both; but this plan did not comport with the idea which our fathers then had of a Christian commonwealth. The second

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\* From the first settlement of the country, these Congregational churches were charged by outsiders with exclusiveness. In 1641, Lechford complains that "most of the persons at New England are not admitted of their church." In 1644, Rathband, in his "Brief Narration" (See Hanbury, Vol. II. p. 302), affirms that "multitudes of our English in New England, yea, the major part of them are there out of church order, and so both they and theirs live little better than heathen." In 1646, a petition was sent to the British Parliament, praying, as they say, in behalf of "thousands," that the disabilities under which they labored might be removed.—Hutch. Vol. I. 145. And here, in 1662, we have a synod assembled and devising measures to prevent the biggest part of the country from being abandoned to heathenism," by being left out of the church.—Magn. Vol. II. 238. Yet in face of all these facts, a learned judge has declared, and momentous results have been made to turn on the declaration, that, in the early history of these churches, "almost, if not quite all the adult inhabitants were church-members;" that "there was a familiar distinction between the church and the whole assembly of Christians in the town;" "little practical distinction between church and congregation;" "without doubt, the whole assembly were considered the church."—Mass. Term Reports, Vol. XVI. 498, 514. The reader is desired to bear these facts in mind when he reaches Chapter XX, where judicial decisions, based on these strange perversions of history, are recorded.

was substantially the plan adopted by the English Episcopalians and Scotch Presbyterians, — differing somewhat in the theory, but agreeing in the practice, of admitting to communion such as had been baptized in infancy, if they desired it on reaching the age of manhood, provided they were outwardly correct, and could “say the catechism.” But this would be to surrender a point which our fathers deemed of vital moment as a condition of full church-membership; namely, satisfactory evidence of regeneration. By adopting the third plan — the half-way covenant — they seem to have fully believed that they were conserving alike the purity of the church and the Christianity of the State, besides conferring privileges of a priceless value, both civil and religious, on the rising race. These several lines of argument all meeting on the one great question about the “enlargement of baptism,” perhaps we ought not to wonder that converts to the synod’s doctrine were so easily made.

One of the strong points which the anti-synodists put forth against this enlargement of baptism was its novelty; it was an innovation upon the usages of their fathers; it was in conflict with the views which they had embodied in the Cambridge Platform. And considering the reputation which those first fathers of New England had earned, and the weight of authority which was accorded then, as now, to their opinions and practices, it behooved the other side to defend this point with especial care. Accordingly, Rev. Increase Mather, after his conversion to the synod’s doctrine, undertook the task in a pamphlet entitled, “The First Principles of New England concerning the Subject of Baptism and Communion of Churches, collected partly out of the Printed Books, but chiefly out of the Original Manuscripts of the First and Chief Fathers of the New English Churches; with the judgment of Sundry Learned Divines of the Congregational Way in England Concerning the said Questions. Cambridge, 1675.”

This rare old tract, of which only two or three copies are known to exist, is valuable, not only for its patristic



lore, but as an illustration of the potency that will sometimes get into a word. The author finds in the Cambridge Platform, as also in the multitudinous writings of those who composed it, the word "membership" used to denote the relation subsisting between a church and its baptized children; and although the sentences in which he finds it do not assign one of the functions of a church-member proper to such persons, either in childhood or manhood, till after they are received by formal vote on satisfactory evidence of regeneration; although these fathers treated these baptized children in nowise different from what they would if they had called them "baptized children," or "children of the covenant," still, seizing upon the term, and using it in its etymological sense, he finds no difficulty in citing passages which contain, as he thinks, the germs of the synod's doctrine. Thus an infant member, grown to manhood, becomes an adult member, unless cut off; and an adult member, "understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing his assent thereto," must no longer be accounted a "mere member" (as the anti-synodists, out of respect for the ancient terminology, were ready to account such), but a "believing member;" and all believing members might have their children baptized;—*ergo* the doctrine of the synod was no innovation.\* Stitched on to the same pamphlet is "A Discourse concerning Baptism," of sixty-eight pages, by the same author, printed also in 1675, "wherein the present controversies, that are agitated in the new English churches, are, from Scripture and reason, modestly inquired into;" and the same magic word "membership" is employed there

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\* Even John Cotton, because he once sanctioned the baptism of a child on the faith of its grandfather who stood *in loco parentis*, is brought in to support the new doctrine. It is unpleasant to find such a revered name as that of Increase Mather associated with such special pleading in the advocacy of a favorite measure. And yet it illustrates a weakness of human nature against which the best and strongest minds have need to be warned.

also with the like effect. Indeed, one who attentively investigates the subject in dispute, with such lights as remain to us, can hardly help suspecting that this disastrous measure might have failed of being carried, if, instead of "membership," some word had been originally found which would exactly express the idea which all Pædo-Baptists really have of that interesting relation which baptized children sustain to a particular church, through the confederate membership of their parents.

By way of apology for dwelling so long on the history of this transaction, it may here be remarked, that it was the inlet of nearly all the errors in doctrine and practice that have since infested the Congregational churches of New England, as will be seen in the progress of this sketch. But to pretend, as some of our Baptist brethren do, that these errors sprang from the practice of infant baptism, and not rather from its perversion, is a fiction, which might be exactly paralleled by ascribing the errors of Campbellism to immersion. In neither case will an intelligent person of candor confound things so utterly unlike.

During the period now under review, namely, on the 10th of September, 1679, was held the "Reforming synod" — a name sufficiently expressive of its leading object. Various causes had contributed to bring on a gradual decline of religion and morals. In "Prince's Christian History" (Vol. I. 94), the process is thus traced through in a single sentence: "A little after 1660, there began to appear a decay; and this increased to 1770, when it grew very visible and threatening, and was generally complained of, and bewailed bitterly by the pious among them; and yet much more to 1680, when but few of the first generation remained." As may naturally be supposed, none laid these things more deeply to heart than the ministers; and nowhere did they give more copious vent to their bitter lamentations and faithful rebukes, than on those august occasions, when called to preach the "Election Sermon." Take the following as specimens of the style in which his

Excellency, the governor, and his associates in the government, were annually addressed, for ten or fifteen years in succession. "How is New England in danger this day to be lost, even in New England! To be buried in its own ruins! How is the good grain diminished, and the chaff increased! How is our wine mixed with water! What coolings and abatements are there to be charged upon us in the things that are good, and what have been our glory! We have abated in our esteem of ordinances, in our hungering and thirsting after the rich provisions of the house of God; in our good stomachs to all that which is set before us upon the table of the Gospel. Ah, how doth the unsoundness, the rottenness, and hypocrisy of too many amongst us make itself known, as it was with Joash after the death of Jehoiadah!" (Mr. Stoughton's Election Sermon, 1668, p. 16.) "Are we not this day making graves for all our blessings and comforts? Have we not reason to expect that ere long our mourners will go up and down, and say, How is New England fallen! The land that was a land of holiness, hath lost her holiness! that was a land of righteousness, hath lost her righteousness! that was a land of peace, hath lost her peace! that was a land of liberty, is now in sore bondage!" (Mr. Walley's Election Sermon at Plymouth, 1669, p. 11.) After propounding it as "a solemn and serious inquiry," whether his auditors "have not, in a great measure, forgot their errand into the wilderness;" and reminding them "how careful you once were, even all sorts, young and old, high and low, to take hold of religious opportunities," Rev. Samuel Danforth, in his Election Sermon, preached in 1670, thus appeals to their consciences: "Doth not a careless, remiss, flat, dry, cold, dead frame of spirit grow upon you secretly, strongly, prodigiously?" etc. (See also two sermons from Rev. W. Adams, in Dr. Burgess' Dedham pulpit.)

Contemporaneously with these signs of spiritual declension, there was experienced also a series of temporal calamities. "Consuming disasters befell the labors

of the husbandman; losses at sea were uncommonly numerous; desolating fires wasted the chief seats of trade; a dreadful pestilence raged through the colony; and in the political horizon, a cloud was gathering of most portentous aspect." (Wisner's Hist. O. S. ch. 15.) These calamities were associated, in all pious minds, with religious backsliding, and from every pulpit came the weekly summons to repentance and reformation. At length, by the entreaties of ministers, "the general court of the Massachusetts colony were prevailed withal," says Cotton Mather, "to call upon the churches, that they would send their elders and other messengers to meet in a synod, for the solemn discussion of these two questions: 'What are the provoking evils of New England?' and, 'What is to be done, that so those evils may be reformed?'" (Mag. Book V. Part 4, § 3.) The call was responded to by nearly all the churches, though not a few of them in the true spirit of Congregationalism, coupled with their vote of compliance a proviso, of like import to the one found in the records of the Old South church, Boston, that, "whatever is there determined, we look upon and judge to be no further binding to us than the light of God's word is thereby cleared to our consciences." A general fast was kept, as a suitable preparative for the meeting, and the entire business of the first day, after the choice of two moderators and a scribe, partook of the same character. "Several days" were spent "in discoursing upon the two grand questions laid before them, with utmost liberty granted unto every person to express his thoughts thereupon." A committee then drew up the result, which after being read twice, and "each paragraph distinctly weighed," was unanimously adopted.

As this "Result," taken in both its parts, is no doubt a true daguerreotype of New England character at that time, and enables us to measure its divergency from the primitive line of life, the heads of it are here inserted. The "provoking evils" brought to light are these thirteen: 1. "A great and visible decay of the power of godliness amongst many professors;" 2. Abounding pride,

as developed through a spirit of insubordination and strife; 3. Neglect of baptized persons to qualify themselves for "church communion;" 4. Profaneness, of which these two specifications are given, namely, "imprecations in ordinary discourse," and "irreverent behavior in the solemn worship of God," such as, "for men (though not necessitated thereunto by any infirmity), to sit in prayer-time, and to give way to their own sloth and sleepiness, when they should be serving God with attention and intention, under the solemn dispensation of his ordinances;" 5. Sabbath-breaking, by "unsuitable discourses," "walking abroad," and by not being sufficiently careful "so to despatch their worldly business, that they may be free and fit for the duties of the Lord's day;" 6. Remissness in parental government and family religion, "many families not praying to God constantly, morning and evening;" 7. "Inordinate passions," manifested in "sinful heats and hatreds," reproachful language, and "frequent lawsuits;" 8. Intemperance; 9. "Promise-breaking;" 10. "Inordinate affection unto the world;" 11. "Incorrigibleness under judgments;" 12. Selfishness, as distinguished from public enterprise; and 13. A persistent disregard of the Gospel summons to repentance and reformation. In answer to the second question, "What is to be done?" the synod recommend that "all who are, in place, above others, do as to themselves and families become every way exemplary;" that "the faith and order of the Gospel, according to what is in Scripture expressed in the platform of discipline," be reaffirmed by the present generation; that more care be observed in exacting "a personal and public profession of faith and repentance" from those who are admitted to the Lord's table; as also a closer watch over the deportment of communicants and their children; that "the utmost endeavors should be used in order unto a full supply of officers in the churches, according to Christ's institution;" that the ministry have a better support, and be more promptly paid; that legal measures be taken to suppress intemperance by looking sharply after "houses

of public entertainment," and that "inhabitants (that is, residents — not travellers) be prohibited drinking in such houses;" that there be a "solemn and explicit renewal of covenant" in all the churches; that in doing this, "the sins of the times should be engaged against," and reformation pledged; that "the college, and all other schools of learning in every place, be duly inspected and encouraged;" and, finally, "inasmuch as all outward means will be ineffectual, except the Lord pour down his Spirit from on high," it is earnestly recommended "to cry mightily unto God," for such an effusion of the Spirit.

In this penitential array of "provoking evils," although we discover more evidence of a tender conscience than of heinous guilt, still there is seen a marked falling off from the spirit of a former age, both in piety and morals; and in several specified particulars, the degeneracy is precisely what the anti-synodists of 1662 predicted, as the first instalment of evil consequences from the half-way covenant. Mr. Davenport, in one of his essays, had said, "your meer members will soon be a far greater number than my sheep and lambs;" and this was rapidly coming to pass, as appears from some of the remedial appliances here recommended. But the solemn and almost universal heed given to this result of the synod, "commended," as it was, "by an act of the general court, October 15, 1679, unto the serious consideration of all the churches and people in the jurisdiction," arrested these fatal consequences for a while, and wrought a happy but temporary reform in other respects. The most effective step in this attempted reformation was the renewal of covenant, in which the example of the Massachusetts churches was followed, to a considerable extent, by those also in Plymouth and Connecticut. From the accounts that have come down to us, this appears to have been done not simultaneously, or in concert; but each pastor took his own method, by a course of preliminary meetings, to bring the church into a fit state of feeling for such an occasion, after which, by their concurring vote, the time was set for

the solemn transaction. The appointed day was spent in fasting. In the forenoon the pastor preached a sermon suited to the occasion, which was immediately followed by the reading of a covenant — either the one into which the members originally entered, with such additions as the peculiarity of the case seemed to require, or another prepared expressly for the purpose — and all the church, standing up, gave their formal assent to it, and their express promise to keep it. Then came, in the afternoon, another sermon, designed to enforce the covenant obligations. Usually this latter sermon was preached by some neighboring minister; for these covenanting days, like the “four-days meetings” of later times, commonly drew together a vast concourse from neighboring towns. The measure, wherever it was taken up and pursued on this wise, was attended with the happiest results. “Many thousands of spectators will testify,” says Cotton Mather, in his Remarks on the Reforming Synod, “that they never saw the special presence of the great God our Saviour more notably discovered, than in the solemnities of these opportunities.” It may properly be regarded as the first in that series of general revivals for which the churches in this land have been so distinguished. And, judging from several of the sermons preached on those occasions, found among the collections of the Congregational Library Association, it was instrumentally brought about very much by what is now called “revival preaching.”

In taking leave of this period, we lose sight of several ecclesiastical and civil usages which obtained among the first settlers of New England.

The marriage ceremony, which, for fifty years, was invariably performed by a civil magistrate, began now to pass into the hands of the clergy; though it was still held to be a civil rite, and not a sacrament.

To avoid what seemed to them a relic of heathenism, our fathers early adopted the custom of expressing dates by the number (not the name), of the month, and day of the week. Instead of writing “May 15th, 1680,” they inserted “3. 15. 1680,” — counting the months from

March, with which the year then began. From the restoration of Charles II., this way of dating gradually gave place to that now in use. But the first day of the week was still called "Lord's day," or "Sabbath," and never Sunday.

The distinction between pastor and teacher, in the ministerial office, had nearly faded out; as had the custom, also nearly ceased, of having two ministers over the same church, except where an aged or infirm pastor required a colleague.

The office of ruling elder, too, had become obsolete — or nearly so; partly from lack of evidence that Christ had ever instituted such an office, and partly from the difficulty of finding suitable persons to fill it. Neither John Cotton, in his "Way of the Churches," nor Cotton Mather, in his "Ratio Discipline," assigns any functions to the ruling elder, which are not implied in those conferred on the pastor or deacon. To justify its continuance, our fathers had apparently sought to magnify the office by giving prominence to its disciplinary power; which only served to hasten its decline by subjecting it to odium.\* (See Wisner's Hist. O. S. Church, 79–81.)

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\* The office of ruling elder seems never to have had the unanimous sanction of the churches, though John Cotton in his "Way of the Churches," pp. 13–38, argues at great length, and with much positiveness in its defence, as "a divine institution." He gives us also to understand, *ibid.* p. 39, that he favored the office of *widow* or *deaconess* (according to 2 Tim. 5: 9, 10), "to assist in ministering to the sick poor brethren in sundry needful services, which are not so fit for men to put their hands unto; only we find it somewhat rare to find a woman of so great an age (as the apostle describeth, to wit, of four score years), and withal, to be so hearty, and healthy, and strong, as to be fit to undertake such a service."



## CHAPTER VII.

1680-1690.

Six churches gathered. — "Branch" churches, designed to meet the wants now met by domestic missions. — Political troubles. — End of the Puritan commonwealth. — Sir Edmund Andros' tyranny. — Opposition of John Wise, and the ministers generally. — The provincial government favorable to Congregationalism.

THE civil commotion into which all the colonies were thrown by the repeal of their charters during the next decade (1680-1690), continued to check, but not to stop, the progress of church extension. Six Congregational churches were gathered within the limits of this State in that time.

The church in Bradford was constituted December 27th, 1682, and Rev. Zechariah Symmes, who had already been their minister fourteen years, was ordained to the pastoral office the same day. Most of the original members came from the church in Rowley, from which town Bradford was separated in 1675.

The church in Essex, originally the second in Ipswich, was embodied August 12th, 1683, and Rev. John Wise was ordained at the same time. Six years before this, an attempt was made to have separate worship in that part of Ipswich, and Rev. Jeremiah Shepard, son of Mr. Shepard of Cambridge, was engaged to preach in a private house. But as he had not then joined himself to any Congregational church, the general court disallowed the proceeding; for who could assure them that he would not set up Episcopacy, or something worse, though he was the son of the great Puritan? Their

first attempt to build a meeting-house was also stopped by the same authority, after "the sills were laid, and the timber in place ready to raise." In this case, however, the ladies proved more than a match for the general court. Determined to have a "raising," they sallied forth into neighboring towns on horseback, and brought in men to do what their law-abiding husbands might not attempt; and in due time the meeting-house was up and finished, by consent of all parties and powers. (Dr. Crowell's History of Essex, 107-12.)

The Marblehead church was separated from the First church in Salem, October 13th, 1684, with Rev. Samuel Cheever for their first pastor—having sustained a "branch" relation, and supported separate worship more than forty years. Mr. Cheever had been their minister sixteen years at the time of his ordination, and was preceded by Rev. William Walton, whose ministry commenced in 1637.

On the 26th of March, 1685, the church in Sherborn was gathered, and their first pastor, Rev. Daniel Gookin, was ordained. His ministerial labors commenced three five years before, but were devoted, in part, to the Indians.

The First church in Deerfield sprang from the Dedham church, as the first settlers came from that town, and was probably gathered in March, 1686, when Rev. John Williams of Roxbury became their pastor.

The First church in Danvers—known originally as "Salem Village," and now as North Danvers—was separated from the First church in Salem, Nov. 10th, 1689, with Rev. Samuel Parris for their first pastor. The members had been associated as a "branch" of the Salem church for eighteen years, having in that time employed Rev. Messrs. James Bailey, George Burroughs, and Deodab Lawson, in the ministry of the word.

These branch churches have become sufficiently numerous to attract notice, as a distinct ecclesiastical feature of the age. So far as can be learned from the circumstances of each case thus far brought to view, this plan, in theory, had a twofold aspect. It looked to

the well-being both of the mother church and the young daughter, and was intended to guard against a too sudden depletion on the one hand, and a too heavy burden on the other. The fundamental idea of a Congregational church, namely, a body of confederate believers meeting ordinarily in one place, on the Sabbath, would naturally require an additional place of worship as the congregation increased in size, or extended abroad. This latter necessity was much the most common; and to meet it, in part, families living six or eight miles from the sanctuary were frequently allowed to expend their proportion of the parish tax to support preaching among themselves, for three or six months of the year,—still holding their ecclesiastical relation to the old home, and returning there on communion days, and, in fact, continuing to worship there after their own scanty supplies had failed. By this arrangement they avoided the indiscretion, seen in later times, of breaking down one strong church to make two feeble ones; while at the same time it afforded a fit opportunity for the “strong to bear the infirmities of the weak.” It was their mode of conducting domestic missions, and may be regarded as the first form which this enterprise took in New England. As the members of a branch were still enrolled with the church from which it sprang, till a formal separation was effected, so its minister was included in the eldership of the other, and was often sent with the pastor to sit in ecclesiastical councils. The plan of church extension lately initiated by the Old South church of this city, in some of its most important features, has its prototype in this ancient usage, and seems admirably adapted to meet a class of wants in all cities and large villages.

As already intimated, the period through which we are now tracing the history of our churches is marked by civil commotions which shook the foundations, alike of church and State. A political thundercloud had long time been rising, which, by imperceptible advances, had at length reached the zenith, and fiery bolts fell in rapid succession, with scathing effect. It was at the most

distressing period in that war which King Philip had waged for the purpose of exterminating the New England settlers, that King Charles II. resolved upon the project of crushing out their liberties; "and, while the people were yet contending with the natives for the possession of the soil, and the ground was wet with the blood of the slain," Edward Randolph arrived at Boston, charged with its execution. (Barry's Hist. Mass. Vol. I. 455.) True to the description, which was aptly transferred from another to himself, of "going up and down seeking whom he might devour," he succeeded in obtaining from the king, first a threat, in 1682, to abrogate the Massachusetts charter, and then, in 1685, its formal abrogation. The death of the king, which occurred immediately after, and the accession of his bigoted brother, James II., were followed, in 1686, by the appointment of a temporary president under royal commission; who was succeeded, before the year was out, by the tyrannical Sir Edmund Andros as "captain-general and governor-in-chief" of all New England, with powers sufficiently despotic to suit a Nero. His arrest and imprisonment immediately after the news came that his royal master was dethroned in 1688, the erection of a provisional government similar to the old, till the union of the Massachusetts and Plymouth colonies under the new charter of 1692, complete the scene of stirring incidents, which, like a moving diorama, pass before the eyes of one who sits down to study this chapter of our history.

As may well be supposed, these extraordinary events in the civil affairs of Massachusetts had a marked influence over its religious and ecclesiastical character, and must have developed some facts which properly belong to this sketch of the churches.

One noticeable fact is, that it brought in Episcopacy; and on this wise. Randolph had not been long in the country without observing that the alarming "independency claimed and exercised" in the government of Massachusetts, which he was bound to put down, and which, he says in a letter to the Bishop of London, "is

one chief occasion of the many mutinies and distractions in other his majesty's foreign plantations" (Hutch. Coll. 540), had its tap-root in the democracy of the Congregational churches. Accordingly, in 1682, he made an earnest appeal for ministers of the church of England to be sent over.\* And when the Bishop of London interposes a question as to their maintenance, he replies, rather curtly, "I did formerly, and do now propose, that a part of that money sent over hither, and pretended to be expended amongst the Indians, may be ordered to go towards that charge;" that is, let the funds of the "Society for propagating the Gospel among the Indians," instead of going to sustain Indian missions, and to print Eliot's Bible, go to pay for reading prayers in Boston! In another letter he proposes, as a means of raising funds, that "no marriages hereafter shall be allowed lawful, but such as are made by the ministers of the church of England." (Hutch. Coll. 533.) He even intimates that the Congregationalists — the more "factious" among them — might be attainted of treason, and their property be sequestered to the church; "for if his majesty's laws, as none but fanatics question, be of force with us, we could raise a sufficient maintenance for divers ministers, out of the estates of those whose treasons have forfeited them to his majesty." (Hutch. Coll. 540.) But to leave no method untried, "I humbly represent to your grace," he says in another communication, "that the three meeting houses in Boston might pay twenty shillings a week each, out of their contributions, towards the defraying of our church charges, that sum being less per annum

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\* Episcopacy, notwithstanding its conceit of an apostolic derivation, an unchangeable priesthood, and an unvarying ritual, must have changed in some other things between 1682 and 1858, inasmuch as a preacher of that order, in this same Puritan city of Boston, from which Randolph was then writing, could lately announce as one of the reasons why he is an Episcopalian, that "the government of the [Episcopal] church is purely republican. It is strikingly analgous to that of the municipal, State, and general government, in this country." This is just what the Episcopal ministers of *that day* were sent here to overthrow.

than each of the ministers receive." (Hutch. Hist. Vol. I. 314.)

But whatever was proposed, nothing was actually done toward setting up Episcopacy till 1685. The day after Dudley, the so-called president, entered in form upon the duties of his office, an Episcopal clergyman who had come over a short time before waited on the council, and requested one of the three meeting-houses to preach in. This was refused; and he was granted "the east end of the town-house" until his flock should provide a place of their own. On the 15th of the following December, Sir Edmund Andros, the "captain-general and governor," arrived. On the 20th he called the ministers together, and talked with them about having the use of one of their meeting-houses, and so arranging the hours of worship, that two assemblies might be accommodated the same day. These ministers, and four members of each church, met in consultation the next day, and agreed to answer the governor, "that they could not with a good conscience consent that our meeting-houses should be made use of for the common-prayer worship." Whereupon the governor sends Randolph for the keys of the Old South church, "that they may say prayers there." This brings to his excellency's door six of the principal members, including Judge Sewall, whose journal furnishes these facts in the minutest detail. They "show that the land and house is ours, and that we can't consent to part with it to such use; exhibit an extract of Mrs. Norton's deed, and how 't was built by particular persons, as Hall, Oliver, £100 apiece," etc. This interview occurred on the 23d of March, 1687. On the 25th, the governor sent orders to the sexton to open the house and ring the bell. The sexton, "though resolved to the contrary," was frightened into compliance by the threat, that if he refused, the house should never be opened again, and that he (the governor) would "punish any man who gave two pence towards the support of a Non-conformist minister." (Hutch. Hist. Vol. I. 356.)

Thus Good-Friday was canonically kept for the first

time in Massachusetts, sixty-seven years and three months after the landing at Plymouth; and on the following Sabbath, the governor and his retinue celebrated the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the same place, having previously notified Mr. Willard, the pastor, that he could have the house at half-past one,—which, however, was not vacated till after two, so that, in the words of Sewall, "t was a sad sight to see how full the street was with people gazing and moving to and fro, bec. had not entrance into y<sup>e</sup> house." From this date, the governor, whenever it suited his convenience to go to church, or say his prayers with his handful of adherents, took possession of the Old South till he was driven from the country in 1689; for the first Episcopal church in Boston was not finished till about that time.\*

These arbitrary proceedings in religious matters give but a faint idea of the rough-shod tyranny that bore rule in *civil* affairs. The powers which the new governor and his council might exercise under the royal commission were almost unlimited; and there appeared no disinclination to exercise them to the fullest extent. This called forth resistance, as it always will, among the enlightened friends of freedom; and, true to their high vocation and Puritan training, the ministers were on the lead. While the controversy respecting the occupancy of the Old South church was at its height, the

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\* The troubles and petty vexations to which the Old South congregation were exposed during all this time are touchingly told in Judge Sewall's Journal,—himself one of the principal members of the church, being often doomed to bear, personally, the insolence of Randolph and the browbeating of Andros. But the old Puritan seems to have kept cool and firm,—unprovoked by the one and undismayed by the other. When Andros, on one occasion waxed warm, and used threatening language while speaking of the backwardness of Boston people to aid in building an Episcopal church, Sewall's bold and apt reply, as entered in his journal, was,—“ Said, came from England to avoid such and such things, therefore could not give to set y<sup>e</sup> up here: and y<sup>e</sup> bishops would have thought strange to have been ask'd to contribute towards sitting up y<sup>e</sup> New England churches.”

venerable pastor stimulated his flock in their resistance to the arbitrary demands of Andros, by a sermon from the text, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood." The ministers had unanimously withstood the proposal of the governor and a portion of the assistants to surrender the charter, when Randolph had prevailed on the king to issue a writ of *quo warranto* against it. At a town meeting held in Boston to consider the subject, Increase Mather, the president of the college, and a fair exponent of the clergy throughout the colony, opposed the motion in the following earnest and eloquent speech: "I verily believe we shall sin against the God of heaven, if we vote an affirmative to it. The Scripture teacheth us otherwise. That which the Lord our God hath given us, shall we not possess it? God forbid that we should give away the inheritance of our fathers. Nor would it be wisdom to comply. If we make a full and entire resignation to pleasure, we fall into the hands of men immediately; but if we do not, we still keep ourselves in the hands of God; and who knows what God may do for us? The loyal citizens of London would not surrender their charter, lest their posterity should curse them for it. And shall we, then, do such a thing? I hope there is not one freeman in Boston that can be guilty of it." The audience were moved to tears, and when the question was put to vote, it was unanimously rejected. "It is better," they exclaimed, "if we must die, to die by the hands of others than our own." (Robbins' Hist. Sec. Ch. 49.)

Could the mendacious Randolph, or his despotic captain-general, or their infatuated king, for a moment imagine, that the people who hung on the lips of such preachers two full hours every Sabbath, besides being catechized by them through all the days of their childhood, would yield obedience to the haughty mandates of tyranny, without resistance? The town meeting was the ordinary place of testing the minister's political influence over the people; and the arbitrary tax of 1*d.* on £1, levied by Andros to support his odious administration, afforded a frequent occasion for its develop-



ment. Not a few towns were fined for non-payment; and town officers imprisoned for contumacy or remonstrance; and in most cases the trouble could be traced up to the inextirpable spirit of independence in the minister. One instance is here given as an illustration. Rev. John Wise, minister of Chebacco (then a part of Ipswich, now Essex), believing that the liberties of his country were in danger, went with two of his parishioners to the centre village to see what could be done. A small meeting for consultation was held, preliminary to the general meeting of the town, duly warned for the next day. The patriotic feelings of Mr. Wise found utterance and sympathy in both meetings; and the decision of the town was, not to aid in assessing or collecting this illegal tax. News of all this coming to the governor's ears, Mr. Wise and five others were arrested, committed to jail, tried, found guilty of contempt and high misdemeanor, and kept imprisoned twenty-one days longer before sentence was passed,— which sentence, in his case, was, "fine £50, pay cost, £1,000 bond, and to be suspended from the ministerial function." (Dr. Crowell's Hist. 149.) In giving his own account of the matter, Mr. Wise, in characteristic style, says: "The evidence in the case was, as to the substance of it, that we too boldly endeavored to persuade ourselves we were Englishmen, and under privileges, and that we were, all six of us aforesaid, at the town meeting of Ipswich aforesaid, and, as the witness supposed, we assented to the aforesaid vote; and also that John Wise made a speech at the same time, and said that we had a good God and a good king, and should do well to stand to our privileges."

On the expulsion of Andros, and before the provincial charter was granted, Mr. Wise, with one of his fellow-convicts, was chosen by the town of Ipswich to meet in Boston the representatives of the other towns to consult for the public safety.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1690-1700.

Eleven churches gathered.— Salem witchcraft.— Change in conducting ecclesiastical affairs.— Comparative strength of the different denominations in Massachusetts,— in New England.— Influence of Calvinism and Puritan Congregationalism on the New England character.— Remarks on Oliver's "Puritan Commonwealth."

ELEVEN Congregational churches were organized within the present bounds of Massachusetts during the ten years from 1690 to 1700, and in the following order.

The church in Wrentham, the second that came out from the Dedham church, was embodied April 13, 1692, with Rev. Samuel Mann for their pastor. His ministry commenced there with the first settlement of the place, twenty years before; but the desolations that swept over it in Philip's war, driving away both minister and people, prevented an earlier organization.

On the 26th of December, 1694, several members of the Plymouth church, with some from other parts, were constituted the First church in Middleboro', having already sustained public worship among themselves ten or twelve years, under the lead of Deacon Samuel Fuller, who was invested with the pastoral office by the same council that organized the church.

A similar process had been in operation for a shorter time in Plympton (then a part of Plymouth), under the direction of Mr. Isaac Cushman, a ruling elder, when, in 1695, they too were separated from the mother church, and elder Cushman ordained their first pastor.

The church in Lexington was gathered from the Cambridge church, October 21, 1696, and Rev. Benjamin Estabrooks, having previously labored with them in the

Gospel about four years, was inducted into the pastoral office on the same day.

The church in Waltham separated from that in Watertown, October 6, 1697, unless we consider it the original, from which the other went off; for at the time of separation, which was occasioned by removing the place of worship, it was the majority of the Watertown church, including "the selectmen of the town," who removed to the new meeting-house, located within the present limits of Waltham, and there settled Rev. Samuel Angier for their pastor; while the minority, still meeting in the old place of worship, were reorganized by an ecclesiastical council on the day above named, and settled Rev. Henry Gibbs over them.

The First church in West Springfield was separated from the old Springfield church in June, 1698. For the space of forty years they had crossed the Connecticut river in boats to attend public worship. On one occasion three persons were drowned while returning from church. Their first pastor was Rev. John Woodbridge, who was ordained at the time the church was organized.

The First church in West Newbury, originally the second in Newbury, was gathered October 26, 1698, and Rev. Samuel Belcher was ordained over it on the 10th of November following.

The Fourth Congregational church in Boston was formed December 12, 1698, by the confederation of thirteen out of the "Twenty Associates," who had just erected a new meeting-house on Brattle square, — not entirely to the liking of the other societies. From a "Manifesto," put forth by these associates, "for preventing all misapprehensions and jealousies," the enterprise was at first nicknamed the "Manifesto church," and was not in fellowship with the others till after the settlement of Rev. Benjamin Coleman, August 4, 1699, who was called there while pursuing his studies in London, where he also took ordination, by advice of the Brattle Street church, lest the Boston ministers should refuse it. Confidence, however, was soon restored; for

in doctrine the new church and their young minister were on the old foundation of the Westminster confession,—differing from the other churches and ministers only on some minor points of social organism and public worship. (Snow's Hist. Boston, 203.)

Some time during the same year (1699) the church in Stowe was gathered, and Rev. John Eveleth was ordained as their first pastor. Rev. William Woodrop had preached there several years before, and was prevented from settlement only by a recall to his native Scotland, after being invited to the pastoral office in Stowe.

The church in Brewster, an offshoot from the Eastham church, was organized October 16, 1700, with Rev. Nathaniel Stone for their first pastor.

Probably the First church in New Bedford was gathered at the head of Accushnet river, during the same year, 1700. In 1696, Dr. Mather puts down "Dartmouth," then including New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Westport, as "perishing without vision," that is, destitute of preaching; while it is known that Rev. Samuel Hunt was preaching there in 1700 to a church whose organization can be assigned to no subsequent date. The early spread of Quakerism into those parts retarded the progress of Congregational church extension throughout that section of the State, leaving a blight upon Puritan institutions which is still discernible.

As we are now passing over the period marked by that frightful delusion, the "Salem witchcraft," a brief notice of it may properly be inserted in this sketch, though its tragical history pertains rather to the civil courts. A belief in the existence of familiar spirits is as old as the Bible, and, at the time of this Salem affair, was held in some form or other by every known tribe and nation on earth. From the most ignorant peasant then living in England to her most learned judge, the idea prevailed that witches might get possession of depraved men,—but more especially of women,—and, through their connivance, play all manner of strange pranks with tables, chairs, tongs, etc., and even inflict

torture on innocent victims. With the exception of this last-named circumstance (if, indeed, it be an exception), the same notion still has credence in certain quarters. But these odd manifestations were then universally ascribed to the devil; and the human "medium" was supposed to be in his confidence. As such, he was arrested, tried, sentenced, and executed, unless evidence could be had that the satanic partnership was dissolved. Several such executions had occurred in different parts of New England since its first settlement, and a much larger number in Old England. And there can be no reasonable doubt that the witch stories and witch trials printed in England, and circulated here just before the terrible scene enacted at Salem, was the proximate cause of its enactment.

It commenced in the family of Rev. Samuel Parris, minister of "Salem Village" (now North Danvers), whose young daughter and niece, ten or eleven years old, being afflicted with a malady which baffled the doctor's skill, he pronounced them bewitched. Other children in the neighborhood soon caught the distemper. An Indian servant living in the minister's family, moved, apparently, by compassion for the sufferers, undertook to find out the witch by certain "wild incantations," which she affirmed had often been successfully tried among her people. These were so odd and heathenish withal, that they drew down upon herself the charge of witchcraft. With a view, probably, to escape the threatened penalty, she at length confessed to the charge, and implicated two other old women as her confederates; and they were all committed to prison. This occurred in March, 1692; and so rapidly did the epidemic spread, that before the end of November following, more than two hundred had been charged with witchcraft, of whom one hundred and fifty were committed to prison, and twenty suffered death!

By this time the panic had reached its height, and an explosion was inevitable. The absurd custom of allowing persons under the supposed influence of witchcraft to give testimony against witches (a custom

copied directly from the English courts) was fast bringing under suspicion the most pious and upright people among them, and threatening to involve all classes in mutual destruction. Even Cotton Mather, whose relish for the supernatural had led him further into the delusion than most of his brethren, frankly confessed that "the whole business is become so snarled that our honorable judges have room for Jehoshaphat's exclamation, 'We know not what to do.' The devil improves the darkness of this affair to push us into a blind man's buffet; and we are ready to be sinfully, yea, hotly and madly, mauling one another in the dark." The recoil in public sentiment was sudden and almost universal. Prisoners were discharged, presentments dismissed, and convicts reprieved. Such a gaol-delivery was made as was never before known in New England. (Hutch. Vol. II. 61.)

It has been the fashion, both in England and this country, either to reproach our fathers for extraordinary superstition in this witchcraft business, or else to turn it into fun. But in regard to the first, it is sufficient to say, on the authority of Hutchinson (Vol. II. 22), that "more witches have been put to death in a single county in England, in a short space of time, than have suffered in all New England from the first settlement until the present time." And five years after the last vestige of a witch was seen in Salem, seven were executed in Scotland, upon the testimony of one girl about eleven years old. As to the merriment which weak minds can make out of it in our day, it was the most serious of all things at the time, and shrouded the land in deeper gloom than the war of Philip or the tyranny of Andros. It should be classed among the calamitous events which New England has *survived*, and by which her recuperative power has been shown. If there is any thing really ridiculous in these "spiritual manifestations" of the seventeenth century, the laugh should be turned on those who, in the middle of this "glorious nineteenth," are compassing sea and land to revive the same phantoms. It is not because superstition is less prevalent,

but because it is more venial, that the interest excited in the public mind by the feats of our "mediums" is not spiced with the tragic as well as the marvellous.

As to the overturns in the civil government during this period, they had less effect on the polity and position of the churches than one would have supposed. Three quarters of a century had given to the religious and ecclesiastical foundations a solidity which could not be unsettled by a change of charters. Even the usurpations of Randolph and Andros only forced Episcopacy in, without being able to force Congregationalism out, or to cripple its power. Certainly the relation of the church to the State, whatever else we may call it, was not a union. Had the state gone to pieces, the church would have remained on the same foundation that she occupied before she built up a state around her. It is nevertheless true, that under the provincial charter ecclesiastical affairs were conducted in a somewhat different, and on the whole, in a decidedly better, manner than under the colonial charter. The temptation to join the church for worldly advantage was greatly diminished by extending the right of voting to all persons alike, of a certain estate, whether members of a church or not. And by cutting off appeals to the general court in all matters strictly ecclesiastical, the churches were restored to their original independence, which had been partially taken away. It is true there were many ways in which the governor, now appointed by the king, and answerable to him alone, might vex the churches, were he disposed to do it; but so deeply rooted was the tree of Puritan Congregationalism in the soil of New England, — all the more so from the storms it had withstood, — and so acceptable, on the whole, was its fruit and shade to the mass of the population, that no governor, whatever his private preferences might be, was disposed to risk his popularity by attempting to check its growth or to lop off its branches.

Looking back from the close of the seventeenth century, over the eighty years whose history has now been sketched, we find that just seventy-nine Congregational

churches had been gathered within the bounds of this State, — two of which had removed in a body to Connecticut, — leaving seventy-seven as the number on the ground. There were also between thirty and forty assemblies of praying Indians, out of which eight churches had been gathered, — all of them cast in the Congregational mould: all of them the fruits of Congregational missions. Of other denominations there were two Baptist churches and one Episcopalian. Moreover, the Quakers had erected a small house of worship in Boston, and were beginning to hold stated meetings; the only Quaker meeting-house then in the State. In Mather's *Magnalia* (Vol. I. B. I. chap. 7), notice is also taken of "a French congregation of Protestant refugees under the pastoral care of Monsieur Daille," located in Boston; but there is no proof that they ever had an ecclesiastical organization; and the presumption is that they were soon absorbed in other religious societies. At the same date there were thirty-five churches in Connecticut, six in New Hampshire, and two in Maine; all of them Congregational. In Rhode Island there were two or three Baptist churches, while nearly half the population, without any very definite organizations, were divided among Quakers, Seekers, Gortonites, Rogerines, etc.

The relative position of the different religious denominations in New England during this formative period of her history is suggestive of reflections which need not be put into words. Every thoughtful reader will perceive that the bones and sinews of New England character — her social habits and political tendencies, no less than her religious type — were all derived from Puritanism; from that form of Puritanism which accepted the theology of John Calvin, and the church polity of John Robinson, with only such modifications of each as are found in the Westminster confession and the Cambridge platform. And it may here be added, that each of the great principles which lay at the foundation of the social, religious, or political character of our New England fathers was subjected to a most



thorough discussion among themselves, — magistrates, ministers, and people, — so that whatever ideas and usages got the ascendancy and came into vogue, rested on an intelligent personal conviction, and not on a traditional authority; a conviction that would have made them martyrs, but that it had previously made them exiles.

In taking leave of the colonial period, or what has been aptly called the "Puritan Commonwealth," which terminated in 1692, a passing notice seems due to a book bearing that title, written by the late Peter Oliver, of the "Suffolk bar," and published since this sketch was commenced, — a posthumous publication of considerable talent, but breathing a spirit of malevolence towards Puritanism and its products, that has hardly been equalled since the days of "Carrion" Heath, and Mark Noble. Complaining that all previous writers have falsified the truth of our history by suppressing one half of it, he falls into the same error by giving us only the other half, and that too after wrenching it out of its connections, oftentimes, and twisting it into every possible distortion. Professing to draw from original sources, he revamps the old slanders of Robert Baylie, without any notice, and seemingly without any knowledge of their utter refutation at the time by John Cotton; and quotes Letchford to prove the existence of wrongs which even that complainer never suffered nor saw nor suspected. With what success he pursued his historical researches, and with how much safety he may be taken as a guide to ours, is sufficiently apparent from the following conclusions to which he comes, — taken almost at random from the first two chapters: "The spirit of Puritanism was hostile to the principles of liberty on the shores of Massachusetts Bay." "The elders and magistrates were alike the enemies of popular freedom." "The trial by jury was reluctantly adopted as a fundamental principle in the new system of laws." At the end of a long chain of evidences, deemed by him conclusive, that the original government was founded in fraud, and perpetuated "by the use of

the ingeniously contrived [church] covenant," he coolly asserts, that, "strictly speaking, the legislation of the commonwealth was treasonable, and every capital punishment inflicted under its laws was murder." With these views of the civil state of Massachusetts during that period, we are not surprised that the author should find all manner of hypocrisy, impiety, and immorality in her religious condition, till Episcopacy came to her rescue, — Puritanism having made a complete failure. Of course, nobody at this day will think of setting himself seriously to refute such stale calumnies. The time was, when, in the freshness and personality of such assaults upon the struggling founders of New England, a refutation was needed; and had it not been triumphantly made by themselves, both they and their Puritan commonwealth would have been crushed.

The book will be useful chiefly as exhibiting, in a gorgeous tableau, the old battle ground on which the Puritans fought their way to fame. Every one knows the result of the battle, but not every one knows the falsehood and effrontery that had to be faced down in achieving it.

## CHAPTER IX.

1700-1710.

Eight churches gathered. — Reasons for so few. — Second type of Home Missions. — Sixteen "Proposals" of Boston ministers. — John Wise assails them. — "Churches' Quarrel espoused," and "Vindication of the Government of New England Churches." — Magical effect of these productions. — Solomon Stoddard. — Evil effect of his well-meant innovation.

At the opening of the eighteenth century, the spirit of Christian enterprise, so far as indicated by the progress of church extension, was in a torpid state; only eight Congregational churches were planted during the first ten years, namely:—

The church in Framingham, gathered chiefly from the Sherborn church, was constituted on the 8th of October, 1701, with Rev. John Swift for their pastor.

The First church in Boxford colonized from the Rowley church in 1702, — probably on the 30th of December, as Rev. Thomas Symmes, their first pastor, was ordained on that day.

On the 13th of October, 1703, the First church in Rochester was gathered, near "Scipican harbor" (now Marion), under the labors of Rev. Samuel Arnold, who, with a company of emigrants from Marshfield, Scituate, and Sandwich, had commenced a settlement there in 1683.

The Byfield church was organized as the third in Newbury, November 17th, 1706, and Rev. Moses Hale was ordained over it the same day.

The present First church in Braintree was gathered on the 10th of September, 1707, with Rev. Hugh Adams for their pastor. It was a colony from the Quincy church, which was then numbered as the first in Brain-

tree; being included within the original limits of that town, and known as the "North precinct."

On the 10th of October, 1708, twenty members were dismissed from the Barnstable church for the purpose of a separate organization in Falmouth, which was effected soon after, with Rev. Samuel Shiverick for their minister. He had already been preaching there several years, in a meeting-house built, in part, by a grant from the general court of Plymouth.

The church in Weston was separated from the original Watertown church, November 2d, 1709, having had a meeting-house and a minister for the space of ten years previously. Rev. William Williams was ordained their first pastor when the church was organized.

The First church in Dighton, originally the "South precinct" in Taunton, was probably gathered in 1710, with Rev. Nathaniel Fisher for their pastor; but the records which should inform us are lost.

The fact that only these eight churches were planted in Massachusetts during this period, is owing, in part, no doubt, to the French and Indian war then in progress. The outer settlements had become a theatre of border conflict, unfavorable for church extension. Even churches already gathered were so reduced by rapine and murder, as to need the help of others in sustaining them. The church of Deerfield presents a mournful example. On the morning of February 29th, 1704, the ground being covered with snow four feet deep, the town was attacked by two hundred French and 142 Indians from Canada. Before the sun was an hour high, forty-seven of the inhabitants were slaughtered, 112 taken prisoners, and nearly every house was in flames. Among the captives was the minister, Rev. Mr. Williams, with his wife and five children. The cruelties suffered on a march of three hundred miles, and during a two years' residence with the savages, is touchingly told in "The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion," which Mr. Williams published after his release. The remnant of his flock, diminished but not discouraged, rallied, and recalled him to settle with them again,

which he readily did, though the war continued to rage; and the legislature made a grant of £20 for their encouragement in his support for the first year.

And this brings to view a new phase of church extension, deserving of a moment's notice. It may properly be denoted the *second* form which home missions took in Massachusetts — the first, being the plan of sustaining "branch" churches, already described. The assistance rendered to the inhabitants of Deerfield, in reëstablishing the gospel among them, was not a solitary instance of the kind. In the archives of this State, are now to be found not less than fifty formal applications from feeble parishes, presented to the legislature between the years 1693 and 1711, and the record of as many appropriations from the public treasury — amounting in all to about £1,000 — for their relief.\*

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\* The reader may be interested in seeing a specimen.

*"The Petition of the inhabitants of Brookfield, to the Honorable General Court assembled at Boston, Nov., 1698, humbly sheweth :*

"1. That we seem to be called of God to continue our habitation in this place, [notwithstanding the disastrous beginnings, which the petitioners here recount].

"2. That it is an intolerable burden to continue as we have done, without the preaching of the word; God doth require his people to attend not only family worship, but his public worship: it is the ordinance of God, that on the Sabbath day there should be an holy convocation, and that his word be preached by those that are able and faithful; and our own necessities put us upon it earnestly to desire it; both we and our children need, the instructions, rebukes, and encouragements of the word; the darkness and deadness of our own hearts, together with the many snares that are in the world, are an experimental conviction to us, that we need all those helps and advantages that God hath sanctified for our good.

"3. That we are not able at present to maintain the worship of God, — we are but twelve families, and are not of estate sufficient to give suitable encouragement to a minister. We are willing to do to the outside of our ability; but though we do as much as can be expected from us, it will not amount to such a sum as a minister may reasonably require for his labor.

"4. That if this honorable court would please to pity us, and grant us some help for a few years for the maintenance of a godly, able minister, besides the advantage that it may be to those few families that are here, it would be a means to draw many other inhabitants to

These cases of necessity were usually, but not universally, the result of Indian depredations; and this prompt way of meeting them by legislative grants, though open to many objections, shows how appalling to the guardians of the commonwealth, at that time, were such moral destitutions as now engage the friends of home missions.

The period now under review is memorable for an attempt made by certain ministers "in and about Boston," to unsettle the platform of these Congregational churches; and no less so for its utter defeat by the Rev. John Wise of Ipswich — now Essex — in a pamphlet of eighty-six pages, entitled the "Churches' Quarrel Espoused."

The facts, in brief, are these. At a meeting of the Boston Association, held November 5th, 1705, sixteen "Proposals" were drawn up and put forth, for the consideration of "the several associated ministers in the several parts of the country." These, though couched in plausible terms, and embodying some useful hints, were nevertheless repugnant, in their general spirit, to the Cambridge platform and the popular usage; or, as Mr. Wise describes them, "they seem a conjunction of all the church-governments in the world, and the least

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us, whereby we shall be so far assisted, that we may of ourselves be able to uphold the worship of God, and not be burdensome to others.

"Under these considerations, we humbly beg that this honorable court would exercise compassion to us, and assign some relief to us out of the public treasury, which we shall look upon, not only a testimony of your zeal for the worship of God, but also of your tender compassion to the souls of those whom God hath made you fathers of. And your petitioners shall ever pray," etc. [Signed by fifteen names.]

"Read November 23, 1698.

