





THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS.

A

CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN NORTHBOROUGH, JUNE 1, 1846,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE

ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN THAT PLACE,

AND THE
ORDINATION OF THEIR FIRST MINISTER, ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

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THE THIRD MINISTER IN SUCCESSION OF SAID CHURCH.

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DISCOURSE.

WHO HATH DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS! — Zechariah iv. 10.

It is not wise to despise the day of small things. Momentous issues often arise from circumstances of the most trivial nature. Great enterprises have had their origin in the meditations and consultations of a few obscure individuals. Revolutions in church and state have sprung from the workings of some single mind into which a new thought had been introduced.

Who could have anticipated the result of the landing from the Mayflower on Plymouth Rock, in 1620, or of the expedition of the Genoese sailor, in 1492? Luther had no conception of the magnitude of the work he had undertaken, when, in 1517, he set at defiance the authority of the pope. It was a day of small things, when, eighteen centuries ago, a little band of Christian disciples met in an upper chamber in the city of Jerusalem, waiting in faith and hope for the fulfilment of the promise of their ascended Master. And, if I may be allowed to compare small things with

great, it was a day of small things, when, one hundred years ago, this day, there was a gathering of other disciples in an unfinished building, that, in the midst of difficulties which it is impossible for us to appreciate, had just been erected near this spot, for the organization of a church and the ordination of its first minister.

The building (forty-six feet by thirty-six) was at the time without pulpit, or galleries, or pews, or even permanent floors, and was lighted only by openings in the unplastered walls. Here were gathered, as members of the ordaining council, venerable divines, with their delegates, from the neighbouring churches: Parkman of Westborough, Prentice of Lancaster, Cushing of Shrewsbury, Loring of Sudbury, Hall of Sutton, Gardner of Stow, and Barrett of Hopkinton.

Here they sat, in the costume of the day; some relics of which continued till a period within the memory of some of my hearers. Here the ceremonies of ordination took place, in the presence of a multitude whom the occasion had brought together. The text chosen by the preacher, Parkman of Westborough, at least the first clause of it, pronounced as it doubtless was in tones of dignity and authority, was well suited, as it was intended, to impress the hearers with the sacredness of the pastoral office, and to secure for him who was just entering upon it deference and honor due. It was from Hebrews xiii. 17:—“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give ac-

count, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief." *

The Charge, by Prentice of Lancaster, from the age and character of the man, must have been grave, weighty, apostolic, yet breathing a gentle and catholic spirit; "for they that knew him," says a contemporary divine, Hancock of Lexington,† "esteemed him for his piety, his probity, his peaceableness, and gentleness, and for his commendable steadiness in these uncertain times." He was of the old Puritan race, his father having been, it is said, one of Oliver Cromwell's body-guard. He was at this time sixty-four years old.

The Fellowship of the Churches was by Cushing of Shrewsbury, "a man distinguished," to borrow the words of Dr. Sumner, his venerable successor, "for his prudence and general exemplary deportment." ‡

We are not informed to whom the other parts of the ordination service were assigned; but, from the character of the men in the council, we may conclude that those services were able and appropriate, and contributed to the interest and solemnity of the occasion.

A church had been gathered on the same day, consisting of ten brethren, besides the pastor elect. Their names, in the order in which they stand in the church records, are as follows:—John Martyn, the pastor elect, Ephraim Allen, Joshua Dewsing, *alias* Townsend,

* Mr. Parkman was then in the prime of life, being forty-four years old.

† See Willard's History of Lancaster, Worcester Mag., Vol. II. p. 321.

‡ Sumner's Half Century Sermon.

John McAllister, Jonathan Livermore, afterwards Deacon Livermore, Gershom Fay, father of the late Thaddeus Fay, Matthias Rice, afterwards Deacon Rice, Samuel Allen, father of the late Samuel Allen, Jacob Shephard, John Carruth, grandfather of the late Joseph and John Carruth, Silas Fay, a brother of Gershom Fay. The Covenant is as follows : —

“ *Westborough Second Precinct Church Covenant,*
May 21, 1746.

“ We, whose names are hereafter subscribed, inhabiting the Second Precinct in Westborough [now Northborough] in New England (knowing that we are very prone to offend and provoke the most high God, both in heart and life, through the prevalency of sin that dwelleth in us, and manifold temptations from without us, for which we have great reason to be unfeignedly humbled before him from day to day), —

“ Do in the name of our Lord Jesus, with dependence upon the gracious assistance of his Holy Spirit, solemnly enter into a covenant with God and with one another, according to the will of God, as followeth :—

“ Ist. That, having chosen and taken the Lord Jehovah to be our God, we will fear him and cleave to him in love, and serve him in truth with all our hearts, giving up ourselves to be his people, in all things to be at his direction and sovereign disposal, that we may have and hold communion with him, as members of Christ’s mystical body, according to his revealed will, to our lives’ end.

“2ndly. We also oblige ourselves to bring up our children and servants in the knowledge and fear of God according to his holy institutions, and according to our best abilities, and, in special, by the use of orthodox catechisms, that so the true religion may be maintained in our families while we live, and among such as shall live when we are dead.

“3dly. We promise to keep close to the truth of Christ, endeavouring, with lively affection toward it in our hearts, to defend it against all opposers thereof, as God shall call us at any time thereunto; and for our help herein we resolve to use the Holy Scriptures as our platform (whereby we may discern the will of Christ), and not the new-found inventions of man.

“4thly. We also engage to have a careful inspection over our own hearts, so as to endeavour, by the virtue of the death of Christ, the mortification of our sinful passions, worldly frames, and disordered affections, whereby we may be withdrawn from the living God.

“5thly. We, moreover, oblige ourselves, in the faithful improvement of our abilities and opportunities, to worship God according to all the particular institutions of Christ under the gospel administration, — as, to give reverent attention to the word of God, to pray unto him, to sing his praises, and to hold communion with each other, in the use of both the seals of the covenant, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

“6thly. We likewise promise that we will peaceably submit unto the holy discipline appointed by Christ in his church for offenders, obeying them that rule over us in the Lord.

“7thly. We also bind ourselves to walk in love one towards another, endeavouring our mutual edification ; visiting, exhorting, and comforting, as occasion serveth, and warning any brother or sister who offends, not divulging private offences irregularly, but heedfully following the several precepts laid down by Christ for church dealing, in Matthew, 18th chapter, 15th, 16th, 17th verses, willingly forgiving all that manifest unto the judgment of charity, that they truly repent of their miscarriages. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make us all perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us all that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” *

And now let us pause for a few moments to contemplate the scene, as fancy, aided by the scanty records that remain, calls it up before us.

The day, according to the New Style, was the first of June, the season of unrivalled beauty ; — June, the queen of the months, when the earth is clothed with her brightest honors, and heaven smiles most benignantly on the forests and the fields.

The rocky knoll, on which the foundations of this church rests, had not been shaped into its present graceful form. Yon green meadows were then, and for many years afterward, an unsightly swamp, cov-

* Appendix, Note A.

ered with birches and alders, through which "Cold Harbour Brook," the name by which it had been known for more than half a century, before a settlement had been made upon its borders, flowed peacefully, uninterrupted in all its course by the obstructions of art. The beautiful eminence beyond, bearing its ancient name of "Liquor Hill," since exchanged for the more dignified title of "Mount Assabet," was clothed on all its sides with forests of oak and chesnut. Where now stands our pleasant village, then stood one or two small dwelling-houses: one built by Jacob Rice (grandfather of Asaph Rice), near the site of the centre school-house; and another, occupied first for a garrison and afterward for a tavern, owned by Captain James Eager, and but recently taken down to make room for the elegant mansion of Mr. Horace Fiske. Only two other dwelling-houses were in sight: one belonging to Mr. Simeon Howard, on the side of the road, a few rods west of the meeting-house common; and the other built and occupied by Nathaniel Oakes, which afterwards came into the possession of the Rev. Mr. Martyn, and subsequently of the Rev. Mr. Whitney, who, in 1780, erected the house which is still standing embosomed in the shade of lofty elms and sycamores, which commend the elegant taste of those who once inhabited that spot. No other dwelling-houses were in sight.

All within our borders was a wilderness, save where, at distant intervals, a clearing had been made and buildings erected for the accommodation of the *forty families* of which the precinct then consisted.

These were scattered over the whole extent of territory now included within the limits of Northborough. As many as four families, at least, had settled in the remotest corner of the town, on what is called "Ball Hill," — namely, the two brothers, James and Nathan Ball, Deacon Jonathan Livermore, whose first wife was a sister of the Balls, and Joseph Wheeler, whose daughter married James Eager, Jr. The descendants of the two former, James and Nathan Ball, are still numerous in this and other towns, — one being the grandfather of Doctor Stephen Ball, the other the father of the late Nathan Ball, the son of his old age, the father being seventy at the birth of the son.

Among the most active and influential members of the new society over which a minister was to be ordained, besides those already mentioned, were Lieutenant William Holloway, son of Adam Holloway, who built the house now in the possession of the heirs of the late Stephen Williams, Esq. One of the daughters of Lieutenant Holloway, Mary, was married to the late Jonathan Bartlett, and died since the commencement of my ministry, at the advanced age of ninety-five. The mother of Mrs. Bartlett was Mary, daughter of Simeon Howard, who died in 1788, also at the age of ninety-five. Gershon Fay, the grandfather of the late Nahum Fay, Esq., whose house stood a short distance east of the west school-house, was another of the first settlers of this town. His wife, Mary, daughter of John Brigham, the first white man who took up his residence within the limits of this town, and who erected a hut and

built a sawmill where now stands the mill owned by Messrs. Haynes and Bush, was the person who had so narrow an escape from the Indians, at the time of the tragical fate of Mary Goodenow, with the particulars of which most of you, I suppose, are familiar.

At the time of the formation of this church, the sons of Gershom and Mary Fay, namely, Gershom, Timothy, Silas, and Paul, the last a young man of twenty-six, were among the acting members of this society. Their descendants are numerous, some of whom occupy the soil which their ancestors reclaimed and tilled. Hannah, wife of Gershom Fay, Jr., was the daughter of Nathaniel Oakes, and died in 1806, wanting but a few months of having completed a century of years. They lived on the farm now in the possession of Benjamin Rice ; and, as I was informed by her son, the late Thaddeus Fay, who died in 1822, at the age of ninety-one, the young mother, leading her little son by the hand, was accustomed to walk on the Sabbath to Westborough to attend public worship, a distance of five miles, the meeting-house at that time standing near the village of Wessonville.

Among the heads of families at or about this time were the Goodenows, Samuel senior and junior, and David and Jonathan, two sons of the latter, who lived in the east part of the town. Also Deacon Isaac and Hezekiah Tomblin, — the former living on the farm afterwards owned by Deacon Isaac Davis, and the latter on Tomblin Hill, so called from its first occupant. Deacon Matthias and Pelatiah Rice,

both worthy members and benefactors of the church, whose names are inscribed on the silver cups used in our communion service,—the one living on the farm now in the possession of William Stratten, the other on the farm belonging to the heirs of the late Ephraim Barnard, but formerly in the possession of Thaddeus Fay, who married Thankful, a daughter of Pelatiah Rice; the other daughter, Sarah, married Adam, brother of Thaddeus Fay. Jotham and Jonas Bartlett, sons of Daniel, and grandsons of Henry, of Marlborough, the latter an emigrant from Wales, came into possession of the Goodenow farms, now owned by Stephen Howe and Ashley Bartlett; Jonathan, another son, who married Mary Holloway, lived on a part of the Holloway farm, now in possession of Albert Rice.

Two of the largest landholders at this time were Jesse Brigham, grandfather of Henry, who lives on the same spot formerly in the possession of his father Artemas and grandfather Jesse, and Josiah Rice, grandfather of the late Ezra Rice, whose house stood on the site of the dwelling-house of James Davis, and whose numerous acres were sufficient to constitute several large farms. To Josiah Rice, however, the occasion which we are commemorating was not one of joy or of hope. He was one of the disaffected; and, though one of the wealthiest men in the precinct, refused, till compelled by law, to bear any part of the public burdens. Mr. Rice was, at this period, forty-six, and he lived to the advanced age of ninety-two.