"In answer to the above petition, Ordered, that there be twenty pounds paid out of the public treasury of this province towards the support of an Orthodox minister for one year, to commence from the time of the settlement of such minister amongst them.

"Sent up to the honorable the lieutenant-governor and council for concurrence.

NATHANIEL BYFIELD, *Speaker.*

"Read in council, November 24, 1698, and Voted a concurrence with the representatives.

ISA. ADDINGTON, *Secretary.*"

part is Congregational,"—"the spectre, or ghost of Presbyterianism,"—"something considerable of prelacy,"—"something which smells very strong of the infallible chair." The Congregationalists of our day, grown familiar with modern innovations, will fail to detect in these proposals all the ugly features here portrayed, unless they follow the author through his illustrations, and learn to look at things *in embryo et in rerum natura*, to cite one of his classical allusions. The leading ideas contained in them may be reduced to these three: first, to give the ministerial meetings, which were then coming into vogue, an ecclesiastical character, by the introduction of business pertinent only to the churches. Second, to combine these associations of ministers, thus ecclesiasticized and enlarged by a lay delegation into standing councils, whose decisions in all ordinary cases should be "final and decisive." Third, to allow "no particular pastor or congregation to employ any one in occasional preachings who has not been recommended by a testimonial under the hands of some association."

On this last point, it may be proper here to remark for the information of those not familiar with "the old ways," that hitherto a "license" or "approbation" to preach was only "the express or implied authority granted by a church to preach to *them*." (Cong. Dict. 214.) The Congregational churches had acknowledged no human authority, either ministerial, prelatic, or civil, as a prerequisite to the employment of any one whom they chose to select. They would submit to none; though they thankfully availed themselves of every help, especially that of settled ministers, in finding suitable candidates.

The Cambridge Platform is silent on this subject; but John Cotton, in his "Way of the Churches" (p. 39, 40), indirectly tells us how ministers got licensed, by showing "in what manner they were chosen." "When any of the churches are destitute of any of these officers, the brethren of the church (according to the apostle's advice, in defect of deacons, and so in defect

of all other officers), *they look out from amongst themselves*, such persons as are in some measure qualified according to the direction of the word. If the church can find out none such in their own body, they send to any other church for fit supply, and each church looketh at it as their duty to be mutually helpful one to another, in yielding what supply they may, without too much prejudice to themselves. Such being recommended to them for such a work, they take some time of trial of them, partly by their own observation and communion with them, partly by consultation with the elders of other churches continuing there."

In *theory*, therefore, a Congregational church, destitute of a pastor, looked over their own list of members for a suitable candidate. If they could find one of sufficient promise, they placed him in the pulpit and heard him preach, and applied such other tests as they deemed necessary to a satisfactory judgment of his qualifications. Their own "approbation" was all the testimonial he got or wanted. If they found no suitable person for that office among themselves, they looked into other churches, consulted the ministers of those churches, consulted the laymen, conversed with the candidate recommended, took him into the pulpit, took him to their houses, — used all appropriate means, — and then "lisenced" him, if he stood the test, and settled him if he and they could agree.

The general court undertook to interfere with this right in 1652, by ordering that a license should be obtained from a council or county court; but so determined was the resistance, that the order was revoked the following year. "If a church has liberty of election and ordination," said the Woburn church in their petition on the subject, "then it has the power of approbation." (3 M. H. Coll. Vol. I. 42.) Nearly fifty years later, namely, in 1699, Increase Mather, with nine other ministers, signed and sent forth their "Advice unto the churches of New England," the drift of which was "to beware of running after new preachers, of whose endowments and principles they have not had a



reasonable attestation,"—expressing also their own intention thenceforth to admit into their pulpits "no stranger, coming as a preacher without sufficient assurances of his being what he pretends to be," except by first passing him through "a solemn examination of his capacity for the tremendous work of preaching the everlasting Gospel." But this put no restraints on the ancient liberties, or the existing usages, of the churches; nor did it imply that their trial and approbation of a candidate would not be regarded by these ministers as a "sufficient assurance" of his "capacity" to preach. It was simple and seasonable advice, having reference particularly to illiterate pretenders coming from abroad; and it was backed up by considerations like the following: "If every piece of ignorance and arrogance be set up for a preacher, the name of the holy God will be profaned by an offering that is made a ridicule in the repetition." "If God should be provoked, by the unthankfulness of men, to send the plague of an unlearned ministry upon poor New England, soon will the wild beast of the desert lie there, the houses will be full of doleful creatures, and owls will dwell therein." (Math. Mag. B. VII. ch. 5.)

Thus the matter stood when these sixteen "Proposals" came out, and called forth in reply, that excoriating satire from the pen of John Wise, "The Churches' Quarrel Espoused;" which had the effect, not only to explode the whole project, but to recall the churches to the first principles of Congregationalism, and to re-seat them on their ancient platform more firmly than ever, for the next sixty years. Even to this day it is common for ministerial bodies to insert in their constitutions, or rules of business, a disavowal of all "ecclesiastical authority," out of respect to an in-wrought jealousy among the churches, which had its origin in this affair. The sudden and complete triumph which this small book achieved is the more remarkable, when it is considered that the proposed innovations were supported by an array of names which were deemed a tower of strength to any cause which had *their* indorsement.

But it ought to be observed, in this connection, that the commanding and long-continued influence which Mr. Wise acquired over the public sentiment was not all due to this one effort. Encouraged by the success of his first blow in defence of invaded rights, he repeated the stroke soon after, in his "Vindication of the Government of New England Churches,"—a production as remarkable for terse logic as the other is for keen satire. It is unquestionably the clearest and most convincing demonstration of the Congregational polity ever put forth in the same number of pages. It would have left its mark on any age that could produce it. But in that age, and among a people whose susceptibilities of impression were quickened by late encroachments on popular freedom in the state, and still later, on the liberties of the churches, it was like setting a seal to melted wax. Especially forcible is his argument "drawn from the light of nature." Digging down to the bottom, and laying bare the foundation stones, he shows that all human government is, and must be, originally derived from the people. "For as they have a power, every man in a natural state, so upon a combination, they can, and do, bequeathe this power unto others, and settle it according as their united discretion shall determine,"—which is seen in the obvious fact, "that when the subject of sovereign power is quite extinct, that power returns to the people again. Ranging all governments under three general heads—the monarchy, the oligarchy, the democracy—and subjecting them each to a scrutiny in the light of nature, he discovers that the last named is incomparably the best suited to the end for which human government is instituted; and looking at the Prelatic, the Presbyterian, and the Congregational, as the then corresponding forms of ecclesiastical rule, he finds the same grounds of preference for the latter. "To me it seems most apparent, that, under Christ, the reason of the Constitution of these and the primitive churches is really and truly owing to the original state and liberty of mankind, and founded peculiarly in the light of nature,"—

which conclusion, being admitted, there is in it, he thinks, the force of a divine sanction. "It seems to me as though wise and provident nature, by the dictates of right reason, excited by the moving suggestions of humanity, and awed by the just demands of natural liberty, equality, and principles of self-preservation, originally drew up the scheme and then obtained the royal approbation."

This argument for the democracy of Congregational churches from the light of nature, which at that time was truly, what he calls it, "an unbeaten path," was quite as available for a democracy in states, — an inference which could not have escaped the thoughtful reader of that age, nor have failed to give the public mind a bias towards the political independence which was achieved in the age following. If Thomas Jefferson confessed himself indebted to the business meetings of a Baptist church in his neighborhood which he occasionally attended, for some of his best ideas of a democratic government, much more were John Adams and his New England compatriots beholden to their ecclesiastical surroundings for the republican tendencies of their politics. Indeed, some of the most glittering sentences in the immortal Declaration of American Independence are almost literal quotations from this essay of John Wise. And it is a significant fact, that in 1772, only four years before that declaration was made, a large edition of both these tracts was published by subscription in one duodecimo volume, — a copy of which, among the collections of the Congregational Library Association, has supplied the foregoing extracts. The suspicion which this fact alone suggests, that it was used as a political text-book in the great struggle for freedom then opening in earnest, is fully confirmed by the list of subscribers' names printed at the end, with the number of copies annexed. Distinguished laymen in all parts of New England, who were soon to be heralded to the world as heroes in that struggle, are on that list for six, twelve, twenty-four, thirty-six, and two of them for a hundred copies each!

Should the time ever come for the people of this republic to renew that struggle, or the Congregational churches to reassert their ancient rights, another edition of this rare old book would be called for.

It is much to be deplored that no champion was found during this period to lead these churches back to the "old paths" of piety, as well as of church polity. But Jonathan Edwards was then in his cradle, and his grandfather, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard of Northampton, was inaugurating a measure which really, though not intentionally, was a movement in the opposite direction. A sermon published by him in 1707, maintains that "sanctification is not a necessary qualification to partaking of the Lord's supper," and that "the Lord's supper is a converting ordinance." To Orthodox Congregationalists in our day, such a doctrine sounds strange enough, from a minister of real as well as reputed orthodoxy on every other point, and it would seem to be the easiest thing in the world to crush out the heresy in its germ. But it had far-reaching roots. It grew from the "half-way covenant" of 1662. Davenport, and others, had predicted such growths, as the natural product of such a scheme, when once admitted into the churches. But, like the warning of the ardent Laocoon against admitting the wooden horse into Troy, their predictions were unheeded till fatally fulfilled. A forty years' trial had shown that neither the children who were baptized on that covenant, nor their unregenerate parents who offered them, were brought thereby any nearer to the kingdom of heaven, but on the contrary, seemed the more content to remain in that half-way place. Consequently, while almost everybody was baptized, and, in that sense, became a visible saint, and member of the church, the number of real saints, or such as could come to the Lord's table on the old terms, was lamentably small, and was ever growing less. In this posture of affairs, why should not the same motives that had drawn the churches thus far from the primitive path, lead them this one step further? The idea of Mr. Stoddard was a startling, though not an inconsistent

one. The ministers at first very generally opposed it. The aged Dr. Increase Mather, now forty years older, and considerably wiser, than when he was urging the churches to take the path which had brought them to this formidable brink, prepared an able reply, which was published in 1708. But it is easier to get poison into the system than to expel it. Mr. Stoddard's rejoinder, in 1709, entitled "An Appeal to the Learned, being a Vindication of the Rights of Visible Saints to the Lord's Supper, though they be destitute of a Saving Work of God's Spirit on their Hearts," together with his own personal influence, and a growing aptitude of the public mind in that direction, availed to get the practice formally introduced at Northampton, from which it soon extended into other parts of New England,—working out, by degrees, into dead Orthodoxy, Arminianism, Pelagianism, and modern Unitarianism, as we shall have sad occasion to notice in the progress of this sketch. "One obvious tendency of this practice was, to destroy church-discipline; for unconverted members generally would not be strict in calling others to account for errors of doctrine or practice." — Great Awakening, p. 5.

## CHAPTER X.

1710-1720.

The gathering of thirty-eight churches. — Reasons for so many. — “Convention of Congregational ministers,” its origin and objects. — Contention in the New North church, Boston. — Great principles involved in the controversy. — The rights of Congregational churches maintained in the issue. — Views of Ware and Robbins. •

THIRTY-EIGHT Congregational churches were gathered in Massachusetts, from 1710 to 1720; and so common had the custom grown, of blending into one transaction the organization of a church and the settlement of a pastor over it, that when we have no record of the former, we may safely assume for its date the authentic record of the latter, — as has been done in several instances here following. It may also be assumed with equal certainty, that this first settled pastor had been previously employed for months or years in a laborious work, preliminary to that step. With this understanding, the details of church planting may be summarily given thus.

In 1711, three churches were gathered, namely, on the 17th of October, the South church in Andover, with Rev. Samuel Phillips for their pastor; — on the 1st of November, the church in Truro, an offshoot from the old Eastham church, with Rev. John Avery for their pastor; — and, not far from the same time, the church in Nantucket, probably under the direction of the Mayhews. It is known that a small colony from Salisbury, chiefly Baptists, with a few Quakers, had been there more than fifty years; but no church of any kind was formed on the island, except such as Governor Mayhew

had gathered among the Indians, till a handful of emigrants from the Vineyard were organized, as tradition says, about 1711.\*

In 1712, there were also three churches gathered;—the West Roxbury church, November 2d, over which Rev. Ebenezer Thayer was ordained on the 26th of the same month;—the First church in Attleboro, (West Parish,) November 12th, with Rev. Matthew Short for their pastor;—and the Pembroke church, probably on the 3d of December following, when Rev. Daniel Lewis was ordained.

In Medford, though favored with able but inconstant preaching for the space of eighty years by such men as James Noyes, Simon Bradstreet, Benjamin Woodbridge, and other noted divines, no regular church organization was effected till the settlement of Rev. Aaron Porter on the 11th of February, 1713; and on the 23d of September the same year, the Second or South church in Danvers colonized from Salem, with Rev. Benjamin Prescott for their first pastor.

During the year 1714 five churches were gathered, — the New North, in Boston, on the 5th of May, who settled Rev. John Webb on the 20th of the following October; the church in Hamilton on the 12th of October, with Rev. Samuel Wigglesworth, whom they settled for their pastor on the 27th; the church in Norton, a colony from Taunton, on the 28th, with Rev. Joseph Avery for their pastor; the First church in Abington, probably on the 17th of November, when Rev. Samuel Brown is known to have been settled over them; and probably the original church in Provincetown, though no surviving record fixes the exact date of the organization or of the settlement of Rev. Samuel Spear, their first minister. This last-named church subsequently became so nearly extinct by the depopulation of the

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\* The first meeting-house was erected this year, and the frame of it is known to have been hewed from the native forest of the island, where no trace of a tree is now to be found, except such as the hand of modern husbandry has planted.

place, that a reorganization was found necessary at the ordination of Rev. Samuel Parker, in 1774.\*

Four churches arose in 1715; the church in North Chelsea, then belonging to Boston and known as Rumney Marsh, October 19th, with Rev. Thomas Cheever, son of the renowned Boston schoolmaster, for their pastor; the East church in Medway, from the Medfield church, probably in November, when their first pastor, Rev. David Dunning, was ordained; the second in Beverly (Upper Parish), December 28th, having Rev. John Chipman for their pastor; and probably the church in Chilmark, as the ordination of Rev. William Homes, their first pastor, is known to have taken place this year. The Indians, and a small settlement of whites in the west part of the town, had been under the ministry of Rev. Ralph Thacher nearly thirty years earlier.

The Second church in Marblehead was gathered April 25, 1716, and settled Rev. Edward Holyoke, subsequently a president of Harvard College; and the Second church in Gloucester (West Parish), was separated from the First, October 4, the same year, and Rev. Samuel Thompson, their first pastor, was ordained on the 28th of November following.

In 1717, five churches sprang into life; the church in Brookline, a colony from the First in Roxbury, on the 6th of October, though Rev. James Allen, their first pastor, was not ordained till November 5th the next year; the church in Longmeadow, originally the Second in Springfield, probably on the 17th of the same month, the day that their first pastor, Rev. Stephen Williams, was ordained; the church in Canton, the then "South precinct" of Dorchester, with Rev. Joseph Morse for

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\* Provincetown was incorporated in 1727, and for ten or twelve years was in a flourishing condition. "In 1748 it was reduced to two or three families." During the first twelve years of Mr. Parker's ministry the general court granted £45 per annum towards his support, in consideration of the importance of the place to the interests of navigation, and the difficulty of keeping it peopled! It now has nearly 4,000 inhabitants, and four religious societies.



their pastor, on the 30th; the church in West Brookfield, with Rev. Thomas Cheney for their pastor, on the 17th,—nearly sixty years after the first settlement of the place;\* and the church in Littleton, probably on the 25th of December, when Rev. Benjamin Shattuck was ordained. A community of “praying Indians” occupied this spot prior to Philip’s war, and had an Indian preacher.

In 1718, five more churches were added; the church in Sunderland, a colony from Hadley, on the 1st of January, with Rev. Josiah Willard for their pastor; the church in Bridgewater, from the West Bridgewater church, having Rev. Benjamin Allen for their pastor, July 9th; the Second or East church in Salem, November 14th, whose first pastor, Rev. Robert Stanton, was ordained on the 8th of April following; the Second church in Salisbury, November 19th, over which Rev. Joseph Parsons was installed the next week; and probably during the same year the church in Northfield, with Rev. Benjamin Doolittle for their pastor. The original members of this church came from Northampton, Hadley, and Hatfield, as early as 1672, and erected a meeting-house and fort among the first houses built on the plantation; but Indian depredations, by which the first settlers suffered greatly, prevented the earlier organization of a church.

The three following churches were gathered in 1719: the New South in Boston (Summer street), numbered as the sixth, with Rev. Samuel Checkley for their pastor, on the 22d of November; the church in Orleans, who took with them Rev. Samuel Osborn, the pastor of the Eastham church, from which they came; and the First or South church in Worcester, with Rev. Andrew

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\* The township was granted to several inhabitants of Ipswich in 1660, and a settlement begun forthwith, and preaching established; but before a church was organized the town was laid in ruins by King Philip’s warriors, from which it was forty years in recovering the ability to reestablish Christian ordinances,—and then not without assistance from the legislature. See note, p. 114.

Gardner for their pastor, during the autumn of this year. This settlement was begun at a much earlier date, but was abandoned on account of Indian hostilities.

In 1720, the following six churches arose:— the East church in Needham, on the 20th of March, whose first pastor, Rev. Jonathan Townsend, was settled over them on the 23d of the same month; the church in Chatham, probably on the 15th of June, when Rev. Joseph Lord was ordained; the North church in Reading, June 29th, with Rev. Daniel Putnam for their pastor; the church in Lynnfield, originally the second in Lynn, with Rev. Nathaniel Sparhawk for their pastor, on the 17th of August; the church in Sutton, probably on the 9th of November, as their first pastor, Rev. John McKinstry, was ordained on that day; and the church in Kingston, a colony from the old church in Plymouth, with Rev. Joseph Stacy for their pastor, at what precise time in the year is not known.

This great accession to the number of Congregational churches in Massachusetts during these ten years was owing, not so much to any new impulse given to the current of Christian enterprise, as to the removal of obstacles which had obstructed its natural course. The peace of Utrecht, in 1713, terminated a ten years' war between England and France, which had been exceedingly destructive both of life and property to New England, but more especially to Massachusetts and New Hampshire, as being most exposed to hostile forays from the French colonies on the North and East. Indeed, the country had been in arms ever since the opening of Philip's war, in 1675; and it is the opinion of Hutchinson (Vol. II. 183), that "five or six thousand of the youth of the country had perished by the enemy, or by distempers contracted in the service during that time;" while "the various expensive expeditions actually prosecuted, and the preparations made for others, added to the constant defence of the extensive frontiers, and the support of civil government without any relief or compensation from the crown, certainly must have occasioned such an annual burden as was not felt by any other subjects of Great

Britain." Computing the entire population of the province at eighty thousand, which is the estimate given in the Collections of the American Statistical Association (Vol. I. 142), and dividing it equally among these 124 Congregational parishes that were taxing themselves to support a permanent ministry, it will give 645 souls, or about 130 families to each parish. Assigning two adults and three children to a family, which is the usual classification, there could have been only about fifty adult persons connected with each parish, or twenty-five taxable members. Considering the loss of men in the late military expeditions, the number of tax-payers was probably less. These, with their wasted estates, constituted the reliable basis of ministerial support. Could so many "learned, orthodox ministers" have found an adequate support on such a basis anywhere else in the world at that time? Would it be possible now to find it here, without large appropriations from the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society?

As the convention of Congregational ministers in Massachusetts took an organic form about this time, and introduced the custom (now venerable for its age) of appointing one of their number annually to preach a "convention sermon," this seems to be the place to state whatever may be known of its origin and objects.

We have already had occasion to notice the controlling influence which, in early times, the ministers of New England had, both in church and State. Though not a recognized branch of the legislature, like the "bench of bishops" in England, no lawned bishops were ever more anxiously consulted by the civil powers. In every public emergence, and on all perplexing questions in government and politics, their opinions were sought, and usually followed. In Massachusetts, for more than fifty years, John Cotton's "Judicials," and Nathaniel Ward's "Body of Liberties," constituted the only civil code. A class of citizens so necessary to the public weal were expected, as a matter of course, to be present at general elections, when governors and magistrates were to be set over the people. Modern writers

are not agreed as to the precise when or wherefore this political influence of the clergy was lost. Some of the more anti-Puritanic would have us believe that it was annihilated by the popular odium incurred in their persecution of the Quakers and Baptists about the year 1656; while yet these same, when they come to speak of the Salem witchcraft, thirty or forty years later, find enough of this clerical influence then and there, to admit of a second annihilation, which is accordingly dealt out, — just as some English historians represent the French as utterly crushed, over and over again, in the same war with England; and yet when hostilities cease, and treaty stipulations are to be settled, the French always seem to have a considerable quantum of existence left. Others date the downfall of this clerical power in State affairs to the repeal of the first charter in 1692. But it is certain that the general court found occasion to call on the ministers for something more than an election sermon, down to a later period than that. In Judge Sewall's journal, under date of "Friday, June 24, 1695," is the following entry: "The bill against incest was passed with the deputies, twenty-four noes and twenty-seven yeas. The ministers gave in their arguments yesterday, in writing, else it had hardly gone," etc. And we shall probably discover traces of the same political influence emanating from the Congregational ministers of New England as late as the Revolutionary war, if not later.

But, however this may be, the old manuscript journal above cited (now in possession of Rev. Samuel Sewall, of Burlington) makes it certain that the period we have reached in this sketch was characterized by "a general appearance of all the ministers at Boston, at the time of the general court for elections of magistrates;" that they usually dined together at one of the minister's houses, and not unfrequently had the governor, and some of the most distinguished of his council, to dine with them; but no arrangement appears to have been made for a convention sermon till 1720. On the 25th of May that year (election day), the ministers met at Judge Sewall's house; and at an adjourned meeting the

next morning, "Voted, that a sermon should be preached annually to the ministers on the day following election. Dr. Increase Mather was chosen to that service the next year. The Rev. Solomon Stoddard was also chosen in case the doctor should fail; and Dr. C. Mather to supply his place upon supposition that he should be prevented by the providence of God." The only other item of business noticed by this faithful chronicler, aside from devotional exercises, is entered thus: "It was proposed, and I think generally agreed, that days of fasting and prayer should be kept by our churches successively to ask the plentiful effusion of the Spirit on the rising generation." The vote respecting the sermon was carried into effect the next year. Dr. Increase Mather preached in a private dwelling-house, as did each of his successors during the first eight years — for the reason, probably, that it was intended to be exclusively a "*Concio ad Clerum*." The first notice of any charitable collection as a part of the convention business is in 1731, and this was for missionary purposes, which appears to have been the sole object of their charities for many years after. The annual collection for the widows and children of deceased ministers, and the incorporation of the Congregational Charitable Society for the safe-keeping and disbursement of the same, came in at a later date, and will be noticed in a subsequent part of this sketch.

Thus it appears that the convention sermon, and the convention itself, grew up, like all other old Congregational usages in New England, not from any preconceived purpose or decree of a few controlling minds, but from the seeds of Puritanism germinating and expanding into living forms by an innate force, and through a process as inevitable as it was spontaneous. It may also be added, that all the early convention sermons were eminently practical, and aimed solely at ministerial edification. The second one in the course was delivered by Cotton Mather (the substitute of Mr. Stoddard), May 31, 1722, in the parlor of Judge Sewall, a copy of which, "published at the request of them that heard it," has come down to us, showing marks of

narrow escape from the tooth of time. The text is Rom. 2: 19, "I know thy—*service*;" and the running title is, "The services of an useful ministry." After expatiating upon all imaginable methods in which "a minister may be serviceable,"—reading, studying, writing sermons, preaching them, administering to the poor, admonishing the rich, visiting the sick, catechizing the young, circulating good books, schooling his own heart, and bearing patiently the buffeting of others,—he touches upon "subjects to be handled" in preaching, and utters a special plea "on the behalf of some truths which all real and vital piety forever lives upon; and which yet, alas," he adds, "are threatened with a sentence of banishment from the ministry, in some churches, which once they had been a beauty and a safety to." These "truths" are presented under eight specifications, which he calls, and which we still call, "The doctrines of grace." This marks the beginning of that eclipse which, though not total, yet greatly obscured the orthodoxy of the churches during the next twenty years.

It was in the latter part of 1719, that a contention arose in the New North church, Boston, which, as it created an unhappy schism, and brought into debate a fundamental principle of Congregationalism, may be allowed a brief notice here. The facts, in a few words, are these. In settling an associate pastor with Rev. John Webb, it was voted in a regular church meeting, as a preliminary step, "1. That the church shall go before and lead in the choice, according to the professed principles and practice of the churches in New England. 2. Since the edification of the brethren of the congregation is to be considered on such an occasion, we are willing they should join with us in the call of a minister; that is to say, after the church has expressed their satisfaction with any particular person, we are willing that a major vote of the church and congregation assembled together, as is usual in country towns, shall determine whether the person, first chosen as aforesaid by the church, be finally settled in the pas-

torial office over us. And we all of us promise to make ourselves easy, and sit down contented with such determination and purpose by the grace of God to do so, unless some weighty and conscientious reason oblige us to the contrary; but upon this condition, that our brethren of the congregation are willing to act upon the same principles, and submit to the same rules." This was readily agreed to by the others; and it was stipulated also, that all who attended Mr. Webb's meeting, and aided in his support, should be considered "the congregation," and have a right to vote.

On the 9th of September the church met, and after a day spent in fasting and prayer, deposited their votes—thirty-four out of forty-four—for Rev. Peter Thacher, the popular and much esteemed pastor of the church in Weymouth. The next week, when the congregation met to cast their votes, six church-members and thirty-nine others of the congregation protested, and immediately withdrew, taking their written protest with them. Forty-six persons remained, and all voted for Mr. Thacher. The day for installation was fixed, and a council called, embracing all the Boston ministers, and five from churches in the vicinity. A few days before the installation, "the aggrieved brethren," by advice from the Boston ministers, proposed that their differences be referred to a mutual council. The church declined the proposal on the twofold ground that it came too late, and in a wrong way. On the day set for the installation services, none of the Boston ministers came, and only two from other places, with one delegate. The malcontents assembled at the same hour in a house which the council would have to pass in going the direct way to church, and sent a committee of their number to remonstrate against any further proceedings; avowing it as their determination to prevent the settlement of Mr. Thacher, "peacably if they might, forcibly if they must." The council heard their remonstrance, but could not feel its force. To avoid all danger of a collision in the street, Mr. Webb led the members of the council through a back way to the church, where

the installation services were performed,—not without riotous interruptions from the opposing party.

This humiliating affair—long since forgotten—brought up in a practical form the old question about the rights of Congregational churches and the power of councils. The importance of the principle here involved is the only reason for stirring the dead cinders of this extinct volcano. Let us see how such a case looks in the light of that age. Of all the pamphlets and printed documents growing out of the controversy, only two small tracts remain. One is entitled, "A seasonable Testimony to good Order in the Churches of the Faithful. Particularly declaring the usefulness and necessity of *Councils*, in order to preserving Peace and Truth in the Churches. By Increase Mather, D. D., with the concurrence of other ministers of the Gospel in Boston;" and was printed by 'B. Green,' March 1, 1720." The other came forth the next day from the press of "J. Franklin" (set in type, it may be, by his brother "Ben," who was an apprentice boy in his office at that time) under the title of "A brief Declaration of Mr. Peter Thacher and Mr. John Webb, pastors of the New North church in Boston, in behalf of themselves and said church, relating to some of their late Ecclesiastical proceedings." In these two antagonistic pamphlets (now lovingly stitched together into one, among the collections of the Congregational Library Association) we probably have a fair exponent of the views held by both parties,—the one leaning toward the juridical power of councils, the other towards the independent rights of churches. The former maintains, that, "if any of our churches presume to transact their weighty affairs, and such as are of a common concern to the churches in their neighborhood" without the use of councils; "or if they shall upon grievous differences among them refuse the advice of those who urge them to make use of this remedy; and much more, if they shall proceed in matters after the neighboring churches have signified that they cannot countenance their proceedings," they virtually "exclude themselves from



communion with the faithful," and may be proceeded against, even to excision. The latter asserts that "it is an essential right belonging to particular churches to enjoy a free liberty, within themselves, duly and regularly to inquire" into their own affairs, "and to judge upon them as becometh creatures endued with reason and conscience, who are ever to be supposed more nearly concerned for their own spiritual interests, than others can be supposed to be for them." At any rate, that "they ought to have the privilege reserved unto them of regularly determining when and in what cases to call in the help of their brethren."

The fact that the writers on both sides appeal to the Cambridge Platform, as they do with great earnestness, in support of their conflicting views, is evidence of at least an apparent discrepancy between its different parts, which we have before had occasion to notice. But the fact that the New North church was sustained in its proceedings by a strong public sentiment, under which the disaffected party were constrained to withdraw and form a separate church (the New Brick), also shows that in those days the key-note of Congregationalism — its leading idea, to which all other ideas embraced in the system were to be held subordinate and subservient — was the right of a church to manage its own affairs; that whatever power the Cambridge Platform confers on synods and councils cannot be truly interpreted, nor lawfully exercised, to the prejudice of this right; "that, according to the constitution of these churches," to quote the words of Messrs. Webb and Thacher, "neither the declaration of ministers nor of councils to any particular church is to be received by it as *law* only to be understood and so obeyed, but as *counsel* to be advised on, weighed, and determined upon according to the word of God, by the body of Christians to whom it is made; though we freely confess the affair ought to be managed with the greatest honor and respect to those that give their advice in a solemn way and manner, as well as with a due regard to their own both Christian liberty and holy edification." In short, the issue to

which this controversy came, most clearly shows that as late as 1720 it was a prevailing sentiment in Massachusetts that each particular church is the seat and source of whatever ecclesiastical power belongs to Congregationalists; and that synods, councils, consociations, and whatever other machinery may be found convenient and helpful in the working of our system, or deemed essential to the "well-being of the churches," are to be so used as in nowise to interfere with the free exercise of this power.\*

Whatever different views we may have of the expediency of settling a pastor under the forbidding circumstances which beset the New North church in settling Mr. Thacher, it must be confessed, that, as defenders of a great principle lying at the foundation of our church polity, they were clearly in the right and did a good service; and it was by losing sight of primitive Congregationalism, and looking solely at modern usage as an exponent of congregational law, that Mr. Ware, in his notice of their proceedings, could have reached the conclusion that "they were clearly in the wrong," — which Mr. Robbins, in his valuable "History of the Second Church," has inadvertently admitted, p. 301.

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\* The issue thus reached is the more worthy of record from the fact that the Cambridge Association, embracing all the Boston ministers, had passed two very stringent resolutions, — one on "the power of synods with respect unto particular churches;" and the other on "the power of elders in the government of the church;" in the former of which they claim for councils *decisive authority* in questions brought before them; and in the other the pastor's right of imposing a *negative* or *veto* on the decisions of the church. Dr. Mather brings these doings of the Cambridge Association into his *Magnalia* (Vol. II. B. V. § 7), in such close connection with some historical remarks of his on the Cambridge Platform, that an inattentive reader might easily mistake them for an addenda to that document, — as things embraced in "the substance of it," which he is there discoursing of. In truth, however, they not only have no connection with it, but, in their spirit are antagonist to it.

## CHAPTER XI.

1720-1730.

Thirty-five churches organized. — Symptoms of spiritual declension. — Dead Orthodoxy, and mistaken remedy for it. — Inadequate salaries. — "Shady-side" literature. — Abortive attempt to hold a general synod. — Causes of the failure. — Salutary effect of abandoning that mode of relief.

DURING the next decade (1720-1730), thirty-five Congregational churches arose in Massachusetts, and in the following order.

On the 18th of January, 1721, the church in Oxford was embodied, and, on the 11th of March succeeding, their first pastor, Rev. John Campbell, was ordained. This, however, was not the beginning of the Gospel in that town. About thirty families of French Protestants with Mons. Daniel Boudet for their minister, had occupied the place from 1686 to 1696, and then fled to Boston through fear of the Indians, — leaving to a hardier and more courageous band of settlers the honor of becoming the fathers of the town and founders of the first church. Four other churches were gathered during the same year (1721), namely, the present East church in Dracut, with Rev. Thomas Parker for their pastor, some time in February; the Leicester church, probably on the 15th of September, when Rev. Daniel Parsons was installed; the church in Rehoboth, on the 29th of November, with Rev. Daniel Turner for their pastor; and the Cohasset church, probably on the 13th of December, as that was the day on which occurred the ordination of their first pastor, Rev. Peter Hobart, grandson of the Hingham minister of that name, from whose church the colony was gathered.

The only church organized in 1722 was the New Brick, on Hanover street, Boston,—a secession from the New North, occasioned by a controversy growing out of Mr. Thacher's settlement, as narrated in the last chapter. The "aggrieved brethren," and their associates in this movement, professed to have nothing against Mr. Thacher, but objected to his removal from another church,—a most laudable sentiment in itself; which, yet, when resisted by a majority of votes, turned into an acrid state of feeling, which could be softened down only by the expensive process of building a new meeting-house. The church was embodied, and Rev. William Waldron, their first pastor, was ordained on the 23d of May, 1722.

In 1723, four churches arose; the church in Wayland, February 11th, a colony from Sudbury, who settled Rev. William Cooke for their first pastor on the 20th of March following; the church in East Bridgewater, probably on the 28th of February, when Rev. John Angier was ordained; the South church in Weymouth, on the 26th of September, with Rev. James Bailey for their pastor; and on the 4th of December the church in Shrewsbury, whose original members came chiefly from Marlboro', and settled Rev. Job Cushing at the time of their organization.

The churches in Hopkinton and Westboro' were gathered in 1724; the former on the 2d of September, with Rev. Samuel Barret for their pastor, and the latter, a colony from the Marlboro' church, on the 24th of October, when Rev. Samuel Parkman was also ordained in the pastoral office.

On the 12th of May, 1725, the Second, or East church in Barnstable, separated from the First, or West, and settled Rev. Joseph Greene. During the same year, probably, the church in Brimfield was gathered, and had Rev. Richard Treat for their first pastor; but with the loss of early records is also lost the exact date of these transactions. The church in Easton is also conjecturally assigned to this year, with Rev. Matthew Short for the first pastor.

The First church in Newburyport (originally the Third in Newbury) was organized January 12th, 1726, and Rev. John Lowell was ordained the week following. The Second church in Amesbury (West parish) was separated from the First, June 15th, the same year, with Rev. Paine Wingate for their pastor.

The church in Rutland was gathered, October 9, 1727, and their first pastor, Rev. Thomas Frink, was ordained November 1. The members were prepared for an organization four years earlier, and had even gone so far as to call a pastor, and fix the day for his installation; but before it arrived they were attacked by the Indians, August 14, 1723, and several of the inhabitants were slain, among whom was Rev. Joseph Willard, their pastor elect. During the same year (1727), the following were also gathered: on the 15th of November, the church in Westford, from the Chelmsford church, and settled Rev. Willard Hall; the Federal street church, Boston, a colony of Irish Presbyterians, with Rev. John Moorhead for their pastor; and, at uncertain dates, the North church in Dennis, a part of Yarmouth, with Rev. Josiah Dennis for their minister; also a church in Bellingham (now extinct), who settled Rev. Jonathan Mills.

Five churches were gathered in 1728; the church in Groveland, originally the second in Bradford, May 7th, with Rev. William Balch for their pastor; the church in Lunenburg, May 15th, who installed Rev. Andrew Gardner the same day; the church in Holliston, a colony from Sherborn, October 31st, over which Rev. James Stone was ordained, November 20th; the church in Hanover, probably on the 11th of December, when Rev. Benjamin Bass was ordained; and the second, or North church in Haverhill, though on what day is not known. The first pastor, Rev. James Cushing, was not ordained till the 2d of December, 1730.

In 1729 three churches were organized; the church in Stoneham, July 2d, who settled their first pastor, Rev. James Osgood, on the 20th of September following; the church in Methuen, October 29, over which

Rev. Christopher Sargent was installed the next week; and the church in Middleton on the 26th of November, with Rev. Andrew Peters for their pastor.

The following five churches were gathered in 1730: — the church in Bedford, with Rev. Nicholas Bowes for their pastor, on the 15th of July; the church in Walpole probably on the 16th of September, when Rev. Philips Payson was ordained; the church in Southboro', with Rev. Nathan Stone for their pastor, on the 21st of October; the church in Wellfleet (the exact time not known) under the pastorship of Rev. Josiah Lewis; and the church in Palmer, with Rev. John Harvey, who was ordained by the "Londonderry Presbytery," probably in December.

These thirty-five Congregational churches, added to the number previously organized, makes one hundred and seventy-eight in Massachusetts at the close of 1730, — all formed on the same ecclesiastical model, and founded on the same religious faith which the first fathers of New England had elaborated from the word of God, by years of intense study and prayer. Looking merely at this fact as it naturally connects itself in one's mind with the rapid progress of church extension about this time, we find it difficult to believe that we are approaching a dark and disastrous period, — the darkest and most disastrous of any in our religious history. And yet as we pause to examine more closely into the inner life of these churches, it becomes but too evident that the spirit of their Puritan fathers is suffering a rapid decline. The second generation of New England's worthies, — those lesser lights, as we have called them, in comparison with brighter luminaries that went before, — had all disappeared; and nothing yet betokened the rising of others to hold even this secondary rank in the religious firmament. The venerable Increase Mather, whom Grahame, in his history, characterizes as "the most eminent theologian, and the most pious and popular minister in Massachusetts" (Vol. I. 279), went down to the grave in 1723, under a sorrowful premonition that the glory was departing

from New England, in the decay of spiritual religion. Five years later, his son and colleague, Dr. Cotton Mather, whose learned pedantry was overmatched by his humble piety, left the world lamenting "a gradual and a growing apostasy;" and even expressing the "melancholy apprehension, lest New England have now done the most that it was intended for; and lest our glorious Lord come quickly, in various ways, to remove his golden candlesticks from a place which has been in a more than ordinary measure illuminated with them." (*Ratio Discip.* p. 196, 1726.)

Nor were these forebodings without foundation. With a creed as sound as John Cotton's, or John Calvin's, the ministers were lapsing into religious formalism, and the churches into spiritual apathy. The preaching lacked point and personal application, rather than orthodoxy; though not a few preachers, from prudential reasons, had become nearly silent on certain obnoxious truths, much insisted on by their predecessors, and not a few congregations were all the better pleased with this prudent and pointless style of preaching. In the preface to a small volume of "Five Sermons on Eternal Election, Original Sin, Grace in Conversion, Justification by Faith, and Saints' Perseverance," by Rev. Jonathan Dickinson, of Elizabethtown, N. J. (which preface was written by Rev. Thomas Foxcroft, of Boston, soon after this time), the writer laments that in the "sermons that pass the press" there should be so much "room for the complaint, which judicious observers have sometimes made, that the grand principles of the everlasting Gospel, though frequently touched upon, are generally not allowed their due consideration, are not so distinctly stated and so fully inculcated, as their importance justly demands." At the same time he charitably hopes that these printed productions may not be a true exponent of "the general tenor of preaching." Here his charity misled him. Several hundred manuscript sermons of that day, found among the collections which have already supplied so many materials for this sketch,

render it certain that the ordinary instructions of the sanctuary, as a general thing, were quite as defective in fulness and force of evangelical doctrine, as those which "passed the press."

Many seem to think that Arminianism was what ailed the ministry at that time. But this is a mistake. True, the churches were tending in that direction, and were likely enough to get there—just as a becalmed fleet is liable to drift upon sand-bars and shoals. But not a church nor a minister throughout the State had yet avowed an Arminian tenet nor renounced an article of the Calvinistic creed. Dead orthodoxy was the prevailing religion of the period now under review; and, with some marked exceptions, the reciprocal influence of pastor and people was like the dead burying their dead. Even those who were sufficiently alive to notice these death symptoms, appear to have had no just idea of the cause and cure. Was piety languishing, or immorality increasing, or awful judgments impending? The remedy was, to own the covenant and have their children baptized; or to join the church and come to the communion; or to set up family prayers. In a sermon dated 1719, from the text "Why have ye not obeyed my voice,"—which is sufficiently pointed and rousing,—the preacher thus "expostulates" under the sixth head of "Use II." "What numbers of people in some places remain unbaptized! And are there not thousands of people in the land, and some not very young neither, who never joined themselves to the churches of Christ; and never attend the Lord's Supper?"

In this remedial use of outward forms and rites, which was only the ripened fruit of the half-way covenant, we discover not only the chief cause of the spiritual declension, but the great obstacle to a thorough reform. It required the combined powers of an Edwards, a Whitfield, and a Tennent, energized and directed by the Omnipotent Spirit, to remove it out of the way. Even "the great earthquake" in 1727, which, from all accounts, must have wrought a powerful religious impres-



sion on many minds, so far from correcting this fallacy, only served to illustrate its force. Mr. Prince, in the *Christian History* (Vol. II. p. 381), speaking of its effect, says, "the people were greatly frightened, and many were awakened to such a sense of their duty, as to offer themselves to our communion." But he candidly adds, "very few came to me then under deep convictions of their unconverted and lost condition, or with the inquiry, 'What shall I do to be saved?' but rather to signify that they had such a sense of their duty to come to the Lord's table, that they dare not stay away any longer."

Hutchinson speaks of the same religious awakening, and of its transitory character, thus: "There was a general apprehension of danger of destruction and death, and many who had very little sense of religion before appeared to be very serious and devout penitents; but, too generally, as the fears of another earthquake went off, the religious impression went with them, and they who had been the subjects of both, returned to their former course of life." (Vol. II. p. 295.)

We must not suppose that all the churches were equally near the point of spiritual death. Some of them were blessed with pastors whose faithful and fervent preaching forbids the supposition. But we can easily believe that a large majority of them were receiving unconverted members to their communion,—persons of fair outward deportment, no doubt, but confessedly or presumptively unregenerate in heart. We can also imagine to what extent the custom of "owning the covenant" (which by this time had come to mean only that those who did so desired baptism for their children), must have given an unmeaning and farcical air to all religious covenants, and paved the way for hypocrisy to enter the church, as also for bold impudence to remain easy outside of it. One obvious effect of all this was to destroy church-discipline, and thus efface the distinction between the church and the world; for unconverted members would not generally be very strict in calling others to account, nor stand in much fear of being called to account themselves in a church

so constituted. True, the doctrines implied in this system of administering the ordinances were contradicted by the doctrines professed and preached. "But in the end," as has been well expressed by an able pen, "the doctrines on which a church is seen to act will prevail over those which are merely uttered; and the state of feeling among the members, and ultimately the preaching itself, will conform to the theory on which the church is governed and the ordinances administered." (*Great Awakening*, p. 6.) Precisely so was it with these churches and their ministers at the time of which we speak. The religion of their creed died out before its theology was changed, — so long before, that men had learned to abhor Calvinism as an absurdity, and took up Arminianism rather for consistency's sake than from conviction. It is worthy of particular notice, not only as explanatory of subsequent events, but as admonitory to us at the present time, that this deplorable state of the churches was the antecedent, not the consequent, — the legitimate cause, not the effect, — of all the Arminianism, Arianism, Pelagianism, or Unitarianism, which we shall find developed in the progress of this sketch. It is idle to charge upon any external agency the inroads which these heresies have made upon our denomination, as if the citadel of truth had been carried in a conflict with error. It is through quite another process that her dominion is lost and her sceptre taken. That there is evermore a tendency in the Christian church, and in every member of it, to slide from spiritual religion into formalism, need not be shown here; the whole past history of the church on earth proclaims it. And this religious formalism was the first sign of danger that appeared among these Congregational churches. That an orthodox creed may exist for a long time in connection with a low state of spiritual life, is equally apparent. It was the case here at the time now described. There is unquestionable evidence that the articles of faith in all these churches embodied the great doctrines of our Puritan fathers throughout this period. But the spirit and power of those doctrines were so feebly felt

in the hearts of both preacher and people, that it needed but the slightest occasion to arouse an active and virulent opposition to them. Such an occasion was about to be afforded; and that it brought out this result we shall see in the next chapter.

Before leaving this period, a few miscellaneous facts may be given, which will serve still further to illustrate the state of the churches. The support of the ministry, which had never been large, though generally satisfactory, and always sure, began now to fail, by reason mainly of a depreciated currency. The pecuniary terms on which ministers were settled in those days, were usually stated in two parts—so much for settlement, and so much for salary. In country towns, the settlement was about £200 lawful money, and the salary from £70 to £90, which, while corn was ninepence a bushel, and labor fourteen cents a day, and fuel merely the cost of cutting and carting, made a very comfortable living. But when, in consequence of repeated issues of bills of credit to meet war expenses, money had lost one third or one half its nominal value, it was impossible that ministers should live on their former salaries. Equity required a readjustment of the terms, to match the fluctuations of the currency; and in some parishes this was promptly done. But, as a general thing, religion was at too low an ebb, for equity, in such cases, to keep its balance. It happened, therefore, as it often has since, *in times of religious declension*, that the support of religious ordinances dragged heavily, and many a minister's family was reduced to straits. An old pamphlet, published anonymously in 1725, whose tawny and tattered condition seems to tell the reader, in the language of Job's messengers, "I only am escaped alone to tell thee," discloses an affecting and instructive tale. It was evidently written by a clergyman, and, as we learn from the preface, at the instance of a distinguished layman, who was also a magistrate. His object is to "lay open and set home" the people's duty in this regard, though he frankly confesses that he "don't expect to convince all who have low and contemptible thoughts

of God's word and ministers, or such as are eat up with covetousness." After giving the subject a most searching discussion, and charging the sin of "sacrilege" on those who rob God's ministers of an adequate support, he proceeds to answer the four following objections, the naked statement of which will sufficiently indicate the tone of public sentiment at that time. 1. "We give our ministers as much as we promised them, or bargained with them for, when we invited them to the work of the ministry among us; and what can they reasonably desire more of us, since we are as good as our word to them?" 2. "If we should give our ministers more, we should offend and grieve many of our neighbors." 3. "We are engaged in a chargeable war, so that if we should make our ministers' salaries as good as some think they were some years ago, the poor would be oppressed, and charges would lie heavy upon us all; and we know not why ministers should not suffer with us." 4. "We give our ministers enough to maintain their families honorably, if they spend it prudently; for they have more than many families among us spend in a year, who live handsomely, and we know no reason why we should give them more; and we think they have no reason to complain of us, it being apparent that they spend more, and live better in their houses, than we do."

These objections — bating a certain quaintness in the wording — would very well express the views still held by some in almost all our parishes. But it is certain that the annihilating force of this writer's reply to them finds nothing at the present day wherewith to liken it. As compared with the "shady-side literature" of our times, it might be called the Scripture-side logic; and could be withstood only by a shield capable of withstanding the thunder of Sinai. This was the second time that our Congregational ministry had been imperilled from this cause; and it deserves particular notice, that in this instance it is associated with a wide spread declension of religion, as in the other — about seventy-

five years before — it stands connected with a general depreciation of learning.

The year 1725 is memorable for an abortive attempt — the last ever made in Massachusetts — to hold a general synod. Four assemblies of this kind had preceded at different periods, namely, in 1636, 1648, 1662, and 1679; each by an order of the general court, passed at the request of ministers. In accordance with this ancient usage, the convention of Congregational ministers, at their meeting, May 27th, 1725, "considering the great and visible decay of piety in the country, and the growth of many miscarriages," made application to the provincial legislature, that they would "express their concern for the interests of religion in the country, by calling the several churches in the province to meet by their pastors and messengers in a synod, and from thence offer their advice upon that weighty case, which the circumstances of the day do loudly call to be considered — 'What are the miscarriages whereof we have reason to think the judgments of Heaven upon us, call us to be more generally sensible, and what may be the most evangelical and effectual expedients to put a stop unto those or the like miscarriages.'" (Hutch. Vol. II. 292.) The application was granted in council, but the house did not concur; and by the governor's consent, it was referred to the next session. This consent of that functionary cost him a sharp censure from his royal master, which put a stop to the proceeding. It appears that the Episcopal ministers in the province rose up against it, and found time, during the legislative recess, to invoke the aid of the Bishop of London, through whose agency the reprimand and veto were procured; on the ground that such a procedure might encourage dissenters, over the water, "to ask the same privilege, which, if granted, would be a sort of vying with the Established church." (Dummer's Letter in Hutch. Ibid.)

Whatever unkind feelings were thereby engendered between the three or four clergymen of the Established church in Massachusetts, and the ministers placed over

her one hundred and seventy-eight churches of the "standing order" (which opened an ecclesiastical war of several years' duration), it was undoubtedly a favor, both to ministers and churches, that no synod was allowed. This was their last reliance on "Egypt for help,"—the end of their dependence on secular power and outward ecclesiastical forms for the recovery of spiritual life. They were now in a condition to appreciate God's help, and to search out his prescribed but forgotten method of obtaining it.

## CHAPTER XII.

1730-1740.

Forty-five churches gathered. — Presbyterianism. — Samuel Mather's "Apology for the Liberties of the Churches." — "Great Awakening" — Jonathan Edwards and the revival at Northampton. — Prevalence of Arminianism arrested. — "Narrative of Surprising Conversions." — Its influence in preparing the way for a more general revival.

WE now enter upon a period which marks the dawn of a brighter day than had passed over these churches during the previous half century, — the period of the GREAT AWAKENING, as it has been called, which saved the life of evangelical religion in New England, when, to human view, it was about to die of spiritual languor. But the first fact which arrests our attention, as we glance our eye across the decade, 1730-1740, is the large number of Congregational churches — forty-five in all — which sprang up during this period.

The following five arose in 1731: — the church in Uxbridge, chiefly a colony from the Mendon church, January 6, whose first pastor, Rev. Nathan Webb, was ordained on the 3d of February; the West church in Randolph, derived from Braintree, with Rev. Elisha Eaton for their pastor, May 28th; the Second church in West Newbury, September 1, with no settled pastor, however, till the ordination of Rev. William Johnson, just one year later; the church in Raynham, a colony from Taunton, October 19, which settled Rev. John Wales the next day; and the church in Grafton, on an Indian reservation, known as Hassanamisco, December 28, where Rev. Solomon Prentice was settled the next day.

Three churches were settled in 1732: — the church in

Georgetown, which separated from the Rowley church, October 4, and settled Rev. James Chandler on the 18th of the same month; the Hollis Street church, Boston, on the 14th of November, whose first pastor, Rev. Mather Byles, was not ordained till December 20, the following year; and the church in Dudley (exact date not preserved), over which Rev. Perley Howe was settled June 12, 1735, as their first pastor.

Four churches sprang up in 1733:—the church in Carver, from the Plymouth church, with Rev. Othniel Campbell for their pastor, May 13; the church in South Hadley, with Rev. Grindall Rawson for their pastor, October 3; the church in Harvard, derived chiefly from Lancaster and Stow, October 10, having Rev. John Secomb for their pastor; and the church in Wilmington, a colony from the Woburn church, which settled Rev. James Varney, October 24.

On the 16th of October, 1734, two churches were formed, namely, one in Townsend, with Rev. Phineas Hemmenway for their pastor, and another in Halifax under the pastorate of Rev. John Cotton; the First church in Stockbridge, October 18, originally a mission church, was planted among the Stockbridge Indians, over which Rev. John Sergeant was ordained the year following; and a second church in Sandwich, composed of seceders from the first, with Rev. Francis Worcester for their only pastor, as a reunion was effected in 1749.\*

On the 18th of April, 1735, a schism occurred in the

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\* So completely was this church absorbed by its reunion with the first, that no lingering *tradition of its existence* could be found among the present inhabitants of the town, when a few scraps from the early records—supposed to have been lost more than a hundred years ago—were lately discovered among the entries made after the settlement of Mr. Williams, in 1749. From these data, it appears that the separation grew from a diversity of views touching the old custom of “relating experiences” before the congregation, in connection with a public profession of faith; and that it was finally healed by an agreement to leave it optional with each candidate to do it or not.



First church, Salem, from which the present Tabernacle church derives its date; though according to all received rules of settling such questions, it should bear the date of the First church (August 6, 1629), and the other should be numbered the Third.\* During the same year (1735), arose also the West church in Dedham, with Rev. Josiah Dwight for their pastor, June 4; the church in Upton, probably in the month of August, at which time they called Rev. Thomas Weld to become their pastor, though his ordination was delayed till two years later; a second church in Malden, with Rev. Josiah Stimpson for their pastor, September 24 (which reunited with the first after about sixty years' separation); the church in Sheffield, on the 22d of the same month, with Rev. John Hubbard for their pastor; the church in Burlington on the 29th of October, with Rev. Supply Clap for their pastor; the West church in Haverhill about the same time, with Rev. Samuel Bachellor; and the church in Blandford, a colony from Hopkinton, embodied before leaving

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\* "For twenty years, the present Tabernacle church alone was called the First church. The minority of the First church, by the aid of a council and the legislature, 'dismissed' Mr. Fisk, the pastor, on the 18th of April, (O. S.) 1735. Having held together and hired preaching for about a year, they were duly organized as a church in 1736, under the style of 'The Church and Parish of the Confederate Society in Salem.' More briefly, they were called the 'Confederate Church;' while their brethren, who had been separated from them by an ecclesiastical procedure which would not have been possible, since the Revolution, called themselves and were called by others 'The First Church of Christ in Salem.' Their organization was the same as had been transmitted from the 6th of August, 1629. In the course of twenty years, some of the former friends of Mr. Fisk returned to the church and society of those who had procured his forced and violent dismissal from his original pastorate. Perhaps the thorough evangelical spirit of Rev. Mr. Leavitt's preaching disaffected them. However this was, their return gave the Confederate church a 'majority of those who were members of the First church, at the time of Mr. Fisk's dismissal;' and it was therefore voted, that, from July 28, 1755, the church 'take on them in all public transactions the title of the First church in Salem!'" — Dr. Worcester's Memorial of the Old and New Tabernacle, p. 81.

home, and which subsequently settled for their first pastor, Rev. Mr. McClenathan, an Irish Presbyterian.

In 1736, the following churches were gathered:—the South church in Dedham, June 23, which settled Rev. Thomas Balch on the 30th; the church in Sturbridge, chiefly from Medfield, September 29th, with Rev. Caleb Rice for their pastor; the church in Hardwick, November 17, with Rev. David White for their pastor; and the Second church in Boxford (West Parish) on the 9th of December, over which Rev. John Cushing was ordained on the 29th of the same month.

Five churches were gathered in 1737:—the Lynde street church in Boston, January 3d, which settled Rev. William Hooper on the 18th of the following May; the church in Mansfield a colony from Taunton, probably on the 23d of February, when Rev. Ebenezer White was ordained; the church in Belchertown, probably during the spring, with Rev. Edward Billings, who was ordained in April, 1739; the church in Berkley, an offshoot from the Taunton church, November 2d, with Rev. Samuel Tobey, who was ordained on the 23d of the same month; and the church in Tewksbury from the Billerica church, probably on the 23d of November, when Rev. Sampson Spaulding was ordained.

The following five churches were constituted in 1738:—the North Bridgewater church, January 3d, whose first pastor, Rev. John Porter, was not settled till two years later; the church in Franklin, from the Wrentham church, February 16th, which settled Rev. Elias Howe on the 8th of November following; the Second church in Plymouth (Manomet precinct), November 8th, with Rev. Jonathan Ellis for their pastor, having had stated preaching among them for about seven years; the church in Acton, from the Concord church, which also settled Rev. John Swift on the 8th of November; and the church in Petersham, with Rev. Aaron Whitney for their first pastor, some time in the month of December.

Five churches were gathered in 1739:—the West Cambridge church, originally the second in Cambridge,

September 9th, with Rev. Samuel Cooke for their pastor; the First church in Amherst (West Parish), a colony from the Hadley church, November 7th, which settled Rev. David Parsons the same day; the church in Saugus, originally the third in Lynn, December 5th, with Rev. Edward Cheever for their pastor; and the Second, or North church in Marshfield, under the pastoral care of Rev. Atherton Lewis.

The three following were organized in 1740; the church in Wareham, January 5, with Rev. Rowland Thacher for their first pastor; the Second church in Rochester (Mattapoisett), probably on the 29th of October, when Rev. Ivory Hovey was ordained; and the church in Shutesbury (the precise date lost), whose first pastor, Rev. Abraham Hill, was not ordained till April 10, 1742.

Thus at the close of 1740 there were located in Massachusetts a fraternity of Congregational churches to the number of two hundred and four, unless we except the Federal street church in Boston, and the church in Palmer, both of which were organized Presbyterially, but soon afterwards assumed their present Congregational form. It may be proper here to add that the pastors of several others had strong Presbyterian tendencies, and took various methods to bring their respective churches to the same views; but with little or no success. The theory of Congregationalism, especially that first principle which concedes to the brotherhood the power of control, was so clearly perceived and tenaciously held, and consistently practised, that ministers, neither singly nor in association, could turn the popular current from the deep channel in which it had flowed peacefully along for more than a century. If Samuel Mather's "Apology for the Liberties of the Churches in New England," which was published in 1738, may be taken as a true exponent of the Congregationalism then current (and it professes to be such), never did these churches have a clearer understanding of their liberties, nor less disposition to surrender them. Neither his father, Cotton Mather, nor his grandfather, Increase, nor

yet his great-grandfather, John Cotton, in any of their numerous writings on the same subject, is quite so explicit in defining the rights of the churches, nor so bold in defending them against all human interference, whether ecclesiastical, synodical, or ministerial. He had evidently read "The Churches' Quarrel Espoused," by John Wise; and instead of passing it over in "dignified silence and pious contempt," — *visum est non alio remedio quam generoso silentio et pio contemptu utendum nobis esse* (C. Mather's Ratio. Dis. 185,) — as the author of the Proposals had tried to do, he has wrought the substance of it into this "Apology," and has thereby shown that the spirit of it pervaded those churches as late as the period we are now passing.

Especially important is it, before dismissing this author, to learn from him what position synods and councils held at that time in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. Chapter VIII. (pp. 109–18) seems to be devoted exclusively to this subject, for its heading is, "The Liberty of these Churches to sit and act in Councils and Synods, Cleared and Vindicated; and the Power of Synods explained." The first paragraph asserts the consistency and desirableness of calling together such bodies "upon requisite occasions;" but repudiates the idea of turning these "occasional helps into the form of a carnal state polity, and erecting a government out of friendly and Christian consultations." "There may be synods or meetings of pastors for promoting peace and concord; but there is great danger lest such meetings should be hurtful to the principles and liberties of particular churches." Councils should be composed of "pastors and laymen in equal numbers, and both should have equal right to speak their sentiments; but if the churches should only have such bishops or pastors as are either not so well acquainted with their constitution, or are enemies unto it, it is their duty to keep them at home, at least." (p. 112.) As to the proper functions of such bodies thus constituted, "they neither pretend to nor desire any power that is juridical. If they can but instruct and persuade, they gain their

end ; but when they have done all, the churches are still free to accept or refuse their advice." (p. 118.) The author confesses that some of his brethren "think it not enough for councils to persuade and give advice, but want something more for them." Instead of conceding it, however, he calls on the churches firmly to resist it. "Let them never blindly resign themselves to the direction of their ministers ; but consider themselves as men, as Christians, as Protestants, obliged to judge and act for themselves in all the weighty concerns of religion." (pp. 32, 122.) It may be worth while for the intelligent reader of this sketch to inquire among his reminiscences of past ecclesiastical troubles in our churches, — the bitter and long-standing quarrels which could not be healed by mutual councils, nor ex parte councils, nor anti-councils, — and see how many of them have originated in, or have been perpetuated by, either a heedless or a wilful departure from the principles of Congregationalism as here set forth by Rev. Samuel Mather, the last of our New England fathers, whose utterances on this subject are entitled to the weight of patristic authority.

In passing from ecclesiastical matters to those more strictly religious, we seem to be carried back to the valley of dry bones, and are permitted to witness the vision of returning life which Ezekiel there saw. The spiritual torpor which we found settling down upon the churches at the close of 1730, as described in the last chapter, continued to benumb the souls of men till about the year 1733, when, in not a few towns, the preaching had become so fully conformed to the practice, that the existence of Arminianism to an alarming extent could no longer be doubted. The pretence of such preachers "that they were only explaining some of the doctrines of Calvinism more rationally than had formerly been done," just to avoid certain difficulties which incumbered the truth, was no longer conceded by their more evangelical brethren : and a controversy arose, which at first assumed "a very threatening aspect upon the interest of religion." As the results of this controversy were

of vital moment, and entirely different from what was feared by many good men, the facts, as stated briefly by President Edwards in his "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," deserve a place here. "The friends of vital piety," says he, "trembled for fear of the issue; but it seemed, contrary to their fear, strongly to be overruled for the promoting of religion. Many who looked on themselves as in a Christless condition, seemed to be awakened by it, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land, and that we should be given up to heterodoxy and corrupt principles; and that then their opportunity for obtaining salvation would be past. Many who were brought a little to doubt about the truth of the doctrines they had hitherto been taught, seemed to have a kind of trembling fear with their doubts, lest they should be led into by-paths, to their eternal undoing; and they seemed, with much concern and engagedness of mind, to inquire what was indeed the way in which they must come to be accepted with God. There were some things said publicly on that occasion, concerning justification by faith alone." (Edwards's Works, Vol. IV. 21.)

The modest allusion, in this last sentence, to the part which he himself took in the controversy, is characteristic of this great man. It is well known that his two discourses on Justification by Faith alone, from Rom. 4: 5, and others on kindred themes which followed in the series, not only put to rout the Arminian forces entrenched all around him, but were instrumental in the conversion, as he believed, of "more than three hundred souls" among his own flock, "in the space of half a year; and about the same number of males as females." Some of his most influential parishioners at first deprecated his course, and besought him to desist, through dread of some undefinable harm that might come from combating the prevalent easy religion of the day with such hard and metaphysical doctrines. "But it was no proof of arrogance in him, to be conscious that he understood the crisis and the subject, and was able to say things that his people needed to hear."

(Great Awakening, 10.) In his preface to the sermons on "Justification by Faith alone," published a few years after, he says: "While I was greatly reproached for defending this doctrine in the pulpit, and just upon my suffering a very open abuse for it, God's work wonderfully brake forth amongst us, and soules began to flock to Christ, as the Saviour in whose righteousness alone they hoped to be justified. So that this was the doctrine on which this work in its beginning was founded, as it evidently was in the whole progress of it." (Works, Vol. V. 348.)

It was near the close of 1734 that this extraordinary revival commenced in Northampton, from whence it soon spread into South Hadley and Suffield; then in Sunderland, Deerfield, and Hatfield; afterwards in West Springfield, Longmeadow, and Enfield; finally in Hadley and Northfield,—thus penetrating "from one end to the other of the county." It may here be added, that in Connecticut also there was a similar work of grace in some sixteen towns, which, if not directly referable to the awakening in Northampton, was simultaneous with it, both in its beginning and decline, and it partook of precisely the same characteristics. These characteristics were strongly marked, and can all be accounted for on principles not less philosophical than scriptural. Edwards has described them fully in his "Narrative," the study of which is essential to a right understanding of the doctrinal and religious differences which that revival so suddenly developed throughout New England. An allusion to one or two must suffice for this sketch. Most prominent among them was an utter abandonment of all self-help in securing salvation. Whatever solemn truth or alarming providence might have arrested the thoughtless sinner's attention, his whole subsequent experience till he became a confirmed convert was an illustration of the text, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;" and thus contradicted "the new-fashioned divinity," as "the Arminian scheme of justification by our own vir-

tue" was then called. Two circumstances, no doubt, conspired to give prominence to this characteristic of the revival: first, the preliminaries to conversion had been constantly preached, but to no practical purpose; *do and live, do and live*, had long been sounding in the ears of congregations that were all the while doing less, and becoming more dead; second, the opposite doctrine of justification by faith alone had been cleared up once more, as it was at the opening of Luther's reformation; men now understood it, and were, intellectually at least, convinced of its truth. So that their religious convictions, when once aroused, would almost inevitably have this type, which Edwards calls a feeling of "absolute dependence on God's sovereign power and grace, and an universal necessity of a Mediator." Another marked characteristic of the revival was, a clear perception, on the part of its subjects, of God's justice; — his justice in "their condemnation" while in a natural state — his "just liberty with regard to answering their prayers, or succeeding their pains," while they continued in that state — his justice "in receiving others and rejecting them." Edwards mentions some who felt such a "sense of the excellency of God's justice, that they almost called it a willingness to be damned; though it must be owned they had not clear and distinct ideas of damnation, nor does any word in the Bible require such self-denial as this. But the truth is, as some more clearly expressed it, salvation appeared too good for them; that they were worthy of nothing but condemnation; and they could not tell how to think of salvation being bestowed upon them, fearing it was inconsistent with the glory of God's majesty, which they had so much contemned and affronted." (Ib. IV. 39.)

It is easy to imagine how strange such a commotion in the religious world would seem, springing suddenly from out the dead calm that had reigned for years. It was like the earthquake, all the more startling from the stillness that precedes it. These experiences, too, — so unlike any thing that had been experienced by multi-



tudes of reputable professors; and the religious truths therein illustrated,—so opposite to the prevalent preaching,—could hardly fail to provoke comparison and arouse opposition. If this was the way to heaven, many church-members and some ministers were not walking thitherward. If this was true religion, their hopes were fallacious. They must, of necessity, think ill of the one or the other. “It was inevitable, human nature being what it is, that evidence should be sought and found against the work at Northampton; that all real faults should be gathered up and reported; that a bad interpretation should be put upon every thing that the hearer or beholder could not understand; and that every evil report should be exaggerated, till the sum total met the wishes of those who were anxious to condemn the work, lest the work should condemn them.” (Great Awakening, 17.)

Here, then, commenced a divergence between two lines of theological speculation, and two corresponding types of religious experience, which, under different names, and at different angles of divergency, have been projected into our times. And it is worthy of particular notice that this classification was, in the most literal sense, the work of God’s Spirit; that the affinities on which it was formed were developed in a revival of religion, and sprang solely from the differing views entertained respecting regeneration, or the new birth. This explains the fact that the Arminianism of New England from that day to this (except among the Methodists) has partaken more largely of the Pelagian than of the Arminian element, though the name has not been changed. It also accounts for certain metaphysical distinctions in explaining the doctrine of the new birth which have attached to the orthodox New England theology ever since that time. When rightly understood and clearly presented, it may be called revival theology, and originated with Edwards.

In bringing this chapter to a close, it ought to be stated that the revival of 1734–6, though it suffered a perceptible decline during several years following, is

not to be separated from that more extensive awakening which followed the labors of Whitefield in 1740-2, and which will be noticed in the next chapter. The spell of stupidity had been broken in a considerable number of the churches, and the spiritual incubus shaken off. Tidings of these strange things came to other places, and put men upon thought. In answer to a request from Dr. Colman of the Brattle street church, Boston, Mr. Edwards wrote him an account of the revival in Northampton and its neighborhood, which was published, and copies sent to England and Scotland. This excited so much interest in the circles where it came, that a more full account was desired and obtained, which was also published in London, under the title of "Narrative of Surprising Conversions," with an introduction by Drs. Watts and Guise, and in 1738 republished on this side the water, with several sermons from the same author, which had been especially blessed in promoting the work. Evangelical pastors and church-members were greatly quickened in many places where no general awakening prevailed; and private praying circles called "Societies," or "Family meetings," were instituted in the different neighborhoods of many towns, with a "Covenant" or "Constitution," subscribed by the members, obliging them to meet at each other's houses weekly or monthly "to seek the Lord." An original document of this sort, found among the papers of Deacon Henry Prentiss of Cambridge, and in his own handwriting, gives seven "reasons" for such a meeting, and twelve "rules" for conducting it, which reasons and rules breathe a spirit of piety and penitence most refreshing to contemplate, — reminding one of those "who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools." All these recuperative measures were preparing the way for that wonderful effect which the preaching of Whitefield produced when he first visited New England in the latter part of 1740.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1740-1750.

Organization of forty-five churches. — Friendly relations of Congregationalists and Presbyterians. — George Whitefield's first visit to New England, and the effects of his labors. — Gilbert Tennant. — James Davenport, and the Separatists. — Strife of parties. — Whitefield's second visit. — His antagonists. — Estimate of the revival.

THE period on which we are now entering (1740-1750) is scarcely less distinguished for the planting of new churches, than for the spiritual renovation of those already planted.

The following five sprang up in 1741: — the church in Milford, April 5, whose first pastor, Rev. Amariah Frost, was ordained December 21, 1743; the church in Sharon, from the Canton church, May 20, and settled Rev. Philip Curtis on the 13th of January following; the North church in Wilbraham (originally the Fourth in Springfield), with Rev. Noah Merrick for their pastor, in June; the church in Bolton, chiefly from the Lancaster church, November 4, with Rev. Thomas Goss for their first pastor; and the church in Bernardston, which embodied in Deerfield, November 25, where Rev. John Norton was also ordained over it the same day.

On the 19th of July, 1742, Rev. Samuel Mather's church, so called, seceded from the Old North in Boston, where he had been colleague pastor with Rev. Joshua Gee for about nine years, and organized as the Tenth Congregational church, and built a meeting-house on the corner of North Bennett and Hanover streets, which they occupied till the death of Dr. Mather in 1785; when, in accordance with his dying request, the flock returned to their former fold, and the meeting-

house subsequently passed into the hands of the Universalists. During the same year (1742), on the 20th of October, the church in Westminster was gathered, with Rev. Elisha Marsh for their pastor; the church in New Salem, December 15th, with Rev. Samuel Kendall in the pastoral office; and the church in Holden, chiefly from the Worcester church, on the 22d of December following, when Rev. Joseph Davis was also ordained as their pastor.

The eight following were organized in 1743:— the North church in Middleboro' (Titicut parish), February 4, whose first pastor, Rev. Solomon Reed, was not formally settled till 1750; the church in Southampton, a colony from the Northampton church, with Rev. Jonathan Judd for their pastor, June 8; the church in Leominster, a part of Lancaster, September 14, when Rev. John Rogers was also ordained; the church in Boylston, a part of Shrewsbury, October 6, which settled Rev. Ebenezer Morse on the 26th; the church in Great Barrington, an offshoot from Sheffield, December 28, with Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D. D., for their first pastor; and some time during the same year, the churches in Warren, and the East parish of Haverhill, the former with Rev. Isaac Jones, and the latter with Rev. Benjamin Parker, for their respective pastors, who were both ordained the next year.

Five churches arose in 1744:— the church in Spencer, a colony from the Leicester church, May 17, which settled Rev. Joshua Eaton on the 17th of November following; the church in Stoughton (the third that arose within the original limits of that town), August 10, which was destitute of a pastor till the settlement of Rev. Jedediah Adams, on the 19th of February, 1746; the church in New Marlboro', October 31, with Rev. Thomas Strong for their pastor; a small church in Plymouth, which seceded from the First, with Rev. Thomas Frink for their pastor, November 7, and returned in 1776; and the church in Sterling, a part of Lancaster, December 19, with Rev. John Mellen for their first pastor.

Some time during 1745, the Second, or South church in Hingham was separated from the First, with Rev. Daniel Shute for their pastor; also the church in Pelham (originally Presbyterian), with Rev. Robert Abercrombie for their pastor, whose ordination sermon—still extant—was preached by President Edwards.

On the 3d of January, 1746, nineteen disaffected members of the First church in Newbury, withdrew, and formed a separate organization,—the same is now the First Presbyterian church in Newburyport,—and shortly after settled Rev. Jonathan Parsons. On the 21st of May following, the church in Northboro' colonized from the Westboro' church, with Rev. John Martin for their pastor; and on the next day, May 22, a large secession from the Second church in Ipswich (now Essex) was effected, and Rev. John Cleaveland was settled over the new organization, February 25, the year after. A reunion, however, was effected in 1774.

In 1747, the following nine were added:—the church in Pepperell, from the Groton church, January 29, which settled Rev. Joseph Emerson, on the 25th of the next month; a second church in Woburn, with Rev. Josiah Cotton for their first and only pastor, July 15, whose members, after a few years, were amicably reunited with the First, from which they came; the church in Lincoln (originally the Second in Concord), August 20, which settled Rev. William Lawrence the next year; the present Second, or South church in Ipswich, August 22, with Rev. John Walley for their pastor; the present First church in Millbury, October 10 (which was then the Second in Sutton), with Rev. James Wellman, who was ordained the following month; the church in Douglas, a colony from Sherborn, November 11, over which Rev. William Phipps was ordained December 16; the church in Harwich, November 6, with Rev. Edward Pell for their pastor; a church in Fall River (then Freetown), with Rev. Silas Brett for their first and only pastor, whose faithful but unappreciated labors in that field were terminated and the church disbanded in 1775; and, probably, the First, or East church in Granville,

with Rev. Moses Tuttle for their first pastor, but the exact date is lost.

On the 17th of February, 1748, another Congregational church arose in Boston, the eleventh in number, known as Rev. Andrew Croswell's, which occupied a place of worship on School street, built and formerly used by a congregation of French Protestants. At the close of Mr. Croswell's pastorate, the members returned to the several communions from which they came, and their meeting-house again changed owners, falling at length into the hands of the Catholics, where their first church in Boston was constituted. On the 31st of August, the same year, 1748, the church in Hanson was gathered from the Pembroke church, and settled Rev. Gad Hitchcock, D. D., in October following; also the East church in Attleboro', on the 30th of November, with Rev. Peter Thacher for their pastor, who had preached to them steadily during the previous five years.

Only two Congregational churches were gathered in 1749; the Linebrook church in Ipswich (whose members occupy a part of Rowley also), November 15, when Rev. George Leslie was ordained as their first pastor; and the church in Greenwich, probably on the 20th of December, when Rev. Pelatiah Webster was ordained.

In 1750, four churches arose:—the church in Athol, August 29, over which Rev. James Humphrey was ordained in November following; the church in Tyringham, September 25, which settled Rev. Adonijah Bidwell, October 3; the Second, or West church in Medway, October 4, whose first pastor, Rev. David Thurston, was not ordained till June 23, 1752; probably the West church in Middleboro' (with a membership located partly in Taunton), who had, for their first pastor, Rev. Benjamin Ruggles; and near the close of the year, a company of Scotch-Irish were organized into a church in Colerain by the "Boston Presbytery," and settled Rev. Alexander McDowell.

It will be seen that several of these later churches, like two or three of an earlier date, whose original members came from Scotland, or the north of Ireland,

were formed at first on the Presbyterian model. But as they all, with a single exception, afterwards assumed the Congregational polity, which they still retain, their history, excepting only that one, is included in this sketch, — which now, at the close of 1750, embraces two hundred and forty-six churches. The first permanent organization of Presbyterians in Massachusetts was the one gathered from the Old Newbury church in 1746, as already noticed, — a movement, by the way, which originated not so much in a denominational spirit, as in the deep religious excitement that divided so many other churches at that time. It is pleasing to add, in this place, that the two denominations, throughout this period, and through long years on either side of it, were essentially one, not only in Christian doctrine, but in ecclesiastical and ministerial fellowship. There is no historic record, no remembered instance, of opposition on the part of our Congregational fathers to the gathering of a Presbyterian church, wherever were found members of that communion desirous of doing so. But records and reminiscences without number are at hand, showing a cheerful consent. As early as 1640, when Congregational churches were the only ones here, and had every thing their own way, a band of Presbyterians wrote from Scotland “to know whether they might be freely suffered to exercise their Presbyterial government amongst us; and it was answered affirmatively, they might.” (Winslow’s Brief Narr. in Young’s Chron. 405.) From that time almost to the present, “Heads of Agreement,” “Plans of Union,” and coöperative alliances mark the way-side along which the two have travelled together, mutually “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” True, our fathers were tenaciously attached to their own church polity, — more so than the bulk of their descendants are at the present time, and defended it from encroachments with more warmth of zeal. Even those Scotch brethren, to whom such a ready welcome was extended, were told “not to expect that we should provide them ministers; but getting such themselves, they

might exercise their Presbyterian government at their liberty, walking peaceably towards us, as we trusted we should do towards them." And when, as Winthrop informs us (Vol. II. 137), a discussion arose in a convention of ministers and magistrates in 1643, about "the Presbyterian way," which was "concluded against" in that body, it was simply a conclusion not to change their *own* way, at the request of the "Newbury ministers," — who, the governor rather curtly adds, "took time to consider the arguments." And among the many sharp sayings of John Wise, in his "Churches' Quarrel Espoused," nothing is said against Presbyterians holding to their own polity, but only against Congregationalists giving up theirs. It was by this peaceful yet firm and consistent adherence to their principles, and not by the arts of proselytism, that the Congregational churches of Massachusetts so generally drew the Presbyterians who came among them to their views of church-government.

But the distinguishing characteristic of this period in our ecclesiastical history is "The Great Awakening," whose antecedents and opening chapter have been already given. The revival at Northampton and its vicinity in 1735 had subsided, but its influence through Mr. Edwards's published "Narrative," was silently pervading the eastern section of the province, when Rev. George Whitefield arrived in Boston, September 18, 1740, on his first visit to New England. His fame had preceded him. In the afternoon of the next day he preached in Brattle street meeting-house to "about four thousand people;" the day following, in the Old South, to "six thousand;" and on the Common, at a later hour of the same day, to "eight thousand," — which out-door assemblies afterwards increased to "twenty" and even "thirty thousand." These numbers are taken from his own published journal; and though usually adopted by his biographers without questioning, must be received with some abatement — at least the meeting-house assemblies must — unless he included the outside throng, who could neither see the preacher nor hear his voice.



From Boston he proceeded east as far as York, in Mainé; then west to Northampton; and completed the tour of New England on the 1st of December, having travelled upwards of eight hundred miles in seventy-four days, and "preached one hundred and seventy-five times in public, besides exhorting frequently in private."

In order to form any just conception of the religious excitement that everywhere attended his preaching, on this remarkable tour, one must bear in mind the religious formalism and deadness that for long years before had been creeping over the ministers and churches; the undisguised appearance of men at the Lord's table, and in the pulpit, who did not pretend to have been born again, and of a vastly larger number, whose pretensions lacked evidence; the distressing fear of being utterly forsaken of the Lord, which began to oppress pious hearts all over New England, just before the "Surprising Conversions" in the valley of the Connecticut, — a valley, which, like that of "Achor," was mercifully "given for a door of hope" at that desponding moment; together with a universal expectation, or dread (according to the different views that each one held) of some remarkable effects to follow the advent of Mr. Whitefield here, as elsewhere. In these circumstances, let it only be supposed that he preached the truth of God intelligibly and faithfully, adapting that truth to the known religious wants of his auditors, and applying it fearlessly, earnestly, eloquently, — giving to the doctrine of the *new birth* a prominence, corresponding with the privacy into which it had retired, and declaring boldly to unconverted professors and preachers just what God plainly says in his word of their character, — and we can easily see that there must have been an upheaving of the stagnant public sentiment on religion, which, like ocean waves lifted by the tempest, could not be easily controlled, nor suddenly rocked again to rest.

Only two weeks after Mr. Whitefield left New England, Rev. Gilbert Tennent came, and performed a similar tour of about the same length. These two

preachers, extremely dissimilar in their pulpit oratory, were remarkably alike in their power to impress (the one by melting, the other, by crushing) the hearts of their hearers. Both were unsparing in their denunciations of dead formalism, and were sufficiently, though not very offensively, personal, in their addresses to unconverted ministers and church-members. Immense were the throngs that attended their meetings on all days of the week, and at all hours of the day; and large accessions were made to the churches. Magistrates and civilians, merchants and mechanics, children, servants, and negroes, all were religiously affected, and great numbers hopefully converted. Opposition, where it existed, was generally concealed, or, if it broke forth in open demonstrations, it was utterly powerless to stop the movement, which, thus far, was manifestly the work of God, and seemed scarcely to abate under the ordinary means of grace, when Whitefield and Tennent had withdrawn. Alluding to this stage of the revival, Mr. Prince, in his *Christian History*, says: "And thus successfully did this divine work, as above described, go on, without any lisp, as I remember, of a separation, either in this town, or province, for above a year and a half after Mr. Whitefield left us, namely, the end of June, 1742; when the Rev. Mr. Davenport, of Long Island, came to Boston. And then, through the awful providence of the sovereign God, the wisdom of whose ways are past finding out, we unexpectedly came to an unhappy period, which it exceedingly grieves me now to write of."

The long story of what followed, filling an immense number of pamphlets, many of which (thanks to Mr. Prince) are still preserved in the Old South library, may be intelligibly told in a few words. Rev. James Davenport, a lineal descendant of the renowned John Davenport of New Haven and Boston, early caught the revival spirit, which, in him as in many others, soon rose to enthusiasm, and ended in fanaticism. In the progress of his wild career, and before his extravagances had crippled his influence, he came to Charles-

town, where his conduct during the Sabbath excited painful suspicions, and brought him into a conference with the ministers of Boston and vicinity, which resulted in a published "Testimony" against four particulars in his practice, and a decision, on their part, not to invite him into their pulpits. This, of course, offended those who, by sympathy of nature or taste, were inclined to indulge Mr. Davenport's vagaries, and brought him out in open denunciation "against us all," says Rev. Mr. Prince, "naming some as unconverted, representing the rest as Jehoshaphat in Ahab's army, and exhorting the people to separate from us; which so diverted the minds of many from being concerned about their own conversion, to think and dispute about the case of others, as not only seemed to put an awful stop to their awakenings, but also on all sides to inflame our passions, and provoke the Holy Spirit in a gradual and dreadful measure to withdraw his influence." As Edwards and Whitefield and Tennent represented the class of ministers whom God employed as promoters of this work, so may Davenport, and his ever ready apologists Croswell and Pomeroy, be taken as exponents of a numerous class, whose rash and erratic zeal, by involving the work in controversy, brought it to a pause. The *Separatists*, as they were called, were by no means discriminating in their alleged reasons for separation. Some withdrew because they were opposed to the revival, even in the mildest form of it; others, because the churches and ministers would not go with them to the full extent of their "new light" and new measures. Not a few of these last, becoming involved in strife with their brethren, and exposing themselves to church censure and civil penalties, at length changed their denominational standing, and became Baptists;—not so much through dissatisfaction with their baptism, as with the legal restraints upon their property to support ministers from whose flocks they had conscientiously separated. It is often insinuated that the civil enactments of that period bore peculiarly hard upon the Baptists; but what are the

facts? The former restraints upon their liberties had been relaxed, at least to the acknowledgment of their rights, as a denomination, to organize churches, support ministers, and worship God in their own way, with a full exemption from assessment to support ministers of the "standing order," as the Congregationalists were called. It was this "standing order," on which the law bore the hardest, by compelling all who were not Baptists, or something else known as a distinct denomination, to pay taxes for the support of the "able, learned, Orthodox minister," whom the major part of the town voters had settled over them. Separations, unless brought about in the way provided for by statute, were not allowable, nor were such separatists released from their due proportion of taxes in the society from which they came. This wrought immense mischief to the Congregationalists, and contributed largely to build up the Baptists, by driving the disaffected into their ranks. Of the forty-five Congregational churches in Massachusetts that sprang into life during the ten years now under review, eight or nine had their origin in this spirit of separatism; while more than twice as many others, originating in the same spirit, grew at length into Baptist churches, and therefore are not included in our list.

These small local strifes by degrees ran into a general controversy, which divided the churches throughout New England into two great factions (the friends and the opposers of the revival), which, in 1743, gave expression to their conflicting views in published testimonials. The first came forth from the "general convention of Congregational ministers," under this heading: "The Testimony of the Pastors of the Churches in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England, at their Annual Convention in Boston, May 25, 1743, against several Errors in Doctrine, and Disorders in Practice, which have of late obtained in various parts of the Land; as drawn up by a Committee chosen by the said Pastors, read and accepted, paragraph by paragraph, and voted to be signed by the Moderator in their name, and

printed." The other was headed "The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New England, at a meeting in Boston, July 7, 1743, occasioned by the late happy Revival of Religion in many parts of the Land." As to the first of these documents, the way in which it was brought in and carried through occasioned much discontent, and some angry correspondence. By a vote of thirty-eight ministers, it was signed by the moderator "in the name of the convention." It was subsequently doubted whether there would have been a majority without the votes of ministers from other colonies; and whether more than "one fifth of the ministers in Massachusetts would have subscribed their names, if the proposal for a personal subscription had prevailed." The utterance of this testimony, under these circumstances, led to an immediate call for another convention of the friends of the revival, to be held in Boston, July 7, the day after college commencement, to give their testimony in its favor. Those approving of the design who could not be present were desired to "send their attestations, and communicate their thoughts seasonably in writing." This was the body from which the second document proceeded, with the signatures of sixty-eight, and the attestations of forty-five,—one hundred and thirteen in all, of which twenty-eight were from other colonies.

To this pass had the controversy come, and thus the parties stood, when Whitefield made his second visit to New England, in October, 1744. And though his auditors were counted by thousands, and his friends in Boston offered to build him "the largest place of worship ever seen in America," which he declined; though he preached often, and in his journal records "movings" and "meltings" as formerly, and some interesting cases of conversion, still there was no revival, in the present technical sense of that word. "People heard, and were affected; but there was no spreading among the impenitent, as if by sympathy, or by a simultaneous impression on all, of those views which constitute conviction of sin. Nor ought any thing else to have been

expected. Both ministers and people were thinking too much about the man, to profit by his preaching." (Great Awakening, 369.) Mr. Whitefield's time, too, was much taken up in self-vindication, — publishing replies to published assaults, answering charges brought against him by associations, and correcting statements in the second edition of his journals, which had been too hastily admitted into the first. These journals, by the way, appear to have kindled hotter resentment against him than his preaching. And it must be confessed that many of his strictures, especially on Harvard and Yale colleges, as published in the first edition, were extravagant, and his estimate of the number of unconverted ministers was uncharitable. He himself confessed it, and magnanimously expunged or modified what he had written in not a few instances, and made frank apologies. But it was of no avail. The doctrines which he preached, rather than the measures which he pursued, were what moved the leaders in the opposition to take up arms against him; though it was mainly by combating offensive measures, that the war was carried on. The insane extravagances, fanaticisms, and denunciations of Davenport and his associates, the wild disorders of the Separatists, and the wicked retaliations which these provoked, were all laid to the charge of Whitefield, and held up as fruits of the revival. It was in vain that he could disprove such charges brought against himself, unless he would also denounce those claiming to be his followers who were guilty of them; and equally vain for the guilty themselves to make and publish retractions, as Davenport did, in the most humble, penitential phrase; nothing would allay the opposition. As further evidence that it was the *revival*, and not its mere accompaniments, that aroused this resentment, Dr. Sewall, of the Old South church, made an earnest endeavor, in the convention of 1743, to insert "an attestation to a revival of religion in many parts of the land," in connection with their "testimony against errors and disorders" (for its friends in that body were not unwilling to join in condemning the disorders which

had grown out of it), but the proposal was resisted and ruled out. In fact, the two parties into which the ministers and churches of Massachusetts were then divided, leaving out the Separatists, differed mainly in this: both acknowledged the existence of disorders, and condemned them; but while the one could see little or nothing else as the fruits of the revival, the other saw fruits of grace also which infinitely outweighed them. The one noticed only the tares that came up with the wheat; the other saw them overtopped by bending grain, which, in spite of the tares, was ripening for a bountiful harvest. Mr. Edwards was the acknowledged champion of these last, and Dr. Chauncy of the others. Edwards's "Narrative of Surprising Conversions" was followed by Chauncy's "Wonderful Narrative; or a Faithful Account of the French Prophets, their Agitations, Ecstasies, and Inspirations." Edwards published his "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England," which was the great work on that side; the next year Chauncy followed it with his "Seasonable Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England," the great work on the other side. Edwards admits and censures the evil, but rejoices in the abounding good that has come from the revival, and prays for its continuance. Chauncy admits that some good has come of it, but vastly more evil, and wishes the "commotion" at an end.

If, now, regardless of these conflicting opinions, we attempt to form a candid judgment of the Great Awakening by observations made from our standpoint, and in the light which an intervening century has shed upon its results, all evangelical Christians must come to the conclusion—which, in fact, they have long since reached—that it was preëminently a work of God's grace, carried on with great power, and productive of vast results. Whether we regard the deep sleep from which it roused the churches throughout the land, the number of hopeful converts (estimated by some at 50,000) with which it replenished them, or the new life it breathed into their pastors and teachers, we

are forced to this conclusion. And there were other kindred results, which, if not so suddenly developed, were even more important in their transmitted influence. The death-blow which it gave to the "Half-way covenant," and the custom of admitting unconverted men into the church and into the ministry; the bounds which it set to the growth of Arminianism, Pelagianism, and Socinianism (for even this last was beginning to make its appearance); and the prominence which the doctrines of grace have ever since held in the system of New England theology; these are among the abiding effects of that revival. Princeton and Dartmouth Colleges both grew indirectly out of it; as also the mission of David Brainard to the heathen, and the monthly concert of prayer for the world. Even the disorders which attended it—those fanaticisms, strifes, separations, which gave so much grief to its friends and disgust to its enemies—were not without their practical use. Like beacon fires and buoys along the sea-coast warning the voyager of rocks and shoals, they have afforded most instructive lessons of caution in subsequent revivals. Especially did the troubles occasioned by the Separatists, which were counted among the greatest evils of the day, result in a great advantage to the Congregational denomination, by crushing out the spirit of parish despotism, which had installed itself among them. Religious liberty, in the parochial and ecclesiastical sense of that word, made great advances in the conflicts which it waged against unnatural and obnoxious restraints.



## CHAPTER XIV.

1750-1760.

Religious declension. — Sixteen churches gathered. — Influence of the French war in retarding church extension. — Legislative enactments against religious disorders. — Edwards and Chauncy, the two antagonist champions. — Symptoms of Unitarianism. — Correspondence of Edwards and Wigglesworth on the subject. — Removal of Edwards from Northampton.

IN passing on from the period of the great revival in the days of Edwards and Whitefield, we soon discover tokens of another declension, though in several respects unlike the dead formalism that preceded it. Among the earliest signs of it in Massachusetts was a gradual and growing inattention to the ordinary means of grace. Neglecters of public worship were increasing, — the result, it may be, in part, of overtaking the powers of nature in times of extra religious meetings. New settlements were not so promptly supplied with Christian ordinances; men were not so distressed at the idea of living and training up families without them. New churches were not gathered with the same despatch as heretofore. The following sixteen were all that were organized among the Congregationalists in this State during the ten years from 1750 to 1760.

The first church in Ware was probably organized May 9, 1751, when Rev. Grindall Rawson, their first pastor, was ordained; the people having been favored with occasional preaching for about ten years.

The three following arose in 1752: — the church in North Brookfield, originally the Second in Brookfield, May 28, which settled Rev. Eli Fobes, D. D., on the 3d of June following; the church in Chicopee parish

(the second in Springfield), Sept. 27, with Rev. John McKinstrey for their pastor; and the church in Montague, November 22, with the settlement of Rev. Judah Nash, the same day.

The church in Barre, an offshoot from Rutland, was gathered July 30, 1753, and installed Rev. Thomas Frink the next October.

The two following were organized in 1754:—the First church in Greenfield, March 28, with Rev. Edward Billings for their pastor; and the church in New Braintree, April 18, which settled Rev. Benjamin Ruggles the same day.

The church in Rockport, originally the fifth in Gloucester, was gathered February 13, 1755, with Rev. Ebenezer Cleaveland for their pastor; and the church in Templeton, December 10 of the same year, which settled Rev. David Pond.

The church in the present town of Brookfield, formerly the south parish, arose April 15, 1756, though their first pastor, Rev. Nathan Fiske, D. D., was not ordained till May 24, 1758; and on the 24th of February, the church in Sandisfield was gathered, and settled Rev. Cornelius Jones.

On the 12th of May, 1757, the church in Dunstable was organized, and ordained Rev. Josiah Goodhue on the 8th of June following. Previously, the inhabitants worshipped with the church in Dunstable, N. H., which at first was counted as a Massachusetts town.

The North church in Rochester, Sniptuit parish, was gathered during the early part of 1758, with Rev. Thomas West for their pastor; and on the 28th of December following, the church in Becket, which settled Rev. Ebenezer Martin, on the 23d of the next February.

The church in Ashburnham was organized April 23, 1760, with Rev. Jonathan Winchester for their pastor; and the church in Warwick, December 3, over which Rev. Lemuel Hedge was settled the same day.

The fact that so few churches were gathered during this decade, — less than half the number that sprang up

in either of the two preceding, — must not be ascribed wholly, perhaps not mainly, to a decline of religious interest. There were other causes at work. The “French war,” extending through nearly the whole of this period, was sufficient of itself to paralyze the arm of Christian enterprise. The expensive armaments called forth to intercept the French in that bold scheme of theirs for confining the English colonies to the Atlantic slope, by drawing a military cordon along the whole frontier, from the Bay of Fundy to the Mississippi river, exhausted the men and the means, which would otherwise have found occupation in planting new settlements and churches. From the day that the youthful George Washington, with his handful of volunteers, built their little Fort Necessity, on the banks of the Ohio, in 1754, to check the aggressions of the French, till the complete conquest of Canada, in 1760, the peaceful pursuits of domestic life were continually interrupted by the stern requisitions of war. And the prominence which Massachusetts held among her sister colonies, as also her proximity to the chief points of invasion, threw upon her citizens a large share of the burden. In the disastrous fight of Braddock on the banks of the Monongahela, in the battle of Lake George, in the expedition to Crown Point, in the siege of Niagara, in the reduction of Louisburg, and in the capture of Quebec, her blood and treasure were profusely expended. What wonder if, in these circumstances, Christianity made but slow progress in the form of church extension, or, in fact, in any other form. When it is remembered that the treaty of 1762, which terminated the war with France, was followed, only three years later, by the passage of the “Stamp Act,” the first in that series of oppressions which brought on a war with the mother country, engrossing the mental and physical powers of the entire population, till independence was achieved, in 1783, we are prepared to expect, not only a suspension of Zion’s growth, but an eclipse of her former glory, — a decay of piety in these lately revived churches.

This last phase challenges our special notice, on account of its connection with the rise and spread of Unitarianism. It will be recollected that the revival, so happy in its beginning and early developments, soon became mixed with great disorders, giving occasion for its enemies to raise opposition, in which, also, they were able to enlist many real but cautious friends of evangelical piety. The spirit of antagonism took various forms. In Connecticut, pains and penalties amounting to persecution were resorted to. The legislature of that colony in 1742 passed "An Act for regulating abuses and correcting disorders in ecclesiastical affairs," which deprived a settled minister of his salary, if he went over his parish line to preach without invitation from the pastor there settled; or, if no pastor was there, from a majority of the church and society; and if the offender was "not an inhabitant within the colony," whether a regularly ordained minister, or only an exhorter, "every such teacher or exhorter (so the act ran) shall be sent, as a vagrant person, by warrant from any one assistant or justice of the peace, from constable to constable, out of the bounds of this colony." (Trumbull's Hist. Conn.) This oppressive law was not a dead letter. It went into stern operation, not only upon such wild separatists as Davenport, but against the renowned Dr. Bellamy (then a young exhorter) and Rev. Samuel Finley, afterwards president of the college at Princeton, and others of a similar type.\*

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\* In an old pamphlet of sixty-six pages, printed in 1744, entitled "A seasonable Plea for the Liberty of Conscience, and the Right of private Judgment, in Matters of Religion, without any Controll from human Authority — being a Letter from a Gentleman in the Massachusetts Bay to his Friend in Connecticut," ascribed to Thomas Cushing, Esq., speaker of the house of representatives, in 1746, this act is reviewed with great ability. The intense purpose of its framers to have it rigidly enforced, appears from an incidental allusion of the reviewer to a subsequent amendment, "occasioned," as he tells us, "by that good gentleman, Mr. Finley's coming, at the direction of a Presbytery in the New Jersey government, who had been applied to for a minister, and preaching to a Presbyterian church at Milford,

In eastern Massachusetts the revival was "assailed by sneers, reproaches, unfavorable insinuations, and slanderous reports." These, in the hands of shrewd and learned men, like Drs. Chauncy and Mayhew, of Boston, were incomparably more hurtful than the legal enactments of Connecticut. The contumely heaped upon warm, active, devoted piety, under the name of "fanaticism," and upon the promoters of it as "New-lights," was all the harder to face down in communities where real fanaticism was confessedly at work, under pretence of superior sanctity. In the region of Northampton the same feeling found vent in ecclesiastical proscriptions. The decided stand which Mr. Edwards took against the admission of unregenerate persons to the communion table, contrary to the custom of his grandfather Stoddard, awakened a spirit of resentment, which after repeated trials to effect his removal, at length succeeded, by a majority of one vote, in a council convened June 22, 1750.