Bezaliah Eager, grandfather of the late Colonel

William Eager, was another of the active men in the settlement of the first minister, and in the subsequent doings of the society. He lived on the farm occupied in succession by his son Francis and grandson William, and now in the possession of Charles Southworth.

Thomas Goodenow, father of Asa Goodenow, who lived on the farm now owned by John F. Munroe, was a person of some distinction, being the first that was employed by the town as an instructor of youth. And long before any school-houses had been erected, Master Goodenow was accustomed to teach from house to house, a few weeks at a time in each; the precinct paying him four shillings a week for his board. He was at this time thirty-seven years old. He died in 1790, at the age of eighty-one.

But time would fail me, should I dwell on the names of Warren, and Beeman, and Gamwell, and Bowker, and Billings, and McAllister, and Hudson, and Briggs, and Townsend, and Babcock, and Carruth, and the Goddards, Josiah and Solomon, and the Oakeses, John and George, and others who were heads of families in this place one hundred years ago. I must not, however, pass over, without some slight recognition of their worth, such men as Colonel Levi Brigham, son of David Brigham, and father of the late Judge Brigham of Westborough, and of Winslow Brigham of this town, — who was chosen in 1775 to represent this district in the assembly which convened in Watertown to consult on the state of public affairs at that critical

juncture ;* and Deacon Paul Newton, father of Martyn Newton.† He was respected as a man of worth and an exemplary officer of the church.‡

I must not omit to mention also the name of Seth Rice, father of the late Deacon Seth Rice, whose descendants are numerous and respectable. Seth Rice Sen. was born in 1705, the year after his two infant brothers, Silas and Timothy, while in the field with their father at Westborough, were taken by the Indians, and carried into captivity, where they lived, married Indian wives, acquired their habits, and lost all knowledge of their native tongue. Their Indian names were Tookanowras and Oughtsorongoughton, — the latter being one of the chiefs of the Cagnawaga tribe, in the time of the old French War. This chief visited his native place, Westborough, in 1740 ; but chose to return to die, as he had lived, among the barbarians, “ who had shown him no little kindness.” Seth Rice Sen., and his son, Deacon Seth Rice, lived on the farm now in the possession of Calvin Hastings. His wife Dorothy died in 1801, aged ninety-three.

Samuel Allen, one of the ten names affixed to the church covenant, was at that time a young man of twenty-six ; thus setting an example, which his descendants have not been backward in following, of an early dedication of himself to Christ and the

* At the time of the settlement of Mr. Martin he was thirty years old.

† Named for the minister, who was buried on the day the child was born.

‡ He was twenty-eight years old at the time of the ordination of Mr. Martyn.

Church. Ephraim Allen, his father, was another of the ten. They lived on the spot now occupied by Deacon Lewis Allen, one of their descendants. Ephraim Allen came from Roxbury, and erected the first grist-mill in town, on the Assabet river.

Samuel Wood, father of the late Abraham and Samuel Wood, came from Sudbury soon after this time,* and set up a fulling-mill in the town. His son Abraham was skilled in music, and composed several pieces which were popular in their day. His other son, Captain Samuel Wood, commanded a company and received a wound at the battle of Bunker Hill, and was a man of great firmness and decision of character. He died in 1818, at the age of seventy-five.

Such were the men that founded our little republic. They were for the most part plain, unlettered men, who had enjoyed but few advantages for intellectual culture. But most of them were of the Anglo-Saxon race, and the blood of the Covenanters and Puritans ran in their veins. They were men who thought and acted with freedom and independence, and sometimes, it may be, with pertinacity and dogged obstinacy. They were not timeservers, nor were they "carried about by every wind of doctrine." At the period referred to, many of the churches of New England were in a very distracted state, torn by intestine divisions threatening their dissolution, owing partly to the excitement produced by the preaching of George Whitefield, the eloquent enthusiast, and his followers. I am

* He was chosen Precinct Clerk in 1750.

not aware that the controversy reached this church, or that the first minister took any part in it. From the circumstance mentioned in the Records of the Precinct, that that part of the ordaining council which was selected by the pastor elect consisted of the Rev. Messrs. Barrett of Hopkinton and Gardner of Stow, both of whom were sound, stable, and judicious men, and opposed to the *New Lights*, as the enthusiasts of that day were styled, I infer that Mr. Martyn, who, at the time of his ordination, was upwards of forty years old, was himself a sound, stable, and judicious man.*

I wish I could present a true picture of the women of that generation, the wives and daughters of the first settlers, the mothers of the men who have risen up in their fathers' stead. They were an industrious, hard-working, thrifty race, and better answered Solomon's description of a good wife, I suppose it will be conceded, than some of their granddaughters and remoter descendants. For they "sought wool and flax, and worked diligently with their hands." They "girded their loins with strength, and strengthened their arms." They "laid their hands to the spindle, and their hands held the distaff." They "looked well to the ways of their household, and ate not the bread of idleness." Methinks I see them now, as they appeared on the memorable day which was to witness the consecration of their new minister, wending their way on foot, or mounted on pillions behind

* Appendix, Note B.

their husbands or brothers, dressed in homely garments, made for use and not for show, through narrow, crooked lanes, impassable for carriages, had such luxuries been in use. They come from their scattered homes, — all who can leave, — and gather to the house of prayer to witness the imposing ceremony. They take their places on the “women’s side,” while the men occupy the seats opposite. And all are attentive while the services of the ordination last.

But I feel that I cannot give life to the picture, and so I let it pass, while I attempt a sketch of the man to whom all eyes were directed, who formed the chief object of attraction, on the occasion referred to.

The Reverend John Martyn, the first minister of Northborough, was the son of Captain Edmund Martyn of Boston, who was the master of a vessel, and led a seafaring life. The father died before the son entered college, leaving him to the care of his excellent mother, whose circumstances enabled her to give him the best advantages of education which were afforded at that time. He became a student at Harvard College, where he graduated in the class of 1724. After leaving college, he devoted himself for some time to secular pursuits, residing in Harvard, in this county. At length, at the age of forty, — about twenty years after he was graduated, — he engaged in studies preparatory to the ministry, and, having completed his course, was employed as a candidate in this place, in the winter of 1745 or 6, — according

as the beginning of the year is reckoned from the twenty-fifth of March or the first of January. Two other candidates, agreeably to the advice of neighbouring ministers, had been heard during the winter, but the preference was given to Mr. Martyn, who was chosen, if not with entire unanimity, yet, as it is recorded in the Precinct Book, “by a clear vote.”

As none of Mr. Martyn’s sermons are known to be in existence, and as many may be desirous of knowing something of the views and character of the first minister of Northborough, I cannot doubt that his answer to the call he received from the town will be listened to with interest.

“FOR MESSRS. NATHAN BALL, MATTHIAS RICE, and JONATHAN LIVERMORE, the Committee chosen by the Second Precinct in Westborough to present me, the subscriber, with a call to the pastoral office in said Precinct. To be communicated to the inhabitants of said Second Precinct in Westborough.

“I have spent much time and much thought in seriously considering your invitation to me to settle with you in the relation of a pastor to you, and have asked advice of those I thought most proper and capable to give it; and I hope I have not been negligent in seeking to the throne of grace for direction in this important affair. I am sensible, that, as the apostle says in 1 Timothy iii. 1, ‘if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.’ So also as that text

implies, 2 Corinthians ii. 16, that none is thoroughly sufficient for these things. But yet, as God hath been pleased to commit the treasure of the gospel to earthen vessels, to men like ourselves, and to make it necessary there should be a standing ministry in his church, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, so although all are not apostles, prophets, or teachers, though all indifferently may [not?] take upon them the work of the ministry, yet it is necessary that some be taken from men to be ordained for men in things pertaining unto God. And as we have not a divine oracle to consult, nor any way to come at the knowledge of God's will, but by observing his providences and comparing those with his word, so when persons of sobriety, learning, and orthodoxy, disposed to the work of the ministry, have a clear and regular call from the people and from God, it is the duty of such to comply with such a call, trusting in God that his grace shall be sufficient for them, and that his strength shall be made perfect in their weakness.

“And now, brethren, as the Providence of God seems to have singled me out from amongst others, to commit unto me a dispensation of the gospel, and as you have manifested unto me so much respect as to count me worthy to rule, guide, and teach you, by calling and inviting me to labor amongst you in this part of the Lord's vineyard, so I do now testify my compliance with your invitation. My brethren, I think that I can say that it is not for the sake of

filthy lucre that I am moved hereunto; for I can see no prospect of any great worldly advantage to be in the ministry, especially in country parishes; neither do I expect a life of ease and pleasure, for I am sensible that, as to the work I am engaging in, it is painful and laborious; and, as the temper of mankind is at present, whoever engages in it must expect to meet with contempt, reproof, sorrow, and trouble; but I trust in the grace of God to grant me those supplies of strength and grace which may be necessary to enable me to perform any work and to bear any sufferings he may have appointed for me, and to arm me with that patience, self-denial, and meekness, which should be eminent and conspicuous in the ministers of Jesus Christ, who should be patterns of every grace and virtue, and who, above others, had need to abound in these things. And I am not without hope that you yourselves, brethren, will contribute what you can to lighten my burthen, and to comfort me under it, by manifesting a readiness to receive instructions, by your endeavouring to live a holy, harmless, blameless, circumspect, shining life; and that you will take part with me in whatever sorrows and sufferings God hath determined to lay upon me. My brethren, our interests are now to be united. It will become us, therefore, to seek and endeavour each other's welfare in all proper methods. Your offers to me, as to temporal support and maintenance, are not large; but yet, as I now comply with them with an honest intention, and not desiring to

make a gain of you upon account of the uncertain foundation of our medium of trade, so I hope, if I should be in need of any further assistance from you in any matters which might be much to my advantage and nothing to your damage, you will readily afford me help. I know very well, that, as the salary is settled upon silver, and that as our paper bills are daily depreciating, so it seems, on a transient view, and considering the present state of trade and living, as if you had given me a considerable advantage over you ; on the other hand, if it had not been thus settled, it appears that I might have been subjected to many difficulties, and have been a continual complainer or sufferer. But, as I hope, had there been any seeming disadvantage on my side, you would have endeavoured to ease and relieve me, upon proper remonstrances and representations of my case, so I assure you, though the advantage at present may *seem* to be on my side (and, indeed, it does but *seem* so, for none can tell what turn affairs may take with respect to the medium of trade), — therefore, I say, though it may *seem* so, yet it is not my design to take any advantage of it to your prejudice ; and if there should ever happen any difficulty upon this account, I shall be very free and willing to leave it to any impartial judge.

“ And now, brethren, I commend myself to God, and beg your prayers for me, that I may be found diligent and faithful in the work whereto I am called. And God forbid that I should cease praying for you and myself, that both you and I, in our respective

stations, and relations to one another, may so conduct ourselves in this world, as that we may be able to lift up our heads with joy another day, and may meet together in the temple of God in heaven, never more to go out. To conclude, brethren, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

“I am your sincere friend
and hearty well-wisher,
“JOHN MARTYN.

“Bolton, March 29, 1746.”

I am not aware that any other of the writings of Mr. Martyn have been preserved, but even from this specimen I think we are justified in concluding that he was a wise, honest, strong man, and that he entered on his work with right views, and a just sense of the responsibilities of the office he was about to assume.

In regard to his theological opinions, he did not probably differ from his brethren in the ministry with whom he was in habits of intimacy, as Cushing of Shrewsbury, Parkman of Westborough, Prentice of Lancaster, and Morse of Boylston, all of whom were sound, orthodox divines, but not among the “New Lights” of that time, and probably having very little to do with the peculiarities of any human creed, and meddling very little with religious controversy. It is worthy of remark, and it should be borne in mind, that

the old church covenants, which were in general use at that time, were not formularies of faith, embracing the peculiarities of Calvinism or of Arminianism, or of any other system of human origin, but covenants, properly so called, — that is to say, religious engagements entered into on the part of those who became communicants, binding them, not to a fixed creed, but to endeavours after a holy life. The covenant subscribed by Mr. Martyn, and adopted by the church organized on the day of his ordination, is of this character. It is wholly unobjectionable on the score of sentiment, although its length and style might not be adapted to our fastidious tastes. The term *orthodox*, which occurs in one clause, is a very good term, and ought not to be appropriated by any one denomination, or any body of believers, as belonging exclusively to them.*

At the period referred to, there were not in all this region any but Congregational churches and Congregational ministers; and though there may have been diversities of faith among them, as there must be where there is religious freedom and the minds of men are awake, and though some men were then, as now, of a warmer temperament and more excitable than others, and though feuds and controversies broke up the peace of many of the New England churches about that time, which, it will be recollected, was the season of the great revival produced by the labors of Whitefield, Buel,

* Appendix, Note C.

Tennent, and other itinerant preachers, who travelled through the country, reviled the standing order of ministers, and drew away from them the affections of many of their hearers, yet, so far as I can learn, the churches and ministers in this immediate vicinity remained unaffected by the fanatical spirit of the times, or only shared in a healthy excitement, and were animated with new life. The Rev. Mr. Barrett of Hopkinton, who, it will be recollected, was on the council for the ordination of Mr. Martyn, as we learn from Howe's Century Sermon, from his unwillingness to adopt the new measures, lost the confidence and affection of some of the most serious and pious people in town, who for a time absented themselves from his ministry and joined other societies in neighbouring towns; "but," as we are told, "when the fervor of their affection abated, they returned, respected Mr. Barrett, lived under his ministry, and were edified."

The Rev. Mr. Martyn married Mary Marrett of Cambridge, by whom he had several children, descendants from two of whom, John and Michael, are still living in this town.

A venerable old man, of the stock of Israel, Rabbi Judah Monis, was an inmate of Mr. Martyn's family during a few of the last years of his life. He had been Hebrew Instructor in Harvard College as early as 1720, while yet an unconverted Jew. He embraced Christianity, and was publicly baptized at Cambridge, in 1722. He continued in office forty years, and after the death of his wife, in 1761, he

came to reside with his brother-in-law, Mr. Martyn, in whose family he remained till his death, in 1764. I find in the town records the following vote, relating to Mr. Monis, and several others, who I suppose were among the most aged persons in town, and who, with their three-cornered hats and staves and enormous shoe-buckles, must have made quite an imposing appearance, as they came in to take their places in the *seat of honor* allotted them: — “March 14th, 1763. The precinct voted that ‘Mr. Judah Monis, John McAllister, Thomas Taylor, Ephraim Allen, Joshua Townsend, and Daniel Mason should be seated in the four [fore] seat below.’” Mr. Monis was then about eighty years old. He died April 25th, 1764, and was buried in what was then the new burying-ground, though that term has been since appropriated to another, — “and his sepulchre remaineth to this day.” Mr. Monis was a benefactor of this church; three silver cups, bearing his name, forming part of the plate used in our communion service. The verses inscribed on his grave-stone are a not unfavorable specimen of the poetry of the day: —

“ A native branch of Jacob see,
Which, once from off its olive broke,
Regrafted in the living tree,
Of the reviving sap partook.

“ From teeming Zion’s fertile womb,
As dewy drops in early morn,
Or rising bodies from the tomb,
At once be Israel’s nation born.”

The last stanza expresses a benevolent and pious hope which many have shared, but which has hitherto been sadly disappointed.

Mr. Martyn had a peaceful and successful ministry of twenty-five years, which, in the midst of his useful labors, was interrupted by his sudden and lamented death, on the last day of April, 1767. A handsome monument was erected in the adjoining burying-ground by his bereaved flock, bearing the following inscription, which, as I have no doubt, expresses not only the estimation in which he was held, but also the true character of the man:—

“Under this sepulchral stone lies interred, in Christian hope of a blessed resurrection, what was mortal of the Reverend John Martyn, A. M., the late worthy pastor of this flock, son of the late Captain Edward Martyn, of Boston. Educated at Harvard College, Cambridge. Was ordained in this place May twenty-first, 1746. Approved himself an assiduous, orthodox, eminent preacher of the great redemption by Jesus Christ. After a few days’ illness, to the inexpressible grief of his family, flock, and friends, expired April thirtieth, 1767, aged sixty-one.

“*Si vitam fide Christi egimus sanctam, si quid præclare gessimus, hoc sit nostri monumentum.*”

A few other incidents relating to the early history of this town may be listened to with interest, as throwing light on the character of the men and of the times of which we are speaking.

What is now Northborough was for many years known as the Second Precinct in Westborough, having been set off as such, October 20th, 1744, which answers to October 31st, N. S. It did not become an incorporated district till January 24th, 1766, when, from its situation in respect to the First Precinct, it received the name of Northborough. But it was not even yet thought worthy of the rank of a *town*; and was not allowed the privilege of sending a representative to *the Great and General Court* till the commencement of the Revolutionary War, in 1775, when, by a general act of the Provincial Congress, all incorporated districts were declared to be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of towns.*

The First Precinct officers were chosen on the 15th of the following November, at which time "it was voted that precinct meetings for the future should be warned by two notifications posted up, one at Ephraim Allen's mill, and the other at Bezaleel Eager's."

One of the first objects to which the attention of the precinct was directed was, of course, the building of a meeting-house, which, after much delay, occasioned by differences of opinion respecting its location, which were at length terminated by arbitration, James Eager having generously given the land for that purpose, was raised April 30th, 1745. It stood very

* See Ancient Charters and Laws of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, — Appendix, chap. xl. p. 3.

near the spot which forms the site of the present church.* They did not, however, wait till the house was built, before they took measures to provide preaching. Meetings for public worship were held through the winter of 1745, first at the house of Nathaniel Oakes, and afterwards, for three months, at the house of Jacob Rice, which, as has been already said, stood near the site of the centre school-house. As they could not agree upon a candidate, agreeably to the pious custom of those times, they appointed "a day of humiliation and prayer," and sent for several of the neighbouring ministers to give them their advice.

"September 12th," as the record stands, "the day appointed, Rev. Mr. Parkman and Rev. Mr. Goss came and carried on the work of the fast day, and adjourned, giving us their advice, till the 23d of September, and then the Rev. Mr. Prentice, and Mr. Cushing, and Mr. Parkman, and Mr. Morse, met at the house of Lieutenant William Holloway, and, after looking up to Heaven for divine help and assistance on the occasion they met upon, they heard each party, and gave us their advice as followeth:—

"Westborough, Sept. 23, 1745.

"Inasmuch as the committee of the Second Precinct in Westborough have made application to us whose names are underwritten to give them our advice with reference to the settlement of divine ordinances among

* Appendix, Note D.

them, after humble application to God for direction ourselves, and maturely weighing what has been laid before us, do lament the appearance of misunderstandings and uneasinesses in the precinct, and would earnestly recommend a mutual condescension as becomes Christian professors, but on consideration that the chief matters of grievance cannot fall under our cognizance, nor can we have any prospect, from any thing in our power, to redress them. But though there have been such difficulties subsisting here, yet, if there should be any long delay, we have reason to fear they would rather increase, in such a day of temptation, than be diminished, we do freely advise that they proceed to nominating a number of candidates for the gospel ministry, to be heard by the precinct, in order to a choice; that they be two, together with the gentlemen they have been some time hearing. And we (divers of us) recommend the Rev. Mr. Rand and Mr. Jedediah Adams, of Cambridge, that they all be heard a few Sabbaths each. Upon the whole, brethren, we cannot but express our compassionate concern for you in your new circumstances, and do beseech you to beware of the many evils of strife and contention; be cautious of the snares to which your most precious souls are exposed at such a critical juncture; and may the God of all wisdom and grace conduct and restrain you.

(Signed,)

“JOHN PRENTICE,
JOB CUSHING,
EBENEZER PARKMAN,
EBENEZER MORSE.”

This advice was followed; and after hearing the three candidates two Sabbaths each, Mr. John Martyn was declared to be "chosen by a clear vote," on the 9th of the following December, the precinct voting him a "salary of £ 50, in bills of the last emission, or £ 200 in bills of the old form and tenor, with a settlement of £ 300 of old tenor money"; a pound, old tenor, being equal to about 82 cents of our currency; so that his salary was \$ 166.66, and his settlement \$ 246. This was indeed "a day of small things"; but not, on this account, to be despised. The salary was in proportion not only to the means of the society, but to the price of labor and the articles of living. In consideration of the rise of provisions, the precinct, two years after the settlement of Mr. Martyn, made an additional grant of £ 150, old tenor, to his salary for that year; and numerous grants of a like nature are recorded in the Precinct Book.

It was not till the last year but one of the life of the Rev. Mr. Martyn, namely, 1766, the year that Northborough obtained an act of incorporation, that the precinct voted to provide schooling and to repair the highways at the public charge. The amount granted that year for the former is not stated. For the latter a grant of £ 60, lawful money, was made. In the following year, however, the grant for schooling was £ 11, which was gradually increased, till, in 1776, it amounted to £ 20; while that for highways was £ 40, an equal amount, or £ 40, having been granted the year before to pay the minute men "to learn the military art." It is worthy

of note, that, in the following year, 1777, the sum raised for schooling was doubled, amounting to £40 lawful money, while *no appropriation was made for repairing the highways*, a fact which evinces the interest that was taken even in those troublesome times in the cause of education. Since the Revolutionary War, at least during the last thirty years, the amount raised for each purpose has been, I believe, nearly the same.*

Having dwelt so long on the ministry and times of the Rev. Mr. Martyn, I must pass hastily over the subsequent period.

The Rev. Peter Whitney, the successor of Mr. Martyn, was the son of the Rev. Aaron Whitney, of Petersham, where he was born, September 17, 1744, the year the Second Precinct was set off from Westborough. He also was educated at Harvard University, Cambridge, where he was graduated in 1762, and where he pursued the study of theology, preparatory to the Christian ministry. Mr. Whitney received a call, September 21, 1767, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Mr. Martyn, with the offer of a salary of £60 lawful money, afterwards increased to £66.13.4, about \$220, and a settlement of £160 lawful money, or \$533.33 $\frac{1}{3}$; and on the 4th of the following November, was ordained as the pastor of the church in this town, only six months and four days after the death of his predecessor in office.

* Appendix, Note E.

It was during his ministry, namely, in 1808, that, at an expense of more than \$ 11,000, this house in which we are now assembled was erected near the spot occupied by the old meeting-house.

Mr. Whitney's ministry was long, peaceful, and prosperous, and was terminated by his sudden death, February 29, 1816. He is still remembered by many with affectionate respect, and his Christian deportment and useful labors contributed not a little to the harmony and strength and respectability of this religious society as it was at the time when the speaker first became connected with it. Mr. Whitney, at the time of his death, was in the seventy-second year of his age and the forty-ninth of his ministry. His mortal remains, and his monument, and the remembrance of his many virtues, are still with us. Of his descendants, with a solitary exception, all have gone from the former home of their honored ancestor, and some have gone to their last home.*

And so, after a few short years, it will be with the family of his successor, into which, by a most remarkable providence, death has not yet entered, and the places which now know them will know them no more. The present incumbent entered on his office, October 30th, 1816, so that he has now nearly completed the thirtieth year of his ministry among the people of his first and latest love. He has never aspired to a higher place or a better fortune; and he hopes to

* Appendix, Note F.

spend the evening of his days, if not in the office that he loves, yet "among his own people," for whom he has so long labored, and from whom he has experienced so constant and considerate kindness.