The unreasonable and un-Congregational procedure through which this calamitous issue was reached, can be accounted for only by supposing a settled hostility to the revival and its practical results. This supposition is sufficiently verified by the recorded action of the church and parish, as also by the published result of a preliminary council. In the preface to his farewell sermon, among the "gross misapprehensions" which he deemed it proper for him to correct, is this: "That I had fallen

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who had joined themselves to that Presbytery and put themselves under their care; for which, being transported out of the government, he returned and preached to a Congregational church at New Haven; and for this he was adjudged, by the civil authority, to be transported again, which was but in part effected, through the negligence of some officer; and, I am told, he returned and preached again." The amendment was to the effect, that a transported minister, thus returning, besides paying the costs of his transportation, shall be put under £100 bonds not to repeat the offence. In summing up his estimate of such legislation, the writer, with great pertinence, remarks: "And how near this comes to *turning judgment into wormwood* may deserve the serious consideration of some."

in with those wild people who have lately appeared in New England, called Separatists; and that I myself was become a grand Separatist." It hardly need be said that this opprobrious insinuation was mere pretence, maliciously put forth, like the cry of "mad dog" against the unlucky spaniel doomed to death by the offended Quaker. The true cause of the trouble, and what such men as Edwards saw to be a real ground of alarm throughout New England, is indicated in the sermon itself under the third head of "advice," thus: "Another thing that vastly concerns the future prosperity of the town is, that you should watch against the encroachments of error; and particularly Arminianism, and doctrines of a like tendency." Alluding to the apprehensions of danger from this source just before the revival in Northampton, sixteen years earlier, he goes on to say: "But the danger then was small in comparison of what appears now. These doctrines, at this day, are much more prevalent than they were then. The progress they have made in the land within seven years seems to have been vastly greater than at any time in the like space before. And they are still prevailing, and creeping into all parts of the land, threatening the utter ruin of the credit of those doctrines which are the peculiar glory of the gospel, and the interests of vital piety. These principles are exceedingly taking with corrupt nature, and are what young people, at least such as have not their hearts established with grace, are easily led away with. And if these principles should greatly prevail in this town, as they very lately have done in another large town I could name, formerly greatly noted for religion, and so for a long time, it will threaten the spiritual and eternal ruin of this people in the present and future generations."

The allusion here made to Boston (for that was undoubtedly the "large town" referred to), and to the "doctrines of a like tendency" with Arminianism then and there breaking in with such a threatening aspect, would seem almost prophetic, on the supposition that Unitarianism had no existence in these churches earlier

than its open avowal in 1810-15. But this idea is not supported by facts. The essential elements of the system can be distinctly traced back to the middle of the last century. In 1750, Dr. Bellamy (Works, Vol. I. 49) was perplexed at seeing "the country so generally settled in their prejudices against experimental religion and the doctrines of the Gospel," so soon after such a "general outpouring of the Spirit;" and to check the mischief done by "enthusiasts" on the one hand, and "heretics" on the other, he published his "True Religion Delineated." Ten years later, in 1760, he wrote thus: "But perhaps you will say, 'the Calvinists are too suspicious; there are no Arminians, no Arians, no Socinians, etc., among us. The cry is raised by designing men, merely to answer political ends.' O that this were indeed the case! O that our fears were quite groundless! How soon would I believe it, if you could help me to 'see just reason for it.' But how would the party through New England laugh at our credulity in Connecticut, if their friends among us could make us believe all to be safe, till they could carry their points here as they have elsewhere. In the New Hampshire province this party have actually, three years ago, got things so ripe that they have ventured to new-model our Shorter Catechism; to alter, or entirely leave out, the doctrines of the Trinity, of the decrees, of our first parents being created holy, of original sin, Christ satisfying divine justice, effectual calling, justification, etc., and to adjust the whole to Dr. Taylor's scheme. Come from New Hampshire along to Boston, and see there a celebrated D. D. at the head of a large party. He boldly ridicules the doctrine of the Trinity, and denies the doctrine of justification by faith alone." (Vol. III. 386.) In 1759, Rev. Noah Porter of Fairfield, Ct., wrote: "And even the doctrine of the sacred and adorable Trinity has been publicly treated in such manner as all who believe that doctrine must judge not only heretical, but highly blasphemous."

The following letter from Pres. Edwards to Prof. Wigglesworth of Harvard College, and the professor's

answer, never before published, will be found to shed much additional light on a dim page of our religious history. It is taken from a manuscript copy in the possession of Dr. Felt, at the rooms of the Congregational Library Association:—

“Stockbridge, Feb. 11, 1757.”

“Rev. and Dear Sir:—

“I can't assign any particular acquaintance as my warrant for troubling you with these lines; not being one of them that have been favored with opportunities for such an advantage. I only write as a subject and friend of the same Lord, and a follower and fellow-disciple of the same Jesus. A regard to his interests has made me uneasy ever since I read Dr. Mayhew's late book, some time the last year, and saw that marginal note of his, wherein he ridicules the doctrine of the Trinity.

“And my uneasiness was increased after I had wrote to Mr. Foxcroft upon it, and fully expressed my sentiments to him concerning the call of God to ministers that way, or others whose business it was to teach the doctrines of Christianity, to appear publicly on this occasion in defence of this doctrine; and he, in reply, informed me that the same affair had been proposed and considered at the board of overseers; and in the issue nothing concluded to be done. Very lately Mr. Emlyn's book has fallen into my hands, published in New England by one that calls himself a layman; who, in his dedication to the ministers of the country, gives them an open and bold (though a very subtle and artful) challenge to answer that book, and defend the proper deity of Christ, if they can. Since I have read this book I am abundantly confirmed that my opinion, signified to Mr. Foxcroft, was right; and that the call of God that some one should appear in open defence of this doctrine, is very loud and plain; and that an universal neglect of it in the churches of New England on this occasion, will be imputed by the Head of the church, whose glory is so struck at, as a lukewarmness that will be very displeasing.

“Though I live so much at a distance, yet I know so much of the state of the country, that I am persuaded it will be of very bad consequence. This piece, by many, will be looked upon as invincible. It will be concluded that those who maintain the divinity of Christ are afraid to engage, being conscious that they are unable to defend their cause; and the adversary will triumph, and that cause will more and more prevail.

“Now, sir, I humbly conceive that you, above all others in the land, are called to engage in this cause. You are set for the instruction of our youth in divinity in the principal seminary of learning; and it will be among them especially that these pernicious principles will be like to gain ground. Something from you will be more regarded and attended to than [from] any other person.

“I have heard say that your health is not firm; which may pos-



sibly be an objection with you against engaging in a laborious controversy, which, if once begun, may possibly be drawn out to a great length; and probably spending your time in controversy may be much against your inclination. But yet you doubtless will allow that the case may be so, that Christians may be evidently called, in adverse providences, to engage in very irksome and laborious services, and to run considerable ventures in the cause of their Lord, trusting in him for strength and support; as men, in a just war for their king, in many cases doubt not of their being called to great fatigues, and to very great ventures even of life itself. And shall all stand by at such a day as this, under the testimonies of God's anger for our corruptions, which are already so great, and see the cause of Christ trampled on, and the chief dignity and glory of the King of Zion directly and boldly struck at, with a challenge to others to defend it if they can, and be silent, every one excusing himself from the difficulty and fatigue of a spiritual warfare? I live one side, far out of the way; I know not what the view of the ministers of the country is; I can only judge what the case requires. I think Zion calls for help; I speak as one of her sons. If nothing be done, I dread the consequences. I entreat you, sir, for Christ's sake, not lightly to refuse what I have proposed and requested, and forgive the freedom which has been used by,

“Honored sir, with great esteem and respect,

“Your son and servant,

“JONATHAN EDWARDS.

“To the Rev. Edward Wigglesworth, D. D., Professor of Divinity in Harvard College, at Cambridge.”

Prof. Wigglesworth replies in a long letter, of which the following is an abridgment: “Among many things exceptionable in the marginal notes [of Dr. Mayhew's book] I at length met one which seemed to insinuate that the canon of the Old Testament was compiled according to the humor and caprice of the people; that some books were admitted and others left out of the canon, according as the people relished or disrelished the contents of them. I immediately thought that this was the first thing which demanded my attention. For if the divine authority of the books of the Old Testament be once shaken, besides all the other mischiefs (too many to be mentioned) we shall be deprived of the weight of that evidence which might be drawn from them for the true and proper Godhead of our Saviour. I, therefore, at my very next lecture, delivered the inclosed discourse, which I ask your candid acceptance of,” — which

discourse, we learn from the same letter, was published at the "request of almost every student in the college," as an antidote to the doctor's heretical views. Harvard College, a hundred years old, vindicating the *true and proper Godhead of our Saviour* against the possible harm that may come to it from a blow aimed at "the divine authority of the books of the Old Testament!" — and all this through her learned theological professor!!

The writer lets out other secrets which have a deep significance; as that, in the "Boston Lectures," during the vacation following the publication of his views, "the worthy ministers of that town were generally vindicating the divinity of Christ." "At length came out a catholic and judicious discourse of Mr. Pemberton upon that subject, prefaced by Dr. Sewall and Mr. Prince, the two oldest ministers of the town. I thought it was now time to have done, and wait in silence till we saw whether any thing would be replied to Mr. Pemberton or to me. And I believe (for more than one reason) that if no further stir had been made, we should have met with no more trouble. But the printers, who live very much by disputes, observing that the people's passions were up, that any thing on that subject would fetch a penny, and that every thing was supposed to be pointed at Dr. Mayhew, continued printing little things with pompous advertisements about them in the newspapers, week after week. If it had not been for these repeated and long continued provocations, I don't think we should ever have seen the 'Layman's' new edition of 'Emlyn's Inquiry.'" The professor hopes this book of Emlyn will not have much of a run; but if it should, he stands ready to "give the youth of the college the best preservative" in his power against it. He thinks it "by no means desirable," however, to "publish a new answer to a book that hath been answered over and over again on the other side of the water." This would be to "encourage hungry printers to pester us with new editions of any pernicious books written in other countries," and "set us a writing and sending more grists to

their mill." If any thing in this line is to be done, he would recommend "the reprinting the best answer to Mr. Emlyn which hath been written abroad; and perhaps some other 'layman' may usher it on to the stage with as much address as Mr. Emlyn hath been introduced with before it. This would serve all the good purposes which would be served by printing a new answer to him. And at the same time it would avoid giving any occasion, which some of the adverse party seem to wish for, of setting the controversy on foot among ourselves; a thing which I would avoid as much as possible consistent with a due concern for such an important truth. For if the gentlemen get to writing one against another upon so interesting a subject, I greatly fear that the debate will be managed with so much acrimony and warmth on one side, and perhaps with such an intermixture of threat and sarcasm on the other, as would be a great disservice to the interests of religion. And if the controversy be once begun, perhaps neither I nor you, sir, who are much younger, will live to see the end of it." The writer expresses himself much pleased with Mr. Edwards's "concern for the honor of our blessed Lord," though differing from him somewhat "about the most prudent methods to support and vindicate it, at the present conjecture;" and closes his interesting letter with, "I pray God direct us to what may be most agreeable to his will. We both aim at the same end, though we may not have the same sentiments about the means to compass it." The uncontroversial "method" of Professor Wigglesworth prevailed, and its dire consequences have been seen. What the result of President Edwards's plan would have been, we never shall know; but we wish it had been tried.

From the foregoing facts it is sufficiently evident, first, that Unitarianism, in its germinal state, had an existence in these Congregational churches soon after the revival of 1740; second, that in some of them it had expanded into Arianism and Socinianism before 1760; third, that it was not so much an exotic, as a

native production, quickened into life under the heat of an earnest repugnance to the old doctrines of grace as these were preached and practised in a revival of religion. No doubt the writings of Taylor and Whitby and Emlyn were helpful in directing the steps of such as were leaving the "old paths;" but the long continued declension of religion which had been filling the churches with unconverted members, and even the pulpits with unconverted ministers,—this was unquestionably the cause of the defection, whatever be regarded as the occasion of it. Let us do justice to our Unitarian friends by conceding the point, much insisted on of late, that Unitarianism was not imposed upon our churches "by an adroit manœuvre," but sprang up spontaneously in our own membership. (See Ellis's *Half-century of the Unitarian Controversy*.) And let them also, in a spirit of equal justice, concede a point not less evident, — *that it grew from decayed piety and dead orthodoxy*. Whatever useful hint this fact may suggest to others, it behoves the present ministers and members of orthodox churches to bear in mind and lay to heart the admonitory lesson which it teaches.

But while these anti-evangelical tendencies were thus developing under the husbandry of a few talented men, there were others, not less talented and more numerous, whose teachings from the pulpit and the press were giving to the churches an opposite tendency, — actually bringing the bulk of them to a higher standard of Christian life and orthodoxy than had been seen here for many years before. The powerful intellect and pious heart of Edwards, no longer permitted to exert their wonted influence through the pulpit, were never so effectively employed as after his removal from Northampton. How little is true greatness beholden to its material surroundings for a development! Rising superior to all outward impediments, amid the dull routine of daily toil as an instructor of the half-civilized children of the forest, he found opportunity to exert a power which is felt to this day, not in New England only, but throughout Christendom. From out that

obscure retreat of his among the Stockbridge Indians, in less than six years he sent forth those masterly productions of his pen, "Freedom of the Will," "God's last end in Creation," "The Nature of Virtue" and "Original Sin," — "the ablest and most valuable works," says his biographer, "which the church of Christ has in its possession." The strong-jointed theology found in these productions, and in others of the same class from his pupils and coworkers, Bellamy and Hopkins, had a powerful effect on the evangelical ministry of that day, by stimulating theological inquiry, and laying bare the sophisms of error, and detecting counterfeit piety. It came to pass, therefore, that the evangelical system, as it sunk into disesteem with some of the churches, was more than ever prized by others; and as it ceased to be taught in one pulpit, was preached with increasing pungency in another. Consequently, though no breach of ecclesiastical or ministerial fellowship had yet ensued, a distinction of parties was everywhere recognized, — subsequently known as the "liberal," the "evangelical;" and in the action of councils and conventions, party feeling oftentimes rose to a pretty high pitch. The removal of Mr. Edwards from Northampton has already been referred to as an illustration; and as it also illustrates the tyranny which ministers and churches can impose upon each other by turning the harmless functions of a council into those of an ecclesiastical court, it may be well to call up the case again, as Paul does some passages of Hebrew history, which, he says, "happened for ensamples, and were written for our admonition."

The trouble originated in an attempt of the pastor to correct certain immoralities, known to prevail among the younger members of the church. This gave umbrage to some of their friends. It must be borne in mind, that the custom introduced by his predecessor, of admitting members to full communion without professing to have been "born again," was still in vogue at Northampton, and prevailed in the neighboring churches generally. The subject had pressed Mr.

Edwards's conscience for some time; and perhaps this case of difficulty in dealing with unworthy members may have given it additional force. In the early part of 1749, his mind was made up that he could no longer receive members without a public profession of godliness. The announcement of this fact raised a storm of opposition which appears unaccountable to us, who never saw a reputedly orthodox church of our denomination in which these views of Mr. Edwards were not in actual practice. So it was in earlier times throughout New England; but not so at the time of this transaction. To such a mind as that of Edwards, the most natural and scriptural, and the only Congregational, way of going to work, was to instruct his people on the subject, showing them the grounds of his opinion, and answering their objections; with the reasonable presumption, that, if his views were founded in truth, he could make them appear so to others. But the leading opposers did not care to run that risk. The church committee were extremely averse to hearing any thing about it from the pulpit; and so great was "the ferment in the town," that he deemed it "not best to preach upon the subject for the present." Reluctantly they consented that he might give his views through the press; and he set himself to the preparation of his "Humble Enquiry into the Rules of the Word of God concerning the Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church." While he was assiduously occupied in this labor, his people were laboring with equal assiduity to have the matter brought before a council for settlement,—rightly judging that nothing would be gained to their side of the question, by waiting for Mr. Edwards's "reasons." Reasons were what they were most afraid of.\*

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\* "The reason they assigned, why they would not suffer him to preach [on the subject], unfolds the actual state of their minds. It was, because *they feared, that his preaching would make parties in the town.* In other words, the great body of the people were united

This being the state of affairs, no intelligent Congregationalists will doubt for a moment, that Mr. Edwards's idea of bringing it first before the church, was the true one. Perhaps they could settle the matter among themselves; and then no council would be needed. According to Scripture, — certainly according to the Cambridge Platform, — this was the way to begin; and, beginning thus, the first regular step would be for the pastor to state the reasons on which his proposal was founded; and then for the church to consider them, weigh them, and act upon them by a formal vote of acceptance or rejection. If, after due consideration, it appeared that he and they could not walk together, it would be best for them to part. But before taking this final step, they should seek advice — not a judicial decision, but *advice*; and here a council would properly come in. Mr. Edwards had all along proposed this measure, when, after taking the preliminary steps, their “affairs were sufficiently ripe” for it. But a false view of the appropriate functions of an ecclesiastical council had become prevalent at that time, which has not been entirely corrected since. With all their repugnance to Mr. Edwards's principles, together with their manifest reluctance to be convinced that he was right and they were wrong, they would hardly have refused him a hearing on the subject, but for the mischievous notion that a Congregational council is a sort of church court, to which they could appeal and get a swift decision, without the hazard of encountering arguments. They knew very well that only two churches and three ministers through-

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against Mr. Edwards; the leaders of the opposition were resolved on his dismissal; and they were afraid, if he should preach his sentiments, that he would convince a large number of them that he was right, and thus, by making a party in his own favor, defeat the measure on which they were resolved. This was the same as to acknowledge that the people at large had not examined the question, and that, if they were to hear the discourses of Mr. Edwards, so many of them would probably be led, by the force of argument, to embrace his side of the question in dispute, as to hazard the success of their measure.” — *Dwight's Life of Edwards*, p. 44.

out the county (then comprising the present counties of Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden) were in sympathy with Mr. Edwards in the existing controversy about church qualifications. His condemnation, therefore, seemed almost certain, if the case should come before a council; and to make it quite certain, a vote was passed restricting both parties to that county in the selection of the members. This cruel and unconstitutional vote, at the remonstrance of the pastor, was so far modified as to allow him liberty to go out of the county for two of his half. In accounting for these tyrannical proceedings, it may here be stated that from beginning to end the *parish took the lead*, contrary to all rule and precedent. Yet the council, representing nine churches, when they came together, found no difficulty in proceeding to business, and bringing in the following result: first, "it is necessary that the relation between pastor and people be dissolved;" second, "it is expedient that this relation be immediately dissolved." No wonder that Mr. Edwards, in a letter soon after to Mr. Erskine of Scotland, who kindly inquired whether he could accept of a pastorate there under Presbyterian rule, expressed himself "perfectly out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church-government in this land." Nothing could have been better adapted to create disgust for the whole system of Congregationalism, if this was indeed the "way" of it. But it was not; it was a perversion of that way,—as much so as the jugglery of "Elymas the sorcerer" was a perversion of "the right ways of the Lord," and was instigated by motives hardly less sinister. It was an ebullition of party prejudice, seeking vent through an ecclesiastical council. That event could never have happened, even under the blinding influence of party strife, had not ministers and churches, by looking at precedents more than principles, come to regard the functions of a council as *judiciary* rather than *advisory*. Edwards himself had lent his sanction to this mischief-making notion, in a controversy, about sixteen years before, respecting the settlement of Mr. Breck at Spring-



field. A council was called "to advise," and, if thought proper, "to assist," in his ordination. They advised not to settle him, as, with their views of the case, they ought to have done. Here their responsibility ended, and they went home. The church and society saw fit to reject that advice, as they had a right to do, and called a second council, who ordained him. This was complained of by the first, as trampling on constituted authority, — which complaint only showed an existing usurpation of authority. With such views pervading the community, and gaining additional force by every new development of them, we ought not to wonder at the eagerness shown by Mr. Edwards's opposers to trust the decision of a council rather than to encounter his logic. A court of appeal will never want business. But the deplorable result in this case should admonish us to keep these advisory bodies to their appropriate functions, and, as far as possible, to settle our ecclesiastical disputes before the only tribunal recognized in the New Testament, or known to Congregationalists — *the church.*

## CHAPTER XV.

1760-1770.

Thirty-one churches organized. — Comparison of the several denominations in New England. — State of morals at the opening of the Revolutionary war. — Christian doctrine and church polity at that time. — Outcropping of Unitarianism. — Probable reason why the Unitarian controversy did not then break forth.

At the close of 1760, where the last chapter left this sketch, there were 262 Congregational churches in Massachusetts. During the next ten years the following were added, namely: —

In April, 1761, the church in Charlton was gathered, chiefly from the Oxford church, whose first pastor, Rev. Caleb Curtis, was ordained in October following.

In 1762 these six were organized: — the church in Monson, June 23, from the Brimfield church, with Rev. Abishai Sabin for their pastor; the Fifth church in Newbury, some time in the summer, whose first and only pastor, Rev. Oliver Noble, was settled on the 1st of September; the West church in Granby, a part of South Hadley, over which Rev. Simon Backus was ordained in October; the church in Shirley, a district of Groton, the exact date unknown, but probably June 23, when the first pastor, Rev. Phineas Whitney, was settled; the church in Dover, a colony from Dedham, November 7, which settled Rev. Benjamin Caryl the next week; the church in Feedinghills, West Springfield, November 10 (the remains of a Baptist church gathered twenty years before), with Rev. Sylvanus Griswold for their first Congregational pastor, who was ordained on the 17th of the same month; and the First

or South church in Winchendon, December 16, under the pastoral care of Rev. Daniel Stimpson.

On the 22d of February, 1763, the church in Ashfield was gathered, and Rev. Jacob Sherwin was ordained the same day.

Four churches were planted in 1764:— the church in Pittsfield, February 7, whose first pastor, Rev. Thomas Allen, was settled March 5; the church in Lanesboro', March 28, over which Rev. Daniel Collins was ordained, April 17; the Princeton church, an offshoot from Rutland, August 12, with Rev. Timothy Fuller for their pastor, who was not settled, however, till September 9, 1767; and the church in Chesterfield, October 30, whose first pastor, Rev. Benjamin Mills, was ordained November 22.

Three churches were gathered in 1765:— the church in Williamstown, probably in March, when Rev. Whitman Welch was settled over it; the church in Holland, a part of Brimfield, September 13, with Rev. Ezra Reeve for their pastor; and some time during the same year, the church in Richmond, though with no pastor till the settlement of Rev. Job Swift, D.D., in 1767.

The two following arose in 1766:— the Second church in Methuen, April 16, whose first pastor, Rev. Eliphaz Chapman, was not ordained till November, 1772; and the church in Royalston, October 13, which settled Rev. Joseph Lee, October 19, 1768.

On the 28th of August, 1767, the church in Oakham was gathered from the Rutland church, and settled Rev. John Strickland, April 1, the year following; and the church in Paxton, September 3, which had Rev. Silas Biglow ordained over it October 21.

In 1768 these four were planted:— the North church in Newburyport, some time in January, which settled Rev. Christopher Marsh the 19th of the following October; the church in Fitchburg, June 27, whose members came chiefly from the Lunenburg church, and settled Rev. John Payson the same day; the church in Conway, July 14, with Rev. John Emerson, who was ordained over it December 21 the year following; and some

time during the same year, a church in the south part of Mendon, with Rev. Benjamin Balch for their pastor.

In 1769, but on what particular date cannot be ascertained, the church in Lenox was constituted, and Rev. Samuel Monson was ordained on the 8th of November the next year; also on the 20th of December the church in Chester, with Rev. Aaron Bascom for their pastor.

These six were gathered in 1770:—the church in Hubbardston, a colony from Rutland, February 14, which settled Rev. Nehemiah Parker, June 13; the church in Egremont, February 20, under the pastorship of Rev. Eliphalet Steele, who was ordained June 28; the church in Reading (Wood End, so called), February 21, which settled Rev. Thomas Haven, November 7; the church in Peru, some time in June, whose first pastor, however, Rev. Stephen Tracy, was not ordained till April, 1772; the Third church in Roxbury (Jamaica Plain), December 11, with Rev. William Gordon for their pastor, who was settled July 6, 1772; and the church in Shelburn (exact date unknown), a colony from Deerfield, which settled Rev. Robert Hubbard, October 20, 1773.

Before entering upon the period of the American Revolution, which we have now reached, and whose exciting scenes wrought such momentous changes in the subsequent course of events, both civil and ecclesiastical, let us pause a moment, and post up our ideas on a few points which may be of use to us hereafter, should we be disposed to make comparisons.

The number of Congregational churches in Massachusetts at this date (1770) was 294. If to these we add eleven Episcopal, sixteen Baptist, and eighteen Quaker meetings, we have the entire ecclesiastical map of the province. No other sect or denomination had made its appearance in an organized form; though it is to be presumed that in most of the towns there were not wanting those who belonged to neither of these religious orders, and may therefore properly be denominated nothingarians. In 1760, when the whole population of New England was estimated at 500,000,

President Stiles supposed that this latter class numbered ten thousand, the Episcopalians 12,600, the Quakers sixteen thousand, and the Baptists twenty-two thousand, with a small sprinkling of Jews and Moravians; leaving the Congregationalists about 440,000 strong; and the proportion of Congregationalists in Massachusetts was certainly not less than in New England at large; that is, seven times as many as all other denominations put together. From a valuable old manuscript register of ministers and churches, for 1762, found among the collections of the Congregational Library Association, and prepared with much pains and seeming accuracy, by an unknown hand,—containing a complete list of all the clergymen of each denomination in Massachusetts, with the date of their graduation and settlement,—it appears that four Baptist churches, five Episcopalian, and fifteen Congregational, were at that time vacant. In other words, nearly one half the Episcopalian churches, one quarter of the Baptist, and only about one twentieth of the Congregational, were destitute of stated preaching. These figures and facts have a significance in estimating the moral and religious forces—of which no adequate idea has yet been formed—that were brought into action in achieving our national independence. Whatever they were, their predominant element was Puritan Congregationalism.

And this suggests an observation, that may properly come in here, touching the general state of morals at the time of which we speak. That there had been a falling off from the strictness which characterized the first settlers of New England can easily be believed. We have had occasion to notice and acknowledge this fact before. But he who derives his views solely from the lamentations of preachers and reformers, bewailing the “awful degeneracy and wickedness of the times,” without keeping in mind the earlier standard of excellence from which they measure this degeneracy, will certainly be misled in his conclusions. As compared with our day, the moral sentiment of that age was of a lofty tone. Moral character, both public and private, was of a firmer

texture; more fibrous; tougher to bear a sudden strain, to which honesty and honor, both in business and politics, are ever exposed. The affairs of life were pursued, not with less ardor, but with more seriousness; and worldly pleasures had fewer votaries. Even recreation, aside from some useful employment, was sparingly indulged in. The first theatricals that Boston ever saw, were introduced by British soldiers, during the occupancy of the town by General Gage, at the opening of the Revolutionary war; and the building in which they were exhibited on Theatre Alley (hence the name) was torn down only a few years ago to make room for a more useful edifice. It is a suggestive fact, that our republic was founded before the theatre was thought of; while, in the last French Revolution, that of 1848, large sums were paid from the public treasury to keep the theatres of Paris open, as an auxiliary to the Republican cause; which, after all, ended in a miserable failure. (Wonder if that infant republic might not have been saved, if they had had our "Cradle of Liberty," in place of those theatres!) The case was very well put by the preacher of our late "Artillery Election sermon," Rev. J. H. Means. "They were severe in spirit, but they had a severe work to do; and men who loved pleasure could not have done it. If our fathers had laughed more, we, perhaps, should have had cause to laugh less." These moral habits were the natural result of that religious culture which each rising generation, from the first settlement of New England, had received from the pulpit, the school-house, and the family fireside; a culture which was kept up, even through periods of religious declension; and which, by the force of honorable precedent and surrounding example, had a controlling influence over those who were not religiously disposed.

The particular phases of Christian doctrine and church polity which prevailed in these churches at the period we are now reviewing, deserve a brief notice. In a discourse of 156 pages (including the appendix), preached in 1760, by President Stiles, at Bristol, R. I., before the "Convention of Congregational Ministers," from Phi-

lippians 3: 16, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule," etc., he sets forth, under fifteen distinct heads, "the fundamental principles of Christianity and ecclesiastical polity" in which he supposed the Congregational churches throughout New England generally agreed. As to theological points, he enumerates all the articles usually recognized in our day as belonging to the system of Calvinism, though with such explanatory and qualifying remarks as to suggest plainly enough the idea of differing shades of belief, or rather, different forms of stating their belief, on some few topics. In regard to ecclesiastical matters, embracing by far the most elaborate and instructive part of the sermon, he shows what *ought to be* the practice of our churches, in order to be consistent with their principles, rather than what actually, in all cases, *was* the practice; and thereby indirectly points out several divergences from the old paths. For instance: after announcing as the thirteenth "principle" in which the Congregational churches of New England are generally agreed, that "every voluntary Christian assembly have an inherent right, a power which ought neither to be surrendered nor controlled, of electing its own officers," he goes on to say, that this power of the brotherhood is abridged and embarrassed, "when, in virtue of a public compact established among a body of churches, the churches in the vicinity have a negative on the pastoral choice of a destitute congregation." Allusion is here made to the authority which was then claimed, not only by the consociations of Connecticut, but by many of the Ecclesiastical Councils of Massachusetts, to control the churches in that matter, by interposing a negative on their action. Another "fundamental principle" is laid down in the announcement and elucidation of his fourteenth head, thus: "Each individual church has the sole right of judging and determining its own controversies. Our churches, to the purposes of discipline, are so many distinct ecclesiastical sovereignties, in point of power and control, as independent of one another as the United Provinces of Holland, to purposes of civil

government." In this connection he refers approvingly to John Wise's celebrated satire, "The Churches' Quarrel Exposed," and is heartily glad of its success in killing the "Proposals" of the Boston ministers for a consociation, near the beginning of the century. "It was early seen to be important," he adds, "that our churches should be consociated; but whether for purposes of harmony only, or dominion, was as early the question." In his view, the former was the essential idea which the synod of 1662 had in mind when they recommended "consociating." And after quoting, in proof of it, their emphatic words, that "every church has full power and authority ecclesiastical within itself, regularly to administer all the ordinances of Christ, and is not under any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatever," he pertinently remarks, "Subordinate to this fundamental principle is all to be interpreted in their answer" to the question about consociations. The discourse of President Stiles was evidently a "tract for the times," and it produced its designed effect. It was a needed restraint upon the tendencies of the age towards the assumption of ecclesiastical power, than which no proclivity of poor human nature more needs to be checked.

The outcropping of Unitarianism, which we had occasion to notice in the last decade, is also noticeable in this. The suspicions of President Edwards, touching the orthodoxy of Boston in 1757, were shared by Dr. Hopkins in 1768, as appears from the following passage in his autobiographical sketches, p. 95: "In 1768, a sermon which I preached in the Old South meeting-house, in Boston, was published at the desire of a number of the hearers." The title of it is, "The Importance and Necessity of Christians considering Jesus Christ in the Extent of his high and glorious Character." The text, Heb. 3: 1. "It was composed with a design to preach it in Boston, as I expected soon to go there, under a conviction that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was much neglected, if not disbelieved, by a number of the ministers in Boston." The following extract from



that sermon, taken in connection with this avowal of its design, shows that his discerning mind saw clearly, what it took other minds forty years longer to discover, namely, that the plan of salvation by Christ hinges on the doctrine of his proper deity, and that this doctrine was in danger of being discarded by some of the Boston ministers. "What then shall we say of those who expressly deny the divinity of Christ, and represent him as no more than a mere creature? If they do not preach Christ who silently pass over this divine dignity and glory, infinitely the greatest and most essential part of his character, and without which there is nothing in his person and character that can be a reasonable ground of hope, support, and life to the true Christian, must not they who expressly deny that he is the true God, and consequently hold that he is only a mere creature, be justly looked upon and treated as preaching against Christ and perverting and overthrowing the whole gospel?" He even goes so far as to raise the question, "whether they who believe the divinity of Jesus Christ, and trust in him for pardon and salvation, may and ought to have charity for those, and look on them as good Christians, who expressly deny this doctrine." "How," he asks, "can these two walk together, who are so far from being agreed, that they oppose each other most directly in the highest and most leading article of Christianity, in their infinitely different and opposite notions of the author of it, and which really comprises the whole!" Aware that such views would be pronounced uncharitable by many; he repels the imputation, and fortifies his position by citing "Paul, who, in the exercise of unquestionable charity, pronounced those accursed who preached another gospel, and told the Galatians that a mistake about the ground of the sinner's acceptance with God was fatal." From a foot note added by the author, we learn that "ordaining councils" were beginning to "neglect the examination of candidates for the ministry, with respect to their religious sentiments," and that individual ministers might be found who would "zealously oppose such exami-

nations." "The conduct of these gentlemen," he goes on to say, with more than his wonted warmth of feeling, "is really surprising, and none need to be at a loss what will be the fate of Christianity, so far as their influence reaches. All the distinguishing important doctrines of it will be neglected; and instead of preaching the gospel, sermons will be either insipid dissertations upon something else, or filled with stupid inconsistency, or else be only florid harangues without any meaning."

From these bold declarations, put forth designedly to counteract the disbelief of Christ's divinity which was known to exist among some of the Boston ministers, and from their publication by the request of others, we are prepared to expect a public controversy which will speedily bring about a better agreement, or a wider divergence of theological views, among the brother ministers of these sister churches. But other and very different events were just at hand, sufficiently engrossing to sink these differences out of sight; and the theological controversy, which otherwise would doubtless have ensued at that time, was postponed for the space of forty years longer. The Revolutionary struggle, in which ministers and people of all denominations and of every theological type heartily fraternized under an overwhelming sense of common danger in working out a common destiny, imposed a truce on every other strife, and united all hearts in one single aim. This, on the whole, appears to be a more rational (certainly a more charitable) way of explaining the mysterious silence, than to impute it to studied concealment on the one side, or to cowardice on the other.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1770-1780

Twenty-two churches gathered. — Six extinct churches. — Old usages becoming obsolete. — Ministers taking part in politics. — Election sermons. — Ministers in the army. — John Adams's testimony to their influence in securing Independence. — Controversy between the Bolton church and their pastor. — Claim of the veto power by Rev. Mr. Goss.

ONLY twenty-two Congregational churches sprang up in Massachusetts, during the period from 1770 to the close of the year 1780; and these arose in the following order:—

Three were gathered in 1771:— the church in Worthington, April 1, whose first pastor, Rev. Jonathan Huntington, was ordained June 26 the same year; the church in Williamsburg, July 3, over which Rev. Amos Butler was settled July 14, 1773; and the church in Whately, August 12, with the Rev. Rufus Wells for their pastor, who was ordained September 25th following.

Three were also gathered in 1772:— the church in Washington— exact date lost, but near the beginning of the year— with Rev. William G. Ballantine for their first minister, who was not ordained in the pastoral office till June 15, 1774; the church in Windsor, at what time of the year not known, whose first pastor, Rev. David Avery, was ordained March 25, 1773; and the North church in Salem, July 19, over which Rev. Thomas Barnard, D. D., was settled July 13, the next year.

On the 17th of August, 1773, the church in Southwick was constituted, and Rev. Abel Forward was ordained over it, on the 13th of October following— the only church gathered that year.

The church in Leverett was gathered October 10, 1774, and Rev. Henry Williams was installed the first pastor, November 10, 1784; also the church in Wendell, November 29, with Rev. Joseph Kilburn, settled October 8, 1783.

The South church in Salem seceded from the Tabernacle, February 15, 1775, though the first pastor, Rev. Daniel Hopkins, D. D., was not settled till November 18, 1778.

In 1776, these two were planted:—the church in Auburn (then Ward), January 25, whose first pastor, Rev. Isaac Bailey, was not ordained till November 3, 1784; and the church in Ashby, June 12, with Rev. Samuel Whitman for their minister, who was settled in the pastoral office some time in August, 1778.

The church in Norwich (now Huntington) was organized in July, 1778, and Rev. Stephen Tracy was installed over it May 23, 1781; also the East church in Hawley, on the 16th of September, the same year, with Rev. Jonathan Grant for their pastor.

In 1769, the following were gathered:—in Loudon (now a part of Otis) a small church, February 2, but never settled a pastor, and is absorbed in the present Otis church; the church in Berlin, April 7, an offshoot from the Bolton church, which settled their first pastor, Rev. Reuben Puffer, D. D., September 26, 1781; the church in West Hampton, September 1, which ordained Rev. Enoch Hale on the 29th of the same month; the church in Cummington, July 7, with Rev. James Briggs for their pastor, having had stated preaching for the space of twelve years previously; and the church in Foxboro', November 25, with Rev. Thomas Kendall for their first pastor, whose ordination was not effected till May 25, 1786; and a church in Alford, with Rev. Joseph Avery for their pastor.

The church in Goshen was organized December 21, 1780, and the first pastor, Rev. Samuel Whitman, was installed January 10, 1788. The church in Lee was organized May 25 the same year, but had no pastor till the settlement of Rev. Elisha Parmalee, July 3, 1783.

It was during this period, namely, in 1774, that Universalism was planted in Massachusetts by Rev. John Murray, who founded a church at Gloucester, and was subsequently settled in Boston.

Adding these twenty-two churches to the 294 previously gathered, would make the whole number on the ground, at this date, 316, were it not that six extinct churches are to be subtracted—those in Hull, Bellingham, the church which seceded from the First in Plymouth during the revival of 1744, the Second in Sandwich, Mr. Brett's church in Freetown, and the Second in Essex. The last settled minister in Hull was Rev. Samuel Veazie, who resigned the pastoral office in July, 1767, from which date the church declined through a rapid depopulation of the place till about 1770, when it became extinct. The Congregational church in Bellingham survived till 1774, when the meeting-house, having long stood unoccupied, by reason of Baptist incursions, was demolished, and the few remaining members went into neighboring towns on the Sabbath. The seceding church in Plymouth continued till 1776, when the surviving members, diminished and disheartened, returned to the bosom of the church from which they went out. The Second church in Sandwich, known as "the New-lights," returned to the First about 1769. Mr. Brett's congregation and church disbanded in 1775. The Second in Essex was combined with the First, in 1774. Dropping these six, there remain 310.

The reader of these sketches must have noticed a gradual departure from the old way of church extension in one particular, which, instead of being any longer a rule, has become a rare exception. Whereas it was almost uniformly the custom in early times to organize a church and settle a pastor the same day, who was as uniformly the minister under whose direction they took the preparatory steps, we have reached the point where that custom no longer obtains. Several months, and sometimes years, intervene between the consummation of these two ecclesiastical acts. Had

the object of this sketch allowed of greater detail, it would also have appeared that a change was coming on in the department of church building. In former times, the original proprietors, who were also the first settlers of townships, usually provided for this want, in connection with the building of their own houses. It was now becoming a custom for the new-comers, who might or might not be the original purchasers or patentees of the soil, to defer the meeting-house question till the plantation was incorporated into a town, which was sometimes five, ten, and even twenty years after the first planters reached the spot. And although the warrant for the first town meeting usually contained an article "to see if the town will take measures for building a meeting-house, and hiring a minister," it often happened that the house of worship was suffered to linger for years (even till after a pastor was settled), before it was completed. Perhaps the first appropriation raised and covered the frame, within which the congregation worshipped for the season, sitting on carpenters' benches, and hearing the Gospel from a rough-board pulpit. Then came the glazing,—at least, for the lower part of the house,—the gallery windows being boarded up. In due time, as the people felt able, the building was glazed throughout, and plastered, and the pulpit put in, with its magnificent sounding-board hung over the minister's head, to the terror of weak nerves and the never-tiring gaze of children. Pew-building was undertaken variously. Sometimes it was included in the common charge, and then the pews were usually sold to the highest bidders. Sometimes the floor was "lotted out," that is, the aisles and location of each pew-lot were chalked on the floor, and a committee appointed to decide who should have the liberty to build for his family, a pew on lot No. 1, who on lot No. 2, etc. Sometimes the meeting-house was ten, twenty, and even twenty-five years from its foundation to its finish.\*

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\* The following extract, from "An Historical Sketch of Sturbridge," affords a good illustration: "It appears that the house of

Let us not too hastily ascribe either of these departures from the old way to a lack of zeal for the Lord's house, or a want of interest in his ministers. No doubt there had been a falling off in both these particulars from the spirit of primitive times, as we have had frequent occasion to notice. But there were causes at work adequate to produce these effects, even among churches more pious than these were at the time of which we speak. It was not possible to fill the ministerial ranks, thinned by death, and at the same time to provide a pastor for every new church as soon as organized. There was a growing scarcity of men in the ministerial profession. There was also a scarcity of means wherewith to support them, and to build meeting-houses. The country had but partially recovered from the impoverishing effects of the old French war, when she was plunged into tenfold deeper impoverishment by the drain made on her money and men — the products of her industry and the producers also — in the war of the Revolution. The people were in the

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worship at first had no *pews*, but was fitted up with temporary seats, each worshipper being at liberty to sit, or stand, wherever he could find a convenient place. At length there was inserted in the warrant for a town meeting to be holden October 14, 1741, the following article, namely, 'To see whether the town will lot out the room in the meeting-house under the galleries, and come into some measures to do and accomplish the same,' — an article which would be utterly unintelligible to us, were it not for the record of what was done with it. From that record it seems, that '*to lot out the room*' was neither more nor less than to divide it into squares of convenient size for pews. The town readily came into the measure, and voted that these several lots should be assigned to as many heads of families; and whoever received a lot should have the privilege of building a pew thereon, and of occupying it with his family during the time of his natural life; that if he left a widow she should enjoy the same privilege; and that on her decease the pew should revert to the town, the town paying the original cost of building it. The business of making the assignment was committed to three men with the following instructions: — 'to have due regard to age; to the first beginning in town; to their bearing charges in town, and to their usefulness; and to dispose of the room for pews to such persons as they shall think fit.' The committee, it will be seen, was intrusted with a business no less delicate than *to make out a scale of merit for the town.*"

camp, and many of the ministers were there with them, to inspire the living and to console the dying. And those who tarried at home had more than they could do to succor those who went. Nothing but a high appreciation of religious ordinances could have prompted the oppressed people of Massachusetts to plant so many churches, and settle so many pastors, and to put up even the frames of so many meeting-houses, as we have found during this distressing period.

And here it would savor of ignorance or affectation, to pass over, unnoticed, the patriotic and self-denying spirit which animated the ministers of these Congregational churches throughout this struggle. The ministers of other denominations, as a general thing, were not wanting in the same spirit; but they were comparatively few in number, and exerted a proportionably feeble influence. If any are disposed to think that they departed too far from their proper vocation as preachers of the Gospel, and took too lively an interest in the exciting political events of the day, perhaps something may be pardoned to their respect for the line of succession in which they found themselves standing. Unquestionably, the key-note of Republican freedom was first struck on these shores,

"When the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang  
To the anthem of the free,"

as a fraternity of churches were settling the void wastes of New England, under the lead of ministers who had the shaping of all their opinions, social and religious, civil and ecclesiastical, an hundred and fifty years before the grand chorus of that song resounded from thirteen United States. The pastors of 1776 knew, and could appreciate the fact, that Rev. John Cotton's "Judicials" were the only civil code in the colony till it was superseded by Rev. Nathaniel Ward's "Body of Liberties;" that Rev. John Elliot and Rev. John Wise, for inciting their people to stand fast in those liberties, were punished, the one by a public reprimand, and the other by imprisonment and fine; in short that they



themselves were occupying pulpits every Sabbath day, which, from the first, had been occupied by pastors who were uniformly the aiders and abettors, if not the instigators, of all previous attempts to put down oppression and promote liberty. They could hardly be true to their sacred trust, as that trust was then interpreted, without giving countenance and encouragement to the cause of freedom, both by preaching and practice.

As to *preaching*, there is scarcely a parish in New England where there does not exist some authentic story of what the minister of that day said, in sermon or prayer, by way of exhorting the people to resist the invasion of their rights, and calling on God to confound or cut off their invaders. The Thanksgiving and Fast-day sermons which have been preserved, abound in patriotic appeals of the most pointed character. Even the Sabbath services were not unfrequently spiced with the same, as appears by running the eye over a large collection of manuscript sermons of that date, gathered up by the Congregational Library Association. In one of these, by Rev. Ebenezer Chaplin, of Millbury (then the second parish in Sutton), the preacher has stitched into the middle of his discourse, as the appendix to a head after it was finished, an item of news, which, he tells his audience, come to hand the evening previous, — “that General Burgoyne, with his entire army of 5,752 men and 5,000 stands of arms, surrendered to our brave troops under General Gates, on the 18th inst,” — with sundry other particulars of the war and reflections thereon.

The election sermon, throughout this period, was a clear exposition of the divine law, in its application to human governments and human governors; civil rights and civil wrongs; and the religious obligations of all classes to uphold the one and to crush out the other. The reader of these sermons at the present time will be startled at the boldness of speech, and the senatorial spirit, displayed by the preacher, if he fails to call up the circumstances which surrounded him, or forgets

that he was appointed to that office for that very purpose. And we may venture to say, that no governor's message, in our day, has half the effect in giving tone and direction to public sentiment on political questions, that went along with the election sermon in those times. When Rev. William Gordon, of Roxbury (Jamaica Plain), in performing that service on the 19th of July, 1775, before announcing his text, professes his "zeal for the cause of liberty," and bespeaks "the most candid allowances from so respectable an audience, as oft as my knowledge is surpassed by my zeal, *considering that the last should predominate*, now that the times call for vigorous, unabating exertions," one needs to remember that the battle smoke has but just rolled away from Bunker Hill, and that Boston is still in possession of British troops. In view of such surroundings, who thinks of stopping to criticize his zeal, or even of withholding his assent from the glowing utterance which that zeal prompts him to give in these warm words near the close of his discourse: "We should certainly rebel against the sovereign of the universe in his providential dispensations, and reject the divine counsel communicated to us by that medium, did we not resolve to persist in our present opposition to the wicked designs of an arbitrary ministry."

But when, on the next election day, we see the calm, philosophic, and rather phlegmatic Samuel West, of Dartmouth, going up into the pulpit to perform that service, we feel pretty sure that we shall hear nothing of a "zeal without knowledge" to-day; no gusts of excited feeling against tyrants, either in the government or out of it, will fan the flame of political excitement. And when we hear him read for his text, in a low monotone, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work," we wonder if the "Honorable Council," in appointing him for such an office, at such a time, have not mistaken their man. But let us hear what he has to say. He is announcing his subject: "In order that we may form a right judgment

of the duty enjoined in our text, I shall consider the nature and design of the civil government, and shall show that the same principles which oblige us to submit to government do equally oblige us to resist tyranny; or that tyranny and magistracy are so opposite to each other, that where the one begins the other ends. I shall then apply the present discourse to the grand controversy, that at this day subsists between Great Britain and the American colonies." The discriminating and profoundly learned discussion which follows, in a sermon of seventy pages, might be ranked with the political writings of Philip Sidney and John Milton,—all which is "applied to the grand controversy," in burning sentences like these: "It would be highly criminal not to feel a due resentment against such tyrannical monsters." "It is an indispensable duty, my brethren, which we owe to God and our country, to rouse up and bestir ourselves, and being animated with a noble zeal for the sacred cause of liberty, to defend our lives and fortunes, even to the shedding the last drop of blood:" "We must beat our ploughshares into swords, and our pruning-hooks into spears, and learn the art of self-defence against our enemies:"—"Providence seems plainly to point out to us the expediency, and even necessity, of our considering ourselves as an independent state:" (this was said about five weeks before the declaration of independence by the continental congress). He closes his fervid appeal by calling on his "fathers and brethren to teach their hearers the duty they owe to magistrates; to show them the difference between liberty and licentiousness; and while animating them to oppose tyranny and arbitrary power, to inculcate upon them the duty of yielding due obedience to lawful authority,"—in order to which, says he, "we should thoroughly study the law of nature, the rights of mankind, and the reciprocal duties of governors and governed." These election sermons were usually printed in large editions, and circulated among the people as "The Documents" are now, when great questions of state policy are pending.

The following extract from a discourse "preached on the eve of the battle of Brandywine, September, 1777, by Rev. Jacob Prout (probably not a New England minister), to a large portion of the American soldiers, in the presence of Gen. George Washington and Gen. Wayne," is not more remarkable for its glowing patriotism than for its prophetic words. "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword," is the text; and after a graphic description of the outrages committed by those who have taken the sword against these inoffending colonies, he proceeds: "Brethren, think me not unworthy of belief, when I tell you that the doom of the Britisher is near. Think me not vain when I tell you, that beyond the cloud that now enshrouds us, I see gathering, thick and fast, the darker cloud and the blacker storm of Divine retribution. They may conquer us on the morrow! Might and wrong may prevail, and we may be driven from the field—but the hour of God's own vengeance will come! Aye, if in the vast solitudes of eternal space, in the heart of the boundless universe, there throbs the being of an awful God, quick to avenge, and sure to punish guilt, then will the man, George of Brunswick, called king, feel in his brain and his heart, the vengeance of the Eternal Jehovah! A blight will be upon his life—a withered brain, and accursed intellect; a blight will be upon his children and upon his people. Great God! how dread the punishment!" The prayer which followed this sermon has also been preserved, and contains petitions like these: "O God of mercy, we pray thy blessing on the American arms. Make the man of our hearts strong in thy wisdom; bless, we beseech thee, with renewed life and strength, our hope, and thy instrument, even *George Washington*. Shower thy counsels upon the honorable continental congress; visit the tents of our host, comfort the soldier in his wounds and afflictions—nerve him for the fight—prepare him for the hour of death. Teach us to be merciful. Though the memory of galling wrongs be in our hearts, and knocking for admittance, and they may fill us with desire to revenge,

yet let us, O Lord, spare the vanquished, though they never spared us. In the hour of death, do thou guide us into the abode prepared for the blest; so shall we return thanks unto thee, through Christ our Redeemer. *God prosper the cause, Amen.*"

The practice of these divines was fully up to their preaching and praying. Aside from their uncomplaining and even cheerful spirit with which they submitted to privations of domestic comfort, — giving up a portion of their salaries in many cases, and working with their own hands to subsist their families, that the people of their charge might be encouraged to bear the crushing burdens of the war, — there were not wanting acts of a more positive and forth-putting heroism among the ministers. A few instances, gathered without search, from authentic sources nearest at hand, must suffice for illustration. In September, 1774, the town of Sturbridge voted "to provide four half barrels of powder, five cwt. of lead, and five hundred flints," as a donation to the public service. At another meeting, held a month later, the selectmen were instructed to provide still more ammunition. On this occasion, Rev. Joshua Paine, pastor of the Congregational church, "came forward, and proposed to pay for one cask of powder himself, if the town would be at the trouble of procuring it." Whereupon a Baptist deacon, in the absence of his minister, became responsible for bullets to match. The powder, as that article then sold, came to just one fifth of Mr. Paine's annual salary. (Town Records.)