This church has now existed a century, during which time it has had only three pastors, including the one who now fills that office, and has been destitute of a settled minister only about fourteen months,— "a fact," as he took occasion to say in his account of Northborough, published twenty years since, "highly creditable to the members of the society, as an evidence of their regard for the institutions of religion, and of the union and harmony which have long subsisted among them." I may be allowed to quote the rest of the paragraph from which the foregoing extract is taken. "It may be justly considered," the writer remarks, "that the town is indebted to the spirit of union which has hitherto so generally prevailed among us, for the respectable rank which it now maintains. It would be easy, however painful, to predict the consequences of the prevalence of an opposite spirit. Large and opulent societies can bear to be reduced by division; but in societies small as this, and whose resources are no greater than ours, union should be the watchword of all who wish well to the cause of human improvement."

These sentiments were entertained by the speaker twenty years ago; they are retained and cherished by him still. Union is strength; and though separation is better than strife, it is not unattended by many

painful circumstances. In our own experience the evils of division have been less grievous than in the case of many of our brethren. A good degree of harmony has ever existed between the parent society and the two that have been formed out of it. The speaker has lived in good fellowship with all, and in habits of intimacy with some, of those who from time to time have sustained the pastoral office in the other churches; and he can truly say that he has, with very few exceptions, been treated with all the respect and kindness he could ask or desire by those who went out from us, as well as by those who have since united with them in the maintenance of religious institutions. In return, he has cherished only the most friendly feelings towards them; and, while he has scrupulously endeavoured to avoid all improper interference and all attempts to proselyte, he has, he can truly say, sought opportunities to benefit the rising and the risen generation, without regard to sect or denomination.

Especially has he sought to know nothing of sect or party in his connection with the subject of education; and teachers and scholars in our public schools will testify, that, in his intercourse with them, he has shown no partiality in favor of the advocates of a particular religious creed. I call on others, — I call on you, my hearers, — I call upon this whole community, to pursue the same righteous and honorable course, and never to allow a sectarian spirit to enter those sacred retreats, consecrated to learning and science, where the tender minds of our children receive their earliest and deepest impressions.

The early records of this church, together with the house of the pastor, were destroyed by fire in 1780. In consequence of this calamity, some items of information, which we should be glad to possess, are irrecoverably lost.

From the Rev. Mr. Parkman's account of Westborough, we learn, that, in the year of Mr. Martyn's death, this church consisted of twenty-one males and twenty-three females. The number admitted during the ministry of Mr. Whitney, as nearly as can be ascertained, was 204; while 201 have been received into the church since I became its pastor, of whom about one half remain with us to this day. Our church at present consists of about 120 communicants. The number of baptisms, from the year 1780, when the records were destroyed, to the time of the decease of Mr. Whitney, was 661. The present pastor has baptized 318; while ten received baptism in the interval between the death of Mr. Whitney and the 30th of the following October. During my ministry, I have solemnized 208 marriages. I have thus united in indissoluble bonds 416 persons; of whom about 70 or 75, as nearly as I can learn, are no longer numbered among the living. The survivors, with the descendants of the 208 couples, would make a great congregation, and I have often thought that I should like to see them all assembled in one place, to learn their various fortunes, and to speak to them words of congratulation, and sympathy, and Christian counsel. The whole number of deaths within the borders of this town,

since the beginning of my ministry, has been about 500 ; making the average $16\frac{2}{3}$. I have probably attended about the same number of funerals, in this and the neighbouring towns.

The scenes and occasions that the recital of these facts calls up before me are, some of them, of the most deeply affecting character, and have left impressions on my mind which will remain while life or memory lasts.

Eight persons only, besides the present incumbents, have sustained the office of deacon in this church since its organization ; and it is but justice to add, that, so far as I have learned, they were all men of great moral worth ; respectable and respected. Of the first four I had, of course, no personal knowledge. Jonathan Livermore and Matthias Rice were the first that held that office. The former, who came from Watertown, and who lived to the great age of one hundred years and seven months, was, in his day, probably the best educated man in the place, and for many years in succession was clerk of the precinct. After the death of his first wife, the mother of his children, he married a lady of Irish extraction, a widow (Mrs. Jane Dunlap), who lived in Milton, and was a member of the Congregational church in that place, and who, from letters of hers in my possession, addressed to the church, with which she had a protracted controversy, as well as from other sources, I should judge to have been a woman of strong intellect and of great independence, associated perhaps with some acerbity of temper, and, it may be,

other faults of character. Certain it is that the church received her communications, of which she sent several, in no very courteous manner, — voting, on one occasion, (Nov. 23, 1784), “unanimously, not one hand up,” as the record reads, that her communication was not satisfactory.

Deacon Matthias Rice was a good man, “in simplicity and godly sincerity having his conversation in the world”; and such were, by reputation, the two successors of Deacons Rice and Livermore, — Deacons Paul Newton and Seth Rice. They all lived to a good old age, leaving behind them the savor of a good name. Of the other four I can speak from personal and intimate knowledge. Deacon Isaac Davis and Deacon Nahum Fay were in office at the time of my ordination, and during several of the first years of my ministry; and I may add, that, though differing from me on points of doctrinal belief, they were my personal friends, from whom, so long as they lived, I experienced uniform kindness. Deacon Jonas Bartlett and Samuel Seaver, Sen., have so recently ceased from their mortal labors, that few among us need to be informed that they, too, possessed the public confidence and respect. Of the present incumbents it does not become me here to speak.

I shall dwell but for a few moments on the present condition and prospects of this religious society. I cannot use the language of exultation and boastful confidence; — it is unbecoming at all times; it would be especially out of place at this time. When I think

of the strong pillars that stood here thirty years ago, on which our social fabric and this church rested, and consider how they have fallen, one after another, till only here and there a decaying shaft remains, I have no heart to exult; I am more inclined to *commune with my own heart and be still*.

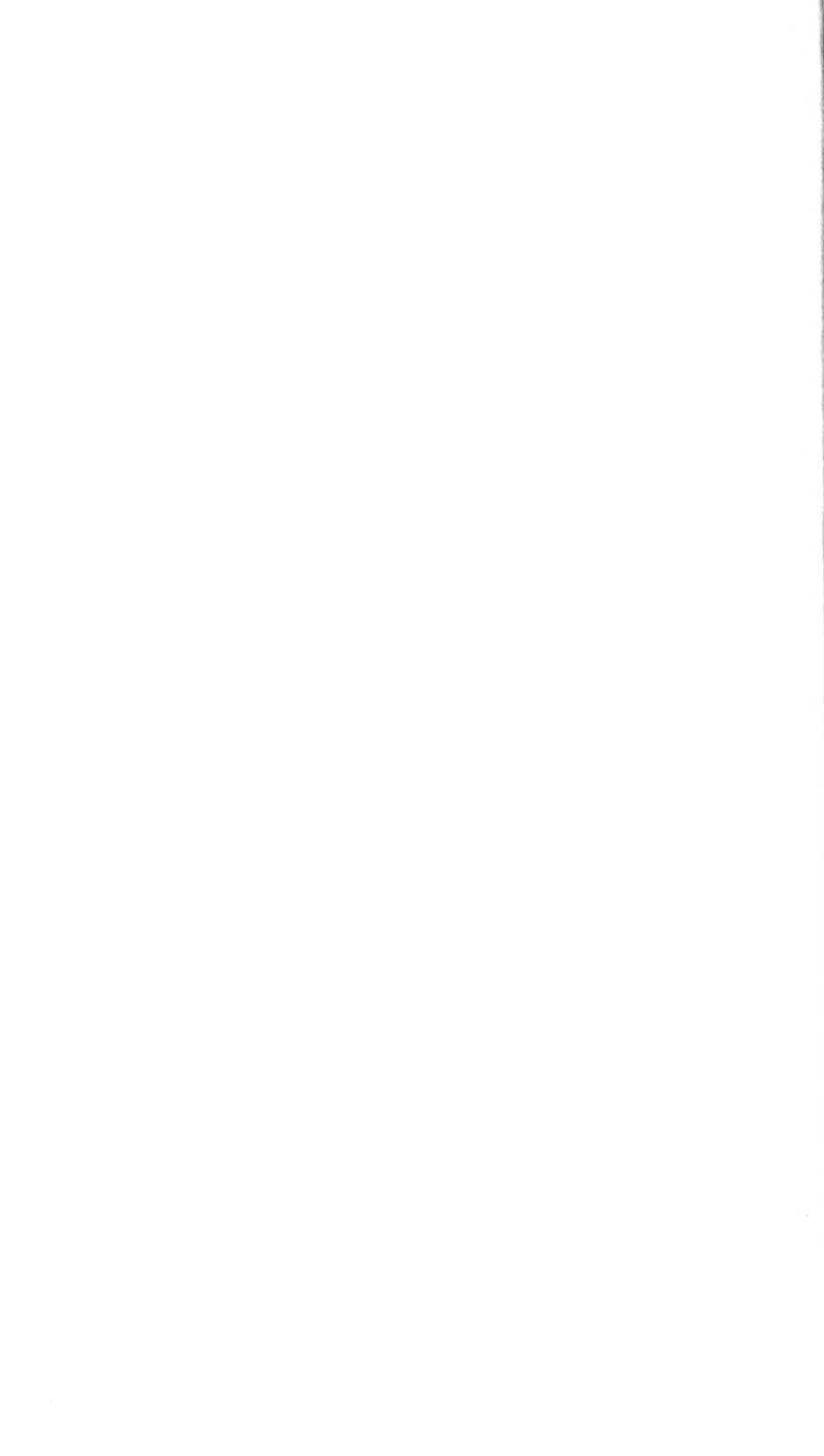
True, we have ample resources and many encouragements; and it were weakness and a criminal distrust of Providence to despond, as, when I think of the past, I am sometimes tempted to do. Once we were, certainly in respect to worldly wealth, much stronger than now. By death and removal, and those changes that are common in this changing world, many of the best estates that once belonged to us have passed into other hands; and although there has been a considerable increase of population in the town, especially within the last ten years, only a small proportion of those who have removed hither from other places have become members of this religious society. One main purpose of our respected friend and benefactor (Henry Gassett, Esq., of Boston), whose bounty we have so liberally shared, has thus been in a manner frustrated. He had hoped that his large donation, (\$3000,) intended principally for the support of the ministry, would prove a bond of union, so that all might partake of the fruits of his liberality. In other times it might have been so. And the day may come when sectarian strifes and party names shall be done away; and when that bounty, which was intended for all, shall be shared by all who shall then dwell

within our borders. In the mean time it will be, I trust, a bond of union to us who remain connected with this ancient Congregational church; and the memory of the donor will be dear to our children's children.

We have received other benefactions; among which is the valuable clock lately placed in the tower of our church (the gift of Mr. Jonas Ball), which, so long as it remains, will remind us of the source whence it came, and of the hours as they fly.

And now my parting word; for it is quite time to relieve your exhausted patience. My ministry has been protracted, and my labors among you have been blessed, far beyond my most sanguine hopes. According to the order of nature, which, if I might, I would not subvert or alter, I have seen my best days. I am deeply sensible that it is so; and I submit, without a murmur, to the great law of life, — that, while others increase, “I must decrease.”

Receive, then, the word from my lips. As though I stood on the borders of the grave and in the prospect of the eternal world, — in the earnestness of a spirit that yearns towards you with a strong affection, I beseech you, dear brethren and friends, in the words of the apostle, adopted by the first minister of this church: “Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace; — and the God of love and peace shall be with you.” Amen.



A P P E N D I X .

NORTHBOROUGH, being originally a part of Marlborough, may lay claim to considerable antiquity; Marlborough having been incorporated as early as 1660, only forty years after the landing from the Mayflower, and thirty after the settlement of Boston.

It was, indeed, in this very year (1660) that certain meadow lands lying within the borders of this town were surveyed, and the names given them (Three Corner Meadow, Stirrup Meadow, Crane Meadow, &c.) which they now bear. Cold Harbour Meadow, then bearing its present name, was taken up and laid out in thirty-four lots as early as 1672; and in the same year, a grant of land was made to John Brigham (who went by the name of Doctor Brigham, and was a noted land-surveyor) "on Licor Meadow Plain," probably the plain extending north and north-west from Liquor Hill (now Mount Assabet) to the farm of Mr. Jairus Lincoln. On what I suppose were the eastern borders of this grant, near the site of the saw-mill owned by Messrs. Haynes and Bush, Mr. Brigham erected a small cabin, in which he lived several years, remote from any human habitation, tending the saw-mill which he had built on Howard Brook, till at length the fear of the savages induced him to retire to a place of greater security.

In the same year, several other grants of land, now within the borders of this town, were made by the proprietors of Marlborough;—one to Samuel Goodenow, father of Thomas, and grandfather of the late Asa Goodenow; and to Thomas Brigham, father of David, and grandfather of the late Judge Brigham of Westborough. Another grant still was made to John Rediat, "west of Assabeth River, north-west side of the Chauncey Great Pond, bounded on the east by a Spruce Swamp." Another "on the Nepmuck road, that formerly led toward Coneticoat," which was probably on the eastern borders of Little Chauncey Pond,—the Nepmuck road from Marlborough to Grafton (then Hassanemesit) leading through Westborough near Great and Little Chauncey Ponds. Nathaniel Oakes, the person mentioned in the Discourse, married for his first wife a daughter of John Rediat, through whom he came into possession of a

large estate. After the death of his first wife, Mr. Oakes married Mary, daughter of Adam Holloway, by whom he had several children, descendants of whom, by his daughter Hannah, who was married to Gershom Fay, Jr., are still with us. Three granddaughters of Hannah Oakes, namely, Zilpah, Zeviah, and Thankful, daughters of Thaddeus Fay, were married severally to Joel and Asa Parmenter and Deacon Jonas Bartlett. One of the grandsons, Thaddeus Fay, Jr., married Abigail, a daughter of John Martyn, Jr.; she died in 1810, in the eightieth year of her age.

The tragical fate of Mary Goodenow is alluded to in the Discourse. The following particulars may be interesting to those to whom the story is not familiar. It took place August 18th, 1707. Mary Goodenow, daughter of Samuel, who then lived near the present dwelling-house of Mr. Stephen Howe, in a house which was used for a garrison, was gathering herbs in the adjoining meadow, in company with Mrs. Mary, wife of Gershom Fay, who then lived in the east part of the town, when a party of Indians, twenty-four in number, all stout warriors, were seen issuing from the woods and advancing towards them. Mrs. Fay escaped to the garrison, having barely time to fasten the gate of the inclosure, before her pursuers came up. Mary Goodenow, being retarded by lameness, was overtaken, seized, and dragged by the savages to the east side of the meadow, where she was killed and scalped, and where her mangled remains were afterwards found and committed to the dust, and where her grave was visible a few years since.

Some other particulars respecting this event may be found in the historical notice of Northborough, contained in the second volume of the Worcester Magazine, published in 1826.

Before the incorporation of Westborough, in 1717, the western part of Marlborough, including what is now Westborough and Northborough, went by the name of "Chauncey" or "Chauncey Village," — so called, according to the Rev. Mr. Parkman of Westborough, from the circumstance, "that in early times a person of that name was lost in one of the swamps here." The name is retained in connection with two beautiful sheets of water, — "Great Chauncey Pond," in Westborough, and "Little Chauncey Pond," in Northborough.

The names given respectively to the three towns which were taken from Marlborough were strictly appropriate, at the times when they were assigned. Thus, in 1717, the whole of the western part of Marlborough was incorporated by the name of Westborough; and in 1720, the southern part of what remained, was incorporated by the name of Southborough; and, finally, in 1766, the northern part of Westborough was incorporated by the name of Northborough.

Before the incorporation of Marlborough, in 1660, the English planta-

tion which was commenced there in 1656 was called by the Indian name of Whipsuppenicke, or, as it was sometimes written, Whipsufferadge. The Indian plantation in the neighbourhood went by the not unmusical name of Ockoocangansett, corrupted, in Yankee dialect, into Agogangomisset. The name originally belonged to the beautiful hill back of the Academy, as Whipsuppenicke was the name of another hill south of the former.

NOTE A. Page 8.

I find by examination, that this very church covenant, with a few slight variations, had been adopted by the church at Sterling about eighteen months previous, namely, December 19th, 1744, at the time of the ordination of their first minister, the Rev. John Mellen. It is not unlikely that it was adopted in other places.

NOTE B. Page 16.

The excitement on the subject of religion, about this time, in many parts of New England, was unprecedented. George Whitefield made his first visit to this country in 1740, and was followed by admiring crowds wherever he went, and his eloquent declamations produced the most astonishing effects. Many of the clergy welcomed him to their pulpits; while others refused to give him their countenance, and more than questioned the wisdom of his measures, and the perfect integrity of his conduct.

So strong, however, was the conviction in the minds of many of the clergy of the value of his services in awakening a religious interest in the community, that a meeting of pastors of churches was called at Boston, the day after Commencement, July 7th, 1743, to bear their testimony and to give their advice in relation to "the late happy revival of religion in many parts of the land," &c.

In the copy of the doings of that convention now in my possession, I find that but four ministers of Worcester county, namely, Webb of Uxbridge, Seccomb of Harvard, Prentice of Grafton, and Goddard of Leicester, were willing to affix their names (and one of these with qualifications) to "the testimony and advice," while the name of Parkman of Westborough is associated with the honored names of Colman, and

Checkley, and Andrew Eliot, of Boston, with ten or twelve others, who, "while they concur with the testimony for the substance of it," object to it, on the ground that it did not use sufficiently strong language in testifying against "itinerancy, or ministers and others introducing themselves into other ministers' parishes without their consent."

In the following year, namely, October 25th, 1744, in an occasional discourse delivered to his people, on the twentieth anniversary of his ordination, from the text, Genesis xxxi. 38, Mr. Parkman uses the following language: — "There have been, at several times, some movings of the spirit of God among us. But as to the outward tokens thereof, by persons joining to the church, I have not been very fond of promoting and countenancing great multitudes of these, when it has been plain to me, either that it has been very much out of form, or, when they have been too raw and unqualified, as being too inexperienced in the practical and spiritual part of religion, or not been so much as indoctrinated and instructed in the necessary principles of Christianity." And not long after, namely, September 6th, 1747, Mr. Parkman, in a funeral sermon, occasioned by the death of the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Colman of Boston, one of the soundest and most judicious ministers of that generation, introduces his subject in the following eulogistic strain: — "When principal pillars fall, the fabric shakes! When great and eminent men are taken away, the whole land feels a shock! Our spiritual fathers are the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof; — our glory and our defence. But our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? One of the very brightest lights that ever irradiated the Western world has lately been extinguished; and how gloomy and sorrowful hereupon is it! What a sensible and general loss is the death of the excellent, the faithful, and venerable Dr. COLMAN!"

President Quincy, in his "History of Harvard University," thus speaks of Dr. Colman: — "This liberal and distinguished man, who was second to none of the clergy of that day in character and influence, departed full of years and honors, his intellectual light and moral worth unclouded, and his Christian charity brightening to the last; yet none of the active, able, professional brethren by whom he was surrounded, except his colleague, Samuel Cooper, ever preached, so far as can now be ascertained, and no one ever published, a funeral sermon or eulogy in token of respect for his memory." — Vol. II. p. 76.

It seems, that, if he was unnoticed by his brethren in the metropolis, a tribute of respect was paid to the good man by a retired country minister in the heart of the Commonwealth.

Every one is at liberty to draw what inference he pleases from the facts I have collected. They may serve to throw some light on the character of the times, if not on the character of the first minister of Northborough.

Just as I was preparing to send these notes to the printer, I met with the following letter, which I had carefully laid away, enclosed in an envelope, some thirty years ago, the very existence of which I had forgotten. I think it worth preserving, as a precious relic of olden times. All must admire the manly and independent tone of the letter; and I have no doubt, that, while, as we know, it brought the people to see and to repair their injustice, it increased their respect and veneration for their minister. Some churches in the nineteenth century might be profited by the timely reproofs it conveys.

I may add that the letter was followed by action on the part of the precinct, on the 6th of the following August; and in December, the sum of eight pounds, in addition to the hundred pounds already assessed, was granted "to the Rev. Mr. Martyn, our worthy pastor."

"TO BEZALEEL EAGER and others, Committee of the North Precinct in Westborough.

"GENTLEMEN, — You are not strangers to the terms or conditions upon which I settled in this place, neither need I tell you that they have never yet been complied with on the part of the precinct; and as you have the management of the public affairs of this precinct, I thought it therefore not improper to inform you of my uneasiness with respect to my salary from year to year. It is an old saying, that sufferers have leave to speak; and as I have been a very great sufferer upon account of the non-fulfilment of the contract from year to year, I think this, if there was nothing else, would be sufficient to justify me in my present complaints, without telling you that I look upon it a real injury to the people themselves to make no conscience of fulfilling their engagements. For let me tell you, if you have a house for the worship of God, a minister, and ordinances, only for fashion-sake, you had better be without them; but if you really intend by them to get that good which God designs by bringing his kingdom so nigh you, how can you expect to reap those benefits, while you injure him who is appointed to bring you the messages of peace and salvation? Is it likely that any success will attend the means of grace among a people who show a manifest slight and contempt of them by their backwardness and unwillingness to maintain and encourage those that wait at God's altar? For is not the laborer worthy of his hire? Don't you acknowledge this in temporal things? for if you have a laborer for the lowest, meanest sort of work, has he not at least his food from day to day? And why must a minister maintain *himself*, at least nine or ten months of the year, which has all along been the case here, or suffer? Is the work of the ministry of so much less value than digging in a ditch? and can you suppose that persons will always think that any body they deal with should be better paid than the ambassador

of Christ ; and that, if they keep their word and make good their promises to others, no matter whether they are kept with ministers or not? Is it not likely that this is oftentimes the case? If there had been fewer instances of it, even in this place, the conditions upon which I settled here had been better performed than they have been. And one great reason, though not the only reason, why the payment of my salary hath been delayed from year to year hath been the putting off making the rates in proper season ; and what apprehensions they that are concerned have of public trusts and sacred oaths is very strange to me.

“Gentlemen, you know something of the difficulties and charges I have been put to to settle here, and the very small matter of assistance I have had from the people ; and I must needs tell you, that, after all this, I take it very hard that I am obliged to take the very money which I should make use of to pay the debts I have contracted towards my building, to buy the necessaries of life ; and not only so, but to be obliged through mere necessity to injure those I owe ; whereas, if the precinct was faithful and just to their engagements, I need not be brought to this. I am very sorry I am obliged to write thus ; but how can I avoid it, when I am a continual sufferer, and those whose business it is will not move in my behalf? It is a hard case, when a minister is obliged thus to complain, and what I wish there was no occasion for, but necessity puts me upon it ; for four years have now passed, and though every year, according to agreement, I was to have my salary at two equal payments, yet more than half a year hath always run away, and sometimes more, before any rates have been made, and then some months after hath been taken up before I have even had any thing of value, which has been to my damage one way or other at least forty or fifty pounds a year. But if the contract was never intended to be kept by the people, why did they ever make it? How vastly different do this people deal with others from their dealings with me ! I do not intend any thing I have writ to be by way of reproach to you or any particular person, for I write in sober sadness ; for it is designed as an introduction to a petition which I have to make, and that is, that you would be just to yourselves and me for the time to come, and that I may have no more reasons for complaints of this nature. I have told you before, and tell you now, that I owe a considerable sum yet towards my buildings, and the money I should have took to have paid my debts, and which I never had of the people, I was obliged to lay out for the necessaries of life ; and do now buy all that I expend in my family, which is very discouraging to me. I wish these matters might be seriously thought of by you, and not only so, but that a meeting may be called and proper steps taken to bring things under a better regulation. I know some may say, the times are hard and difficult, and if the rates should be made in season, the money could not be

gathered. To this I answer, I am as sensible of the hardness of the times, and have as much reason, under my present circumstances, to lament it, as any body ; but the times are not equally hard with all ; some have money, though others han't ; and if the generality would deal as well with me as they do with their shoemakers, tailors, smiths, and the like, I doubt not, though the times are hard, I should be better paid this year than I have been in any year past. But supposing the times to be never so hard, do you think this reason sufficient for the committee to betray their trust, or for the assessors to trifle with a sacred oath? You must remember that I am one party in the covenant with this people, and I never yet consented to any alteration of it ; and until I do, it ought to be fulfilled as near as possible. And were the rates made sooner, from year to year, it might be an advantage to the people as well as to me ; for, as I have something of a farm, a considerable part of my salary might be paid in labor, without injuring any body ; but so it is that nobody cares to ease their burthen this way till perhaps a year and a half is gone, and when they have nothing to do at home they may offer their service to me ; and what is still to my damage, some that I have hired to work, though there hath been near or quite six months of the year gone, and sometimes more, have insisted upon their wages, which I have paid them in money, when there has been no reason for it but because there was no rate made. Many more grievous things of the like nature I could tell of, were it likely to do any good. Upon the whole, I pray you would take this matter into consideration, and let what is amiss be rectified as soon as possible.