Rev. Thomas Allen, first pastor of the church in Pittsfield, served as chairman of the "committee of correspondence," which every town appointed at the opening of hostilities. He also served as chaplain in the army at White Plains, Ticonderoga, and Bennington, to which last-named place he marched with a company composed partly of his own parishioners; and after fervent prayer in presence of the army on the morning of the battle, he joined the ranks by the side of his brother, telling him, "Joseph, you load and I will fire." On being asked, after the battle, how many he killed, he

said he could not tell, but expressed the hope that he had prevented some from being killed; "for, observing a flash often repeated in a bush near by, which seemed to be succeeded by the fall of some one of our men, I levelled my musket, and firing in that direction, put out that flash."

A large number of the ministers became chaplains for longer or shorter periods, throughout the Revolution; and those who did not thus go to the war themselves, encouraged their people to go. The case of Rev. Samuel Eaton, settled near Brunswick, Me., may be cited as a representative case. While the British were plundering and burning the towns along the seaboard, a recruiting officer came into his parish on the Sabbath, just before meeting. Knowing Mr. Eaton's patriotic sentiments, he called on him for help. This was promptly declined, but with an intimation that after sundown (the Puritan Sabbath being then over), if he would attend his evening lecture, he might afford him some aid. That evening his discourse was founded on Jeremiah 48:10, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." Within an hour from the close of the third service, forty men of that congregation were marching toward the scene of conflict.

Such was the preaching, and such the practice, throughout New England, with but here and there an exception. And it was on the knowledge of such facts that the opinion of the elder President Adams was founded, which he expressed to a French statesman, that American independence was mainly due to the clergy; that their well-known devotion to the cause of liberty, and the habitual deference paid to their opinions, imbued all ranks and classes with one common sentiment of resistance to oppression. The acknowledgment of this power was freely and emphatically made in the provincial congress of 1774 at Concord, with John Hancock at its head, when a circular letter was sent forth to the ministers, begging that they would interpose to prevent "this dreadful slavery," as they termed the out-

rageous acts of parliament. Testimony bearing on the same point exists in the fact referred to in a previous chapter, that the writings of Rev. John Wise on Congregational church-government — eminently democratic in spirit and argument — were republished by subscription in 1772, sixty years after the last previous edition, and almost wholly by laymen, who were prominent in the struggle for freedom.

As may well be supposed, the religious and ecclesiastical interests of these churches, except so far as involved in the all-engrossing question of civil freedom, received but little attention throughout this period. The more devout members, male and female, we can easily believe, were driven nearer to the throne of grace. Frequent days of fasting and prayer were appointed. Preachers, especially those who had begun to be designated as evangelical, were often searching out the causes of God's displeasure against the land, and setting them forth "for a lamentation." But controversial questions seldom came up, and soon subsided. The only ripple that we notice in ecclesiastical affairs, arose in Worcester county, on this wise: the church in Bolton becoming disaffected towards their pastor, Rev. Thomas Goss called him to account for his alleged misconduct. No satisfaction being obtained, the case was submitted to a succession of councils, whose results proved equally unsatisfactory. After several years spent in fruitless efforts to adjust the differences between the pastor and people, the church took it upon them to dissolve the pastoral relation without the advice of an ecclesiastical council, and even against the advice of several neighboring ministers. Whereupon the controversy took a wider range, involving the entire ministerial association with which Mr. Goss was connected. Attempts were made to prevent the Bolton church from settling another minister, and even to get them disfellowshipped by other churches. Narratives of the troubles, and counter narratives were put forth; pamphlets were published and reviewed. Rev. Zabdiel Adams, of Lunenburg, was chief champion on the one side, and a racy writer, who signed

himself "A Neighbor," earned that title on the other. At length the convention of Congregational ministers, at their meeting in May, 1773, issued a document of twenty-one pages, entitled "Observations upon the Congregational plan of church-government, particularly as it respects the choice and removal of such officers." Although the Bolton case is not named, these "Observations" are confined to the discussion of matters involved therein.

All this would hardly warrant the space here given to the subject, but for one or two important principles of church polity which came into debate. The right of a pastor to negative the votes of his church was claimed by Mr. Goss, and defended in a published pamphlet by Mr. Adams,—a figment of prelatic power so completely cut in pieces by the dissecting knife of "A Neighbor," that we wonder how any pastor could afterwards think of patching it up, as sometimes has been attempted in our day. Another point in the discussion was the necessity of ecclesiastical councils, in settling and dismissing ministers, which resolved itself into the question whether there is a binding force in their decisions, independent of their acceptance by the churches, — or rather whether it be *decision*, or only *advice*, that comes out in their results. It would be amusing, were it only less annoying to the peace of the churches, to mark the many attempts that have been made to attach a cumbersome judiciary to our simple form of church-government, by erecting our fraternal councils into ecclesiastical courts, — attempts necessarily abortive, because inherently repugnant to that first principle of Congregationalism which secures every church against the jurisdiction of every other. In this controversy, however, those who advocated the indispensableness of councils, and the binding force of their decisions, succeeded in getting their views adopted by the "Convention of Congregational ministers," and published in a pamphlet, with their imprimatur. But the spirit of liberty was too wide awake at that time, to bear the yoke thus laid upon the necks of the people, and it was indignantly



thrown off. "Where were these liberty plunderers convened?" asks a nervous reviewer of the convention's pamphlet. "Why, they say, at Boston! Is Boston, that metropolis of liberty for these many years past, become a den of liberty plunderers? O, Boston, will you exert yourself so against m-n-stry, p-rl-m-nt, g-v-rn-s, etc., for your civil liberties, and yet suffer your religious liberties, which solely moved your fathers to come over into this land — will you suffer that most sacred birthright to be sacked by those in your own bowels? I hope better things of you, and that, ere this time, you have sent a hue and cry after them. Something must be done. If the churches do not rouse up and protest against it, in less than half a century it will be urged as of great authority; as being a fundamental book of the constitution — this convention pamphlet." The result of the discussion was a general acquiescence in the old doctrine of the Cambridge platform, that councils, "though not absolutely necessary to the being, yet many times, through the iniquity of men, and perverse-ness of times, necessary to the well-being of churches, for the establishment of truth and peace therein," — "not to decide and determine authoritatively, but to advise the church how to decide and determine;" and that this advice "should have just so much force as there is force in the reason of it."

## CHAPTER XVII.

1780-1790.

<sup>24</sup>  
 Gathering of twenty-two churches. — Disastrous effects of the Revolutionary war on the churches. — Rise of Universalists in Massachusetts. — First Roman Catholic church. — Unitarianism in King's Chapel. — Third article in the Bill of Rights. — Congregational Charitable Society incorporated.

NOTWITHSTANDING the drainage on Massachusetts money and men by the Revolutionary war, the following twenty-four churches were organized within her bounds during the ten years from 1780 to 1790.

In 1781 these four arose: — the church in Carlisle, February 28, whose first pastor, Rev. Paul Litchfield, was ordained on the 7th of the next November; the Second or West church in Newton, October 21, over which Rev. William Greenough was settled, November 8 of the same year; the Second, or West church in Granville, November 17, which had no pastor till the settlement of Rev. Aaron J. Booge in 1786; and probably the church in Rowe, though Rev. Preserved Smith, the first pastor, was not ordained till 1787.

Three churches were gathered in 1782: — the church in Northbridge, June 6, which settled Rev. John Crane, D. D., on the 25th of June the next year; the Second, or East church in Amherst, November 28, which had no pastor till the ordination of Rev. Ichabod Draper, January 25, 1785; and probably in the autumn of the same year (1782) the church in Orange (North), with Rev. Emerson Foster for their pastor, who was installed on the succeeding 12th of December.

In 1783, two churches were organized: — the church in Brighton, February 26, over which Rev. John Foster, D. D., was ordained November 1 of the next year;

and the church in Middlefield, November 18, whose first pastor was Rev. Jonathan Nash, ordained October 31, 1792.

The church in Boxboro' was gathered April 29, 1784, and settled Rev. Joseph Willard, November 2, the year following.

In 1785, seven churches were constituted:— the church in Dalton, February 16, from the Pittsfield church, with Rev. James Thompson for their first pastor, who was not ordained till March, 1795; the present church in Heath, April 15, over which Rev. Joseph Strong was ordained October 27, 1790, (for though a Congregational church had existed from 1767 within the present limits of the town, and had Rev. Jonathan Leavitt for its pastor, it was disbanded at the close of his ministry in 1785, just before or at the time that Heath was separated from Charlemont); the church in Buckland, October 8, which settled Rev. Josiah Spaulding, October 15, 1794; the church in Phillipston, November 16, a colony from Templeton, over which Rev. Ebenezer Tucker was ordained November 5, 1788; the church in East Hampton, November 17, which settled Rev. Payson Williston their first pastor, August 13, 1789; the Second church in Worcester, a secession from the First, December 1, with Rev. Aaron Bancroft, D. D., who was ordained the succeeding 1st of February; and at some unknown day of the same year the Second or South church in Wilbraham, which settled Rev. Moses Warren, September 3, 1788.

These two arose in 1786:— the church in Gardner, February 1, over which Rev. Jonathan Osgood was ordained October 19, 1791; and the church in Plainfield, August 31, with Rev. Moses Hallock for their first pastor, who was settled July 11, 1792.

The present First church in Charlemont dates from June 6, 1788, though as before intimated (see Heath) a church was gathered in 1767, which, after years of contention with their minister, Rev. Jonathan Leavitt, — partly doctrinal, partly political, and partly financial, — was broken up in 1785. Rev. Isaac Babbitt was the

first pastor of the newly organized church, who was settled February 24, 1796.

The four following were gathered in 1789:—the church in West Stockbridge, June 4, 1789, with Rev. Oliver Ayers for their pastor, ordained May 29, 1793; the church in Tyngsboro', November 30, which settled Rev. Nathaniel Lawrence, January 6, the next year; the church in Ludlow, but the day of organization is not known, over which Rev. Antepas Steward was ordained November 27, 1793; and the church in Enfield, though at what precise date cannot be stated, unless we assume December 2, when the first pastor, Rev. Joshua Crosby, was settled over it.

In addition to the ordinary process of church extension here described, there came upon the people a heavy load of labor and expense, in rebuilding altars broken down by the ravages of war, and in restoring the suspended means of grace. But nowhere did this extra burden fall so heavily as on Boston and its vicinity. While the battle of Bunker Hill was raging at its height, the ancient sanctuary in Charlestown, with more than three hundred dwellings, over which, from its elevated position, it seemed to keep guard, were reduced to ashes, whereby two thousand persons were also reduced to poverty and exile. While Boston was in possession of the British, "the Old North meeting-house and above one hundred other large wooden buildings were taken down and distributed for firewood. The Old South was transformed into a riding-school. Hollis street, Brattle street, the West, and the First Baptist meeting-houses were occupied as hospitals or barracks." (Snow's Hist. Bost. p. 310.) The Sabbath worship in these places, as a matter of course, was broken up. In fact, all the pastors who were friendly to the American cause, except Dr. Samuel Mather and Dr. Andrew Eliot, had left during the siege. The clergymen of the three Episcopal churches fled with General Howe on the memorable 17th of March, 1776, and Dr. Byles of Hollis street was dismissed in 1777, on account of his supposed predilection for the regal

cause. Mr. Morehead's church on Federal street was vacant, and Mr. Croswell's meeting-house (School street) was untenable.

From this disastrous state of the Boston churches, recovery was necessarily slow; indeed, a complete restoration was never effected. The Old North having lost their meeting-house, and the New Brick their pastor (Dr. Pemberton, who died September 15, 1777), the two were merged into one under the pastorship of Rev. John Lathrop, D. D., who had been settled over the former since 1768; and the united church was numbered the "Second," retaining the date of the Old North. In 1765, on the decease of Dr. Samuel Mather, the remains of his church were also merged in this Second, according to his dying request; and their deserted meeting-house was sold the same year to the first society of Universalists, who shortly after settled Rev. John Murray. Still another Congregational church disappeared from Boston in 1785,—the one known as Andrew Croswell's, which had never been in full sympathy with the others. Immediately after the death of Mr. C., the church disbanded, and their place of worship in School street, originally built and used by a congregation of French Protestants, came into possession of the Catholics. This was their first place of worship in New England. The Abbe La Poitrie, a chaplain in the French navy, being at Boston on his way home after the war closed, gathered the few French and Irish residents then here, and laid the foundation of what has since become "The Church of the Holy Cross" on Franklin street.

This last makes the sixth religious denomination that got established in Massachusetts; and their comparative strength, as indicated by the number of churches connected with each, at the close of the Revolution, may be stated thus:—Roman Catholics, one; Universalists, three; Quakers, six; Episcopalians, eleven; Baptists, sixty-eight; Congregationalists, three hundred and thirty. This enumeration of the Congregational churches excludes the three in Boston that were crushed

out by the war, and Rev. Mr. Noble's in Newburyport, which disbanded soon after his removal in 1784.

But the extinction of churches was not the only nor the worst calamity that the war of the Revolution inflicted on the cause of religion and morals. We have already had occasion to notice how the perils into which the country was thrown, and the political excitements incident thereto, engrossed all hearts, and, for the time being, swallowed up all other concerns. We have also seen how zealously the ministers of the Gospel enlisted in this struggle for life and liberty. "Perhaps no class of citizens were more deeply interested" — certainly none felt a heavier responsibility, or discharged it with more fidelity. "By their prayers, their sermons, their conversation, influence, and example, they endeavored to the utmost to sustain the courage of the citizens, and secure the deliverance of their bleeding country. This course of procedure was regarded at the time as necessary, and in many points of view it was highly commendable; yet it could not but have withdrawn the minds of the clergy, and, through them, of their people, from the great concerns of religion and the soul." (*Spirit Pilg.* Vol. II. p. 178.) Add to this the large number of young men withdrawn from the pursuits of honest industry to a military life, — liberated from all Sabbath and sanctuary restraints, to be associated with unprincipled foreigners, schooled from their youth to despise sacred things, and laugh at the Bible, and live a vicious life — and it will not appear strange, however deplorable, that the war should have brought into New England a flood of corruptions and errors in life and doctrine, to which no ordinary means of grace would present a barrier, — still less when these means, in their actual appliance, were weakened much below their ordinary force. And then this irreligious tendency would naturally "increase unto more ungodliness," in the full tide of commercial prosperity and increasing wealth that flowed in upon the new-born republic through the same friths and channels. The desecration of the Sabbath, the neglect of the sanctuary, and a dis-

position to cavil at the teachings of the Bible as an antiquated book, prevailed to an alarming extent; and in not a few of our New England towns, which it would be easy though invidious to name, some of the last vestiges of Puritanism seem to have been irrevocably effaced at that time.

It was at this epoch in our religious history that the first open avowal of Unitarianism was made in Massachusetts — not among the Congregationalists, however, but the Episcopalians! As this event has an important relation to the subsequent development of that system in our own denomination, it deserves a brief notice.

When the British troops evacuated Boston in 1776, all the Episcopal ministers, as before remarked, and many of their people, took passage with them. Religious service being thus suspended in their churches, King's Chapel was occupied by the Old South congregation for the space of five years, while the desolations of their own house were being repaired. At length, in 1782, as they were about to vacate the chapel, the few remaining proprietors determined to restore their former mode of worship, and employed Rev. James Freeman as reader. At the end of three years, during which time the authorized (Trinitarian) liturgy and prayerbook were used, he succeeded, not without opposition, in substituting a revised ritual, after the plan of Dr. Samuel Clark, excluding all recognition of the Trinity. As yet Dr. Freeman had not received ordination. After several unsuccessful attempts to obtain it in a canonical way, he "was ordained as rector, priest, etc., by the wardens, vestry, proprietors, and congregation of the chapel, by virtue of the third article in the declaration of rights," (Snow's Hist. Boston, 338)—if any one can tell what virtue there was in that article to accomplish, or even to countenance that act. The senior warden "laid one hand on him, and with the other delivered him the Bible, enjoining him to make that sacred book the rule of his faith and conduct."—(Lindsey's Vindi. 35.)

On this transaction an able writer in the *Spirit of the Pilgrims* (Vol. II. 290) remarks, — "Must we not conclude, that, had Dr. Freeman fallen into some Congregational churches, instead of an Episcopal one, where he could have modified his worship without attracting public attention, and been ordained without examination, his Unitarianism would have been as closely concealed, as that of any of his contemporary brethren? But the liturgy of the church of England stood directly in his way." The implication here is, that other ministers in Boston held the same views, but not being under the same necessity to avow them, practised concealment. It may be that Dr. Freeman's course would have been less open and bold had the worship in his congregation been disencumbered from the liturgy. But there is nothing to show that his "contemporary brethren" would have taken his course, had they been in his place. He was evidently far in advance of any others. Those Congregational ministers who subsequently professed his sentiments, were not, at this time, sufficiently "ripe for so great a change," — to use his own words to Mr. Lindsey, in describing the public sentiment of Boston. Instead of studying concealment, we may suppose that they professed as far as they believed. This supposition, while it leans to the side of charity, accords with a known characteristic of American Unitarianism, from its rise among us, till a comparatively recent date, namely, to ignore the evangelical system, rather than acknowledge its opposite; to *deny*, rather than *affirm*, in its discussions of doctrinal truth. This trait, whether it be a trick of concealment or not, cannot properly be fathered on Unitarianism, as it attached to a certain class of our ministers before Unitarianism had a name or a being among us. As early as 1722, Cotton Mather, in his Convention sermon, complained that certain theological topics, known in our day as the doctrines of grace, were "threatened with a sentence of banishment from some churches." Twenty years later Mr. Foxcroft expressed his conviction that the same doctrines, "though frequently touched upon,"



were slurred over in the sermons of many preachers around him, and "generally not allowed their due consideration." Indeed, when considered historically, it will appear that the habitual neglect of these doctrines as essential, or their avoidance as unwelcome (not their *denial* as unsafe or untrue), in the discourses of reputedly Orthodox divines, was the necessary cause of that defection from the faith which will be developed in future chapters of this sketch. But as yet we find no visible and avowed Unitarianism in Massachusetts outside of this one Episcopal church, — a fact, by the way, not suited to strengthen our confidence in the polity and ritual of that church, as a defence against errors in doctrine, or disorders in practice.

The new constitution which the State adopted in 1780, while it liberated each religious sect from all subordination to any other, left the old law of taxation for the support of ministers in full force. This was strenuously resisted by the Baptists. They held conventions; they memorialized the legislature; they appointed delegates to meet other bodies, if such could be found, who sympathized with them; they employed Rev. Isaac Backus, of Middleboro', to act as their agent in accomplishing their purpose. Still it failed. The Third Article in the Bill of Rights, appended to the constitution, clearly recognized the right to compel the people to support public worship, on the ground that "the happiness of a people, and the good order and preservation of civil government, essentially depend upon piety, religion, and morality, and that these cannot be generally diffused through a community but by the institution of the public worship of God, and of public instructions in piety, religion, and morality." Conceding to the framers of that article all honesty of intention and purity of motive, we must also concede to our Baptist brethren the credit of holding the truth, on this point, — a very great and practical truth, which has since been acknowledged by the nearly unanimous action of the commonwealth in expunging that article, and leaving religion to its own inherent, vital energy,

with the promised blessing of God, for its support and propagation. The result has shown that public worship and its attendant blessings can be had without legal compulsion; and even more effectually than with it.

It was during this period that the "Congregational Charitable Society of Massachusetts" was organized to carry out the eleemosynary plan which the "Convention of Congregational Ministers" had devised. The origin and early history of this convention were noticed in a former chapter; as also some of their subsequent acts and testimonies bearing on religious and ecclesiastical questions. But it has been chiefly as almoners of charity to the widows and children of deceased ministers, that their functions have been fulfilled during the last hundred years. The contributions taken up at the close of the annual sermon had been gradually accumulating in the form of a residuary fund—increased by an occasional donation or legacy—when the idea, and the necessity of a chartered corporation were brought up at the annual meeting in May, 1785, which resulted in the appointment of eight of their number, to be joined by twelve laymen (designated by the convention), who were incorporated by an act of the legislature on the 24th of March, 1786, with the name, and for the purposes, above specified. By this seemingly artless method of husbanding and dispensing the funds committed to their hands for their future widows and fatherless children, the convention, as the result has proved, put the whole business forever out of their hands, and beyond their control, except only so far as relates to the small fund then on hand. All subsequent donations and legacies, amounting now, with the accumulation from interest, according to the terms of the charter, to sixty or seventy thousand dollars, are at the disposal of some twenty or thirty individuals who fill their own vacancies, and give no account of their doings to the convention, or any one else, except merely to report and pay over the pittance annually set apart to go with the contribution taken up at the close of each convention sermon for the widow and fatherless.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1790-1800.

Fifteen churches gathered. — Comparative numbers in the different denominations. — Rise of the Methodists. — Presbyterianism in disfavor. — Licensing candidates for the ministry. — Theatricals first introduced into Boston. — Massachusetts Home Missionary Society founded. — Revivals near the close of the last century, and their effects.

ONLY fifteen Congregational churches were planted in Massachusetts during the last decade of the eighteenth century, a smaller number than in any like period for the previous ninety years. The causes of this are plainly referable to the war of the Revolution, which, in addition to a heavy financial pressure, left also a blight on the moral and religious sentiments of the people, unfavorable to church extension. Nor did the churches that actually arose, in all cases spring from the best of impulses.

In 1792 a separation took place between the church and parish in Taunton, occasioned — so say the surviving minutes of a council — by “the opposition of a few in the society to some of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel contained in the Westminster confession of faith;” which resulted in the withdrawal of the entire church, excepting only four members; and its union with a new society formed for that purpose in the west part of the town, known as the West parish, with which the original church has ever since been connected. The four remaining members joined with the First parish in calling Rev. John Foster to settle with them. His installation took place, May 16, 1792, from which we may properly date the beginning of the Second, or present

Unitarian church in Taunton. On the 30th of May, 1793, was gathered the Temple street church in Newburyport, and Rev. Charles W. Milton was ordained on the 20th of March following; and the church in Gill, an offshoot from Deerfield, about the same time, whose first pastor, Rev. John Jackson, was ordained June 10, 1798.

Three churches arose in 1794:—the New Marlboro church, on the 25th of April, over which Rev. John Stevens was ordained October 22; a small church in Bethlehem (a district now included in Otis), September 14, without a pastor till its union with the Otis church; and the church in Fairhaven (exact date lost), whose first pastor, Rev. Isaiah Weston, was settled the next year.

The church in Hinsdale was gathered December 17, 1795, but had no pastor till the settlement of Rev. Caleb Knight, April 28, 1802.

The church in West Boylston arose September 15, 1796, which settled Rev. William Nash the year following.

These three were gathered in 1797:—the church in Montgomery, January 30, which settled Rev. Seth Noble as their first pastor, November 4, 1801; the West church in Dracut, August 31, which had no pastor till the settlement of Rev. Reuben Sears, January 31, 1820; and the church in Tolland, then a part of Granville, with Rev. Roger Harrison for their pastor.

In 1798, the two following arose:—the North church in Wrentham, June 16, over which Rev. John Cleveland was ordained the same day; and the West church in Needham, September 6, which settled Rev. Thomas Noyes, July 10 of the next year.

The present First church in Holyoke, formerly the Third in West Springfield, was gathered December 4, 1799, and for a number of years united with the Baptists in sustaining public worship, having Rev. Thomas Rand for their minister. The first Congregational pastor was Rev. Hervey Smith, who was ordained in 1833.

In the town of Russell, a church was organized on the first of November, 1800, but no pastor has ever been

settled over it; and owing to the depopulation of the place, the ordinances of religion have been suspended for several years past.

These fifteen Congregational churches, added to the three hundred and thirty previously existing, (if we drop the Second church in Malden, which was reunited with the First in 1791), will make the whole number in Massachusetts, at the end of the last century, three hundred and forty-four. From the most reliable statistics within reach,—which yet are imperfect,—the churches connected with all other denominations in the State, were 151, namely:—Baptists, ninety-three; Methodists, twenty-nine; Episcopalians, fourteen; Quakers, eight; Universalists, four; Presbyterians (counting only those which continued such), two; Roman Catholics, one.

The Methodists made their first appearance among us in 1790, but had no incorporated societies or churches till three years later. The fact that twenty-nine such organizations arose during the next seven years, would seem quite surprising, were it not known that "class meetings" and preaching posts, of which several came into the circuit of one and the same preacher, were all reckoned in the statistics of that day, as so many churches. But after all reasonable allowance has been made, it will still appear that this denomination had extraordinary success in gaining converts during their early years in New England. There was evidently an aptitude in the public mind to receive the Methodist faith and form of worship. Nor is it difficult to show how this came about. Old orthodoxy, tinctured with Arminianism, and cooled down to a lukewarm temperature in its delivery from the desk, had become the characteristic of Sabbath day instructions, in many of the pulpits, as it had been prior to the great awakening in 1740; and nothing could have been more favorable to the success of an earnest, loud-spoken Methodist ministry. In his doctrinal teachings, Jesse Lee, the pioneer of that denomination in these parts, suited such as were of Arminian tendencies; in his fervid style of address, he was acceptable to many warm-hearted Calvinists, tired of

dull preaching. What with both these adaptations to the wants of the people, no wonder that Methodism had a rapid growth. Something of the kind was inevitable. The wild enthusiasm of the Quakers had long since disappeared, and their numbers were diminishing. The martyr spirit which animated the first generation of Baptists, had subsided with the removal of their legal disabilities, and their religious zeal suffered a proportional decline. If Jesse Lee had not come into Massachusetts, some one else, pressed in spirit like Paul at Athens, "when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry," would have found utterance, and have had followers.

The churches that at different periods had been constituted after the Presbyterian model (of which seven or eight have been noticed in this sketch), had generally assumed the Congregational form. This seems the more remarkable, when it is known that the ministers were rather verging to the opposite side. The most vigorous treatise that New England has ever produced in defence of Presbyterianism is that of Dr. Nathaniel Whitaker of the Tabernacle church, Salem, published in 1774, as a "confutation" of John Wise. But it did not avail to turn the ebbing tide. Unluckily for the Presbyterian cause, the doctor's main point, namely, that "the brotherhoods of the churches, acting collectively, are more likely to do wrong and tyrannize, than an aristocracy" (that is, an eldership), was just what the people felt politically bound to disbelieve and to disprove. Aristocracy, oligarchy, monarchy,—the tyranny which these could inflict they had suffered, and were determined to throw off. They were fighting for popular sovereignty. It was an unfortunate time to ask them to abandon that mode of governing in the church, from which they had derived their best ideas of self-government in the State; for they had too much discernment, or else too little, to believe Dr. Whitaker's theory would work any better in the one case than in the other. Even his own flock, which had been kept under Presbyterian rule during his fifteen years' minis-

try among them, reverted to their original form of government immediately after his departure in 1785. Indeed, it was their strong proclivity in that direction which induced him to go.

In one respect, however, there had been a steady divergency from the old Congregational way, to what, about this time, became a fixed usage, namely, the examination and certified approval of candidates for the sacred office, by clerical associations. This was the only thing in the celebrated "Proposals" of 1705, which survived the scathing satire of Mr. Wise in the "Churches' Quarrel Espoused." Letters of commendation from experienced pastors, which a young minister would naturally take when going among the churches as a candidate, gradually assumed the form and authority of credentials, till, in 1790, the convention of Congregational ministers virtually made them necessary, by recommending that only those bearing such papers from clerical bodies be admitted to the pulpits. Thus the business of testing the qualifications of a young man for the ministry silently and gradually passed from the churches to the clergy, where the sole responsibility now rests, — whether wisely or not, no one ever asks. It is understood, however (or should be), that such credentials are intended to express merely the "approbation" of those who give them; and that no Congregational association claims, *or ever can rightfully claim*, the authority implied in the term license, which, in later years, has inadvertently crept into our associational nomenclature.

As indicative of a departure from Puritan principles, and a growing laxity of morals during the period now under review, it may be worth while to notice, in passing, that Boston finally succeeded in getting a theatre, after petitioning the legislature again and again for the repeal of certain old prohibitory acts and penalties. Two, in fact, were opened at nearly the same time, — one at the corner of Federal and Franklin streets, February 3, 1794, and another near the foot of the mall, December 26, 1796, known as the Haymarket theatre.

This last grew out of a dissatisfaction with the management of the first, rather than from its flush patronage. Indeed, so slow were the descendants of the Puritans to appreciate this improved style of teaching morals, and so slender were the pecuniary proceeds, that four failures occurred during the first eight years! (Snow's Hist. Bost. 334.) How many have happened since, may be within the memory of some who read this sketch. But it should be honor enough for one city to be the home of Puritanism, and the "cradle of liberty," if it come behind others in theatricals.

Another class of institutions, dating back to this period, have had a more permanent hold on the public sympathy. Passing over the "Society for Propagating the Gospel in North America," which originated on the other side of the water, though its commissioners on this side were incorporated in 1787, and have subsequently prosecuted their work in their own way, the first missionary organization in Massachusetts was "the Congregational Missionary Society in the counties of Berkshire (Mass.) and Columbia (N. Y.)," founded in 1798, which is still in operation under a slight change of name, as an efficient auxiliary of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society. Though nominally lying on both sides of the State line, its patronage is confined almost exclusively to the Massachusetts side.

On the 28th of May, 1799, the Massachusetts Missionary Society was organized, with Rev. Nathanael Emmons, D. D., of Franklin, for its first president. Its original object, as set forth in the second article of the first constitution, was, "to diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel among the heathens, as well as other people in the remote parts of our country, where Christ is seldom or never preached,"—an object comprehending the whole range of foreign and domestic missions, as the work was then understood. The same breadth of design was retained, when, in 1804, that article was so amended as to read: "The object of the society is to diffuse the Gospel among the people of the newly settled and remote parts of our country, among the



Indians of the country, and through more distant regions of the earth, as circumstances shall invite, and the ability of the society shall admit." Its membership and patronage were derived wholly from ministers and churches familiarly called "evangelical," as distinguished from others named "liberal,"—terms at that time interchangeable with Calvinist and Arminian, though each embraced persons of considerable theological difference. A society having a similar object was formed in Connecticut the year preceding.

These missionary movements can be traced directly to a revived state of religion, which marked the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. The infusion of French infidelity into the American army during the Revolutionary war, and more especially the subsequent attempt to scatter it over the land, by means of secret affiliated societies acting in concert with the so called "Illuminati" of France, alarmed the fears of good men. Here and there a note of warning was heard from the pulpit and the press. Foremost among the defenders of the faith against this insidious attack, stood forth the gifted Dr. Dwight, then recently called to preside over Yale College. His powerful arguments and overwhelming eloquence, directed against the free-thinking spirit of the age, was most seasonable and effective. A distinguished civilian, his contemporary, referring to his encounter with infidelity at that time, has expressed the opinion "that no man, except 'the Father of his Country,' had conferred greater benefits on our nation than President Dwight." Moved by a deep conviction of danger, the more devout members of the churches also awoke, and betook themselves to prayer, weeping "between the porch and the altar," and crying, "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." The consequence was a succession of revivals in various parts of Connecticut and Massachusetts, which though small in comparison with what has since been witnessed, were of immeasurable importance in their subsequent influence. It was the beginning of

that moral change, which, in its development, saved us from becoming a nation of infidels. It was the first exertion of a power which, in the words of Dr. Griffin, "swept from so large a part of New England its looseness of doctrine and laxity of discipline, and awakened an evangelical pulse in every vein of the American church." It gave birth to those missionary movements already noticed, and by its continued and increased action, brought into being the whole family of benevolent societies that have since been the glory of our churches. This allusion to the "little reviving" which the Lord in mercy granted in that day of discouragement, is needful to a correct understanding of the process through which these Congregational churches were saved.

## CHAPTER XIX.

1800-1810.

Nineteen churches organized. — Separations in churches on doctrinal grounds. — Harvard College lost to the Evangelical party. — Andover Theological Seminary founded. — The A. B. C. F. Missions constituted. — General Association of Massachusetts formed. — Various benevolent societies. — First religious periodical.

DURING the first ten years of the present century, the following nineteen churches were organized:—

The church in Southbridge, chiefly a colony from the Sturbridge church, was constituted September 16, 1801, though destitute of a settled ministry till the ordination of Rev. Jason Park, December 18, 1816. On the 1st of October, the same year, the Third church in Plymouth seceded from the First, and on the 12th of May following, settled Rev. Adoniram Judson. The secession grew out of a dissatisfaction with the theological views of Rev. James Kendall, who, by a majority of one member in the church, and a large vote of the parish, had succeeded the highly evangelical Dr. Chandler Robbins.

The present First church in Natick was organized in March, 1802, and Rev. Freeman Sears was ordained over it, January 7, 1806. Several Indian and mixed churches had been gathered in the east part of the town since the days of Eliot, which had successively disappeared in the fluctuations that befell the native occupants of the soil. The same year, November 9, the Dane Street Church in Beverly was gathered, which settled Rev. Joseph Emerson, September 21, the year following.

The Branch church in Salem — so called from its early constitution, but now known as the Howard Street Church — was formed December 29, 1803, whose first pastor, Rev. Joshua Spaulding, was installed over it, April 17, 1805. The South church in Dighton, was also gathered in 1803, with Rev. Abraham Gushee for their pastor.

No other Congregational church appears to have arisen in any part of the State till 1807, when the following five were gathered: — the church in Dartmouth, some time in April, through the labors of Rev. Curtis Coe; the present church in Assonet Village, Freetown, in the summer following, with only occasional supplies of preaching for the first twenty years; the present North church in New Bedford, October 15, which had no settled minister till after its separation from the precinct, under the ministry of Rev. Sylvester Holmes in 1810; the Third church in Hingham, June 16, with Rev. Henry Coleman for their pastor; and the Second, or South church in Abington, August 19, whose first pastor, Rev. Daniel Thomas, was ordained June 1, the next year.

In 1808, the following four were organized: — the Second church in Dorchester, January 1, whose first pastor, Rev. John Codman, D. D., was ordained on the 7th of December; the West church in Marlboro', March 5, a secession from the First, occasioned by the unsatisfactory location of a new meeting-house; the Bellville church in Newburyport, some time in April, under the pastorship of Rev. James Miltimore; and the First church in Cambridgeport, November 3, with no pastor, however, till the settlement of Rev. Thomas B. Gannett in 1814.

On the 27th of February, 1809, Park Street church, Boston, was constituted, with twenty-six members, mostly from the Old South, professing a somewhat higher style of orthodoxy than at that time prevailed in the other churches, and having Rev. Edward Griffin, D. D., for their first pastor. On the 22d of August, the same year, a second church in Pittsfield was formed

from the first (chiefly on political grounds), and settled Rev. T. Punderson for their first and only pastor; after a separation of about eight years, a reunion was effected.

In 1810, when the evangelical portion of the New Bedford church withdrew in a body to another place of worship, the residuum, in connection with the precinct, had various preachers, till the settlement of Rev. Ephraim Randall, in 1814, and is now the Unitarian church in that city. On the 5th of June the same year (1810) was gathered the church in Otis, combining the two churches in Loudon and Bethlehem, and Rev. Jonathan Lee became its first pastor, June 28, 1815. With this absorption the whole number in the State was 361.

We have now reached the point where the prediction of Cotton Mather, nearly an hundred years before, was beginning to be fulfilled,—that “churches would be gathered out of churches,” unless the defection in doctrine and discipline, which he saw coming on, were stayed. It was a sorrowful prediction, and it is sad to record its fulfilment. But more sorrowful and sad would be the record, if, in these backsliding churches, no such separations had ensued. Under all the circumstances, every occurrence of this sort afforded new ground of hope. It betokened the presence of a recuperative power, which, in its subsequent forth-puttings, saved the cause of evangelical religion, as will be seen hereafter. And it was a significant fact, fraught with good omens, that this recuperative process should have commenced in the old Mayflower church, “the mother of us all.” There had been one secession from this communion before, occasioned by a repugnance felt by some of its members to the revival of 1740. By the advice of Dr. Chauncy of Boston, those who opposed that revival withdrew from the old church, and formed a new one, and settled a pastor at whose ordination he preached a philippic against Whitefield. Had they remained apart, another separation would not have occurred. But after dwindling away for the space of thirty years, the remnant sought and obtained leave to

return. The "old leaven" of Arminianism thus reinserted, was rapidly leavening the whole lump, when the evangelical portion, as an act of self-preservation, in their turn withdrew.

This movement at Plymouth, followed as it was a few years later by the gathering of Park Street church, in Boston, on the basis of a "decided attachment to that system of the Christian religion which is distinguishingly denominated evangelical; more particularly to those doctrines which, in proper sense, are styled doctrines of grace" — for these are the bold words of their original confession — introduced a new mode of defending the faith, which the "liberal" party were not expecting; and the cry of *schism* was raised. "Bigotry," "illiberality," "exclusiveness," those old word-weapons were furbished up for the new war which had evidently opened, though not yet formally declared.

In this posture of affairs, two events transpired, which had the effect to give a more definite form to the religious differences between the two parties, than had before appeared, namely, the getting possession of Harvard College by the one, and the founding of Andover Theological Seminary by the other. It does not comport with the prescribed brevity of this sketch to detail the process through which that college, founded by Calvinists of the strictest sect, was transformed into an engine of terrible power, in battering down the religious system of its founders; nor to recount the prodigies of faith and liberality through which this seminary arose as an invincible bulwark in its defence. Suffice it to say, that the appointment of Dr. Henry Ware, of Hingham, to the Hollis Professorship of Sacred Theology, in 1804, as successor to Dr. Tappan, who died the preceding year, was the turning-point in the religious destiny of Harvard College. As neither party were sure of a majority, the appointment was delayed a whole year, till the vacancies occasioned by the death of two evangelical members of the corporation had been filled by two others of opposite views. The way being thus prepared, a clamor was raised through the newspapers

against this unreasonable delay, and the deed was suddenly consummated, in spite of all remonstrance, — a man known to be an Anti-Calvinist, suspected of Arianism, and soon to be developed a full-formed Unitarian, was put into an office whose incumbent was solemnly bound to “profess and teach the principles of the Christian religion according to the well-known confession of faith drawn up by the synod of churches in New England!” The reckless manner in which this explicit condition was set aside, “gave signs of woe that all was lost.”

But in one respect the influence of it was most salutary and important. Like an electric shock on torpid nerves, it energized the whole body of evangelical Christians. It awoke a spirit of religious enterprise which, if it could not restore lost endowments to their intended and original use, could found others on a broader and safer basis. In less than three years after Dr. Ware's appointment, Mrs. Phebe Phillips, with her son, John Phillips, and their neighbor, Samuel Abbot, all of Andover, were drawing up an instrument whereby the Theological Seminary in that town was founded; to which, a few months later, Messrs. Bartlett, Brown, and Noyes, as “Associate Founders,” added their princely gifts, — an endowment projected on a scale of munificence at that time without a parallel in the history of New England.

The opening of Andover Theological Seminary, in 1808, was followed by the founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810. These two events have even a closer connection than their chronological proximity. It was the spirit which a few of the early students brought with them to that seminary — kindling, like separate coals of fire, into an intenser glow, by contact with one another — that stirred the pastors, met in General Association at Bradford, to take the first step which led to this result. It is a suggestive fact, fitted to inspire hope in times of discouragement, that these most efficient auxiliaries to evangelical religion both sprang into being just when the evan-

gelical cause seemed in greatest danger of being crushed, — if indeed they were not actually quickened into life by the very means which, to human view, were most likely to crush it. “Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.” Still more manifest will the divine hand appear, if we associate these events with those revivals of religion which are known to have occurred in various places, while they were coming to pass. Allusion has already been made to several such refreshing seasons, near the close of the last century, after a long period of spiritual dearth. We have also the published narratives of fifteen or twenty similar awakenings in Massachusetts during the first ten years of the present century, in which numbers of our earliest missionaries abroad, as well as some of the leaders in our evangelical forces at home, became subjects of grace.

It was also during this eventful period, namely, in the month of July, 1802, that the General Association of Massachusetts was organized. Dim traces of clerical associations can be discerned on the earliest pages of our ecclesiastical history; though none were so constituted as to afford a model from which the associations of our day were copied earlier than October 13, 1690. At that date one was organized in the vicinity of Boston to meet at Cambridge college on “Monday, at nine or ten o’clock in the morning, once in six weeks, or oftener if need shall be.” Other similar bodies were formed, as churches multiplied, till nearly all the territory of the State was covered by them, and most of the ministers were associated in them. But no general association was organized till a convention, held at Northampton in 1802, agreed upon a basis, — substantially the same as the present, — and recommended it to the eight District Associations therein represented. But even of these eight, only five sent delegates to the first two meetings. For various and opposite reasons the recommendation was received with indifference or distrust by most of the ministers throughout the state.

Not discouraged by this experience, those who had



initiated the scheme, with the venerable Dr. Lyman of Hatfield, on the lead, brought the matter before the convention of Congregational ministers in the spring of 1804; and a committee, of which President Willard was chairman, was appointed by that body to correspond with all the district associations and to collect their views. This correspondence was found a few years ago among Dr. Lyman's papers, and now enriches the collections of the Congregational Library Association. It possesses great interest, not merely as indicating the views then held on the subject-matter of inquiry, but especially as disclosing the religious type of the times. Two things are made quite evident: first, that the General Association originated with the friends of evangelical religion, and was designed to strengthen their influence; second, that the anti-evangelical party were well aware of this, and took ground accordingly. All approved of a closer union and greater harmony among the ministers of Christ; but "considering the state of religious opinions," said one of the associations, "the proposed measure for promoting harmony will be more likely to interrupt than to cement and perpetuate our union." Said another, "should the object of the motion in part be to agree upon some general uniformity in the articles of our faith, uniformity in our churches to certain rules and modes of discipline, there would be a vain attempt to do what never can be accomplished in the present age by all the wit, wisdom, and goodness of man."

Among these documents is a list of twenty-four district associations, with the number of members set against each. Of these, seven associations, with an aggregate of eighty-two members, are marked as approving; four associations with fifty-four members, as disapproving; and four associations with thirty-four members, as being undecided. The balance, we are left to infer, made no answer at all.\* It came to pass,

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\* A more minute account of these transactions may be found in the *Congregationalist* of November 27, 1857, from the pen of Rev.

however, in process of time, that all the associations where evangelical views prevailed became affiliated in

A. H. Quint, whose statistical researches, in more than this one instance, have placed the public under obligations of gratitude. The following extracts deserve the space here allotted to them:—

“There were then” (that is, May 30, 1804, when the subject came before the Convention), “twenty-four associations in Massachusetts proper, whose names and number of members were these:—Barnstable, 7; Bay, 10; Berkshire, 17; Boston, 16; Brookfield, 13; Cambridge, 11; Dedham, 8; Eastham, 6; Essex Middle, 10; Hampshire Central, 14; Hampshire North, 12; Hampshire North-East, 4; Hampshire South, 12; Haverhill, 7; Marlboro’, 10; Mendon, 12; Mountain, 12; Plymouth, 17; Salem, 12; Unity, 7; Westford, 7; Westminster, 11; Wilmington, 9; Worcester, 7; there was also one in Maine, namely, Woolwich, 6.

“Several of the associations appear to have made no reply; of those who did act, the letters of fifteen are preserved among the valuable collections of the Congregational Library Association, and were to the following effect:—

“Berkshire assented 16th April, 1805 (Stephen West, Moderator). Brookfield did the same, 12th February, 1805 (Ephraim Ward, Moderator). Hampshire Central ‘approved’ (Enoch Hale being Scribe *pro tem.*). Hampshire North ‘cordially approved’ (Jonathan Grant, Scribe). Haverhill voted favorably, 17th May, 1805, Stephen Peabody willing to answer. Mountain was unanimous in the same direction (Thomas Hinsdale, Moderator). Westford, meeting at Dracut (Paul Littlefield being Moderator, and Freeman Reynolds, Scribe), not only approved the plan, but also suggested the Assembly’s Catechism as a proper platform.

“Several associations were undecided. Plymouth (Joseph Barker, Scribe), did not sufficiently understand the object. Salem (15th May, 1805, Thomas Barnard, Scribe), declined to express an opinion, but appointed Dr. Cutler of Hamilton, a delegate, for the sake of information. Barnstable (John Simpkins, Moderator) was in favor of some plan to secure a ‘uniform method of ecclesiastical government and discipline,’ but objected to any attempt ‘to compel assent to any creed or confession of faith of human devising;’ it did not join until 1821. Unity (Harvard, Phineas Whitney, Moderator) was undecided, though leaning to the opposition, but desired some modifications of the plan.

“On the other hand, four associations were decidedly opposed. Essex Middle objected (14th May, 1805, Joseph Davis, Moderator), on the not unreasonable ground that the churches ought to be recognized and consulted in a matter concerning religion. Marlboro’ (Peter Whitney, Moderator), thought that such a body was uncalled for, assigning as particular reasons for declining, that (1), the

this body, — the Mendon association not till 1841, after the decease of Dr. Emmons. The reason of this long

convention is sufficient' to secure all the grand results contemplated, that (2) there might be excited an unnecessary jealousy on the part of the people against the clergy, and (3) that if its object was to secure uniformity of creed, that was totally impossible. Worcester (Joseph Sumner, Moderator), dissented unanimously, alleging (1) the impracticability of the plan, on account of the 'number,' 'distance,' and 'disagreement' of the clergy, (2) that it was 'dangerous to the peace and liberty of Congregational churches,' by reason of probable attempts to enforce uniform 'discipline,' (3) that it would 'increase the jealousy of people against the body of the clergy,' and (4) that 'the useful purposes contemplated by the motion may be more effectually answered under the influence of the Convention of Ministers.' Boston entered into a long and labored argument in opposition to the plan, in a paper now existing in its records, as well as communicated to the committee; it was adopted 5th May, 1805; after expressing its approval of the 'sentiments in which the proposal appears to have originated,' — 'in that (quoting from the letter addressed to them) the Christian harmony and friendly coöperation of the ministers of the Gospel are concerns of high mutual benefit, and conduce generally to increase their usefulness in the church of God,' — they proceed to express their disbelief in the efficacy of the plan to promote either harmony or usefulness; as to coöperation, it considers the annual convention as sufficient for 'mutual encouragement and assistance,' the several associations as 'highly conducive to the improvement, solace, and excitement of individuals,' and ecclesiastical councils, as a 'profitable and edifying communion' for ministers and churches; and while it would favor any suitable plan to increase these advantages, yet considering 'the state of religious opinions, and the spirit and circumstances of the times, we are led to believe that no practicable plan of this nature can be formed, and we are apprehensive that the proposed measure for promoting harmony will be more likely to interrupt it,' — tending, it argues, by discussions upon doctrinal basis, to 'an erection of barriers between those who at present are not formally separated, and the bonds of union would be strengthened between those only who are already sufficiently cemented.' It insists equally strongly, that usefulness will be impaired, rather than assisted, particularly by the tendency to uphold 'human standards of opinion,' which might be so active in erecting prejudice against dissentients as to exhibit a 'spirit of uncharitableness and censoriousness produced, and the teachers of religion placed under powerful temptations either to shun declaring the whole counsel of God, or to teach for doctrines the commandments of men.' The whole paper, while conceived and expressed in a kind and courteous spirit, yet clearly shows that the main obstacle to a union was their own departure from the doctrinal views

hesitancy may be found mainly in the following sentiment, and in deference to him who uttered it: 'Associationism leads to Consociationism; Consociationism leads to Presbyterianism; Presbyterianism leads to Episcopacy; Episcopacy leads to Roman Catholicism; and Roman Catholicism is an ultimate fact.'" (Hist. Mendon Association, by Rev. M. Blake, p. 53.)

As was predicted by the liberal party (and probably expected by the other), the consummation of this measure was the beginning of a separation between the Congregational ministers of Massachusetts, founded on doctrinal differences which had long before existed, and which afterwards by degrees widened into complete non-intercourse. The subsequent history of the General Association discloses many acts of great moment in their relation to Christ's kingdom, though the danger early pointed out of treading upon ecclesiastical ground has not been avoided in all their proceedings. Not always have the fundamental principles of Congregationalism been kept in mind when business, more pertinent to churches than ministers, has come up in these clerical meetings. A noted instance may be found in the "Plan of Union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the new settlements,"—first agreed upon by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the General Association of Connecticut, in 1801, and subsequently adopted by the General Association of this State.

The case, stated in the fewest possible words, was this:—in a truly fraternal spirit, the General Assembly proposed to the General Association of Connecticut,—the only body of the kind then existing in our denomination,—that Presbyterians and Congregationalists, emigrating to the new settlements of the West, be

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of the earlier New England clergy, an obstacle of whose existence the Boston Association was evidently conscious. In addition to the above, it is also known that Cambridge and Mendon Associations dissented, the latter on grounds which prevented its union with the general association up to 1841."

encouraged to foster a spirit of "mutual forbearance and accommodation;" that a Congregational church settling a Presbyterian minister, or *vice versa*, may still "conduct their discipline" according to their own ecclesiastical principles; and that, in case the church be of a mixed character,—partly Presbyterian and partly Congregational,—they "choose a standing committee from the communicants of said church," to issue all cases of discipline without consulting anybody else, but allowing the condemned member to appeal, if he were a Presbyterian, to the presbytery,—if a Congregationalist, to the church. It will be seen that this plan of union, in its practical workings, would introduce a considerable change into the ecclesiastical polity of both denominations; and without regard to its advantages or disadvantages, it will also be seen, that while the General Assembly, an ecclesiastical body, might consistently negotiate such a scheme, the General Association, a mere body of ministers, could properly do no such thing. Yet the General Association of Massachusetts, "wholly disclaiming ecclesiastical power over the churches or the opinions of individuals," found no difficulty in entering into that compact,—whereby scores of churches were gradually slid off from the Congregational platform at that time, as hundreds have been since. It may be that the Gospel has been more widely diffused by this well-intended measure; but this does not touch the question of right and wrong, in respect to the way of bringing it about.

The spirit of Christian benevolence, whose revival during this period has been already indicated in the founding of a Theological Seminary at Andover, and the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, was still further developed in the organization of the "Hampshire Missionary Society" in 1802, whose "object and business," as stated in the constitution, is, "to promote the preaching and propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ among the inhabitants of the new settlements of the United States, and the aboriginal inhabitants of the continent;" and

also of the "Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," in 1803, "for the benevolent purpose of promoting evangelical truth and piety; in the first place, by a charitable distribution of religious books among poor and pious Christians, and also among the inhabitants of new towns and plantations; and secondly, by supporting charity schools and pious missionaries in places where the means of religious instruction are sparingly enjoyed."

The first religious periodical in the State (unless "Prince's Christian History" be classed under this head)\* also had its origin during the period now under review, namely, the "Massachusetts Missionary Magazine," whose first number came forth under the auspices of the Massachusetts Missionary Society in May, 1803. Its theological tone was Hopkinsian. Its leading object, as set forth in the prospectus, was, conjointly with similar periodicals in America and Europe, "to call into operation those powerful causes which are necessary to spread the Gospel through the world, and to bring on the full glory and final prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom." At the close of the fifth volume, namely, in 1808, it was united with the "Panoplist," a monthly periodical of kindred spirit, but differing slightly in theological views, which had then completed its third volume. For nine years the united publication was known as the "Panoplist and Missionary Magazine." From 1817 to 1822 it was called the Panoplist and Missionary Herald. Then it assumed the name which it now bears,—the "Missionary Herald,"—dating its origin, however, with that of the Panoplist, and not of the Magazine.

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\* The idea of the Christian History originated with President Edwards, and was first suggested in his "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England." It was published in weekly numbers of eight pages, small octavo, for the space of two years (1743-1744), by Thomas Prince, Jr., son of the Old South pastor, and was devoted exclusively to "accounts of the Revival and Propagation of Religion in Great Britain and America."

## CHAPTER XX.

1810-1820.

Open avowal of Unitarianism. — Twenty-six churches organized, several by secession. — Startling disclosures from England. — The Unitarian controversy fairly opened. — Legal decisions against the Orthodox. — Consequence of these decisions. — Domestic Missionary Society of Massachusetts instituted. — Boston Recorder started. — Various Benevolent Societies formed. — Final attempt at consociation.

THE period on which we are now entering (1810-1820) is memorable in our ecclesiastical annals for the development of *Unitarianism*, — not its origin, but its open avowal in the Congregational churches. The way in which this development was made is not the least remarkable thing about it, and will be noticed in another place. The fact itself is recognized here merely as the reason for introducing new terms in speaking of the churches that sprang up during these years. The following twenty-six are found:—

Three were gathered in 1811:— the Union church of Braintree and Weymouth, August 14, with Rev. Daniel A. Clark for the first pastor; a second church within the limits of Windsor, bordering on Savoy, and designed to accommodate the population of that small town also, whose first and only pastor, Rev. Jephthah Poole, was ordained October 11, with whose dismissal, in 1816, the church itself expired; and the present Unitarian church in Sandwich. This last was originally composed of such as adhered to the parish when the old church withdrew and opened another place of worship in connection with a new society formed for that purpose. The circumstances of the case are worthy of note, as inaugurating a new system of measures in

church extension which had a run for the next twenty years. Displeased with the evangelical views of their minister, Rev. Jonathan Burr, the parish, by a vote of eighty-three against eighty, declared him dismissed, and forbade him the pulpit, in attempting to enter which the next Sabbath morning he was forcibly prevented. The ejected pastor and his adherents, including most of the assembled worshippers, withdrew to a neighboring hall for religious service, where they stately assembled till a meeting-house was built. This extraordinary separation took place September 5, 1811, and should therefore date the beginning of the Unitarian church in Sandwich, which embraced only *one tenth* of the church-members, the other nine tenths still retaining not only their organic form, but their pastor also. And when he was reinstalled, February 17, 1813, it was "over the Calvinistic society lately formed and associated with the First church." (See Panoplist for that year, p. 234.) Nevertheless, the few who staid with the parish claimed to be "the First church," which the supreme court of that day confirmed, and on the strength of it the others were forced, at the point of law, to deliver up their communion furniture, and whatever sums of money had come into the deacon's hands, amounting in all to about \$570 worth of property. A fund of \$1,300 held in common by the church and parish was taken of course.

The Third church in Abington was gathered August 27, 1813, and settled Rev. Samuel W. Colburn, their first pastor, October 13, following.

In 1814 two churches were constituted:— a small one in the little town of Florida, August 4, which never settled a pastor, and was disbanded in 1831; and the church in Harvard University, November 6, over which Pres. J. T. Kirkland and Prof. H. Ware, "having been previously chosen thereto and approved by the corporation and overseers of the university, became its joint pastors without any formal installation." (Quart. Reg. Vol. XI. 181.)

The two following were formed in 1816:— the First church in Fall River, January 9, but with no pastor till



the settlement of Rev. Augustus B. Reed, July 2, 1823; and the present church in Egremont, November 22, whose first pastor, Rev. Gardener Hayden, was settled November 23, 1820. The church previously existing in another part of the town had become extinct a few years before.

Six churches were gathered in 1817:—the Second in Greenfield, January 17, which settled Rev. Charles Jenkins, May 9, 1820; the Second church in Charlestown, March 26, which ordained Rev. Thomas Prentiss the same day; the South church in Dennis, June 16, whose first pastor, Rev. John Sanford, was ordained December 30, 1818; a church in Princeton, June 18, comprising the small remnant left behind when the old church withdrew from the parish dissatisfied with their settlement of Rev. Samuel Clarke, of Unitarian sentiments; the Third church in Dorchester (composed chiefly of those who had failed in their efforts to dislodge the pastor of the Second church on account of his orthodoxy), with Rev. E. Richmond, D. D., for their pastor; and about the same time a Unitarian church in Sharon, comprising the small minority of members who adhered to the parish when the old church withdrew and built a new meeting-house “for conscience’ sake and the gospel’s.” This church of the parish settled Rev. Samuel Brimblecom for their pastor, December 18, 1821; and the day following, Rev. Joseph B. Felt was installed over the other.

Four churches arose in 1818:—the First church in South Deerfield, June 30, which settled Rev. Benjamin Rice the next year, February 10; the Unitarian church in Dedham, a minority that remained with the parish when the old church withdrew in a body at the settlement of Rev. Alvan Lamson, D. D., October 29; the East church in Randolph, December 15, which settled Rev. David Brigham, December 29, 1819; and a church in Westport, gathered under the ministry of Rev. America Bonney, which never had a pastor, and is now extinct.

In 1819 these five churches were organized:—the

church at Agawam, West Springfield, September 1, with Rev. Reuben Hazen for their pastor, ordained October 17, 1821; the fourth church in Plymouth (Chiltonville), October 13, with Rev. Benjamin Whitmore for their pastor; the Unitarian church, South Boston, Hawes place, October 27, with Rev. Lemuel Capen for their pastor; the Unitarian church in Ashby, October 27, when the old church, one hundred and one in number, separated from the parish on account of religious differences, leaving only one male member, ninety years old, and eight females as the nucleus of this organization, over which Rev. Ezekiel L. Bascom was ordained soon after; and a church in Wales (now extinct), gathered through the agency of Rev. Jonas King, D. D., who labored with good success as a home missionary in that waste place before he went to Greece.

The three following were organized in 1820:—the Calvinist church, Worcester, August 16, whose first pastor, Rev. L. I. Hoadley, was ordained January 17, 1821; the Trinitarian Congregational church, Waltham (known at the time of its organization, September 28, as "the church of the second society"), who settled Rev. Sewall Harding, January 17, 1821, and withdrew in a body four years later, taking their pastor with them and adopting their present name; and on the 12th of October the same year, 1820, after an unavailing attempt to displace the pastor of the First church in Springfield, a secession was effected which resulted in the organization of the First Unitarian church in that city, and the settlement of Rev. B. O. Peabody, the same day.

Dropping from this list the First church in Egremont, which became extinct in 1814; the Savoy church, in Windsor, which disbanded in 1816; the Second in Methuen, and the Second in Pittsfield, which returned to the churches whence they came, in 1817, the actual number on the ground was 383.

From only these naked statistics, one might readily infer, either that some new element of strife had been introduced into the churches, or that old causes of dis-

agreement had by some means been quickened into more intense activity than ever before. Both these inferences, in fact, are true. Former grounds of distrust between the evangelical and the liberal parties as they eyed each other's cautious proceedings were daily becoming more apparent, when a sudden disclosure was made, which revealed each to the other's naked view without the possibility of disguise. A small, unassuming pamphlet dropped from the Boston press in 1815, entitled "A brief history of the progress and present state of the Unitarian churches in America," which raised a perfect storm of excitement throughout New England. How strange! Scores of pamphlets with similar titles have been issued since, without provoking the least wrath on the part of Unitarians, or exciting the least alarm among the Orthodox. Yet both these emotions were deeply stirred in the breasts of these denominations respectively by the appearance of this little pamphlet. The fact seems all the more surprising when on turning over the leaves one finds the pamphlet made up wholly of extracts from an English book (Memoirs of Lindsey, by Mr. Belsham), published in London three years before, and most of these extracts nothing but calmly written letters from ministers on this side the water to their friends on the other. That such a pamphlet should produce such an effect, proves two things beyond contradiction; first, that the evangelical party, up to that time, did not know the depth to which Unitarianism had struck its roots in this soil; and secondly, that the liberal party were not yet intending to let them know it. It was well understood that there were diversities of doctrinal belief, which in some instances had already broken up ministerial fellowship, — differences familiarly known by the terms "evangelical," "liberal;" that the former had again branched into Calvinistic and Hopkinsian shades of disagreement, as the latter also ranged all the way from moderate Calvinism through endless variations of Arminian faith to the rank heresy of Pelagius. But the existence of *Unitarianism*, though often suspected, had not been proved, — though sometimes

charged upon particular individuals, was resented as a slander, — till this little pamphlet came out, an unimpeachable witness to the fact. How long these views had been held in concealment cannot now be affirmed; but the date of their avowal by some of the Boston ministers in letters to their friends in England, reaches back a number of years prior to the disclosure of them here. How long they would have been kept concealed, had it not been for this forced disclosure, nobody can tell; but they were avowed with sufficient boldness from this time forth; and men of might were found ready, on remarkably short notice, to become champions in their defence. The positiveness with which the old doctrine of a Trinity in the Godhead was denounced as an absurdity by men just entering upon a discussion of it, showed a maturity of conviction which must have had years of reflection to ripen in. For example; in less than twelve months from the first avowal of the new doctrine by any Congregational minister in Boston, "Yates' Vindication of Unitarianism" was republished in this city, containing passages like these: "If it be asked, What kind and degree of evidence would be sufficient to establish the doctrine of the Trinity, thus understood" (that is, as all Christendom has understood it these eighteen centuries), "I reply, No evidence whatever; not even the clearest declarations of the Scriptures themselves." "We ought to reject this doctrine even though it were plainly stated in the Scriptures;" — to which the Boston editor adds in a foot note, "Or, to speak more properly, 'the Scriptures themselves ought to be rejected.'" See pp. 140, 141. To have got so far in one short year, would argue great precocity, supposing the editor's acceptance of Unitarianism to have been as recent as his avowal of it.

But in addition to old theological heats and heart-burnings, now greatly intensified by the developments of 1815, a new question of strife arose, not less exciting, and even more destructive of harmony, than had ever before come up. It was a question touching the civil rights of the churches; and it was decided by the high-

est judicial authority in the State that they had none whatever — not even the right of existence — apart from the parish. So that if the parish by a bare majority voted out one minister and voted in another, the church could not help themselves; if they sought relief by withdrawing in a body, the remnant, however small, would be the church, and hold the property; if none remained, the church was extinct, and the parish might, if they chose, institute another, “and this new church would succeed to all the rights of the old in relation to the parish.” Such was the authoritative decision of Chief Justice Parker in the Dedham case, expressed in the most positive terms. “The only circumstance,” says he, “which gives a church any legal character, is its connection with some regularly constituted society.” “A church cannot subsist without some religious community to which it is attached.” “As to all civil purposes, the secession of a whole church from the parish would be an extinction of the church,” — very much as death ensues, when soul and body separate, only that, in this case, according to the learned judge, it is the *soul* which dies, and not the body.

It will be seen at once that if this decision was to stand, the evangelical churches were in an evil case; for who could tell how many and what kind of opposers of Orthodoxy might be mustered from all the highways and hedges and dark corners of an old territorial parish, especially when stimulated by the scent of plunder? That this decision was not a dead letter we have found evidence already in not less than six instances during the period we are now reviewing; and these are but the preface to a long chapter of similar cases of subsequent occurrence, in which a minority of members who adhered to the parish took the title and records, the furniture and funds of the seceding church, though the secession was effected by an overwhelming vote in full church meeting. But no decision of the courts, no argument of the judges ever convinced one member of an Orthodox church that these proceedings were any better than plunder, — legalized it is true, but none the

less plunder for that. With injured and exasperated feelings, they surrendered their church furniture and funds, but not their convictions. The recollection that the State itself, as here constituted, was born of the church; that the parish was originally formed for its especial behoof; that the rights of each had been universally acknowledged ever since the Cambridge platform was adopted, and were guarded by civil enactments running through a space of nearly two hundred years, — the recollection of these things could not be blotted from the memory by a decree of court; nor could plain common sense be made to see how a body of Christians lost their identity by merely changing their place of worship. Consequently there were two “first” churches in one and the same town, — a confusion which gave rise to new and invidious distinctions, as “parish church,” and “exiled church,” when speaking descriptively of such organizations.\*

It is painful to recall these scenes of strife; but they are an imperishable part of our ecclesiastical history, and without some reference to them, other parts cannot be made intelligible. It was this struggle for existence among the evangelical churches that called into being the “Domestic Missionary Society of Massachusetts Proper” in 1818, — formed under the auspices of the general association “to assist needy churches, parishes, and waste places” within the limits of the State, as the old Massachusetts Missionary Society, with its then existing charter, could not do. The subsequent alteration of that charter, and the union of these two societies into one, in occupying the fields of both, and the timely aid thus afforded to our “exiled” churches, will come under more particular notice hereafter. The present chapter shall close with the record of a few miscellaneous facts that belong to this period.

The first weekly religious newspaper in the land, if

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\* See an able refutation of these judicial decisions in Spir. Pilg. Vol. I. pp. 113-140.

not in the world, to wit, The Boston Recorder, was started in 1816. A proposal to set up a religious conference and prayer-meeting on 'Change in State street would seem hardly more incongruous now, than this mercantile method of inculcating sacred things did to many a scrupulous mind when the scheme was first announced. But the countless number of similar sheets now issued all over Christendom shows that it was one of those great ideas which mark eras in the world's progress.

The following benevolent societies were organized in Massachusetts about this time:— The Howard Benevolent Society, in 1812; The American Tract Society, Boston, in 1814; The American Education Society, in 1815; The Boston Female Jews Society, in 1816; The Massachusetts Peace Society also in 1816; The Boston Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction of the Poor, in 1820; besides many smaller institutions of similar spirit and aim.

The last attempt to bring the Congregational churches of Massachusetts into consociation was made during this period, and on this wise. An original manuscript document, found among the papers of Dr. Cotton Mather, containing an answer to the question, "What further steps are to be taken, that councils may have their due constitution and efficacy in supporting, preserving, and well ordering the interests of the churches in the country?" was submitted to the General Association at their meeting in 1815; and a committee was appointed to inquire into its history, with instructions also to report at the next annual meeting, "on the expediency of a recommendation of this body of the plan of discipline there proposed, to the consideration of the association and churches in our connection."

When the year came round, the committee, through their chairman, Rev. Jediah Morse, D. D., presented a very elaborate report, rich in historical information, and embodying a "Plan of Ecclesiastical order," expressed in ten carefully drawn "Articles of agreement" for the churches "explicitly to adopt and duly to put in prac-

tice." The document appears to have been neither more nor less than the original draft of those celebrated proposals — sixteen in number — which John Wise of Ipswich had demolished a hundred years before in the "Churches' Quarrel Espoused." It was the second attempt to resuscitate those death-struck proposals, the first having been made in 1774 by Dr. Whitaker for a Presbyterian purpose, and now by this committee as the basis of consociation. Both were alike abortive. A vote was passed, "That the report be printed, and copies sent to the several associations in our connection, for the purpose of ascertaining the public sentiments respecting the plan of ecclesiastical order therein presented, and that the subject be called up at the next meeting of the General Association." The subject accordingly came up, but the most that the association could be induced to do in favoring the plan was to signify that they had "no objection" to the consociating of those who desired it, as they had "no wish to prescribe opinions to their brethren." And here the matter ended.\* (Minutes for 1816, and Spir. Pilg. Vol. III. p. 609.)

Let us do justice to the motives of our fathers in this transaction. The ecclesiastical affairs of our denomination were in a deplorable state. The want of agreement in religious doctrine and church-discipline was dissolving the bonds of fellowship between ministers and churches, who yet were held together by ecclesiastical ties that created incessant friction. Almost every council called together to settle or dismiss a pastor, to deal with an erring minister or church-member, or in any way to advise on church matters, was divided in sentiment and discordant in action. To obviate these crying evils, and at the same time to deliver the evan-

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\* This attempt at consociation, though unsuccessful, aroused suspicions which "for a time hindered the growth of the General Association." Merely the recommendatory report "occasioned the withdrawal of one or more associations which had united with the body, and probably prevented several others from uniting with it." — Hist. Gen. Ass. Am. Quar. Reg. Vol. XI. p. 168.



gical interest from its imperilled position, was the leading, if not the only, motive impelling towards consociation. But this was not the first instance in which good men, by attempting to avoid the roaring Scylla, have narrowly escaped the rocky Charybdis. Through the good hand of God upon them, the association steered through the dangerous narrows, and the desired haven was safely reached. A more effectual deliverance was wrought, in a less objectionable way, as we shall see in the sequel.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1820-1830.

Ninety-seven churches organized. — Secessions multiply. — Mode of conducting the controversy. — Unitarians get possession of old meeting-houses, and the Orthodox build new ones. — Domestic Missionary Society of Massachusetts formed by the General Association. — "Spirit of the Pilgrims" established. — Amherst College founded. — Church conferences organized.

THAT new mode of church extension, which we saw inaugurated by the Evangelical party soon after this century opened, of "gathering churches out of churches" when the declension could not be otherwise arrested; and that still newer method invented by the supreme court, of driving them off from parishes and seizing their funds when they would not submit to parish dictation, had a most extraordinary development during the period (1820-1830) which we now approach. Under the combined action of both these causes the Congregational churches in Massachusetts were multiplied beyond all precedent. Not less than ninety-seven were added in these ten years, of which about two thirds were the result of separations growing directly out of the Unitarian controversy. In all such cases, where the church is known to have withdrawn in an organic body, whether every member went or not, it is assumed, in this sketch, that the original date is theirs; but when individual members seceded and organized anew, though constituting a majority, the residuum, or parish church, is considered the original. This deviates from the principle laid down by the civil courts of that day; but better differ even from a Chief Justice, than to fall out with common sense and common law.

As the terms "Trinitarian" and "Unitarian" had

come into familiar use in designating those two sorts of Congregational churches, they will here be employed where distinctive names are needed. For the sake of brevity, the first pastor and the date of his settlement, heretofore included in the statistics, must be omitted hereafter.

In 1821, the five following churches were organized:—the Trinitarian church in Harvard, March 22, a secession of nineteen members from the old church; the Second or East church in Falmouth, June 20, a colony from the First; the Trinitarian church in Taunton, August 17, a secession of twenty-nine members from the Second, when that church settled a Unitarian minister; a Second church in Granby, October 10, which was reunited with the First in 1836; and the Trinitarian church in Bridgewater, October 17, a secession from the other after it became Unitarian.

In 1822, the Unitarian church in Lynn was gathered June 15; the present Essex Street church, Boston, Aug. 26; and the Trinitarian church in Leominster, December 25, a secession of ten members from the First.

The following six were gathered in 1823:—the church in Prescott, January 15, a colony from Pelham; the Trinitarian church in Petersham, June 25, a seceding band of fifteen members; the Second church in Medford, October 2, a secession from the First; the Green Street church, Boston, December 30; the Unitarian church in West Boylston, and the Unitarian church in Fitchburg, some time during the year, both seceders from churches that had fallen under Unitarian control.

These nine had their origin in 1824:—the Trinitarian church in Bernardston seceded January 13, with sixteen members of the old church; the church at South Hadley Falls was gathered August 12; the South church in Amherst, October 14; the North church in New Salem, November 10; the Trinitarian church in Cohasset, November 24, formed of twenty seceders from the other; the Curtisville church in Stockbridge, December 22; and the Independent (Unitarian) church in Salem, exact date not known.

Ten churches were gathered in 1825:— the Chambers Street Unitarian church, Boston, January 28; the Unitarian church in Scituate, a remnant left adhering to the parish when the old church withdrew, April 29; the Unitarian church in Danvers, June 18; the Hanover Street church (now Bowdoin Street), Boston, July 18; a Unitarian church in Boylston (now extinct), June 22, when the old church withdrew from the parish; the Unitarian church in Northampton, July 28, seceders from the first parish; the Trinitarian church in Northfield, November 30, a secession of thirty members from the other; the Phillips church in South Boston, December 10; the Unitarian church in Stoughton, constituted after the old church and their pastor withdrew from the parish; the Unitarian church in Greenfield, gathered chiefly out of the Second society; and the Purchase Street Unitarian church, Boston.

Ten were also organized in 1826:— the church in Amherst College, March 7; the church in Ware Village, April 12; the Trinitarian church in Concord, June 5, seceders from the old church; the First church in Lowell, June 6; the Union Trinitarian church of East and West Bridgewater, June 30, a secession from the other two, turned Unitarian; the North church in Amherst, November 15; the Unitarian church in Groton, November 21, when the old church withdrew from the parish; the West church in Andover, December 5, a colony from the South church; the Trinitarian church in Walpole, a secession of twenty-eight members from the other; and the Unitarian church in Grafton, gathered after the old church withdrew from the parish.

The following twelve were organized in 1827:— the North church in Adams, April 19; the Unitarian church in Brookfield, a residuum of two males and ten females, who adhered to the old parish when the church and pastor withdrew; the Trinitarian church in Barre, August 15, a secession of twenty-five members from the old church; the Second church in Millbury, August 23, originally Presbyterian, now Congregational; the Salem Street church, Boston, September 1; the Pine

Street church, Boston, September 2; the Trinitarian church in Brighton, September 13, a secession from the Unitarian; the First Trinitarian church in Cambridgeport, September 20; a Union church in Hebronville, December 25, which ceased to be Congregational in 1842; the Unitarian church in Raynham, gathered from the Trinitarian; the South Congregational church (Unitarian) on Washington street, Boston; the Centre church, Rochester, which had been ecclesiastically one with the South church (Marion), though parochially distinct, and with a separate place of worship, for nearly a hundred years.

Twelve churches were added in 1828:—the Trinitarian church in Medfield, February 7, a secession of seventeen members from the other, after the pastor had become Unitarian; a Unitarian church in Oakham (now extinct), if indeed an ecclesiastical body was ever organized in connection with the parish after the aged pastor and every member of his church were driven from the meeting-house, February 7, to which, after a five years' exile, they were permitted to return; the Unitarian church in Hubbardston, February 13, a small minority that remained with the parish when the old church and pastor withdrew; the Trinitarian church in Shirley, March 12; the Trinitarian church in Kingston, March 19, a feeble band of seceders from the old church; the Trinitarian church in North Chelsea, May 9, a secession from the First church after it became Unitarian; the Trinitarian church in Wayland, May 21, a secession under similar circumstances; a Unitarian church in Amesbury Mills, June 22; the Trinitarian church at Canton, July 3, also a secession; the Trinitarian church in Mendon, August 13, a secession comprising the major part of the old church; the Trinitarian church in Westford, a secession effected December 25; and a Unitarian church in Hardwick, a small residuum when the Orthodox withdrew.

These thirteen were gathered in 1829:—the Trinitarian church in Warwick, June 10, a secession of thirty members from the Unitarian; a Trinitarian

church in North Dennis, March 4, embracing a majority of the old church, who took themselves off from the Unitarian parish, and are now absorbed in other evangelical churches; the church in Dorchester village, March 11, a colony from the Second; the Unitarian church in Carlisle, a residuum of five members when the old church withdrew from the parish; the Trinitarian church in the West parish, Gloucester; a reorganization of the Orthodox members, March 23; the church in Pawtucket, April 17; the Second, or East church, in Longmeadow, which colonized from the First, April 22; the Trinitarian church in Billerica, April 30, a small secession from the Unitarian; a Unitarian church in Boxboro', May 20, formed after the old church had withdrawn from the parish; the Trinitarian church at Gloucester Harbor, November 17, a secession of seven members from the First; the South church in Braintree, November 18, a colony from the old church; the (Unitarian) church of the first parish in Cambridge, November 20, composed of such as remained behind when the old church withdrew; and the Robinson church in Plymouth, a secession from the third, and now reunited with it.

The following seventeen churches arose in 1830:— the Unitarian church in Framingham, a small remnant that adhered to the parish when the old church and pastor withdrew some time in January; the Mariner's church, Boston, January 20; the Unitarian church in Townsend, when the other withdrew from the parish, in February; the Unitarian church in South Natick, March 11; the Trinitarian Union church in Bolton, March 17, comprising members from several neighboring towns, in which no evangelical church then existed; the Unitarian church in Sherborn, March 25, the minority which remained with the parish when the old church withdrew; a Unitarian church in South Reading, March 21, a secession from the Trinitarian; the church in Chicopee Falls, gathered July 3; the Trinitarian church in Gardner, August 11, a secession from the First; the North church in Gloucester, August 25, a reorganization

from the ruins of an old church, the remnant of which is now Universalist; the Trinitarian church in Athol, August 29, a secession from the First church; the Unitarian church in Lowell, November 7; the South church in New Bedford, November 30, a colony from the North; the Appleton Street church in Lowell, December 2; the Unitarian church in Chelmsford, December 4; the Unitarian church in Berlin, bearing date from the withdrawal of the First church from the parish; and a Unitarian church in Dunstable, since extinct.

Deducting three small Unitarian assemblies, — those in Pelham, Boylston, and Oakham, — that broke up before 1830, there were 477 Congregational churches in the State.

The prominent characteristic of the period which we are now passing is the Unitarian controversy, which reached its culminating point about 1830. Of the ninety-four new churches here enrolled, thirty-six were formed by seceding members, chiefly evangelical, that were subsequently reorganized. Seventeen others, all Unitarian, were so many remnants left behind, where old churches, dispossessed of their places of worship, withdrew in a body from the parishes with which they had been connected. In every such case, the withdrawing church voluntarily gave up the meeting-house as a matter of course; and then all trust funds, whether held by the parish or the church, by whomsoever given, and for whatsoever purpose, were taken from them by legal force. The estimated amount of these spoliations will be given in the next chapter, where we may hope to find an end of this war. At present, we will merely mark its progress, and indicate the steps by which that end was reached.

This strife of tongues and pens and pulpits, which had been waxing more fierce every month since the disclosures of 1815, at length brought the contending powers into a corresponding strife of action. Measures offensive, defensive, preventive, and remedial, were projected with marvellous sagacity, and executed with prodigious energy. We have already had occasion to

notice how Harvard College was seized upon by the one, and Andover Seminary founded by the other. These two events foreshadowed the different lines of policy pursued by the two parties throughout this controversy, which, like that fratricidal battle "in the wood of Ephraim" between the servants of David and Absalom, "was scattered over the face of all the country." Old meeting-houses were everywhere falling into the hands of the one, and new meeting-houses rising under the hammers of the other. To the former, the courts uniformly gave *all* the church funds, however the division of church-members might be balanced; while to the latter, as to the primitive churches, "it was given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." And these sufferings suggested a primitive mode of relief.

The idea of "distributing to the necessity of saints" was not a new one with these Congregational churches. It is distinctly embodied in the Cambridge platform (chap. XV.) as "a sixth way of church communion" and had often been practised on a small scale. But never before had so many churches, dwelling together in such close proximity, been so suddenly brought to impoverishment. To project a system of charitable distribution on a scale commensurate with the present and prospective wants of the whole body of evangelical churches — for they were all in peril — was a bold stroke of Christian enterprise; but it was successfully attempted. The annual income of the "Domestic Missionary Society of Massachusetts," formed in 1818, by the General Association, "to assist needy churches, parishes and waste places," within the limits of the state, as the old "Massachusetts Missionary Society" of 1799 was doing outside of those limits, had not reached \$1,000 in 1822, and that of the other scarcely exceeded \$2,000, when negotiations were set on foot for combining the two organizations into one, which was effected in 1827; and the resources of both were directed to every point where the cry of an oppressed church was heard. At the end of the period now under



review, namely, in 1830, fifty-seven of these "exiled churches," as they were significantly called, had received pecuniary help in sums varying from \$50 to \$150 a year, in supporting the Gospel; besides aid from private donors in building meeting-houses. To commit such an agency to the hands of one of the most earnest and efficient ministers of Christ in Massachusetts, was to "organize victory," as events soon showed. The warm, fraternal sympathy thus poured into the bosoms of a band of religious outcasts, struggling at the point of death to uphold the faith, was more helpful than the return of all their lost funds would have been, as it filled them with gratitude, and inspired them with hope, and enkindled their zeal. To one familiar with the present routine of domestic missions in New England, nothing is more surprising than the effect of a small appropriation of \$50 or \$75 a year, at that time, in bracing up a feeble church. A few hundred dollars, distributed through as many years, was ordinarily enough to secure a vigorous and lasting independence. The explanation is to be sought in the spirit and surroundings of the recipients. It was not the decay of religious interest which brought those exiled churches on the Missionary Society, as is often the case now, but exactly the opposite. And that quickened, intensified interest in religious things which could bring them out as scorned seceders, "a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men,—fools for Christ's sake,"—and place them in a condition of dependence on charity, would not be long in bringing them off from that dependence; especially where God vouchsafed the presence of his spirit in a revival of religion, as in almost every case he did, before the struggle was ended.

As an event bearing decidedly on the grand issue of this controversy, we should not overlook the gathering of Hanover Street church, Boston, in 1825, and the removal of Rev. Lyman Beecher, D. D., from Litchfield, Connecticut, to take the pastoral charge of it. Up to that time the Evangelical party had stood mainly on

the defensive; thenceforward, their measures were more aggressive. A purpose to recover what was lost, no less than to defend what was left, got extensive possession of leading minds, and brought out great results,—seen, among other things, in the many Orthodox churches planted in and around Boston.

Another event of great importance to the evangelical interest was the establishment of the "Spirit of the Pilgrims," a monthly magazine, whose first number dates from January, 1828, though the first issue was several months later. Its bold and able defence of Puritan principles, evangelical religion, and the rights of Congregational churches, together with the vigorous coöperation of the Christian Spectator, published at New Haven, had much to do in turning back the captivity of Zion. The Panoplist, which will ever be remembered with esteem for the service it rendered at the opening of this controversy, had disappeared in the Missionary Herald, as its venerated editor had also devoted his strong powers of mind to the missionary work; and the Spirit of the Pilgrims took its place. On the other side were arrayed the Christian Examiner, the Christian Disciple, and the Unitarian Advocate, combining the best talent in the departments of literature, law, and theology which Cambridge and Boston, the Athens of America, could furnish.

Not remotely connected with this all engrossing controversy was the founding of Amherst College, in 1821. An impulse precisely like that which moved the founders of Harvard led to its establishment. A proposal to remove Williams College from one corner of the State to a central position, as a counterpoise to Cambridge, failing of its accomplishment, a fund of \$50,000 was subscribed for the tuition of "indigent pious students," with which a new collegiate institution was started in the village of Amherst. After three applications to the general court, and three stern rebuffs, it became a chartered college in 1825,—given, by its thousands of religious founders, "to Christ and the Church," as that at Cambridge had been nearly two

hundred years before. It was as an "engine of Orthodoxy," that it suffered such hard treatment at the hands of the legislature, as their printed speeches sufficiently attest, — than which, in the words of a candid reviewer, "we presume the annals of legislation do not furnish more rank specimens of gall and bitterness." (B. B. Edwards, in *Am. Quart. Reg.* Vol. IV. 331.)

And so it was with every movement of a religious nature; the day of concealment had gone by. The thoughts of men's hearts were revealed. Their real intents now came forth in open speech and undisguised action. Whatever may have been the characteristic sins of the times, hypocrisy was not one of them; nor was moderation one of the prevailing virtues. Probably very few now living can look back with entire satisfaction, or with unmitigated censure, on all the proceedings of either party.

But this outspoken, right-earnest spirit, which the controversy had come to assume in 1830, presaged its approaching end. It had the effect also to sharpen those points of Orthodoxy which had been rounded off somewhat by the forced fellowship long kept up between evangelical preachers and those of liberal views. At no time since the days of President Edwards had the "doctrines of grace" been so clearly defined and so faithfully preached in New England, as in the days when the separation was taking place between Trinitarians and Unitarians, in these Congregational churches. This was one of the incidental advantages derived from the conflict before the grand, triumphant issue was reached.

Another was the bond of union thereby formed between churches of "like precious faith," exposed to common perils in its defence. Our present conference system — those local organizations of sister churches into confederate groups, for mutual encouragement and consultation, that once covered nearly the whole State in a beautiful net-work of Christian charity — originated in these times of tribulation. Though strictly ecclesiastical in their character, these conferences of churches

have ever disclaimed ecclesiastical jurisdiction, limiting their functions to the cultivation of practical godliness, or the promotion of benevolent objects; and where they *adhere* to that disclaimer, their influence is eminently good.

## CHAPTER XXII.

1830-1840.

Eighty churches gathered.—The controversy closed, and its results estimated.—Pecuniary losses of the Orthodox, and their gain in other respects.—Report on "exiled churches."—Unitarians become a distinct denomination, and are dropped from this sketch in its subsequent details.

THE same religious controversy that ran like a forest fire over the eastern and central portions of Massachusetts throughout the last decade, continued still to blaze at the opening of this (1830-1840); and its effect in the multiplication of churches was scarcely less marked. Eighty were added during these ten years.

The four following sprang up in 1831:—the Trinitarian church in Southboro', a small company of seceders from the First church, turned Unitarian, was organized February 17; a church in the little town of Mount Washington (now extinct) was gathered some time in September; the North church in Hadley, October 26; and the Trinitarian church at Amesbury Mills, December 6, which purchased the Unitarian meeting-house built a few years before, and absorbed the congregation.

The following twelve were gathered in 1832:—the Unitarian church in Pepperell, formed around the nucleus of two or three members of the First church who adhered to the parish when the body withdrew, January 26; the Unitarian church in Fall River, March 9; the Trinitarian church in Acton, being a large majority of the First church, who withdrew and re-organized, May 13; the Trinitarian church in Norton, a secession from the other, April 3; the Trinitarian church in Templeton, a secession of seventeen members

from the First church, April 11; the Trinitarian church in Northboro', a seceding band, organized April 12; the Unitarian church in Uxbridge, a minority left behind when the old church and pastor were driven from their meeting-house, about this time; the Crombie Street church in Salem, May 3; the John Street church in Lowell, July 4; the Trinitarian church in Quincy, a secession from the old church, August 16; the church in Erving, September 19; and the Unitarian church in Bedford, a small remnant adhering to the parish, when the First church and pastor withdrew from the meeting-house to the town-house, and then were driven from the town-house to a private dwelling, for their adherence to the ancient faith.

Nine churches arose in 1833:— the Olivet church in Springfield, January 8; the Winthrop church in Charlestown, January 9; the Edwards church in Northampton, January 17; a Unitarian church in Marlboro', April 1, when the old church withdrew from the parish; the Monument church in Sandwich, whose members, though connected with a separate precinct for nearly fifty years, still belonged to the First church till July 9; the Centre church in Haverhill, a seceding majority, which was reorganized August 28; the South church in Wellfleet, a colony from the First, December 4; the Village church in West Stockbridge, December 25; and the North church in Falmouth.

The following eleven came up in 1834:— the church in Ashland, a colony from the Hollis church, Framingham, January 22; the East church in Douglas, a colony from the Centre church, June 12; the church in Williams College, June 15; the church in Whitinsville, a colony from the First church in Northbridge, July 31; the Trinitarian church in the North Parish of Beverly, a small secession from the other, September 1; the Trinitarian church in the North Parish of Andover, September 3; the Eliot church in Roxbury, September 18; the Brainard church in Belchertown, a secession from the old church, September 30, which was reunited with it seven years after; the Cabotville church in Chicopee,

October 16; and at uncertain dates during the same year, the Unitarian church in Milton, a remnant adhering to the parish when the old church withdrew; and a small Unitarian church in Westboro', which seceded from the First, and expired soon after.

These nine had their origin in 1835:—near the beginning of the year, the Warren Street (Unitarian) church, Boston, was formed, and King's Chapel, originally Episcopalian (with a Unitarian Liturgy from 1785), became Congregational; the Central church, Boston, May 11; the Trinitarian church in Deerfield village, constituted with eighteen seceders, June 2; the Trinitarian church in Lunenburg, a secession from the First, June 10; the South church in West Roxbury, June 11; the Trinitarian church in the North Parish, Marshfield, a secession of thirteen members from the Unitarian, July 4; the Union church of Amesbury and Salisbury, October 14; and the Trinitarian church in Rowe, a secession from the Unitarian, October 28.

Eight churches arose in 1836:—the Union church, Worcester, February 3; the Saxonville church in Framingham, a colony from the old church, May 1; the Maverick church, Boston, May 31; the present church in Scotland parish, Bridgewater, formed July 4, after the original church had removed its place of worship to the centre of the town; a church in Storrsville, within the limits of Petersham, which, in 1852, was dissolved and reorganized in Dana; the Unitarian church in Leicester; the Pitts Street Unitarian church, Boston; and the South church in Williamstown.

The following seven were organized in 1837:—the South church in North Bridgewater, January 3; the Winslow church in Taunton, January 12; the South church in Royalston, February 1; the Washington Street church in Beverly, February 8; the present church in Pelham, a reorganization, October 25, after the old church had turned Unitarian and become extinct; the Suffolk Street Unitarian Chapel, in Boston, October 29; and the Irvingsville church, October 31, subsequently merged into the South church in Orange.

These four were added in 1838:— the Bulfinch church, Boston, originally Universalist, became Unitarian about this time; the Trinitarian church in Mansfield, seceded from the Unitarian, May 9; the church in Webster was gathered in June; and the Village church in Medway, September 10.

Six churches sprang up in 1839:— the Trinitarian church in Stow, a secession from the old church, May 11; the Winter Street church in Haverhill, May 13; the Trinitarian church in Lancaster, May 22; the Village church in Cummington, July 1; the Trinitarian church in Dover, October 23, composed of seceders from the old church; and the North church in Abington, the same month.

The following ten had their origin in 1840:— the South church in Adams, January 1; the Trinitarian church in Littleton, May 14, a secession from the First church; the North church in Truro, June 25; the Centerville church in Barnstable, July 30; the West church in Cummington, September 20; the West church in Yarmouth, a colony from the First, September 30; the church in Winchester, a colony from the Woburn church, November 19; and, some time during the year, the Second Unitarian church in Lexington; a Unitarian church in the East Parish, Medway; and the Unitarian church in Easton, formed from such materials as were left when the old church and pastor withdrew from the parish.

This brings us through the period assigned to the present article, and also through the Unitarian controversy,— at least that belligerent form of it which has met our eye at every turn, during the previous thirty years. The last ejection of a church from their place of worship, or voluntary withdrawal to avoid such an issue, had transpired. The strife about parish funds and communion furniture had ceased,— for the reason that all property of this sort owned by the Orthodox, which the law could lay hands on, had already been taken away. Nor were there any more Trinitarian churches formed by secessions from old Puritan churches



turned Unitarian, because all such members had seceded. A complete separation had been gradually effected between these two kinds of Congregationalists, sundering them into two sects, as distinct as any others in the Protestant family. It is true that Orthodox churches continued to spring up, as they are now springing up, in towns and villages where evangelical preaching had been excluded; and so, on the other hand, Unitarian churches occasionally arose in communities where the Orthodox previously held the ground. But these occurrences, since 1840 have awakened as little strife as the advent of any other denominations. The conflict virtually came to an end during the period we are now sketching. This seems to be a proper place, therefore, to pause, and take a general survey of the results.

The following statistics present the most concise view that can be given, and one as helpful, perhaps, as any other in forming a candid judgment of the issue. At the opening of this controversy, which, for the sake of a precise date, we may assign to 1810, the whole number of Congregational churches in Massachusetts was three hundred and sixty-one; all of them founded on the old Puritan faith, — at least, all professedly Trinitarian. In the course of this controversy, ninety-six of these same churches passed over to Unitarianism, besides thirty parishes, where the same views predominated to the exclusion of evangelical preaching from their pulpits, and consequently the withdrawal of the churches from their meeting-houses. So that one hundred and twenty-six places of worship, with their appurtenances of parish and church funds, were lost to the cause of evangelical religion and gained to its opposite. The full amount of this loss and gain cannot be exactly stated. And yet we have the data for a probable estimate.

Among the collections of the Congregational Library Association is a manuscript report on "the condition of those churches which have been driven from their houses of worship by town or parish votes, or by measures equivalent to such votes," made to the General

Association of Massachusetts, in 1836, by a committee of one from each of the district associations, — twenty-three in number, — in accordance with a vote of that body, passed in 1833. This document, comprising fifty-two closely written pages of large letter paper, is the result of a thorough research, and possesses great value, as illustrating one of the most important periods in our ecclesiastical history. It enumerates *eighty-one* "exiled churches," giving a detailed account of their sufferings and self-denials for the cause of evangelical religion; and supposes that "some others of the same class may have been overlooked in this enumeration." Among the items which make up the report on each church is the amount of "parish funds" left behind when they went into "exile," the amount of "church funds," including communion furniture, library, etc., which were wrested from them after they went, and the general condition of the meeting-houses from which they were "driven," — as also the proportion of members that remained with the parish. The figures added together make the total of parish and church funds, \$365,958. The value of the meeting-houses, at three thousand dollars each, — which is probably a low valuation, — makes \$243,000 more; grand total of property voluntarily surrendered by these eighty-one churches, or violently taken away, \$608,958. At six per cent. interest this would yield \$36,537 a year; or \$451 to each of the eighty-one Unitarian societies receiving it, towards the payment of their ministers' salaries. To complete the data it should be added, that these eighty-one churches, before the separation, numbered 5,182 members, of which the exiled portion were 3,900, and those who "tarried at home and divided the spoil" were 1,282. It is not pretended that this amount of property belonged exclusively to the Orthodox before the separation took place; they were joint-owners with the others, and had their share of its benefits. But as we are tracing out the results of this controversy in the varied fortunes which befell the contending parties, it is important to know, as a simple historical fact, that so many meeting-

houses, built for orthodox worship, and such an amount of funds, devised for the support of Orthodox ministers, and which up to that time had been available for no other purpose, thenceforth not only ceased to support Orthodoxy, but was turned to the support of Unitarianism. Thus far, therefore, and in this particular, there was an immense loss to the former, and a corresponding gain to the latter. This does not include the funds belonging to fifteen out of the ninety-six old Puritan churches that passed over to the other side without a schism; nor does it take in the Orthodox endowments made to Harvard College before Unitarianism was heard of. These items added, would very much swell the pecuniary advantage derived to that party in the controversy. [See Appendix I.]

But in every other respect the gain was clearly on the other side. When the division was completed, it was found that the whole number of Congregational churches in Massachusetts was 544 (leaving out of the account such as had become extinct, or were merged in others), of which 135 were Unitarian and 409 Orthodox. Dropping those Unitarian churches which were originally founded by the Orthodox, and which came into possession of meeting-houses built before the separation took place, and used for evangelical worship till that time, there remain but twenty-four as the fruit of Unitarian enterprise developed in church extension; while the Orthodox during the same period had planted (or replanted, as the case might be) one hundred and ninety-three, and had actually built that number of meeting-houses,—which is sixty-seven more than belonged to the whole body of Congregationalists before the separation. Thus the two parties stood in the comparative number of their churches when this fraternal strife ceased. The ratio between them was as one to three. In the number of church-members the disparity was far greater; from the most reliable data at command, it may be given as one to ten.

But this rapid increase of churches and church-members was not the only nor the greatest gain that inured

to the evangelical side, in the progress of this controversy. The increase of faith and self-denial, of Christian enterprise, benevolence, spiritual life, and zeal for the truth, betokened a coming triumph, even when, in outward estate, the Orthodox interest seemed weakest. Never was the saying of Paul, "When I am weak, then am I strong," more fully illustrated, than when these churches, bereft of all temporalities, and denied redress at human tribunals, were forced to seek compensation in spiritual endowments, and to carry their appeal to the court of heaven. As the mountain oak grows stronger and strikes its roots deeper by exposure to wrenching winds, so did the cause of evangelical religion derive new vigor and strength from the violent assaults made upon it in the course of this controversy. Those struggles for dear life in which churches, scarcely able themselves to stand, were called upon to hold up others actually fainting, gave them incomparably more strength, more power of self-propagation, than all their lost meeting-houses and parish funds together could have done. It accustomed their sympathies to flow out toward the weak, by imposing on them the necessity of bearing one another's burdens. It taught them to GIVE. Who does not know that there is a habit of beneficence, as there is also a habit of parsimony, and that both are strengthened by use? It is a significant fact, that nearly the whole family of benevolent societies whose birthplace is New England were born in these perilous times, amid the alarms of a war waged in defence of that religious faith which gave them being. As the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt with a trowel in one hand, and a sword in the other, so was constructed that system of religious charity through which these affiliated churches have ever since been "striving together for the faith of the Gospel," and acting together for the world's conversion. They owe much of their present efficiency to an outside pressure which they would gladly have thrown off — if they could — an "affliction," which at the time was "not joyous, but grievous." When would the Evangelical Congregational churches of Massa-

chusetts have reached the point of giving \$200,000 per annum in diffusing the Gospel over the earth (as they are actually now giving), if they had not been schooled to it under the hard hand of necessity? \* We cannot overestimate the value of these rough and painful experiences to our churches, considered merely as a preparation for the great work which Heaven has assigned them.