“ From your suffering pastor,

“ JNO. MARTYN.

“ *Westborough, June 23, 1750.*”

NOTE C. Page 23.

The term “ orthodox ” is found in the original church covenant, subscribed by the Rev. Mr. Martyn, and others, at the formation of this church ; and I have said that it was a very good term, and ought not to be appropriated by any one denomination, or any body of believers, as belonging exclusively to them. I do not doubt, however, that it was, at the time, commonly applied to the doctrines of Calvinism, or of the Westminster Divines, which were received, at least theoretically, by ministers and churches generally, throughout New England ; and which were publicly controverted or openly rejected but by few, till a somewhat later period. To some ministers of that day these doctrines were peculiarly dear, and

were preached with great vehemence and power. By others, probably, they were held with no very tenacious grasp, — were seldom introduced into their public discourses, or were so softened down and modified as to lose much of their sternness and repulsiveness. I have read several of the manuscript sermons of the Rev. Mr. Parkman of Westborough, which I found, to my great surprise, almost unobjectionable on the score of doctrine. Mr. Martyn may have been a Calvinist of the strictest sort, but I have had no evidence to convince me that such was the fact; and I have never supposed that strict Calvinism extensively prevailed in Northborough, either during the ministry of Mr. Martyn, or that of his immediate successor. I learned, by tradition, when I first came to this place, that, in the earlier part of Mr. Whitney's ministry, a few who held Calvinistic views were dissatisfied with Mr. Whitney, on account of his leaning to Arminianism; and I have understood, that, at a subsequent period, an attempt was made by several young men of Calvinistic views to introduce those views by appointing religious meetings at private houses, in opposition to Mr. Whitney's wishes; but I believe that they found little sympathy with the public, and that liberal sentiments continued to prevail till the commencement of my ministry. Great efforts were then made, chiefly by persons in neighbouring towns, to prejudice the people here against Unitarianism, and to prevent my settlement on that ground; the result of which may be gathered from the fact, that only eleven votes out of one hundred and eight were cast against the candidate for settlement, and several of those were given by men who afterwards proved to be among the firmest friends and supporters of the man whom they opposed.

If the Rev. Mr. Martyn and his people generally were Calvinists, which is not proved by their use of "Orthodox Catechisms," — since I doubt whether there were any other catechisms in use in the New England churches of that day than those of the Westminster Divines, which in many churches were not laid aside till long after the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism had been discarded both by ministers and people, — if, I say, Mr. Martyn and his people were Calvinists, there must have been a great, and, considering the staid habits of the people, a most surprising, change in the sentiments of the latter, within a brief period, in order to account for the state of things during Mr. Whitney's ministry, to which I have adverted. But the truth is, Calvinism and Orthodoxy are not convertible terms. *The popular theology* is accounted *Orthodoxy*. And this, as is well known, varies from age to age. Calvinism cannot vary. It is one thing, and not many. There is, properly speaking, no *high* or *low*, *strict* or *loose*, *extravagant* or *moderate*, Calvinism. For the term applies to what is fixed and definite, namely, to the system of theological dogmas held and taught by John Calvin of Geneva. Now Calvinism may be orthodoxy in one

age, but it is not orthodoxy here and everywhere, now and always. The theology of the Westminster Catechism, which I studied, but never understood, when I was a child, nor believed then, or since I became a man, was accounted orthodoxy among the New England churches a century ago; but is it received fully, in all its length and breadth and depth of meaning, by those who would appropriate that title now? I think not. The term orthodoxy literally means *right doctrine or opinion*, and orthodoxy has had so many mutations and phases, that it seems to me that I should not be chargeable with unpardonable arrogance, should I claim for the sentiments, which I honestly hold and openly advocate, the title of *orthodox*. Should I make that claim, however, I should do it with the express recognition of the equal claims of my Christian brethren who as honestly hold and as openly advocate other views, — holding as I do, that no denomination, no section of the Christian church, monopolizes the truth, and that, if I have a right to differ from my brother, he has as good a right to differ from me, — that we both have one Master in heaven, and that to his own Master every man standeth or falleth.

One thing is certain, — the church of which I am the pastor has never had a *Calvinistic*, or even a *Trinitarian*, covenant or creed. I have in my possession, not a copy or a fac-simile, but *the identical church covenant*, with the autograph signatures of the original ten members, following that of Mr. Martyn himself, to which were added afterwards three other autograph names, namely, Josiah Bowker, Paul Newton, and William Holloway. It was put into my hands, with the church records and other papers, by the late Deacon Nahum Fay, who had acted as clerk of the church after the death of Mr. Whitney, and while it was destitute of a pastor. In this venerable document, the second article, which prescribes the use of *orthodox catechisms*, is stricken out by a mark of the pen; when, or by whom, I am unable to say. Neither can I tell how it escaped the flames which destroyed the other church records, together with the house and goods of the Rev. Mr. Whitney, in 1780. That it *was* preserved, and that it *is* the original document, and not a copy, is evident on the slightest inspection.

This covenant was superseded by the one which was in use at the commencement of my ministry, and that again by the one that was introduced by the present pastor, in 1817; neither of which is more or less liberal than the original covenant, and to either of which I suppose any conscientious Trinitarian or Calvinist might assent.

Our church is not, and never was, a sectarian church; and there is nothing in its organization or constitution which requires that either the pastor or the members of it should hold this or that particular system of religious belief. It admits of change. It is an Independent Congregational church. It professes to adhere to the two great principles of Prot-

estantism — the *sufficiency of the Scriptures*, and the *right of private judgment*. It does not aim to secure a uniformity of faith among its members; all of whom are allowed and encouraged to examine for themselves, and who are subjected to no church censure, and no loss of caste, and no social disadvantage, in case they should depart from the views which are entertained by the pastor or by the majority of the brethren. We hold to freedom and progress in religion as well as in other matters, and believe, that, much as religious freedom has been infringed upon, there has been progress in religious knowledge, not in this church only, but in the churches of New England generally, during the century which we have been reviewing; and further, that *progress* should continue to be the object and aim of all the disciples of Christ. We do not doubt that those who shall come after us will have clearer, more enlarged, and rational views of the doctrine of Christ than any to which the human mind has yet attained. We would not take any system of theology that has been embodied in human creeds, or that has been advocated by the most eminent divines, even of our own faith, and transmit it, in a stereotyped form, to future generations. For we believe that “more light is yet to break forth from God’s holy word,” which the darkness of the nineteenth century comprehendeth not, but which shall illuminate and bless future generations. The Christianity of Christ is immutable; but the Christianity of the church, the Christianity of creeds, varies from age to age; and it may be late, if ever, that the one shall be brought into an exact conformity with the other.

I trust I shall be pardoned, if I add to this extended note the following sentiments of the venerable Robinson, of Leyden, taken from his celebrated farewell discourse to our Pilgrim fathers, as reported by Governor Winslow, who was present and heard it; and which appeared in print, for the first time, in 1646, just two hundred years ago.

“He charged us before God and his blessed angels to follow him no farther than he followed Christ; and, if God should reveal any thing to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry; for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word. He took occasion, also, miserably to bewail the state and condition of the reformed churches, who were come to a period in religion, and would go no farther than the instruments of their reformation. As, for example, the Lutherans, they could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; for whatever part of God’s will he had further imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And so also, saith he, you see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them; a misery much to be lamented; for though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them; and were they now

living, saith he, they would be as ready and willing to embrace further light, as that they had received. Here also he put us in mind of our church covenant, at least, that part of it whereby we promise and covenant with God, and one with another, to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written word; but withal exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, and well to examine and compare it with other scriptures of truth before we received it. For, saith he, it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such antichristian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once."

"Words," said Dr. Prince, of Boston, one hundred years ago, "almost astonishing, in that age of low and universal bigotry." Would that the spirit which they breathe might be infused into all the New England churches of the nineteenth century!

NOTE D. Page 28.

The following votes of the precinct, passed at different dates, may remind us of our superior privileges, while they carry us back to "a day of small things."

"December 31st, 1744. Voted to build a meeting-house.

"Voted, that the meeting-house should be set on the most convenient spot on a corner of land between the road coming from Nathaniel Oak's, and the road coming down from Benjamin Lull's, and leading down to Cold Harbour Bridge.

"Voted, that the meeting-house should be forty-six feet in length, and thirty-six feet in wide, and twenty feet post.

"Voted and granted the sum of fifty pounds lawful money [\$ 166.66], to be paid in money, labor, or timber for building the meeting-house."

"April 26th, 1745. Voted to raise the meeting-house on Tuesday next, to begin at nine o'clock in the morning.

"Voted, that every man should provide *according as he was spirited.*"

"August 26th, 1745. Voted and allowed six shillings [twenty-five cents] for scoring timber, and six shillings and six pence [twenty-seven cents] for hewing, and eight shillings [thirty-three cents], per day, for framing, boarding, and shingling."

"November 17th, 1746. Put to vote to see if they would lay the meeting-house floor. Passed in the negative.

"Put to vote to see if the precinct would glaze the meeting-house forthwith, or as soon as glass can be provided. Passed in the negative.

"Desolved the meeting."

“ December 29th, 1746. Voted and allowed to Lieutenant William Holloway, for entertaining the council at the ordination, £ 20, 16 s.”

“ June 8th, 1747. It was put to vote to see if they would build the pulpit, past in the negative.

“ Voted and granted the sum of £ 150, old tenor, for glazing and finishing the meeting-house.”

“ September 4th, 1747. Voted to build the pulpit, the deacons’ seat, and the minister’s pew.”

“ January 30th, 1748. It was put to vote to see if the precinct will have as many pews as can be built by the walls of the meeting-house with conveniency, and four more in the hind part of the body of seats. Past in the affirmative.

“ The precinct voted to build the body of seats in the meeting-house by the last day of May.”

“ September 4th, 1749. It was put to vote to see if the precinct would build the gallery stairs and lay the gallery floors, and build the breast work of the gallery by the last of next October, come twelve months. Past in the affirmative.

“ It was put to vote to see if the precinct will grant *the pew ground* in the meeting-house to those who have paid most on real and personal estate, and one poll only, to what hath been already done to the meeting-house, they building them by the last of next October, come twelve months, or forfeit the ground to the precinct’s use again. Past in the affirmative.”

“ November 13th, 1749. Voted, that they would have twenty pews in the meeting-house.”

August 13th, 1752. A committee, chosen for that purpose, reported the following list of persons, who were the highest payers on real and personal estate, &c., to whom, in the order they are named, the choice of *pew ground* in the meeting-house was allotted.