Another advantage gained to the cause of evangelical religion from this controversy was a more discriminating and pointed style of preaching. The assertion has been made of late, that the doctrines of Orthodoxy were modified by the searching ordeal to which they were then subjected by their opponents, and the high tone of Calvinism lowered to a pitch not very offensive to Unitarian ears, — that this, in fact, was a “triumph,” an “eminent victory,” achieved on that side. (Ellis’s Half Century, p. 41.) But the assertion wants proof. The facts which are supposed to prove it belong to a later date. No such pretence was set up at the time. The opposite was often enough asserted, and with sufficient bitterness. But that the mode of presenting these doctrines — in other words, the prevalent style of preaching them — underwent a change, there can be no doubt. It was a change from the indefinite to the discriminating; from the dull enunciation of truth, to its earnest enforcement as a practical and personal concern;

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\* In 1850 the various evangelical denominations in the State contributed for missionary and other kindred objects, as follows: —

Congregationalists, . . . . .	\$204,963
Baptists, . . . . .	58,360
Episcopalians, . . . . .	28,998
Methodists, . . . . .	13,186
Others, . . . . .	2,491
	<hr/>
	\$307,998

“From these figures it would seem that the Congregational churches, which number scarcely more than one third of all in the State called evangelical, contributed about two thirds of the amount.” — *Home Miss.* Vol. XXIV. p. 269.

wherein the preacher's aim was, not only to convince the mind, but to convert the heart. "Revival preaching" was the name sometimes given it, to denote its effect in producing those religious awakenings which also characterized the period of this controversy. Dr. Nettleton's style differed from that of his brethren only in its stronger developments of these traits. Dr. Griffin's Park Street Lectures give us a good illustration of what is here meant. Doctrinal preaching was a necessity forced upon all orthodox ministers by the unceasing assaults made upon their faith; and these doctrines, pungently applied to the felt necessities of the soul, were "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds. If the prominence given to this mode of preaching had been the only great result of the Unitarian controversy, it would have been richly remunerative to the cause of Orthodoxy, — an ample return for the sacrifice it cost.

Having now followed the current of our ecclesiastical affairs to the point where the stream divides itself into two unequal parts, flowing in different directions, the design of this sketch requires that we keep in the old channel, down which we have come thus far, and confine our observations to the "Evangelical" Congregational denomination, as ours has since been generally called, in distinction from the new sect eliminated from it.

It is much to be regretted that a truthful account of this controversy cannot be given without reviving the recollection of some things which our Unitarian friends and ourselves alike would willingly forget. But they are self-registered facts, like volcanic eruptions and inundations of the ocean in the physical world; and as in the latter case, whatever new formations may supervene, the geologist still finds the indelible foot-prints of fire and blood, which he is bound to notice in explaining the present phenomena of the earth; so in the former will the historiographer of these Congregational churches find imperishable evidence of transactions and events which he cannot blink out of sight if he would,

as the existing state of things cannot be made intelligible without referring to them. Far from us be the wish to reopen the dying embers of former strifes. But when God sends help in answer to the agonizing prayer; when his afflicted people cry unto him "out of the depths," and are delivered, who shall forbid them to speak of "the horrible pit and the miry clay," from which His almighty arm has lifted them? The wrongs inflicted upon them in the civil courts would have been passed over with the lightest possible step, as things which nobody now would think of defending; but a labored vindication lately attempted in the "Half Century of the Unitarian Controversy"—a production of commendable fairness in the main points at issue—seemed to require a fuller insight into the practical workings of the legal decisions which brought these wrongs upon us, and thereby infused more bitterness into the quarrel than all other causes combined. It has been presumed, of late years, that the decision of Chief Justice Parker, so far as it has had the force of judicial authority, was a dead letter,—“twice dead,” and awaiting only a fit occasion to be “plucked up by the roots.” But if, as now seems likely, its departed ghost is to be evoked, it concerns, not the Orthodox Congregationalists alone, but every denomination of Christians alike, to see to it and provide against it.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1840-1857.

One hundred and three churches gathered. — Extinct churches, various causes of. — Comparative view of the different denominations in Massachusetts. — Theological questions. — Moral reforms. — Church polity. — Pastoral Association. — Congregational Library Association, its origin and aims.

HAVING brought the history of these churches down to the end of 1840, in short periods of ten years each, the remaining incidents — too recent, as yet, to be wrought into history — will be thrown together in this one chapter covering seventeen years. The statistics, however, are as valuable now, as they ever will be, and are essential to a complete view of our present ecclesiastical state. The one hundred and three Evangelical Congregational churches that have sprung up in Massachusetts during these last seventeen years, arose in the following order: —

In 1841, the church in Blackstone, April 15; the Housatonic church in Great Barrington, June 18; the Russel church in Hadley, July 15; the Garden Street church, Boston, July 21 (subsequently united with the Green Street, and named the Messiah church); and the Winnisimmet church in Chelsea, September 20.

In 1842, the South church in Springfield, March 23; the North church in Truro, May 22; the Mount Vernon church, Boston, June 1; the church in East Cambridge, September 8; the Union church in South Weymouth, November 1; the Second church in Whately, November 10; the Central church in Fall River, November 16; the church in West Cambridge, December 14; and the Central church in Fairhaven, now disbanded.

In 1843, the Third church in Fitchburg, January 26;



a second church in Heath (now reunited with the first), in February; the North church in Ashburnham, February 21; the North church in Orange, August 16 (now disbanded); the Second Evangelical church in Milton, November 9; and the North church in Winchendon, December 7.

In 1844, the Leyden Chapel church, Boston, February 8, chiefly composed of members from the Salem and Green Street churches, and worshipping in the house of the latter till 1846, when it disbanded; the Spring Street church in Tisbury (Holmes Hole), April 18; the Church of the Pilgrims (now extinct), a re-organization of the original Garden Street church, July 15; the Harvard church in Brookline, August 26; the Pacific church in New Bedford, October 8; the church in Chester Factories, November 13; the church in Clinton, a colony from the Evangelical church in Lancaster, November 14; and the Maple Street church in Danvers, December 5.

In 1845, the Kirk Street church, Lowell, a colony from the First, May 21; the Eliot church in Newton, July 1; the Payson church, South Boston, July 17; the East church in Charlemont, August 6; the South Evangelical church in New Salem, August 15; the Shawmut church, Boston, gathered under the auspices of the City Missionary Society, November 20; and a church at Neponset Village, Dorchester.

In 1846, the High Street church, in Lowell, January 22; the Second church in Pittsfield (colored), February 20; the Free church in Andover, May 7; the First church in Swampscott, July 15; the present church in Alford, reorganized from the remains of the old, August 13; the Second church in Huntington (formerly Chester Village), August 26; the South church in Orange, gathered chiefly from the North church and Irvingville, September 23; and the North church in Springfield, October 28.

In 1847, the Bethesda church in Charlestown, February 10 (subsequently disbanded); the Grantville church in Needham, February 24; the Puritan church in Sand-

wich, March 21; the Central church in Middleboro', March 25; the Second church in Palmer, April 1; the First church in Lawrence, April 9; the Jenksville church in Ludlow, January 6 (now disbanded); the Mystic church in Medford, July 6; the Central church in Dra-cut, July 25; and the Evangelical church in Hingham, December 21.

In 1848, the Monument church in South Deerfield, January 25; the South church in Malden, March 16; the church in Indian Orchard, Springfield, March 28; the Salem Street church in Worcester, June 15; the church in Melrose, July 11; and the Trinitarian church in Berkley, some time in September.

In 1849, the Waquoit, or Second church in East Falmouth, January 3; the Edwards church, Boston (now extinct), February 1; the Bethesda church in Reading, April 17; the Second church in Holyoke, May 24; the North church in Becket, September 25; the Trinitarian church in East Bridgewater, November 14; the Linebrook church in Ipswich, November 15; the North church in Woburn, November 22; and the Central church in Lawrence, December 25.

In 1850, the Whitefield church in Newburyport, January 1; the church in Shelburne Falls, March 6; the Porter Evangelical church in North Bridgewater, March 6; the Mettineague church in West Springfield, June 10; the South church in Pittsfield, November 12; the Auburndale church in Newton, November 14; and the Central church in Lynn, December 11.

In 1851, the Haydenville church in Williamsburg, March 1; and the Broadway church in Chelsea, April 2.

In 1852, the church in Sterling, January 22; the Pilgrim church in North Weymouth, March 11; the church in Assabet village, September 23; the church in Dana Centre, a reorganization of the Storrsville church in that village, September 28; and the Payson church in East Hampton, December 29.

In 1853, the East church in Taunton, January 16; the Mather church on Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, February 15; the church in Somerville, May 3; and the Second church in Waltham, August 9.

In 1854, the church in Hyannis, Barnstable, January 3; the South church in Lynnfield, January 18; the church in Hanover, Four Corners, April 12; the Union church in North Brookfield, June 6; and the Ballard Vale Union church in Andover, December 31.

In 1855, the Pilgrim church in Harwich Port, April 3; the Second church in Rockport, March 15; the Phillips church in Watertown, April 17; the Second church in Ashfield, June 13; and the South church in Franklin, September 13.

In 1856, the Second church in Westfield, May 22; and the Winthrop church in East Randolph, December 30.

In 1857, the Plymouth church in Chelsea, January 7; the Vine Street church in Roxbury, April 9; the church in East Needham, May 6; the Holmes church in North Cambridge, September 23; and Church of the Unity, a secession from the Phillips church, South Boston, in November.

Dropping from this list the twelve churches whose dissolution is indicated in the notice of their origin, there will remain ninety-one as the fruit of church extension since 1840. Deducting ten others, previously organized, which also disappeared during the same time, and the present number of Evangelical Congregational churches in Massachusetts is 490. But while this is given as the exact number, the reader is at liberty to receive it with several grains of allowance. Indeed, he ought so to receive it, on account of the undetermined condition in which some of these churches are found. When the members of a church formally vote to disband, or to combine with another, there is a period put to their confederate existence, which admits of a precise date. But when, for any reason, there is a suspension of Christian ordinances, and the members disperse to other places of worship, or "forsake the assembling of themselves together" in any place, "as the manner of some is," there may, or may not, be a dissolution; or if it come, it may be difficult to tell precisely when. Perhaps a resuscitation will ensue. Perhaps it will be

necessary to reorganize. But for the time being one hardly knows whether to count such a church with the living or the dead.

The whole number of Congregational churches whose organization has been recorded in this sketch is 684; namely, 581 before the Unitarians were dropped, in 1840, and 103 since that time. From this list fifty-nine have fallen out. The exit of so many churches of Christ would afford a sorrowful theme of reflection were we to count them lost, as some who read the statement may be inclined to do. But this is a wrong view. Eleven of these extinct churches were feeble remnants left behind when the evangelical portion withdrew from their respective parishes. After a consumptive existence of a few years as Unitarian churches, they disbanded, and the members, in most cases, were subsequently merged in orthodox assemblies. Their disappearance simply denotes a failure of Unitarianism in those particular localities. A still larger number were reunited with the churches from which they had separated in a day of strife, — a return to duty, it may be, on the return of a better spirit. But the most numerous class of extinct churches presents to our view, when the facts are examined, simply a process of absorption. Life, so far as a particular church is the exponent of spiritual life, has not expired, but only varied its conditions. The members, who had stood in a confederate relation to each other, have dissolved that relation, for some cause deemed by them sufficient, and are joined to other churches, where they sustain a similar relation. No less than eight of these fifty-nine extinct churches were located in Boston. Their dissolution, under the circumstances, instead of being a loss, may have been a gain. The disappearance of some others has resulted from the depopulation of the places where they were originally located. Their dismemberment was providential and unavoidable. But the emigrating members went somewhere, and probably joined some church. A few in the list, it must be sorrowfully confessed, came to their end as the seven churches in Asia Minor did, by losing

their first love, and neglecting their first works, and disregarding the call to repentance and the warnings of God, till the candlestick was removed, and the church blotted out. Repentance—a change of heart and life—was wanted; and when this could not be wrought by kind entreaty nor by Christian charity, the doom of Ephraim at length fell upon them—“joined to his idols, let him alone.”

At several periods in the course of this sketch, we have taken a comparative view of the different religious denominations, so far as might be done by enumerating their churches or religious assemblies. It may interest the reader to take one more, and see how the ecclesiastical map of the State looks with its latest corrections. From the most authentic data at command, the enumeration will stand thus, when reduced to naked figures:—Orthodox Congregationalists, 490; Episcopal Methodists, 277; Baptists, 266; Unitarians, 170; Universalists, 135; Episcopalians, 65; Roman Catholics, 64; Christians, 37; Friends Meetings, 24; Free-will Baptists, 21; Protestant or Independent Methodists, 20; Second Adventists, 15; Wesleyan Methodists, 13; Swedenborgians, 11; Presbyterians, 7; Shakers, 4 communities; nondescript religious assemblies, that cannot be classed with any of the above, nor yet with one another, 12. Total, 1,625; of which the Orthodox Congregationalists comprise nearly one third.

As to the questions of theological controversy that have come into the last seventeen years, they are too recent—too green, as yet, for historical use; and it may be that in the process of seasoning, sufficient time being allowed for personal and party feeling to exude, they will suffer such a shrinkage that history will dispense with their use altogether.

These years have been singularly prolific in moral reform enterprises, great and small, in which our Congregational churches and pastors have largely participated. But these, too, must be left for time to test and label, as at length he will, with his own indelible mark of approval or rejection.

One or two items bearing on our ecclesiastical polity deserve a fuller notice. As nearly every period in the past two hundred years has witnessed some abortive attempt at mending or remodelling our good old Congregational system, so has this last. A committee appointed at a public meeting in Boston, May 29, 1844, "to take into consideration what measures are necessary for the reaffirmation and maintenance of the principles and spirit of Congregationalism," reported in the form of a printed "Manual of Church Principles and Discipline." This report was made, not to the meeting from which the committee received their appointment; nor to any other meeting; but to "The Congregational ministers and churches in Massachusetts"—with the hope expressed that it might also "be adopted beyond Massachusetts."

Though the whole subject of church-government was laid open by the committee, their leading object evidently was to magnify the office-work of councils, and to strengthen the authority of their decisions. To do this without trenching on that first and fundamental principle of Congregationalism—the independent and self-governing power of the churches—had often been attempted before, and had always failed. It did so in this instance, and always must. The veritable old Cambridge platform (thanks to the committee) was printed as an appendix to their proposed "Manual;" and in passing from one to the other, the reader experiences a feeling of disenfranchisement,—a grateful relief from needless and perplexing restraints,—like one sailing on a broad, open sea, after descending a stream where snags and sawyers and sand-bars have kept him on a constant and anxious look-out. May it not be hoped that the next attempted change in our polity will be either the disuse of ecclesiastical councils altogether, except in cases where the fellowship of the churches is mainly to be expressed, as in the settlement and dismissal of pastors, and the gathering of churches, or their employment merely as referees? This change would bring us nearer to "the old paths" than any which has

been proposed for the last hundred years; and would probably give the churches more "rest," by imposing on each a stronger necessity for unanimity,—a point which John Robinson's flock always reached, through the labor and skill of the elders, before a decisive vote was taken on any important question.\*

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\* "In all church affairs, when the elders called for the vote of the brethren, they never called for a negative or contrary vote; as judging it would be the using of axe or hammer in temple-work; only care was taken before the vote was called for in any case, to gain the consent of every brother; and in case any could not actually vote, yet expressing that they could rest in the act of the church, it was satisfying; and this was a great preservation of the peace of the church." Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. IV. pp. 138, 139.

This method of procedure appears to have been generally copied by the other churches, and is thus described by John Cotton in his "Way of the Churches," pp. 94-96. "When we say we do this or that with *common consent*, our meaning is, we do not carry on matters either by the overruling power of the presbytery or by the consent of the major part of the church, but by the general and joint consent of all the members of the church; for we read in the Acts of the Apostles, the primitive church (which is a pattern for succeeding ages), carried all their administrations, *ὁμοθυμαδον*, that is, with one accord, as becometh the church of God. But if it so fall out, that any difference do arise (as sometime there doth, through the remaining darkness of our minds, seeing we all know but in part), then such as do dissent from their brethren are required to propound the grounds of their dissent, which, if they be weighty, and held forth from the light of the word, all the rest do submit, and yield thereunto, not as to the voice of their brethren only, but as to the voice of Christ; whose voice alone must rule in the church, and all the sheep of Christ will hear it, and all the upright in heart will follow it. But if the grounds of such as do dissent do upon due consideration appear to have little or no weight in them, the officers of the church, or some other of the brethren, do declare unto them the invalidity thereof. If they be satisfied, the matter in hand doth then proceed with the common consent of all. If they be not satisfied yet, it is either through want of light (and so through weakness of judgment), or through strength of pride, and so through stiffness of will." And here now comes the rub, as we should say. How are they to determine which of these is the real impediment? Thus; "take further pains,"—"lovingly inform them,"—"patiently bear with them,"—"till at length they can either act with their brethren, or "for their part sit still." If they will do neither, it is taken as evidence that their dissent springs from "stiffness of will;" and "the church doth proceed with common consent to admonish them of their pride and

The Pastoral Association of Massachusetts, whose organization in 1824 was inadvertently overlooked when numbering the evangelical forces drawn out in the Unitarian controversy, underwent a change in 1853 which deserves notice, as restoring an old and long-lost feature of Congregationalism. It is not a little remarkable that the Congregationalists of Massachusetts, whose plantation on these shores was a protest against prelacy and all hierarchal forms of church rule; whose ecclesiastical constitution has ever recognized the supremacy of the "brotherhood;" and whose laymen embody more wisdom and intelligence than can be found in any other

self-willedness, and to leave them under the censure of admonition, whereby the liberty of their voice is taken from them."

The excellence of this "old way," — bating the last step, perhaps, which Cotton assures us was "very rarely" taken, — must be apparent to every one, who will compare it with the modern way of rushing to an issue by a hasty vote, and then resorting to a council if anybody is dissatisfied. They, too, had councils when necessary; and it is worth while, in this connection, to notice when and why and how they were employed. "But if it do appear," continues Mr. Cotton in the same paragraph from which the above is taken, "that the dissent, whether of one or more brethren, do arise from such darkness and intricacy of the matter in hand, as that the officers and members of the church do find themselves either unable to clear the matter fully, or at least unfit, in regard of some prejudice which may be conceived against them (which sometimes doth fall out, though very seldom), in such case, when the matter is weighty, and the doubt is great on both sides, then (with common consent) we call for light from other churches, and entreat them to send over to us such of their elders, or brethren, as may be fit to judge in such a cause. Upon their coming, the church meeting together in the name of Christ, the whole cause, and all the proceedings in it, are laid open to them; who, by the help of Christ, pondering and studying all things according to the rule of the word, the truth is cleared, a right way of peace and concord discovered and advised, and the spirits of the brethren on all parts comfortably satisfied." In other words, when a difficulty arises, not from "the pride and stiffness" of parties in the church (such things they dispose of themselves), but from "the darkness and intricacy of the matters in hand," they request several neighboring churches each to send them an elder or a brother — they are not particular which, so he "be fit to judge in such a cause" — who go into church meeting with them and take part in their discussions, and are no doubt very helpful in "clearing" the matter — but how unlike our councils! — [See Appendix II.]



denomination of equal numbers; should have suffered the direction and management of their affairs to fall so completely out of the hands of the laity into those of the clergy, as has happened among us during the last three quarters of a century. District associations embracing nearly all the ministers in the State; a general association; a convention of Congregational ministers; all originating plans, and devising means, and proposing measures, for the well-being of the churches and parishes, with not a lay member of these same churches or parishes present, to utter his voice, or cast his vote! To this array of clerical advisers, the Pastoral Association was added in 1824, which exerted a greater influence than either of the others, by its seasonable counsels and wise recommendations in the perilous times then passing; but no possible chance was given for the laity to participate in their proceedings, till the time came for carrying the decisions into effect; then they were expected to take their full share, — which they have always done. This way of doing things does not seem to have originated in any desire on the part of ministers to grasp at power, nor on the part of laymen to shirk responsibility. Perhaps all we can say of it is, that “it so happened.” But certainly it was not so in the beginning, nor through a long period this side. It could not have happened so a hundred years since. It ought not to be so now. It cannot long continue; and the Pastoral Association has the honor of taking the first decisive step towards its discontinuance, by merging itself and its main objects into another organization, designed to embrace the whole body of Congregationalists, ministers and laymen.

The movement was on this wise. An institution on a small scale, known as the Congregational Library Association, had been formed in Boston early in 1851, with a membership confined chiefly to that city and vicinity. The idea originated with a few reflecting minds, — foremost among whom was the late Professor Bela B. Edwards, — who had the discernment to see that a collection of our Puritan literature (wasting

away continually by the ravages of time) might be of great service to this and to all coming ages, in perpetuating those Puritan principles which have hitherto been to New England her chief glory, and to our Congregational churches the prime elements of their power. The results of three years satisfied the members that their object was too important to be longer restrained within its present sphere of development; that they had hold of an idea which, with others naturally entwining around it, might be made the basis of a union as extended as the Puritan family, embracing objects of common interest and of vast importance to our whole denomination. Into these views the Pastoral Association entered heartily, laying aside its clerical constitution that it might combine with the other in erecting a new structure on this extended scale, — which was accordingly done in Boston, May 25, 1854, “at a large meeting of Congregational ministers and laymen, representing all the New England States, and many other parts of the country.” The name previously selected for the body thus reorganized was “The Congregational Union,” as more fully expressing the scope of the enterprise. But inasmuch as that name was appropriated by another kindred institution formed at New York for another purpose before the time fixed for this reorganization had arrived, there was a cheerful return to the original name, *Congregational Library Association*, as indicating a department of effort, than which no other will be more influential in securing all its great objects. Its membership already reaches into every State of the Union where Congregationalists are found; while its quarterly and annual meetings afford opportunities for ministers and laymen, — not as a confederation of churches, for it has no shred of ecclesiasticism in it, but as individual Congregationalists, — to meet on common ground in the furtherance of whatever movement the providence of God or the wisdom of man may indicate for the general good. Leaving all ecclesiastical questions for the churches to settle, each by its own independent action, if it can, or by calling in a

council, if it must, — the Congregational Library Association aims to conserve and set forth the great principles on which our ecclesiastical polity rests. Not an eleemosynary institution itself, it will nevertheless keep alive and quicken those vitalizing forces which underlie all our benevolent societies, — as the subsoil does the grain-producing loam, and which every farmer knows must be stirred occasionally, or production ceases. A general coöperation on such a basis, and for such an end, must have a powerful effect in assimilating the views, and harmonizing the action, of the whole wide spread family of Congregationalists, — a desideratum all the more important as the time approaches, which every discerning mind sees to be near, when we are to be left by other kindred denominations who have hitherto acted with us, to do our part of the work of evangelizing the world by ourselves; to “teach all nations,” if we teach them at all, in our own way; and to employ whatever moral, religious, or pecuniary capital God has put at our disposal, in promoting the interests of his kingdom through our own denominational agencies. And when that time arrives, it will be found of unspeakable advantage to have been recalling the achievements of the fathers, and studying their characters and imbibing their spirit.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Practical reflections.—1. Puritanism and Calvinism, the soul and body of New England Congregationalism.—2. Originated, not in pride, but humility.—3. Wherein its efficiency resides.—4. The process through which these churches have lapsed.—5. Their recuperative power.—6. Means of promoting their progress.—7. Responsibility of the present generation.

THOSE who have perused the foregoing pages unfolding the origin, progress, blacksliding, recovery, and present condition of these churches, have had their own reflections—each, it may be, different from those of every other. The author has also had his, which, in taking leave of the subject, he here records with the same honest freedom that is cheerfully acceded to all others.

1. Calvinism, as a system of *religious faith*, and Puritanism, as a code of *morals* (the two toughest things that ever entered into the composition of human character) were the original soul and body of these Congregational churches; that unadulterated Calvinism which had been filtered of every Arminian particle by the Synod of Dort, whose ablest defender was John Robinson; that religious Puritanism which had its best development after reaching these shores, and is to be distinguished from a political sort that shot up on the other side of the water. Both these rare elements of power must be taken into the account, in forming a correct estimate of the genius and practical working of New England Congregationalism. It is quite too easily assumed that its appropriate fruits are the product of a mere form of ecclesiastical polity, and not also of the religious doctrines and moral duties that have been fostered beneath that form,—quite too readily inferred

that the like fruits will certainly grow wherever the same ecclesiastical *polity* is kept up. An apple tree, we may presume, will continue to bear apples so long as it produces any thing; but their size and quantity and flavor, and consequently their value, will depend very much on the quality of the soil into which it strikes its roots.

2. The independent democratic spirit of Congregationalism, which some in our day speak of as "pride and pruriency," (in other days it was called "church rebellion,") more naturally betokens *humility* and self-abasement. Pride has created distinctions between churches and church-members and church officers; but when was it ever known to set up for a leveller of such distinctions, as Congregationalism did? The framers of this, as of every other form of church-government, appealed to the Bible; but long before they had found the chapter and verse, they had found a God, so exalted in their ideas of him as to confound all other distinctions of rank, and reduce these human worms of the dust to an undistinguishable equality,—just as the stars, on account of their immense distance, seem to us equally distant and equally diminutive. As a matter of historical fact, this was the way they discovered the great doctrine that "all men are born free and equal,"—a doctrine which had its first practical development in the Congregational churches, and, subsequently through these, in the State. Congregationalists may be proud, their churches arrogant, their ministers lordly; but it is abhorrent alike to the spirit and the theory of their ecclesiastical *system*.

3. The feature in this system of church-government, which other denominations call its weak point, is really the point on which its main efficiency ever has and always must depend. That feature is *the juridical power vested in the brotherhood* of each church,—the only body recognized in our constitution as possessing such power in any form or degree. It were well if none but outsiders were in the dark on this subject. But the many attempts that have been made to erect some

other ecclesiastical tribunal show that there are within the pale of Congregationalism itself, those who cannot comprehend its true genius. These attempts have usually been accompanied by the absurd protestations that nothing therein is intended against the independence and self-controlling power of the churches,—as if one could turn a circle into a square, without destroying its properties as a circle! To substitute the Presbyterian or Episcopal rule for the Congregational is a thing quite easily done; and those who desire to do it, will ever have the liberty. But to combine their discrepant elements into one and the same system, which shall be kept in harmonious working order is impossible, as the facts in this sketch show. To concede that “every church has full power and authority ecclesiastical within itself, regularly to administer all the ordinances of Christ, and is not under any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatsoever,” and then proceed to erect a tribunal over the heads of these same churches, “for the rectifying of maladministrations,” as was attempted by the synod of 1662, in their proposals for consociation, and by others who have tried similar expedients since that time, is to organize strife, and “make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” This is the source of all the weakness which other denominations find in our mode of discipline. This is that “rope of sand,” which they sometimes speak of. Elements foreign to Congregationalism, and at war with its first principle, have, to some extent, crept in and deranged its natural working. But this is not the fault of the system. Just so far as the churches act with an intelligent appreciation of their rights, and pastors help rather than hinder them in such action, and councils adhere to their appropriate functions, there is no form of church polity on earth, more quietly or more efficiently administered; as there is none whose machinery is less complicated or cumbersome. To recover fully, and maintain firmly, this primitive simplicity and power of Congregationalism, is an obligation not sufficiently felt by the leading minds in our

denomination. A horror of sectarianism is probably the cause. May that horror never be less! But an impulse in this direction, so far from kindling a sectarian spirit, would be the most effectual means of keeping it down.

4. The facts brought to view in this sketch, reveal a tendency in churches to lapse,—or, at least, to pass from a higher to a lower standard of faith and practice,—and suggest the only sure preventive. If there ever was a fraternity of churches on earth that seemed to be placed, by their position and character, beyond all danger of this sort, they were those which fled from the infected moral atmosphere of the old world to the untrodden shores of the new, purged, as they had been, by the fires of persecution, and most thoroughly evangelical in their views. Yet scarcely had the first generation passed away before signs of declension were seen; and many a departing elder who still remembered “the days of old, the years of ancient times,” left his dying admonition. These warnings, if not unheeded, were generally unavailing, and grew fainter as degeneracy increased,—a lower standard of morals all the while inducing a laxer theology, and *vice versa*. Thus did these Puritan churches gradually depart from the faith and practice of their founders, though not without frequent checks and self-reproaches; till, by a continual divergence from the true orbit, gravitation turned the other way, and departure from old standards was reckoned progress. However deplorable the fact, there is nothing new, nothing strange in it. The same tendency and the same results can be traced back through all time,—the people of God devoutly singing his praise, and then stupidly forgetting his works, till, wrought upon by some new reformatory agency, they again renew their covenant vows, which again they gradually forget; while prophets and apostles and Christian martyrs are beseeching them, with tears of earnestness, to be on their guard. When will the admonition be heeded? When shall we once learn that “eternal vigilance” is the price, not of liberty only, but of pure re-

ligion; and that the first divergent step is the one to be avoided, if we would effectually shun the perils of apostasy? Especially "profitable for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness," is the fact, that, in the defection of these Congregational churches, spiritual deadness preceded heretical doctrine, as the cause does the effect. Their creeds were Orthodox long after those Orthodox creeds ceased to have any religious vitality; and in not a few instances they would have retained "the form of sound words" much longer, but for the glaring inconsistency between the profession of Calvinism and the practice of formalism. The practical lesson taught by this fact is, that heresy begins in the heart. Those ministers and churches, therefore, are most effectually guarded against heterodox theology, who are most jealously guarding against religious degeneracy. *Dead Orthodoxy* has been the inlet of the worst heresies that have ever infested these churches.

5. But the most remarkable fact unfolded in the history of these Congregational churches is their recuperative power, — a faculty of self-reformation and recovery. Three times have they been threatened with a dislodgement from their old Calvinistic foundation; — first by the Antinomian heresy; then by the Arminian; and finally in their conflict with Unitarianism. And in each instance they were saved by an application of such forces as were found in their own religious faith and church polity. It is true, that in the last and most formidable of these encounters, they lost nearly a hundred churches, which, though founded on the primitive faith, were severally disfellowshipped when that faith was renounced; but it was such a loss as the body suffers by the amputation of diseased and mortifying limbs, — a painful but indispensable means of preserving life. The defection was thereby arrested, and in almost every case, as also in some thirty others, where churches left their meeting-houses and funds behind, and fled from Unitarian parishes to save their consciences and their faith, there has been a reestablishment of evan-



gelical preaching, and more than the former measure of evangelical influence, if not in the same pulpit, yet in the same place, where Orthodoxy had been silenced. These facts certainly indicate a remarkable power of self-recovery,—a vigor of constitution, as we should call it in the human system, favoring the physician in his effort to throw off disease. This power, no doubt, is mainly the force of evangelical truth, always “mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds,” and the building up of feeble churches. But even the truth of God does not work out its full results without appropriate conditions and appliances. And we cannot doubt that the scriptural simplicity of our ecclesiastical order has been greatly helpful in accomplishing these marvellous results. *Truth* needs no decrees of ecumenical councils to enforce her teachings; no heavy artillery of prelatie conventions, or general assemblies, to help her beat down the strong-holds of error. These defences, moreover, can be just as easily turned against the truth, as they often have been—oftener, perhaps, than otherwise. Her spontaneous impulse is to put them all aside, as David did Saul’s cumbersome armor when going to meet the giant of Gath. She seeks an open field, and the untrammelled use of her own heaven-appointed sling and stone. This is just what she found among the Congregational churches of Massachusetts, in the day of her battle here. May she find it everywhere, and be always as victorious!

6. The past history of these churches inspires the most animating hope of their future progress, and is itself an efficient means of securing it. The remembrance of John Robinson and his achievements; of New England’s founders and their fortitude; of the first Congregational churches planted on these shores, and their invincible faith, will act on their successors through all coming time, as an incentive to piety and a rebuke to degeneracy. These moral forces, lying latent in our history, have been repeatedly evoked in past times of peril with great effect. The “Reforming synod” of 1679 was ushered in by the recall of the pub-

lic mind and conscience to the piety of a former age. The venerable Increase Mather, with a few coevals whose personal "converse with the first planters of this country" added weight to their words, apprehensive that the glory was departing from New England, uttered their warning voice in appeals like the following: "In the last age, in the days of our fathers, scarce a sermon preached but some evidently converted, and sometimes hundreds in a sermon. Which of us can say we have seen the like? The body of the rising generation is a poor, perishing, unconverted, and (except the Lord pour down his Spirit) an undone generation." "We are the posterity of the good old Puritan non-conformists in England, who were a strict and holy people. Such were our fathers, who followed the Lord into this wilderness. O New England! New England! look to it that the glory be not removed from thee! for it begins to go! O tremble, for it is going; it is gradually departing!" The consequence was a solemn recovenanting, a general revival, and "a great addition of converts."

Similar appeals, enforced by the same class of facts, were employed in promoting that wonderful work of God near the middle of the last century. At the instance of President Edwards, a weekly periodical, — "The Christian History," — was issued at Boston for the space of two years from March, 1743. And no less than six of the early numbers were devoted to the history of New England's first settlers. The leading minds to whom God entrusted the human management of that "great awakening" could think of nothing better suited to the times than a review of that primitive type of piety and those Puritan revivals which are recorded in this sketch. And most salutary was its influence in promoting that gracious work, by defending it on the one hand against designing foes, and on the other against disorderly but well-meaning friends. In still later and more perilous times, we have seen the "Spirit of the Pilgrims" invoked with the same happy results. Many who read this page will remember when the con-

scientious adherence of these churches to the religious doctrines and practices of their founders was called *bigotry*, — a word that drove people away from their ranks, or frightened them into silence. But where is the man now, with the blood of the Pilgrims in his veins, and their spirit in his heart, who could be terrified by that harmless word, or would object to passing for such a bigot, if to avoid it he must stand before heaven and earth as a recreant to the principles of such fathers? It was once thought strange, and by those too who could go to Plymouth Rock annually to celebrate the deeds of their Puritan ancestors, that anybody should care to preserve that Puritan religion which gave birth to those deeds, and which alone can reproduce them. But there is a larger number now, who think it more strange that intelligent men and women, of consistent views on all other subjects, should hold such absurdities on this, — like silly children regaling themselves on the delicious fruit of a tree in their father's orchard, which, in their childish reasonings, would be just as fruitful if the trunk and roots were gone. Thus it is that the historic memoirs of our fathers not only render the faith through which they "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises" dear to those who still hold it, but also arm them with fresh courage in its defence, and gain new converts to its side.

7. And this suggests, as a concluding reflection, that the present generation of New England Congregationalists owe a debt to the world which they have not discharged. There is a vast amount of moral and religious capital lying in our hands unemployed, and wasting by neglect, which would yield a large percentage in aid of all our moral and religious enterprises, if properly husbanded and put to use. It consists in the wide spread and increasing reverence now felt for the fathers of New England and founders of her Congregational churches, — a sentiment predisposing mankind to accept of their teachings, and be led by their example, so far as these can be clearly pointed out. The responsibility of doing this is laid upon us. It is ours to "stand in the way,

and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way," not only for our own safe guidance, but that others also may "walk therein, and find rest to their souls." God and man are expecting it of us. The apathy that reigns in our communion touching this subject is amazing. The ignorance and misconception that prevail among the mass of our members respecting the real character and principles of the Puritan fathers is humiliating, and would be unaccountable, were it not known that those who have been foremost of late years in proclaiming to the world their deeds have generally had the least sympathy with their religion. It would be a work of preëminent piety, and productive of immense issues, were the pastors of these churches and their gifted laymen to explore this field in the light of original documents, and lay bare the facts just as they are. It would be doing the cause of evangelical religion an incalculable service thus to connect the "mighty deeds" of our fathers with the "faith and hope" from which they sprang. And when historians, reviewers, lyceum lecturers, and writers of newspaper paragraphs, are continually representing that the chief excellences of the Puritan's character, and the heroism of his conduct, instead of springing from his religious faith, shot up in spite of it, can we, who hold "like precious faith," be content to remain in such ignorance of the facts, as not to be able intelligently to contradict it?

There is indeed a waking up to this subject just now — a conviction of duty fastening on some earnest minds, and a slight enthusiasm of interest kindling in others — which promises important results. While dusty antiquarians and curiosity hunters are on the alert, catching up and carrying off (but for no practical use) whatever of our Puritan literature they can lay hands on, there are found, here and there, an evangelical minister or layman, gleaning from the same field with equal zeal, and for an infinitely higher purpose. While statesmen and civilians are descanting on the inextirpable spirit of liberty that animated the founders of New England, voices are beginning to be heard proclaiming the long-forgotten fact,

that it sprang from their piety, fed, as it confessedly was, by the Genevan theology. While the mass of our church-members are extolling the fruits of the Puritan faith and practice, as now developed in the private virtues, public morals, benevolent societies, and revivals of religion, there is beginning to be felt in some reflecting minds a care for the tree itself which produces these fruits, lest it shrivel into barrenness through neglect of culture. These are auspicious tokens. Should they become general, — should the entire Congregational family but catch this spirit and keep it alive, — a vitalizing force would be brought into play, which all Christendom would feel.

## A P P E N D I X .

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I.— See page 272.

### REPORT ON EXILED CHURCHES.

[A VERY laudable desire not to uncover the dying embers of former strife is understood to have been the reason why the "Report on Exiled Churches," made to the General Association in 1836, was not published at the time. The scenes therein described were of recent occurrence; the localities well known; the actors, in most cases, could be easily identified. Perhaps it was well to let the matter rest where it did, in the repose of an unprinted document, so completely buried out of sight that its existence was questioned, till it was found among the collections of the Congregational Library Association. But historical facts do not belong to the age alone in which they were enacted; much less are they the exclusive property of those who enacted them. The world is at school, under the training of Providence, and history is one of our teachers. It argues illy for human nature, to conclude that this daguerreotype of our churches, taken at the only time when some important phases could have been preserved,—these oppressive experiences which they evidently record not so much in grief at oppression as in gratitude for deliverance,—must always be kept out of sight for fear of giving offence to somebody. Let us charitably presume that the following general views, slightly abridged from the closing pages of the report, will be as inoffensive to all members of Unitarian societies now, as the facts and reasonings are irrelevant to their present position.]

*General Summary.*

It appears, then, that not less than eighty-one of the present evangelical churches of Massachusetts have been constrained to separate from the religious societies with which they were formerly connected; it is possible, too, that some others of the same class may have been overlooked in this enumeration. Of these eighty-one, forty-six appear to "have been driven from their houses of worship by town or parish votes, or by measures equivalent to such votes;" and thirty-five have been constrained by conscience to secede, in their individual capacity, and become organized as distinct churches. Between the two classes, however, there is no essential distinction, only that the first includes all churches where the majority of the members withdrew, and the second, all those where a larger or smaller minority refused any longer to sit under an unfaithful ministry.

*Measures used to dispossess them of their rights.*

These measures have been almost as various as the cases in which they have been employed are numerous. The object of their adversaries, however, has been invariably the same, — to put down orthodoxy, "peaceably if they could, forcibly if they must." The necessary measures have of course been modified by the relative strength of the parties, by the amount of intelligence overspreading the community, and by the general habits of the people in conducting matters of controversy. A few brief extracts from some of the reports will furnish whatever information is necessary on this point.

Says one of these reports: "The measures for dissolving the contract with the Orthodox minister were devised at tavern caucusses. By two individuals every voter in the parish was conversed with and flattered with the assurance of accessions of strength to the parish if the old minister should be exchanged for a new one."

"Unitarianism obtained the ascendancy," says another report,

“by calling in the votes of many, who had not attended any kind of town meeting for fifteen or twenty years. One man was hired to vote by having his town tax paid for him ; another, for two shillings, besides as much as he would drink.”

In a third case “the most unworthy measures were used to procure the votes of persons against the Orthodox, who never heard the minister, and of some who never saw him.”

“In the proceedings against the church,” says another report, “there was much unfairness ; all the wicked were called out, and votes purchased with money.”

By another report it is stated, that, “to procure votes against the church at the time of their expulsion, meetings were held at a public-house, to induce young men, and lovers of strong drink, to give their votes against the man, whose ministry had been followed by a revival two or three years before.”

“To secure voters against the Orthodox,” says another, “flattery, threats, brandy, rum, gin, and other like irresistible arguments, were employed in abundance.”

The following extracts are made indiscriminately :—

“Men who had not seen the inside of a meeting-house for years came eagerly to the spoiling of Zion.”

“Voters were brought in who were legal voters in the other societies ; and other voters in the case had not been twice in the meeting-house for worship in twelve years.”

“To dispossess the church of the pulpit and house, persons were brought in to vote, who had no legal right ; and others, who had signed off, came to sustain the opposition in their efforts to secure the house.”

“In obtaining the meeting-house, voters were illegally received from other towns, and many town voters of the society were arbitrarily rejected.”

“Some individuals of another denomination withdrew their certificates that they might be entitled to vote ; and several voters were made expressly for the occasion ; a large majority of those who habitually met for religious worship, voted with the church.”



“Many who never attended a parish meeting were prevailed on to come and vote for the exclusion of the Orthodox.”

“Opposition at first was violent. No place could be obtained for religious meetings except a private house; and, at present, there is but one district where the school-house can be had for religious meetings. It is next to martyrdom, now, in many cases, to come out from Unitarianism.”

“When the Orthodox society was formed, a meeting was called to consult on measures to crush them at once; not succeeding thus they dismissed their aged minister, and obtained violent Unitarian and Universalist preachers.”

With a very few exceptions, the writers of the reports from which the foregoing abstracts are made, have declined entering into details on this point, through an unwillingness to revive distressing recollections, and fasten a stigma on those that have injured them; and they have commonly passed it over with some general remark as to the strength, violence, or uncompromising character of the opposition they have encountered, adding, “there has been nothing in it peculiar.” And it is doubtless true, that the prominent characteristics of the opposition have been uniform in all parts of the State, — not to say in all parts and ages of the world.

Party strife rises higher on no subjects than those involving man's relations to God and eternity. Here every man is thrown upon his own responsibilities, and constrained to form his opinions and shape his character without reference to the opinion or character of others in view only of those revelations from heaven, which are equally open and important to all men. The questioning of opinions, and the impeachment of character, formed under the weight of those responsibilities, is necessarily offensive to every mind not yet brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And the fact that this strife has proceeded no further, and produced results no more disastrous to the general harmony of society in our own Commonwealth, may be traced directly to the influence of that meek and lowly spirit which forms the sweetest ornament, as well as the resist-

less energy, of the evangelical system. Forbearance and love, mingled with firmness and self-denial, we are happy to say, have strongly marked the course of our churches while under oppression.

The illiberal spirit that has prevailed among us for some years past under various imposing names is not a new thing under the sun; nor to those familiar with the history of the church could it have been unforeseen nor surprising. The enmity of the world cannot sleep when the piety of the church awakes. Evangelical religion can never put forth her energies as she had begun to do when the Spirit of the Lord came down upon Zion more than forty years ago, and commenced a series of revivals in New England, that will never cease till millennial glory bursts upon the world, without arousing the wrath of her enemies, and concentrating their efforts, under the direction of their great master, to the point of defeating her enterprise, and holding the earth still in bondage to hell. Had this spirit in its movements been manly and dignified, however firm and uncompromising, it would have commanded a measure of respect, mingled with tender concern for its consistency with the principles from which it sprang; but when degenerating into fanatical intolerance, and glorying in the least honorable artifices for the accomplishment of its ends, it fully merits all the loathing of soul felt for it, and all the censure now attached to it by common consent.

*Origin of these Measures.*

Says a venerable father yet living—himself ejected from the care of a flourishing church that he greatly loved—“The preaching that drew forth the opposition was the very same *in substance* which excited a world lying in wickedness to oppose and persecute the prophets who faithfully preached the preaching which God had bidden them; which excited the scribes and pharisees and the whole gentile world to oppose and persecute Christ and his apostles; the Catholics to oppose and persecute the Protestants; the established Church of England to oppose

and persecute our pilgrim fathers, and drive them to this American wilderness ; the same which, in all parts of Christendom, has excited opposition and persecution, in a greater or less degree, against the meek and humble followers of the Lamb of God, and more especially those who have boldly preached the Gospel of Christ, and have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God."

Doubtless these measures have, in most cases, originated in a deep-rooted aversion to the great system of evangelical truth, in a determined spirit of resistance to unwelcome restraints on the licentious dispositions of the heart, and in a fixed hostility to the enlargement of that kingdom which is not of this world, rather than in any sober conviction that the system to be sustained by them embraces the truth of the Bible. If we mistake not, this is clear from the fact, made evident by the reports, that their authors and supporters are not united by any common bond of faith ; that their apparent harmony in counsel and action relates to the single point of opposition to orthodoxy ; and that, in "the division of the spoils" consequent on victory, they commonly fall into bitter envyings and collisions among themselves, which bring as little of honor as of profit to either of the parties concerned. To possess themselves of the property, and of other rights of the Orthodox in the houses of public worship, and of the funds bequeathed by their ancestors, or accumulated by their own liberality and economy for the support of the ordinances of religion, appears to be most frequently the ruling motive in sustaining the system of oppression, — for we have yet to learn, that after this object is secured any special effort is ever made to convince the Orthodox of their doctrinal errors, and persuade them to embrace the faith and follow the example of those that have despoiled them of their goods.

*Advantages possessed by the Authors of these Measures.*

Great advantages for prosecuting these measures have been found in the late existing laws of the Commonwealth, in the singular construction put upon those laws and upon the consti-

tution, by our civil magistrates ; and in the ready coöperation of some members of the smaller denominations of professedly evangelical Christians. And other advantages have been found in the too prevalent neglect of public worship by members of the church and their families, in the increasing laxness of discipline in many of the churches ; in their too parsimonious support of the ministry ; in their fierce contentions about matters of doubtful speculation ; and in the encouragement they have yielded to their pastors to extend the hand of fellowship to those that had swerved from the faith once delivered to the saints. A further advantage has been found in the character of the *preaching* that had been enjoyed, or rather endured, by many of our churches, in some previous period of their history. The course of public instruction in some of them appears to have been moderately Calvinistic, but deficient in clearness of discrimination, in fervency of address, and boldness of application. In others, Arminianism had filled the pulpit in former years, and prepared the way for the introduction of that spirit which aims to strip the church of her distinctive character, and subject her to the vassalage of the world. In others still, truth and error had so blended their colors before the eye of the pastor, and poured their jarring influences on the congregation so bountifully as to leave them an easy prey to a watchful adversary. But, almost invariably, a low state of piety prevailed in the church, driven from her sanctuary and robbed of her sacred utensils. Though their last pastor may have been a man full of faith and good works, his predecessor perhaps was less exemplary and less bold in defence of the truth, and the leaven of hypocrisy, or carnal policy, or worldliness of spirit, had wrought mischief which nothing but the hand of an enemy could remove. These, though not all, are some of the obvious advantages seized by the adversary to spoil the church of her pleasant things.

*Encouragement and consolation.*

The history of these "deprived churches" is replete with encouragement to the friends of evangelical truth. Many have

been appalled by the formidable array of means employed to crush them, and by the sufferings they have actually endured. But though they have passed through the fire, the flame has not kindled on them; and through the waters, they have not overflowed them. The fiery trial has only purged away the dross and the tin. The floods have only washed their garments clean. The arm of the Lord has been made bare in defence of the persecuted church. Though turned away from the doors of their sanctuaries, and cut off from their pecuniary resources in many instances, and their very name made a proverb and by-word at the corners of the streets, they have yet strengthened themselves in the Lord, and proceeded to the rebuilding of their broken down walls, and the reestablishment of those ordinances which they had before scarcely known how to appreciate. New sanctuaries have soon arisen, the table of the Lord has again been spread, the servant of God has come among them in the spirit and power of Elias, the Holy Ghost has descended, converts have multiplied, members have been added to the church, and joy has been diffused through all the courts of heaven.

The assailing party has rarely been able long to maintain its ground, unless when aided by ample funds. So long as the means furnished in other years can be made to avail for the support of an unevangelical ministry, they may continue their forms of worship, but their congregations are usually small compared with the whole amount of population claimed as theirs, and their increase is on the descending ratio.

It is the remark of a respected brother of the committee, in reference to the ground covered by the association with which he is connected, but equally applicable to the whole State, "The Unitarian cause is on the wane. It is not that scheme of error which will succeed. There is very much among us which is neither piety nor truth, but it is not *Unitarianism*. Rather it is infidelity and indifference to all religion,—neglect of all religious institutions. I presume we shall have no other church exiled from the sanctuary in this region by the arm of Unitarians." It is true that the past triumphs of Unitarianism

have prepared the way for the present successes of Universalism and infidelity; and not a few of the sanctuaries that have been wrested from the hands of the Orthodox have passed into the custody of men whose errors are palpably demoralizing. But it is by no means certain, that, in the hands of those who now occupy them, they will prove more injurious to Zion than in the hands of a more popular denomination.

It is pertinent to say in this connection, that the existence of a prosperous evangelical society promotes the temporal as well as the spiritual interests of the whole community over which its influence extends. Its example of regular attendance on the ordinances of God provokes the emulation of other denominations, and induces a general respect for the Lord's day, and for the forms of religious worship, that operates kindly on the moral and social habits of the whole population. Its established character for piety imposes a salutary restraint on the vicious tendencies of society, and powerfully checks intemperance, profanity, and licentiousness. And that spirit of beneficence which forms the lifeblood of every truly evangelical church freely pours its blessings on the poor at home and abroad, sustains every judicious effort for the intellectual and moral improvement of the rising generation, and contributes to dignify and elevate the social character of the entire community. The testimony of one, whose impartiality in this case none can question, is quite in point. He affirms, as the result of accurate observation, "that the Calvinistic people of Scotland, of Switzerland, of Holland, and New England, have been more moral than the same classes among other nations; and that those who preached *faith*, or, in other words, a pure mind, have always produced more popular virtue than those who preached good works, or the mere regulation of outward acts." [Mackintosh.]

The recent excitement against evangelical religion, therefore, which has perplexed and distressed many of our churches, has been productive of no small benefit to society, for it has increased their numbers, planted them in the most favorable circumstances for the exertion of a wide and controlling influence, and imparted

to them an independence and energy which their enemies can no more gainsay nor resist.

The result of the observations of another brother of the committee deserves a place here: "The evangelical societies embrace a majority of the sober, temperate, and devout sort of people; the most full attendance on public worship is found in them, especially in unfavorable weather; the new settlers in these towns more generally fall into them; they have the appearance of thrift and increase." The same facts are corroborated by the almost unvarying testimony of every brother who has been in correspondence with your committee. Whoever has a respect for vital piety, and whoever is an unflinching friend of order and morality, unites with an evangelical society, if there be one within his reach, because there he finds consistency between principle and profession, doctrine and practice; and because there religion is uniformly treated as a concern of infinite moment,—its duties observed, and its spirit carried out into action, with a zeal and fidelity that put formality to the blush, and confound unbelief with all its evil doings.

Another result of this excitement, that deserves to be noticed more particularly, is its influence on the increase of Sabbath congregations. A new zeal for the house of God is excited, even among the opposers of the truth; new efforts are made to keep up a suitable complement of worshippers; they lose much of their abhorrence of weekday religious exercises, and their fear of being righteous overmuch; they even lose much of their dread of Sabbath schools and Bible classes, of evening lectures, and missions both foreign and domestic. Can this surprising change of views (if it be lasting) fail to be productive of great and happy consequences?

And, beside this, it is undeniable that the same excitement has produced extensively a more ardent spirit of inquiry into the great doctrines of the gospel, a more fervent love among the brethren, increased prayerfulness and liberality, and a more uniform course of pious and self-denying duty. Nor can we be surprised if the result prove, as it commonly does, that religion

in its revival blesses the whole community, extends into neighboring parishes, and makes its influence felt on the other side of the globe.

Those who have encouraged the spirit of disorganization and violence, in its movements against our evangelical churches, anticipating from it their overthrow, have little reason to congratulate themselves on past successes. More full and satisfactory evidence than is had cannot be desired of the utter futility of all attempts to crush them by a course of overbearing oppression. The more they are pressed on every side, the stronger is their faith, the more lofty their bearing. We hazard nothing when we affirm that the indirect operation of the measures adopted to break down evangelical influence has been decidedly favorable to its increase and permanency. The evangelical churches of Massachusetts have not occupied so high vantage ground for sustaining themselves and the cause of their Redeemer, for eighty years, as they occupy at this moment. Their common trials have compelled them to see eye to eye. They have been taught most cogently that their strength lies in harmonious counsels and united action; that they have abundant reasons for mutual confidence; and they possess a latent energy, which cannot be called forth and directed aright without insuring their triumph over every adversary. Hence they have occasion to rejoice, even though for a season they have been in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of their faith, being much more precious than the gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, will be "found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;" and well may their enemies tremble, when they look forward to the day of final retribution, and remember the declared purpose of the Most High, that the wrath of man shall praise him, and that the remainder of wrath he will restrain.

*The progress of error.*

The pathway of the errorist, however devious, is short, and soon lands its traveller in the region and shadow of death.



Slight deviations from the simplicity of the truth at the outset, though they create but little alarm, yet, unless early and powerfully checked, involve, by necessity, still greater ultimate deviations; and nothing but the mighty power of God will prevent them from issuing in the abandonment of every essential article of Christian faith, and in the cordial embrace of error in its most loathsome forms. "Facilis descensus averni." A fair illustration of this sentiment is furnished by the history of Unitarianism in our own Commonwealth, — a history into whose details we cannot enter here.

*The means by which it has been arrested.*

We have precious tokens of God's favor to Zion in the various means prepared in his providence for opposing an early and effectual resistance to the encroachments of error. It will be acknowledged that it had gained great strength before it threw off the mask, and stood forth confessed, the antagonist of evangelical religion. The great men and the rich men, the wise and the learned, the maker of the laws and the judge, with no inconsiderable portion of men in the lower walks of life, were already among its devoted friends. And the bold confidence with which it urged its pretensions, the facility with which it could accommodate itself to the various characters and prejudices of men, and the power which it actually possessed while wielding the civil arm to crush its opponents, seemed to promise it a triumphant progress through the land. But,

1. At this hour of darkness, God inspired some of his servants in the ministry with the resolution to "come forth and be separate, to touch no more the unclean thing;" and, whatever might be the consequences to themselves, to withhold the customary tokens of ministerial fellowship from men denying the Lord that bought us. This measure, though not at once adopted by all the evangelical ministers, drew the line of demarcation fairly between the opposing interests, and decided the course of the respective churches. The eyes of many that had

been blind were opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped, by it. Problematical at first, the results of the measure fully justified its expediency, as the plain command of heaven justified its rectitude. Perhaps this, more than any thing else, has preserved our churches from the fate of the Presbyterian and Independent churches of England.

2. In the establishment of that Theological Seminary (Andover) which is already exerting so wide and mighty an influence on the destinies of Zion, we have further proof of God's merciful care of our churches. There first began to be supplied those defects in theological education which rendered a large proportion of the most faithful ministers then in the field unable to meet the enemy on his own ground and foil him with his own weapons. The original languages of Sacred Writ had been little studied, and the principles of exegetical interpretation but little understood. Our ministry, however undeservedly, had become the laughing-stock of the enemy, into whose ranks had fallen a few men either truly learned or pretending to be so; and it was only the provision heaven kindly made through the then unparalleled liberality of a few individuals to increase the amount of scriptural knowledge among the evangelical ministers, that their laughter was turned into mourning and their joy into heaviness. From this root of the tree of life, planted on a congenial soil, have sprung many trees of righteousness, that have again struck *their* roots deep, and spread their branches wide, and put forth many leaves for the healing of the nations. All this occurred just at the time when this kind of influence was most needed to roll back the swelling tide of error.

3. It was at the same juncture, and in pursuance of the same gracious purposes of God, that Park Street church was organized in Boston with the avowed design of counteracting the popular error. The fears and the tremblings, the strong crying and tears, of that "day of blasphemy and rebuke," are still had in remembrance by many who live, and by more who have gone to their rest. That, however, was the signal staff to which many thousand eyes were at once directed, and from which

they desired instruction and encouragement with regard to their own duty. From that hour evangelical churches have multiplied, and every effort to suppress them has but increased them yet more and more.

4. Nor in this cursory glance at the past can we overlook the influence of the press,—ordained of heaven to take the place of the gift of tongues, and work its miracles of mercy. Who can remember, but with gratitude to heaven, the labors of the Panoplist, and the more recent labors of the Spirit of the Pilgrims, and the Christian Spectator, by which the field of controversy was overspread with imperishable laurels, and finally won. These publications diffused a mass of information and of motive to inquiry and action which could not be lost, and which in fact settled public opinion extensively and firmly on the eternal ground of truth.

5. And last, though not least among the instrumentalities brought into operation by the great head of the church, at the same juncture, were the Domestic Missionary Societies of New England. The Domestic Missionary Society of Massachusetts originated with this body, and has ever since been cherished by it, though for a few years under another name. And why was it originated at all? Why, but to recover those waste places where the deadly nightshade had been planted by the hands of error, and nourished by the vices of an infatuated population, and to throw open a cultivated garden upon which the north wind might awake and the south wind blow, to send forth its spices for the refreshment of those escaping from the fens and marshes that God had devoted to barrenness and destruction? It was to the Domestic Missionary Society that the little church, exiled from its sanctuary and crippled by avarice in its resources, was early taught to look with a filial confidence. It did look there. The tears in its eye were not disregarded. The plaintive sigh bursting from its lips was heard, and answered in accents of love. When it stretched forth its hand for bread, it was filled. When it showed its back, given to the smiters, and its cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, it

found relief for its wounds, and was no longer confounded, but set its face like a flint against all that contended with it.

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II.— See page 285.

#### COUNCILS.

It is a singular fact, that ecclesiastical councils, whose original design was solely to harmonize differences and promote fellowship, should have become the chief sources of discord and strife,— as has certainly been the case in our own denomination for the last three quarters of a century or more, and the cause of it is equally apparent. It arises from the false position which councils have come to assume in our ecclesiastical system; or rather from the misapprehension, extensively entertained, of their *true* position. It cannot be reasonably supposed, that the framers of our Congregational polity ever intended to invest a church with complete self-control, and at the same time to place it under the authoritative control of other sister churches around it. Yet this absurd theory is the only one that fits the practice, which we often see attempted in our day. The inevitable consequence is jargon in discussion and conflict in action, either among the members composing the council or between the parties calling it, if not throughout the wide community from which it is called together. Such was not the case once. An illustration or two from the records of the past will show how completely consonant with the independent and self-governing power of a Congregational church were the doings of an ecclesiastical council, and how efficient for good such bodies were, when confined to the functions originally assigned them.

Take the following case as it stands in Hubbard's History, [2 Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. V. pp. 277-8.] The Dorchester church, it appears, desirous of settling a colleague with Mr. Mather, called Mr. Burr to that office, having previously received

him into membership for that purpose, agreeably to the usage of those terms; "which call," says the historian, "he deferring to accept upon some private reasons known to himself, some of the church took some exceptions at some things which he in the mean time delivered, (his expressions possibly either not being well understood, or so far wiredrawn as that they seemed too much inclining to the notions then prevailing in Boston,) and they desired him to give satisfaction, and he not seeing need for it, it was agreed that Mr. Mather and he should confer together, and so the church should know where the difference lay. Accordingly Mr. Burr wrote his judgment in the points of difference in such manner and terms as from some of his propositions, taken singly, something that was erroneous might be gathered, and might seem naturally to follow therefrom; but was so qualified in other parts as might admit of a charitable construction. Mr. Mather reports to the church the seeming erroneous matter that might be collected, without mentioning the qualification, or acquainting Mr. Burr with it beforehand. When this was published, Mr. Burr disclaimed the erroneous matter, and Mr. Mather maintained it from his writings. Whereupon the church was divided about it, some joining with the one and some with the other, so as it grew to some heat and alienation of minds, and many days were spent for reconciliation, but all in vain. In the end they agreed to call in help from other churches; so as the 2d of February, 1640, there was a meeting at Dorchester of the governor, and another of the magistrates, and ten of the ministers of the neighboring churches, wherein four days were spent in opening the cause, and such offence as had fallen out in the prosecution; and in conclusion they all declared their judgment and advice in the case to this effect:—

"That both sides had cause to be humbled for their failings; Mr. Burr for his doubtful and unsafe expressions, and backwardness to give clear satisfaction; Mr. Mather for his inconsideration, both in not acquainting Mr. Burr with his collections before he published them to the church, and in not certifying the qualifications of the erroneous expressions which were

in his writings; for which they were advised to set a day apart for reconciliation. Upon this, both Mr. Mather and Mr. Burr took the blame of their failings upon themselves, and freely submitted to the judgment and advice given, to which the rest of the church yielded a silent assent. And God was much glorified in the close thereof."

It should be borne in mind that Mr. Mather was one of the chief fathers of New England Congregationalism; that he drafted the Cambridge Platform; and that his views concerning the "decree of a council" then and always was that it "hath so much force as there is force in the reason of it." [See his treatise on Church Government, p. 66.] Of course the result of this council owed all its influence over him to the reasons which went along with it. Had the plea of authority been set up, founded on the assumption of power delegated to the council by Christ or the churches who sent them, his ready answer would have been, You are assembled "to give light, not for the imperious binding of the church to rest in your dictates, but by propounding your grounds from the Scriptures." [Id. p. 65.] And had they then proceeded after the fashion of our times, both ministers would probably have been dismissed, the church rent in twain (each party under the lead of one of these antagonist ministers in defiance of the council's authority), and a war opened for a generation to come; while Presbyterians, if any were then extant, would have laughed at the "rope of sand," "democratic pruriency," etc., in our denomination, and conservative Congregationalists would have talked gravely about "stronger government," "growing disorders," "disregarding Christ's authority." But as the business actually proceeded, there was a power put forth which the Pope might have coveted, — a power which, in all its effective issues, interfered in not the slightest degree with the self-governing power of the church. It was merely opinion and advice, accompanied by reasons, and deriving all its authoritative force and executive effect from the subsequent vote of the church.

Coming down about half-way from that day to this, we find

the following result of a council held in Marboro', in 1736. It is copied from the private manuscript journal of Rev. Ebenezer Parkman, of Westboro'; and, while it shows a tendency towards the modern type of councils, illustrates some important points of procedure, the neglect of which has greatly weakened their usefulness and efficacy.

"July 13th. Mr. Wheeler (appointed to be the delegate of our church) and Lieutenant Holloway came, and we proceeded on our journey to Marlboro'. When Mr. Hall of Sutton, and that church's delegates were come, we chose Mr. Baxter moderator of the council. They were pleased to choose me clerk, but I requested that Mr. Hall might be chosen clerk also to assist me; which was done. And then we proceeded to the meeting-house. Various hearings of Mr. Frink's grievances and the people's answers, but most of all the affair of Captain W——, etc., took up our time to-day, in public and private.

"14th. We were so happy as to see the great bone of this snarling contention removed, namely, the quarrel between Captain W. and his wife on one side, and Captain S. and his wife on the other. The two former gave confessions, and the last; but Captain S. was cleared by vote of the church. But the great trouble of Mr. Frink's remove remained.

"15th. Various hearings of the said complaints of Mr. Frink, and the people's defence, and the Irish brethren's affair. Fenton's case issued in the church, with the assistance of Rev. Mr. Hall and Colonel Wm. Ward; but the council was adjourned to Mr. F.'s house, and there kept upon business. The council in great perplexity and distress in the evening at the prospect of the desperate state of this flock. We dealt plainly and freely with Mr. F. when we were favored with opportunity. When the brethren came to us to have the hearing of the particulars under the sixth article of Mr. F.'s complaint, they were exceedingly chafed, and impatient with Mr. F.; were heartily willing to throw all the matter in the arms of the council; for it became evident that Mr. F. made a most lame, trifling defence, and more and more exposed himself, the more he undertook to de-

fend or prove any thing. Divers of the church resolved not to hear Mr. F. again. Matters at a dreadful extremity! The brethren would by no means hear of our dissolving, and we could not adjourn without we provided other preaching for them till we should meet again. Eleven or twelve o'clock when the church was adjourned. We were not able to sit up longer. — Adjourned the council (in great distress of heart) to to-morrow morning, six o'clock.

“16th. Mr. Stone and I had some brotherly, friendly, close discourse with Mr. F. When Mr. F. had left us awhile and we went to the council, there was a hint as if he began to see things in another light. Presently we understood he was humbling himself before the brethren in the chamber, and they were smitten with it, and were in tears with him. It was presently proved to be so by his and their coming in voluntarily before the council, and on both sides they were very free and full in their mutual submissions and forgivenesses. The council were put to it to know how to behave on this surprising occasion. Our business was to draw up confessions for them both to sign, and to prepare our result, as affairs now were, through the wondrous power and goodness of God, turned. We went to the house of God with joy and rejoicing, — read the confessions and our result, — prayed and gave glory to God, and sang Psalm 56, from the 17th verse to the end. Mr. F. made a brief speech of thanks, etc., as did the brethren. The moderator, with a short speech, closed all, and dissolved the council.

“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the glory; and let thy saints be confirmed in their faith and trust in God, who fulfils his gracious promise to his church and to his ministers. Lo I am with you always, unto the end of the world.”

It will occur to every reader of this extract that councils have lost much of that effectiveness which went along with their proceedings once. And a moment's reflection will show that the loss has been in exact proportion to their assumption — express or implied — of judicial authority. Think of a church



kept together till "eleven or twelve o'clock" at night to "issue" cases of difficulty, in the light and reason reflected from the deliberations and advice of a council!—neither of these bodies dreaming that there was any other authorized way of employing such help!

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### III.

#### CIVIL RIGHTS OF CHURCHES.

[The following extracts from a report on "The Rights of Congregational Churches in their Connection with Parishes," presented to the Congregational Library Association after this book was written, by Rev. Dr. Pond, of Bangor, Me., are inserted here by permission, and will be read with interest in connection with what is said on the legal decisions referred to, pages 250, 251.]

"The doctrine in New England has been, from the first, that a Congregational church is a body of professed believers in Christ, associated together in solemn covenant for the maintenance of Divine worship and ordinances, and for mutual help and benefit in the Christian life. Until the late decisions,\* the church has always been regarded as a distinct and independent body, having the right (which belongs to all voluntary associations) of admitting and excluding members, of electing officers, of holding and controlling its own property, and, in general, of managing its own proper concerns, subject only to the authority and will of Christ. It may be associated with a parish in the support of public worship, or it may not; but if so associated it is still an independent body, and loses none of its appropriate rights and powers. It may not impose a minister on the parish, but it has the right to choose its own pastor; and if church and

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\* In the Dedham case and others which followed in its train, from 1820.

parish cannot agree in regard to the person to be set over them, they may separate, each retaining its own existence and rights. The church has no right to control the *property* of the parish, but only to take care of its own. If it hold property in trust for the parish, it must, of course, be faithful to its trust; but if there is no such trust expressed or implied (as we believe there seldom, if ever, has been), then it will dispose of its property according to its own sense of right and the expressed wishes of donors.

“Such, we repeat, have been the standing and claims of our Congregational churches from the first; and we insist that they are reasonable claims. They are no more than the natural rights of every organized body; no more than may be justly exercised by any voluntary association whatever.

“But these claims were annulled and set clean aside by the legal decisions above referred to. According to these decisions, a church is not a distinct and independent body, but a mere appendage to a parish, with which it is essentially and indissolubly united. It cannot secede from the parish and live. It may think to withdraw, and retain its property and rights; but it cannot do it. It may *decide* to withdraw, by a strong major vote; but this is a vain effort. Those who go out, go only as individuals, leaving the church behind. The few members which remain are legally the church; or if none remain, the parish may proceed and gather a church, which shall succeed to all the rights and the property of the seceding body. Such was the purport of these decisions; and on the ground of them church after church was deprived of its property, even to its communion furniture and records, from twenty to forty years ago. And the same thing may be acted over again, at any time; for these obnoxious decisions have never been revoked, nor has relief come to the churches in any other way.

“The question at issue in regard to these decisions is a very simple one, and may be stated in few words. Is a Congregational church, when duly organized, a distinct and independent body, — a body by itself, having its own appropriate rights

and powers; or is it, as the courts pretend, the mere creature and appendage of a parish, to which it is indissolubly united, and from which it cannot separate itself and live?" . . . .

After noticing several assertions in support of the latter view, the report proceeds.

"But the constitution of Massachusetts is confidently appealed to as ignoring the churches altogether, and giving exclusive rights, in the last instance, to precincts or parishes. As this argument for the recent decisions is more relied on than any other, it will be necessary to examine it with special care. The clause of the constitution to which reference is had is in the third article of the Bill of Rights, and is as follows: 'The several towns, parishes, precincts, and other bodies politic, or religious societies, shall, at all times, have the exclusive right of electing their public teachers, and of contracting with them for their support and maintenance.' That this language was intended by the convention who framed the constitution, and by the people who adopted it, to deprive the churches of the right of election, is to us incredible; and for the following reasons:—

"In the first place, the words of the clause in question do not imply it. The constitution says that 'towns, parishes, etc., shall have, at all times, the exclusive right of electing their public teachers,' etc. And so say we all. It is their natural right, and they ought to have it. The church has no right to impose a religious teacher, a public officer, upon the town or parish against its will. Let the parish have, what the constitution gives it, the exclusive right of choosing its own religious teacher. But is the exercise of this right on the part of the parish at all inconsistent with the rights of the church? We think not. The parish has a right, by the constitution, to choose a minister for itself, but no right to choose a pastor for the church. The church is quite another and distinct body, and had always been so considered by our fathers; and the right of one body to choose officers for itself conveys no right to choose officers for another body.

"And as the language of the constitution does not necessarily imply that the right of election is taken from the churches, it is

impossible to suppose that the convention which framed it could have entertained any such design. For who constituted this convention? We have lately seen and examined a list of the members, and find that it was composed, to a large extent, of the members and officers of Congregational churches. Numbers who belonged to it, and were 'strenuous advocates for the adoption of the third article in the Bill of Rights,' were ministers and deacons in these churches. And to show how these ministers regarded the right of the churches to elect their own pastors, we may quote from an 'Address of the Convention of Congregational ministers of Massachusetts, unanimously offered to the consideration of the churches,' in 1773. 'Neither diocesan bishops nor lay presbyters, nor magistrates as such, have power to appoint officers to a particular church. This is the unalienable right of the brethren, by a free election.' Thus said the ministers of Massachusetts, with one voice, in 1773. Now can we reasonably suppose that these very men, or some of them, with their deacons and church-members should, in 1780, only seven years after, unite in forming a constitution of government, and be 'the strenuous advocates of it,' which took away the right of election from the churches? Would they take away in 1780, what in 1773 they declared to be an 'unalienable right?' Would they, by a single clause, divest hundreds of churches of a right which had been guaranteed to them by immemorial usage, by long established laws, and (as they believed) by Christ himself? Would they take from hundreds of associations, formed for the most solemn purposes of religion, a right which is claimed by all voluntary associations, — the right of electing their own officers, and oblige them to receive as officers, as pastors, who should preside in their meetings, administer their ordinances, and break to them the bread of life, those whom other and foreign bodies, mere civil corporations, should please to set over them, or force upon them?

"But if we can suppose that a majority of this convention entertained the design of taking from the churches the right which has been mentioned, and that they succeeded in accomplishing

it, we cannot possibly suppose that they succeeded without opposition. There would have been opposition. There must have been. Even if the ministers and deacons in the convention all turned traitors to the churches, and were 'strenuous advocates' for an article which was understood and designed to take away their 'unalienable rights,' still, other voices would have been raised against it. Objections would have arisen from some source. So great an innovation was never effected in this country, or in any other, without debate. Had it been said by the committee who reported the third article in the Bill of Rights, 'To be sure the churches have all along had a distinct voice in the election of their pastors; but to this they are not entitled, and they shall have it no longer. The right of election must be taken from them, and given to parishes or towns;' if language such as this had been used, would it have been heard without objection or remark? Would there have been none to institute an inquiry, or to raise a note of remonstrance against it? Or if we can suppose the third article, thus explained, to have passed the convention without debate, and to have gone forth to the several towns for their acceptance, would it have encountered no opposition from the people? Is it reasonable or possible to suppose it? And yet it is certain that there was no opposition to this article from any quarter, on the ground of its taking away the right of election from the churches, or in any way affecting this right. The third article of the bill of rights was more discussed, and more opposed, in convention and out of it, than any other part of the constitution; and yet not a whisper of opposition was heard from any source on the ground which has been suggested. We have examined an abstract of debates in the convention on this very subject; we have examined the returns from the several towns in the Commonwealth now lying in the office of the secretary of State, with their remarks upon the constitution in general, and upon this third article in particular; we have examined several volumes of newspapers for the years 1779 and 1780, and read all that was published in favor of the third article and against it; and we

fearlessly aver that there was no opposition to it from any source, such as might have been expected, on the ground that it was understood to take from the churches the natural, immemorial, and unalienable right of electing their own pastors.

“The grand objection to the third article, at the time of its adoption, was not that it injured the churches, but that it was too favorable to them; that it proposed to do too much for them; that it went to enlist the civil authority for their support and benefit. It was contended by its advocates, among whom were ministers and church-members, that without it ‘the churches would be in danger.’ It was insisted against those who opposed it, ‘These men mean to set our churches all afloat.’ To which it was replied on the other hand, ‘Why plead for the right of the civil magistrate to support the churches of New England by law? The church has a sufficient security without and beyond the civil law. So says the great head of the church to his disciples, “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”’ We quote here, not only the reasoning, but the very language of the times.\*

“And now, to sum all up, can we conceive that this convention, composed as it was, to a considerable extent, of ministers, deacons, and members of the churches; of men, some of whom, only seven years before, declared the churches’ right of election ‘unalienable;’ of men who were charged with having an undue regard for the churches, and with preparing the article in question with a view to their support and benefit; of men who could reply to the opposers of this article, ‘You mean to set our churches all afloat;’ is it possible to conceive that these very men, and in this very article, should have designed to take away from the churches the ‘unalienable right’ of electing their pastors? Or if we can suppose them to have intended such a thing, is it possible to conceive that the design could have been accomplished without, so far as appears, a whisper of opposition

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\* See Independent Chronicle for April 13, 1780, also the Boston Gazette for June 12 and August 14, 1780.

from clergyman or layman, in writing or in debate, before the convention or before the people? He who can frame a supposition like this, and satisfy his mind as to the truth of it, need have no trouble with his understanding or his conscience afterwards. His wishes and his prejudices, as it seems to us, will carry him anywhere, and he will be able to believe, with evidence or without, just as his convenience or his inclinations dictate.

“ We have shown that it could not have been the design of the framers of the constitution of Massachusetts to take away the right of election from the churches. We now go further and say that the third article of the Bill of Rights (and this was the reason why ministers and church-members were so much in favor of it) absolutely secures to the churches this right. The article says not only that ‘ towns, parishes, and precincts,’ but ‘ other bodies politic, or religious societies, shall at all times have the right of electing their public teachers,’ etc. Now who were these ‘ other bodies politic or religious societies?’ We undertake to say that they were the *churches*, and that the matter was so understood at the time when the constitution was adopted. This is evident, first, from the terms employed. That our churches are ‘ religious societies,’ is evident from the very nature and structure of them. They are voluntary associations of professedly religious persons, and for purely religious purposes. Such bodies, surely, may well be denominated ‘ religious societies.’ It is also true, that, from the first settlement of the country up to the time of the adoption of the constitution, our churches had always been regarded as, in some sense, ‘ bodies politic,’ and not unfrequently this identical phraseology was applied to them. Thus Mr. Cotton speaks of the church as ‘ a spiritual, political body.’\* They are spoken of in the Platform as ‘ political churches.’ (Chap. V.) Mather calls the church ‘ a sacred corporation.’† Mr. Wise repeatedly terms

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\* Discourse about Civil Government, page 5.

† Magnalia, Vol. II. p. 180.

the churches 'incorporate bodies.'\* The late Gov. Sullivan represents the church as, in a certain point of view, 'a civil society,' and 'a civil corporation.' The editor of Winthrop's Journal speaks of each of our churches as 'a body corporate.' And what is more to the purpose than either, and in our view decisive, in the statute of 1754, reënacted in 1786, only a few years after the adoption of the constitution, the churches are expressly denominated 'bodies politic.' In the section which limits the income of church grants, it is provided 'that the income to any one such body politic,' — the identical phrase in the third article, — 'shall not exceed three hundred pounds per annum.'

"But we have an argument, if possible, more conclusive than this. In the discussions attendant upon the formation and adoption of the constitution, the 'religious societies' spoken of in the third article were *understood to mean churches*; so that to churches, as well as to 'towns and parishes,' is secured, by the constitution, 'the exclusive right of electing their public teachers.' In Boston, the minority offered eight distinct objections to the third article in the Bill of Rights. The third of these objections was as follows: 'The people have no right to invest the legislature with power to authorize and require religious societies, etc., because, by religious societies we are to understand the churches of Christ, which can receive no authority, nor be subject to any requisition of any legislature under heaven.' † In the returns from Framingham and from Holliston, we find this objection quoted and adopted in the same words.

"We quote the following from the Independent Chronicle of April 6, 1780. 'Another part of the article, which ought to be rejected with abhorrence, is this: "The legislature shall have power to authorize and require religious societies to sup-

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\* Vindication, etc., pp. 49, 89.

† See Boston Gazette of May 22, 1780.



port the public worship of God. By religious societies I suppose we are to understand the churches of Christ.”

“Of the same import is the following, from the Independent Ledger of June 12, 1780: ‘My antagonist’ (an advocate of the third article) ‘attempts to get along by saying that the legislature have a right to require religious societies or churches to perform a civil duty. To which I reply, that the legislature may require the members of churches, considered as citizens, to perform a civil duty. But as members of churches, or in their religious character, they have no authority over them.’ . . .

“Thus far we have examined the principal arguments by which the obnoxious decisions of our courts have been defended, more especially that drawn from the language of the constitution. We next proceed to urge objections to these decisions.

“Our first objection is, — and this alone would be sufficient, if there was no other, — that the grand assumption on which these decisions are made to rest is *contrary to fact*. The assumption is this, quoting the very words of Chief Justice Parker in the Dedham case: ‘A church cannot subsist without some religious community to which it is attached. Such has been the understanding of the people of New England from the foundation of the colonies.’\* Now we insist that this assumption is contrary to fact. It is contrary to whole classes of facts, — to thousands of them. ‘A church cannot subsist but in connection with some corporate parish or religious society. Such has been the understanding of the people of New England from the foundation of the colonies.’ And yet for many years after the settlement of New England, there were no parishes in the country, nor was parochial power committed to the towns. The church here was the original body. It preceded the State itself, and gave birth to the State. It preceded, by a great way, the organization of parishes. Through all this period, the churches not only chose their own ministers, but contracted with them and supported them. They built and owned the first meeting-

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\* Massachusetts Term Reports, Vol. XVI. p. 505.

houses, and had the power of levying and collecting money for this object. They assessed and collected money, not merely of church-members, but of others. In short, they exercised all parochial power. Such power existed nowhere else. It was not committed to the towns till 1652, more than twenty years after the settlement commenced. Here, then, is one class of facts entirely inconsistent with the assumption of the courts. The churches actually did exist, and flourished for a course of years, without any connected parishes whatever. There were no parishes in the country with which they could be connected.

“Another class of facts inconsistent with the assumption of the courts consists in the frequent *removal* of organized, embodied churches, in all periods of our history. The original church at Plymouth was not formed after landing, but came into the country in an embodied state. The First church in Boston was organized in Charlestown, and removed to Boston. The Old South church also was organized in Charlestown. The First church in Dorchester was formed in England, and removed in a body to this country. The same church afterwards removed from Dorchester to Windsor, in Connecticut. The First church in Newtown (now Cambridge) also removed to Connecticut, and was established at Hartford. In both these removals, individual members were left behind; but, contrary to the doctrine of the late decisions, these individuals were not regarded as churches. The churches were gone with their pastors, and their majorities, and those who remained, were subsequently formed into churches,—at Dorchester under Mr. Mather, and at Cambridge under Mr. Shepard. The church in Rowley removed in a body to this country from some part of Yorkshire in England. The First church in Wenham removed in 1656, and commenced the settlement of Chelmsford. Similar instances have occurred during our whole history for the last two hundred years; and how are they to be reconciled with the doctrine of the courts, that ‘a church cannot subsist but in connection with a parish,’ and that ‘such has been the understanding of the people of New England from the foundation of the colonies?’

\* But there is yet another class of facts to be introduced. There are at this moment hundreds of Congregational churches in different parts of our land, which have no connection with incorporate parishes or religious societies, and never had any. Some of these churches are in the cities and in the older States, others are in the newly settled parts of our country. They own their meeting-houses; they settle and support their ministers; they exist and they flourish without the help or the hinderance of connected parishes; and thus contradict flatly the assumption of the courts, that 'a church cannot subsist without some religious society to which it is attached.'

" We object, secondly, to the decisions in question, that they are inconsistent with the *natural, inherent rights* of our churches. Most of the churches are in possession of property, more or less. Some of this has been contributed by the members, and some they have received from others. But, however acquired, it is their own; and they have a right to dispose of it according to their own convictions of duty. Is not this, we ask, the natural, inherent right of the churches, as of every other voluntary association; a right which they may freely exercise without offence to any one? But, by the decisions of our courts, the churches are stripped of this inherent right. They cannot any longer do what they will with their own. Every church is indissolubly bound to some parish or incorporated society, and must submit to the will of such society, or she is robbed of all. She must receive just such a pastor, and hear just such a teacher, as the parish gives her; and the most she can do with her money even then is to have the trouble of taking care of it, and paying over the avails of it to her corporate master.

" We object, third, to these decisions, that they are inconsistent with the *corporate rights* of the churches. The churches of Massachusetts were from the first in the possession of corporate rights and powers. They were gathered and organized by law and according to law. It was their province to decide, for many years, not only who should be eligible to office in the State, but who should exercise the rights of a freeman. They assessed

and collected taxes of their members and others, for the building of meeting-houses and the supporting of ministers: Their corporate rights were expressly sanctioned by the legal adoption of the Cambridge Platform, according to which they were all constituted. And, as though this were not enough, their deacons were made a corporation to hold their property in trust for them by the act of 1754, and they were empowered to supervise the deacons, and call them to account. But this most equitable intention of the law of 1754 (which was reënacted in 1786, and is still in force) is entirely set aside, and the corporate rights of the churches are annulled by the late decisions. For no sooner is there a collision between church and parish, and the church is compelled in conscience to withdraw, than the parish tells her, 'You are bound to us for life, and cannot withdraw. You may vote to withdraw, and may go in a majority ever so large; but those who remain will be the church, and will retain the property, even to the records. Indeed, if you all go, and go by solemn vote, you go only as individuals; you die as a church; and we are competent to institute a new church, which will succeed to all the immunities which you have left.' It thus appears that there needs but a collision between church and parish, in order to strip the church of every thing, even of its existence. And the parish can create a collision at any time; and in many cases would be richly compensated for the violence and wrong which it might inflict in doing it.

“Again: the views we here oppose are wholly inconsistent with the *independence* of our churches. We call ourselves Congregationalists or Independents. It was their regard for the independence of the churches, which separated our fathers from the ecclesiastical establishments of the old world, and brought them to this country; and here they filled the land with independent churches, each having the power of self-organization, preservation, and government; acknowledging submission to no authority but that of the Saviour. Our churches still retain the name of Independents; but nothing more. By the late decisions their real independence is quite taken away.

They are in a state of thralldom ; and the reason why they do not feel it is, their civil masters have not chosen very recently to exercise their power. Every church is indissolubly joined to some parish, and let her treatment be what it may, there is no divorce. She may vote what she pleases, but there she is. She may vote, to an individual, to withdraw, and may try to withdraw, but instead of doing so she dies by her own hand, and leaves her inheritance to her persecutor. She cannot choose her own pastor, her presiding officer, but must be ruled and taught by one, and receive the ordinances at the hands of one who is set over her by others, it may be, against her conscience and will. She must hear such doctrine, and unite in such worship as the parish shall direct, and, willing or unwilling, her property must go to pay for it. This is not an exaggerated account of the civil state of the churches of Massachusetts, according to the late decisions. It is their real state, and every church will be made to feel it, as soon as the parish with which it is connected is pleased to exert its power. Where then, we ask, is the independence of our churches,— that independence to secure which our fathers braved the dangers of ocean and exile? It is gone to the shadow, leaving only a name behind.

“ We object, again, to the late decisions of our courts, that they are inconsistent with other and previous decisions. Several cases, involving the rights of churches, parishes, and ministers, were decided in our courts previous to the publication of the Term Reports, which commenced in 1804. There was the case of *Goss vs. The Inhabitants of Bolton*, in 1771 ; of *Mellen vs. The Second Parish in Lancaster*, in 1778 ; of *Fuller vs. The Inhabitants of Princeton*, in 1783 ; and of *Chaplin vs. The Second Parish in Sutton*, in 1796. In these cases, such men as Judges Dana, Paine, Lowell, and Parsons, and Governors Sullivan and Lincoln, Sen. were employed as counsel. We have partial reports of them all, drawn up from notes taken by the late Lieutenant-Governor Lincoln at the time. The cases were all similar in one respect ; the parish and church claiming that the pastor was legally dismissed, and he denying it and suing for

salary. A question like this would not involve directly, as it did not, the mutual relations of church and parish. And yet, in all the cases, the original standing and rights of the church are acknowledged,—a distinct and independent body, and not only so, but a *corporate* body. Thus, in the first case mentioned, Judges Dana and Lowell, who were concerned on opposite sides in the trial, both admitted the corporate existence of the church; and in accordance with this, the records of the church were admitted in evidence. Also in the second case referred to, the church is called ‘a public corporate body.’ In the two last cases, which were decided after the adoption of the constitution, the same standing and rights were accorded to the church. The power of choosing its own pastor was distinctly asserted, and from this was inferred the right of dismissing him.

“After the commencement of the Term Reports, the earliest important cases were those of *Avery vs. Tyringham*, and *Burr vs. The First Parish in Sandwich*. Both these cases were like those above noticed, the people claiming that the minister was dismissed, and he denying it and bringing a suit for salary. The latter case was decided by Chief Justice Parsons, and on several points is in direct conflict with the positions of Chief Justice Parker in the Dedham case. For example, Chief Justice Parker decides that ‘the only circumstance which gives a church any legal character is its connection with some regularly constituted society,’ and that it cannot subsist without some such society to which it is attached. But in the Sandwich case, Chief Justice Parsons says: ‘We have to decide upon the nature and powers of a Congregational church, as distinct from a parish,’ and tells us that, ‘a church and a parish are bodies with different powers.’ Chief Justice Parker tells us (what every Congregational minister knows to be false) that those who withdraw from a society cease to be members of that particular church with which the society is connected. But Chief Justice Parsons says, ‘The members of a church are generally inhabitants of the parish; but this inhabitancy is not a necessary qualification for a church-member.’ Chief Justice Parker

tells us more than once, that the church is a mere trustee for the parish, and holds its property for the use of the parish. But Chief Justice Parsons says: 'The deacons are made a corporation to hold property for the use of the church, and they are accountable to the members.' Of these contradictory decisions, those of Chief Justice Parsons seem to us to be much nearest to the truth.

"We further object, that, under the decisions of which we complain, cases of *extreme hardship* have sometimes occurred, and are liable to occur again. Without calling names, we must be permitted to cite one or two examples.

"Here was a church in which a sum of money had accumulated from the stated contributions at the Lord's table. As it was lying useless in the hands of the deacons, it was thought best to purchase with it a piece of land, to be holden by the church, and to be improved under the direction and for the benefit of the pastor. The plan was carried into effect, and the land came legally into the possession of the deacons, to be held by them in trust for the church. Every thing was transacted harmoniously, and the plan proved to be a very good one during the ministry of the existing pastor. But after his decease, the church and parish disagreed. The parish undertook to impose a pastor on the church of different sentiments from those of the members, and (as many believed) of immoral life. The church remonstrated and entreated, but to no purpose. Supported by the late decisions, the parish would have its own way. The obnoxious minister was settled, and the church had no alternative but to withdraw. It was hard for them to leave their pews and their house of worship, but under the circumstances they thought it harder to remain. They voted, therefore, by a large majority, to withdraw. But they were soon given to understand that they could not withdraw except as individuals, and that if they left in this way, they must leave all their property, even to their communion furniture and records, behind them. In these circumstances, what should these brethren do? They knew their property was their own; they had purchased it with

their own money ; it was held in trust for them by their own deacons ; the parish had no more right to it than they had to the clothes on the church-members' backs. But what, we ask again, could these distressed brethren do ? They could submit, and suffer. They could take the spoiling of their goods. They could in patience possess their souls, and wait for justice at a higher tribunal than that of their country.

“To show the workings of these unfortunate decisions, we give another example. Here was a feeble church and society, situated in a large and wealthy town. They had struggled through many difficulties and much opposition, but they had been united among themselves, and had succeeded in maintaining the ordinances of the gospel. At length one of the best and wealthiest members of the church died, and left a considerable portion of his estate duly and legally secured to the church. No trust or use was expressed in the legacy, but it was to go in succession, and the income to be appropriated by a vote of the church. Not long afterwards, some of the inhabitants of the town were seized with a great desire to have the management of this property. So they contrived one after another to get into the society, and as soon as they were sufficiently strong they drove away the minister and settled one after their own liking. The church did all they could to prevent it, but they were disregarded and overwhelmed, and the society's minister was settled. Still, the church supposed that they might withdraw, retain their property, and reëstablish the minister who had so long and so faithfully served them. But what was their astonishment and grief when they found that even this last resource of the afflicted was denied them. They could not withdraw but as individuals ; and in doing this, they must commit ecclesiastical suicide, and leave their inheritance to their persecutors. And the legacy of their dear brother, on whose grave the grass had scarcely begun to grow, must be perverted to the support of a ministry which he would have abhorred.

“We hope, indeed, that instances like those here cited will not often occur in Massachusetts, under any civil regulations. But



why should they ever occur? And especially, why should they under the sanction of judicial decisions which have the force of law? Better have no laws on the subject, than laws which hold out, not merely license, but encouragement to wrong.

“ We only add, that the judicial decisions here remarked upon *have not been generally acquiesced in, and will not be.* They were not in the case of the church in Dedham, nor in any of the cases which have occurred since. By a vast majority of the good people of Massachusetts who know any thing of the circumstances, the church which separated from the First parish in Dedham has been, is, and will be considered and denominated the First church in that ancient town. It is the First church, and no court on earth can make it otherwise. And the same may be said of all other like cases. Much as our good people are disposed to respect the decisions of their judges, they will not believe, for they cannot, that when a church votes, by a large majority, to withdraw from a parish, and by a large majority does withdraw, that still it leaves itself behind!!

“ These decisions were not acquiesced in at the time by some of the ablest lawyers in the State, nor are they now. It is well known that the late Hon. Daniel Webster was always dissatisfied with them. He often said to his friends that he hoped the time would come when he should be able to do something for the churches, to restore to them their rights as corporate and independent bodies.

“ In a letter from one of the judges of Maine, received in the year 1829, the writer says: ‘The Dedham case was a bold stroke. It astonished me. I first saw it merely touched upon in a Boston newspaper; and in a letter to one of the judges I asked whether the statement in the newspaper could be correct. I told him that I hoped not; for, if correct, it seemed to me a declaration of war against all evangelical churches.’

“ In a letter from a distinguished lawyer in the eastern part of Massachusetts, in the same year, referring to the Dedham case, the writer says: ‘This strange and unexpected decision, which has shocked the plain sense of good men wherever it has been

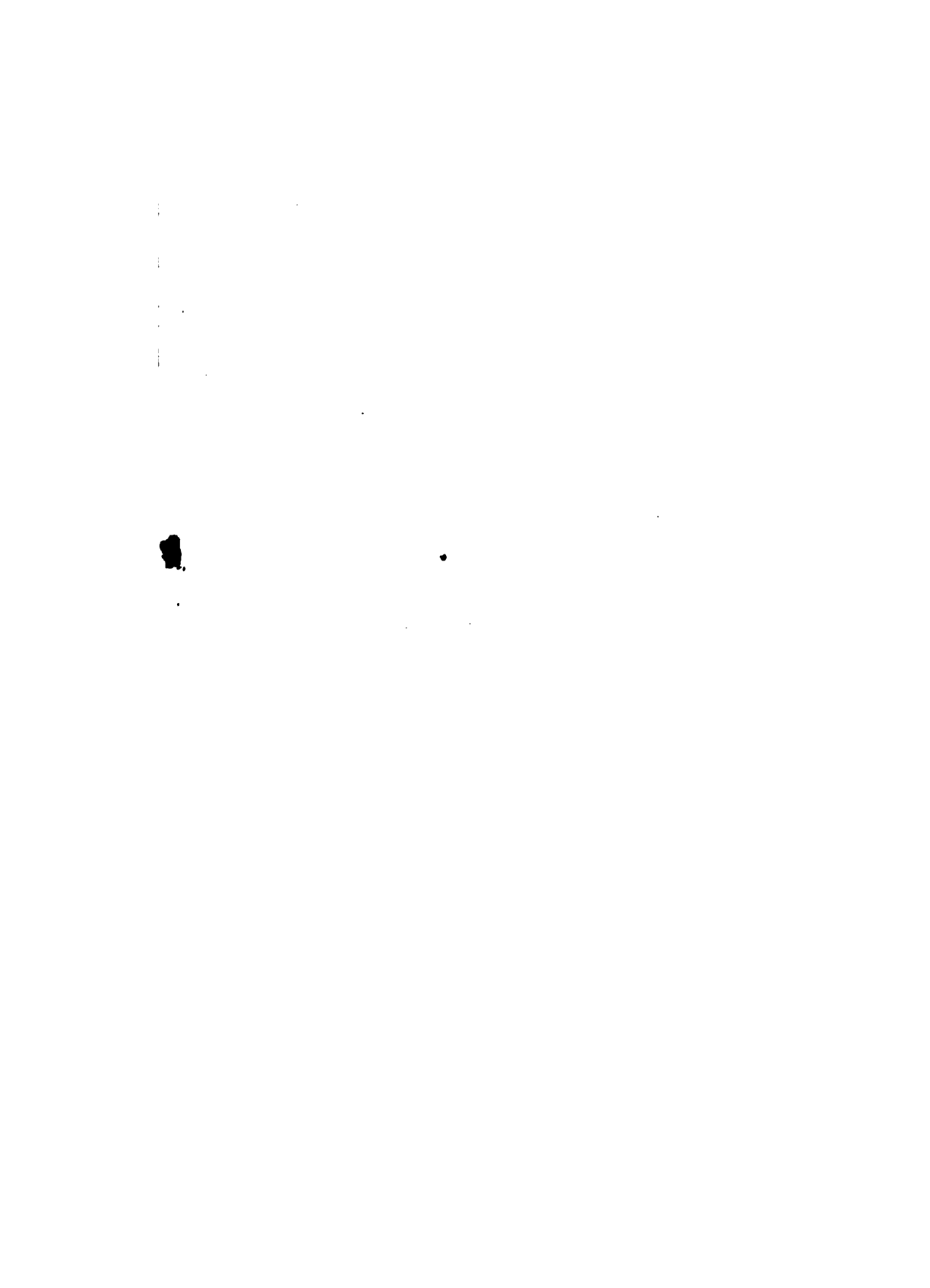
known, has never been well received, or acquiesced in by the bar, or by intelligent lawyers of the Commonwealth. The doctrine by which the decision is attempted to be supported, appears to us not less novel, strange, and untenable than the decision itself, and we regard both doctrine and decision in the light of mere assumption, or, what is quite as offensive, of judicial legislation.'

"The argument of the Hon. Lewis Strong, presented in writing in the Brookfield case, by which he endeavored to refute the doctrine of the previous decisions, and prevent the further plundering of our churches, is proof conclusive as to the light in which the matter was viewed by him.\*

"But we will not protract this discussion further. We have examined the doctrine of the late decisions, have exposed the principal arguments by which they are supported, and have urged, at some length, our objections to them. We have endeavored to do it with all plainness and fairness, and yet with a degree of earnestness such as the magnitude of the cause demands. We have imputed no improper motives to the honorable judges by whom these decisions have been framed. We have said nothing to impeach their professional ability, or their qualifications for the high offices which they sustain. But they are liable, like other men, to be mistaken. They are specially liable to mistake on a subject like this, — a subject which they are not often called to consider, and with which their ordinary professional duties have no tendency to make them acquainted. They evidently do not understand the nature and just rights of a Congregational church. They do not appreciate the claims of these divine, these venerable institutions, and the importance, not only to religion but the State, of upholding and encouraging them, instead of crushing them."

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\* See Pickering's Reports, Vol. X. p. 172.]



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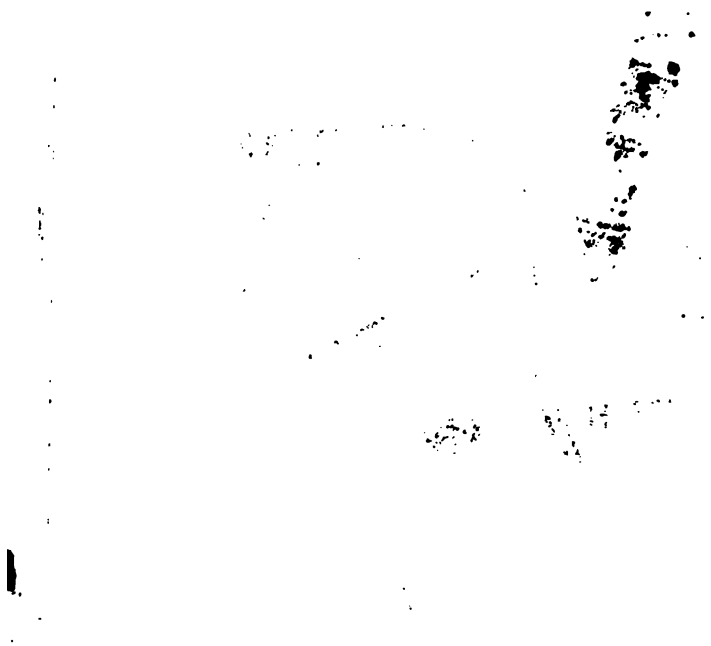
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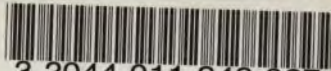
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