Lieut. William Holloway.
 Capt. James Eager.
 James Ball.
 Samuel Gamwell.
 Cornet Simeon Hayward.
 Pelatiah Rice.
 Deacon Matthias Rice.
 Nathan Ball.
 Jacob Rice.
 Timothy Fay.
 Ensign Rice.
 Jonathan Bartlett.
 Josiah Bowker.

Lieut. Bezaleel Eager.
 Jesse Brigham.
 Gershom Fay.
 Samuel Allen.
 Thomas Billings.
 James Eager, Jr.
 John McAllister.
 Deacon Jonathan Livermore.
 Thomas Goodenow.
 Seth Hudson.
 John Oak.
 George Oak.
 Seth Rice.

Finally, on the 11th day of March, 1751, the question was put to see if the precinct would *finish the meeting-house*, and it passed in the affirmative. Although it appears, from subsequent votes, that leave was given to different individuals to build pews, at their own expense, for their own use, in parts of the gallery that were unoccupied.

November 11th, 1765. The following *females* petitioned for leave to build a pew "behind the long gallery seats in the east end": — Hannah Wood, Dinah Fay, Sarah Rice, Beulah Wood, Mary Brigham, Betty Tenney, Abigail Keyes, Anna Goodenow, and Mary Fay; and leave, of course, was granted.

And, September 6th, 1756, the precinct voted and granted the sum of six pounds, ten shillings, and six pence, three farthings, to pay for finishing the meeting-house.

"Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem."

Up to the date of the incorporation of this town, in 1766, nearly all the votes of the precinct recorded in the Precinct Book relate strictly to parish or ecclesiastical affairs. I do not find a single vote relating to schools, highways, bridges, &c.; and it was not till April, 1766, that a proposition was made "to build a pound," and "to provide a reading and writing school-master," and, in the following November, "to repair their highways by a rate." It seems too, that, even at this date, *the pew-ground* had not all been taken up, as that "over the women's stairs" was granted at this time to John Martyn (son of the minister), Henry Gaschett, Timothy Brigham, Silas Rice, Jonathan Bartlett, and Gideon Hayward.

NOTE E. Page 31.

I have learned, since the delivery of this Discourse, by an examination of the Town Records of Westborough, that, after Northborough became a separate precinct, till its incorporation in 1766, the inhabitants of the precinct continued to exercise their rights as citizens of Westborough, and received their share of the appropriations that were made from time to time for the support of schools, for repairing the highways, and for other objects of public utility. Hence, there was no necessity for making any appropriations, as a precinct, except for the support of public worship.

NOTE F. Page 32. .

I cannot forbear adding, in a note, a more extended notice of the Rev. Mr. Whitney, taken from my "History of Northborough," which is now out of print.

"The services at his ordination were performed by the following persons:—Rev. Mr. Morse, of the Second Church in Shrewsbury (now Boylston), made the Introductory Prayer; Rev. Mr. Whitney, of Petersham, the father of the candidate, preached from Matthew xxviii. 19, 20; Rev. Mr. Parkman, of Westborough, made the Consecrating Prayer, and gave the Charge; Rev. Mr. Smith, of Marlborough, expressed the Fellowship of the Churches; and Rev. Mr. Bridge, of Chelmsford, made the Concluding Prayer."

"Distinguished for the urbanity of his manners, easy and familiar in his intercourse with his people, hospitable to strangers, and always ready to give a hearty welcome to his numerous friends; punctual to his engagements, observing an exact method in the distribution of his time, having a time for every thing, and doing every thing in its time, without hurry or confusion; conscientious in the discharge of his duties as a Christian minister, catholic in his principles and in his conduct, always taking an interest in whatever concerned the prosperity of the town and the interests of religion, he was, for many years, the happy minister of a kind and an affectionate people. . . . He was extensively known by his 'History of Worcester County'; a work highly valuable for the facts it records, many of which would probably have been lost, had they not, with great pains and fidelity, been collected and embodied in this work. . . . The other printed writings of Mr. Whitney, so far as they have come to my knowledge, are, two discourses, delivered July 4th, 1774; a sermon delivered at a lecture, July 4th, 1776, on publishing the Declaration of Independence; a half century sermon, preached June 1st, 1796; a sermon at the ordination of his son, Rev. Peter Whitney, of Quincy, February 5th, 1800; a sermon preached at Shrewsbury, February 16th, 1810, at the funeral of Mrs. Lucy Sumner, wife of Rev. Joseph Sumner, D. D.; and a notice of a remarkable apple-tree, in the first volume of the 'Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.'

"Mrs. Whitney [formerly Julia Lambert, of Reading] survived her husband nearly five years, and died at Quincy, while on a visit to her children, January 10th, 1821, aged seventy-nine years. All who knew Madam Whitney will bear testimony to her worth, and admit that she possessed, in no common measure, dignity of manners, sprightliness of mind, and goodness of heart. She was, indeed, a most pleasant companion and a most valuable friend."

The writer now adds, that, with a very moderate income, Mr. Whit-

ney brought up a large family, giving all his children a good education, sending one of his five sons to college (Rev. P. Whitney, of Quincy), and fitting others for various useful walks, in which some of them still continue. Of his four daughters, one died soon after her marriage; the other three, with two of the sons, settled in Quincy, were all well married, and all survive to this day. Soon after the death of Mr. Whitney, a tomb was built by his family, a part of the expense being borne by the town, in which his mortal remains were deposited, and a marble slab, by a vote of the town, placed over it with the following inscription: —

“In memory of the Rev. Peter Whitney, pastor of the Religious Society in this town, who died February 29th, 1816, in the 72d year of his age, and the 49th of his ministry,

“The esteem and veneration of his flock have devoted this monument.”

The present pastor gave some account of his own stewardship in a discourse delivered on the completion of the twenty-fifth year of his ministry, which was printed.

In preparing the following notice of the Celebration, at the request of the Committee for Publication, we have availed ourselves of portions of the account published in the “Boston Daily Advertiser,” written, while the memory of the occasion was fresh, by one who was an interested partaker in it.

“NORTHBOROUGH, MASS., *June 1, 1846.*

“This day is the centennial anniversary of the gathering of the first church in this town, and the ordination of its first pastor, Rev. John Martyn. As Northborough was politically, for many years after this event, the Second Precinct of Westborough, the collecting of the church is naturally considered the epoch which most properly marks the beginning of the independent existence of this beautiful and flourishing town. The members of this church and society, therefore, with their friends from abroad, have united to-day in a centennial celebration, which has passed off, in every regard, most agreeably.

“If the early settlers of Northborough chose the day for their ordination from any regard to the beauty of nature and of the season, it must be owned that they were men of quick and pure taste. For Northborough itself, beautiful as you know it to be always, can never appear to such advantage as in this ‘queen of the months,’ when all the hills around it, and the whole valley, are in the very richest verdure. The long storm of last week had brought every thing to perfect freshness, and

we felt to-day, as one of our friends reminded us, that the very arch of heaven was newly opened for the solemnity,—in the sudden dispersion of a week's clouds and rain.

“At eleven o'clock, a large congregation gathered in the church, which stands finely on a rising knoll overlooking the village. It is a good old New England church, of the older fashion, having been built near the site of the first meeting-house, in 1808. Its large dimensions were put fully into requisition by an interested audience.”

The following was the order of services.

ANTHEM. “THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE.”

ORIGINAL HYMN. BY M. W. L.

Almighty power! whose sovereign grace
Hath kindly led us on our way;
Whose guardian care hath blessed our race,
And brought us to this happy day;—

Thou, whose protecting hand hath led
Our exiled fathers to a home,
When from their native land they fled;—
With grateful hearts to Thee we come.

Inspire our hearts with sacred fire,
To warm and gladden all our life,
That we like them may never tire,
Till we have conquered in the strife.

Father! accept the prayer we raise,
And humble praises which we bring;
And, through the remnant of our days,
Thy love and goodness may we sing.

One hundred years have passed away,
Since first our fathers gathered here;
We meet to celebrate the day
Which to our souls is justly dear.

And when in dust this house shall lie,
O, may our spirits, God of Love!
Receive a temple in the sky,—
A heavenly home with Thee above!

PRAYER, BY REV. W. BARRY, OF FRAMINGHAM.

HYMN. "IN PLEASANT LANDS ARE FALLEN THE LINES," &c.

DISCOURSE, BY REV. JOSEPH ALLEN.

CENTENNIAL HYMN. BY L. C. A.

One hundred years have passed away,
 Since first, where now we stand,
 To form a Christian brotherhood,
 There met a feeble band :
 "Ten righteous men" alone stood forth
 To consecrate the shrine,
 By holy ties together bound,
 In days of Auld Lang Syne.

Then met, in that "unfinished hall,"
 The matron and the sire,
 To bring their humble offering,
 And light the altar fire :
 Aged and venerable forms
 On benches rude recline, —
 The *seats of honor* for the men
 That lived in Auld Lang Syne.

For miles along the untrodden way,
 And through the forest wild,
 In summer's heat and winter's cold,
 The mother led her child
 Far to the plain old meeting-house,
 To hear the word divine ; —
 That was their zeal to worship God,
 In days of Auld Lang Syne.

But now our fathers, where are they,
 The glory of our youth, —
 The honored pastors of our sires,
 Their guides to heavenly truth ?
 Their children's children, here we meet
 Around this sacred shrine,
 To honor those who bravely toiled
 In days of Auld Lang Syne.

And now the dark and gloomy "day
 Of our small things" is o'er,
 And we will reach the helping hand
 To those who need it more :
 So children's children, in their turn,
 In future years shall join
 To bless the friends that strengthened them
 In days of Auld Lang Syne.

PRAYER, BY REV. J. H. ALLEN, OF JAMAICA PLAIN, ROXBURY.

BENEDICTION.

After the services, the congregation went in procession to the hotel, where an entertainment had been liberally provided by Mr. Blake for the large company that were assembled. We were gratified by the presence of several strangers, among whom were S. F. Haven and J. C. B. Davis, Esqrs., of Worcester, and the Rev. Messrs. Alger of Marlborough, Barry of Framingham, Hale of Worcester, and Brigham of Taunton. Many sons and daughters of Northborough had also gathered to pay this tribute of affection and respect to the venerable church which had blessed their infancy and instructed their youth.

The following sentiments, with the remarks accompanying, make the only record we are able now to give of the intellectual entertainment that followed the collation.

1. *The Day*, — which calls together fathers, mothers, and children, grateful to those who established the institutions of religion here, and pledged to sustain and transmit them to ages yet to come.

2. *The Memory of John Martyn and Peter Whitney*. They labored in the vineyard of their Master ; they were faithful servants ; they have gone to give an account of their stewardship.

To this the Rev. Mr. Allen replied, by speaking, in a few appropriate and respectful words, of his two predecessors, whose labors had laid the foundation and prepared the way for the religious education of the town ; and of the duty which now devolves upon us, of preserving faithfully the heritage we have received from our fathers.

3. *The Memory of Jonathan Livermore*, — the first deacon of this church, and the first clerk of this precinct, — a faithful public servant, a true man, and one that feared God, with his household. The fidelity and piety of the old man have been transmitted to his children's children.

The Rev. William Barry, of Framingham, responded to this, regretting the absence of the Rev. A. A. Livermore, of Keene (a descendant of Dea-

con Livermore), and expressed his interest and gratification in the proceedings of the day.

4. *The Memory of Deacons Isaac Davis and Nahum Fay*,— whose integrity, piety, and religious trust are worthy of the imitation of every religious community.

This sentiment called forth F. W. Gale, Esq., of Worcester, a native of Northborough, and grandson of Deacon Davis. He spoke of his former desertion of New England for the West, as if a better home could be found anywhere than in old Massachusetts; and earnestly besought the young men of his native town to remain faithful to their duty to the place of their birth.

5. *Hon. John Davis*. Though reared among us, we are too generous to claim him for our own. He belongs to his country. The people appreciate his worth.

A letter was here read from the Hon. John Davis, expressing his regret at not being able to attend our celebration, his strong sympathy with the spirit of the day, and his interest in the place of his boyhood. His son, J. C. B. Davis, Esq., of Worcester, being present, spoke modestly of his connection with our distinguished townsman, and claimed a share in whatever concerns the town to which he is bound by so wide a relationship. A letter was also read from S. Greele, Esq., of Boston, who was unable to join (as he had been invited to do) in the festivities of the day.

6. *Marlborough*,— the ancient plantation incorporated in 1660. She comes by her representative, to congratulate her children that Christian institutions are sustained in their purity amongst them.

This was responded to by the Rev. Mr. Alger, of Marlborough, whose remarks harmonized well with the spirit of the time and occasion.

7. *The American Antiquarian Society*. In its birth, the pride of our county; in its youth, an honor to our State; in its maturity, an ornament to our country.

S. F. Haven Esq., of Worcester, Secretary of the Antiquarian Society, being called forth by this sentiment, spoke at some length of the interest and value of antiquarian pursuits; of the services rendered in this regard by the New England clergy, among whom he made honorable mention of the ministers of this town; and of the true respect to our ancestry, as distinguished from the foolish imitations sometimes found of the emblems of European heraldry.

8. *The Clergy*,— set apart to minister at the altar, and to offer the sacrifices of the people;— may they always be found with clean hands and with pure hearts, and devoted to the great work of their Master.

The Rev. C. H. Brigham, of Taunton, a descendant of one of the old families of this neighbourhood, replied to this sentiment in a strain of

pleasant remarks, — speaking in particular of the harmony and stability by which the church in Northborough has been honorably distinguished, in contrast with many others, as shown by the fact, that no minister has been dismissed, and that the present is only the third of those whose united ministries have already filled a century.

9. *The Gassett Fund*, — a noble gift from a cheerful giver; — may it never prove a source of dissension, but be the means of propagating a true faith that shall be a little leaven to leaven the whole lump.

10. *New England*, — the best country God ever gave to a people; — may we, who have received it from the hands of our ancestors, transmit it to posterity, with its customs, laws, and government, improved with the advancement of the ages.

The Rev. E. E. Hale, of Worcester, here spoke with great interest of his recent establishment in Worcester county, truly regarded as the heart of New England, and of his pleasure in being thus entitled to respond to that call. After some remarks characterized by hearty good feeling and earnestness, he called our attention, by a bold and striking figure, to the great thought of that progress of the human mind through centuries, indicated in this centennial celebration. The middle of each century has been said to be marked by some great epoch in history, — as the sixteenth by the Reformation, the seventeenth by the struggle for liberty in England, and the nineteenth by the wide diffusion of freedom and general ideas. As in the great trigonometrical survey of our State, by a concerted series of observations, a signal, shown upon Mount Adams in the extreme west, is repeated on Wachusett in the centre, and so seen from the Blue Hills near the shore, spanning the State in two great strides; — so the eighteenth century, marked by the founding of New England churches, serves as a *middle station*, interposed between the seventeenth and nineteenth, to transmit the reflected light of the past.

11. *Our Pastor*, — a watchful sentinel, always at his post; a good shepherd, leading his sheep into green pastures; a faithful steward, always ready to give an account of his stewardship.

In the course of some miscellaneous conversation, the chair abruptly called on the Rev. J. H. Allen, of Jamaica Plain. With an allusion to the well-known anecdote of Lamb, who said to Coleridge, “I never heard you do any thing else but preach,” he expressed his regret at being known only as a preacher and an unfamiliar guest, where in his boyhood he had found a welcome at every fireside; and his joy at being able now to testify his warm personal interest in that spot which would always be to him a home. Two places, Northborough and Boston, were with him identified with the name of New England; for their good name he was jealous as for his own. And though there seemed cause for fear, sometimes, lest the best blood of New England should be all drawn away and poured

into the great opening veins of the gigantic West, and its ancient prosperity should fail, yet here every thing was so open, generous, fresh, and hospitable, that there could be no room left for fear, only for gratitude and hope. He concluded with urging the need of individual character, intelligence, and manly independence, as the only safeguard for the true well-being of our country.

12. *The Inhabitants of Northborough.* May they vie with each other, not as followers of Paul, of Apollos, or of Cephas, but as the advocates of the great principles of Christianity, not by profession merely, but in life and conduct.

13. (Volunteer, by Mr. Anson Rice.) *The Day.* This day witnesses the church organized by our fathers one hundred years ago, divided into three. May the next centennial witness our descendants united in one, with one creed, and that founded on the abiding principles, faith, hope, and charity.

14. (Volunteer, by Mr. G. H. Williams.) *Our neat Centennial,*—may it dawn on a world without a slave.

“And may that centennial be the town’s centennial in 1866,”—was the response given, amidst the welcome which this sentiment received from the assembled guests.

Mr. T. P. Allen, of the Cambridge Theological School, being summoned by an allusion to Dr. Prentice, of Lancaster (mentioned in the Discourse), spoke with the design of enforcing the idea of this last Christian wish. His remarks were directed to the need of holding up that lofty spiritual view of the Christian faith, making religion an affair of the character and life, not of creeds, and thus reconciling diversities of opinion in real unity of the spirit.

Dr. Johnson, of Northborough, being called up by a humorous allusion to his English namesake of the last century, spoke briefly, but earnestly, of that especial object of a true education, to unfold and train the individual character, and develop the characteristic strength and excellence of each person. When he sat down, he was greeted by the following encomium:—

“The Dr. Johnson of a hundred years ago, we are sorry to say, sometimes preached better than he practised; our Dr. Johnson, we always thought till now, practised better than he preached.”

We regret that the sketch offered above is so imperfect, and that we cannot give a more distinct account of the remarks which were made. They were in a tone corresponding with the spirit of the whole occasion, and aided to sustain the interest, which did not seem to flag in the least, even at the close. Among the speakers were Mr. Nahum Ball, of Harvard University, and Messrs. Wood, Lincoln, and Rice, of Northborough. Nor should we omit to notice the readiness and skill with

which the chairman, George C. Davis, Esq., performed the duties of his place, or the music which was agreeably interspersed, under the direction of Mr. Jairus Lincoln.

The general direction was given to the remarks by the series of "Sentiments" which we have copied above; but besides these, many humorous allusions and pleasant sayings came spontaneously with the occasion, and cannot be given here. The whole afternoon, from a little after one till nearly six, was spent in the free interchange of kind feeling, and interesting, sometimes eloquent, remarks; so that it was the universal acknowledgment of those present, that "they had never seen a public dinner where the spirit of all was so perfectly kept up, and where every speaker entered so fully into the cordial, friendly, hospitable tone of the whole celebration." After nearly five hours spent at the table, the whole assembly sang,

"From all that dwell below the skies,"

and, having adjourned to meet at the centennial of the town's incorporation, in 1866, separated to their several homes. And thus ended a successful and agreeable celebration, the auspicious beginning of a new century.

Invitations were extended to the other religious societies in town to unite with us in the celebration, which, to our very great regret, were respectfully declined. It was proposed by the pastor of the First Church, at the Parish Meeting in March, that we, as members of the First Parish, should waive our right to appropriate the day to ourselves, and that the celebration of the first establishment of religious institutions in this town should be made a town affair; and this proposition was seconded by the unanimous consent of the persons present, and a committee was appointed to confer with individuals of the other societies on the subject.

In the hope and expectation that our desires in regard to this matter might be accomplished, a meeting of the citizens of Northborough, without distinction of sect, was called just two weeks before the day of the celebration, to make *all* the necessary arrangements for the occasion. No members of the other societies attended, and, accordingly, a committee of arrangements was chosen from the First Parish.

Unwilling, however, to leave the matter here, the pastor called personally on the Rev. Mr. Wakefield, of the Baptist Church, and addressed a note to the Rev. Mr. Houghton, of the Evangelical Congregational Church, which, with the reply, are published with the consent of the writers.

"NORTHBOROUGH, *May* 29, 1846.

DEAR SIR: — I intended to call on you, but, as the weather is stormy,

I have concluded to write what I have to say. Without preface, then, I hope you will come to our celebration next Monday, and I hope your people will come. I was never more in earnest in my life than when I expressed my desire that it should be a *town affair*, and that arrangements should be made for it in a meeting of the citizens of Northborough, such as was called a few days since. Circumstances, over which I have no control, have somewhat changed the character of the celebration; but, so far as I have any influence in the matter, it will not be sectarian in any sense, and I sincerely believe that my Discourse, especially what relates to the Rev. Mr. Martyn, will be as acceptable to your people as to mine.

“I shall be glad to have you make one of the prayers on the occasion. I have invited the Rev. Mr. Day, as he is fond of antiquarian lore, and as he is the pastor of the church which is the ‘mother of us all.’

“It will give me pleasure to have your people generally with us, on that occasion.

“Perhaps it is as well that the celebration should be conducted by our society. The proper centennial *for the town* will be in 1866, which I do not expect to witness.

“Yours very truly,
JOS. ALLEN.”

“NORTHBOROUGH, *Monday morning, June 1st, 1846.*

REV. MR. ALLEN.

“DEAR SIR: — Your polite note of the 29th inst. was received on Saturday evening, and I am happy of this opportunity to express my hearty acknowledgments of your courtesy towards me and my people, in this whole matter of the celebration. So far as my own feelings are concerned, it is exceedingly unpleasant to be constrained, for any reason, to keep aside from an active part in the proceedings of this day. I think all my people feel it unpleasant to refuse the courteous invitation which has been extended to us by your society, to join them in the commemoration of the founding of the first church in Northborough. So far as the act of commemorating that particular event is concerned, we feel that we could do it with all propriety. All know, of course, that that church was a Calvinistic church, embracing the same views as those on which the church to which I minister is also founded. It is known, also, *to the world*, that we, as a denomination, regard such a foundation as essentially different from the foundation of the churches which are now called Unitarian. And it seems, in our view, — rather *in my own*, for I have heard no expression of opinion from my people, — it seems in my view, after much deliberation, to be quite inconsistent with our convictions of truth,

for us to say, as the proposed union would, as I look upon it, *make* us say, that either foundation for a Christian church is equally good. For it is known, of course, that the *characteristic* views of the original church are rejected by the church now standing in their place. It seems to me, moreover, that any proper celebration of the founding of a *church* should be *specifically* religious in its character. And in the present case, were I to take any part, I should be compelled by courtesy to refrain from expressing what I should feel the occasion called for, and could only with difficulty avoid a *virtual* acknowledgment that views which I hold to be essentially different are equally deserving of our cordial sanction.

"I may be mistaken as to the language or import of a union on our part. But feeling as I do in respect to it, I must respectfully decline an acceptance of your polite invitation.

"Wishing you and your people a pleasant and agreeable time in the celebration proposed, I am,

"Respectfully, your humble servant,

"W. A. HOUGHTON.

"REV. JOS. ALLEN."

It was a sad disappointment to many that we could not harmoniously unite in the celebration of the day. We trust, however, that the refusal to accept our cordial invitations does not indicate unkind feelings on their part, and will not be suffered to interrupt that harmony which has so generally and so happily prevailed in our favored community.

The note addressed to the Rev. Mr. Day received the following answer :

"MARLBOROUGH, *June 8th*, 1846.

"DEAR SIR: — Your favor, inviting me to attend the centennial celebration of the foundation of religious institutions in Northborough, reached me on Saturday, consequently not in season for me to return an answer before the day arrived.

"I take the earliest opportunity which my engagements have permitted, to acknowledge your politeness, and to express the satisfaction it would have given me to be present on the occasion. I was called out of town, however, in another direction, by the illness of a friend, considered near her end. In the hope that the address you delivered will be given to the world through the press,

"I remain very respectfully and truly

"Yours, &c.,

"GEORGE F. DAY."



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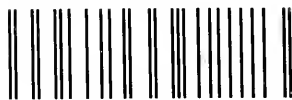
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