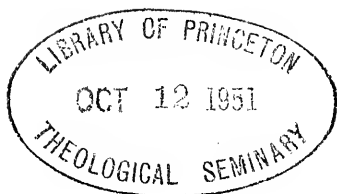


Samuel M. Forester, A.M.

A
Discourse

First Centennial Anniversary
of the
Tabernacle Church

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DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED ON THE

FIRST CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

TABERNACLE CHURCH,

SALEM, MASS. APRIL 26, 1835.

BY SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

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CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE.

Psalm lxxvi, 2.

IN SALEM ALSO IS HIS TABERNACLE.

THE leading purpose in the settlement of New England, was religious. The colonists in general were men, who taught by precept and example, that the **FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM.**—Among the expedients adopted by the fathers of this town, to secure an habitual reverence for evangelical principles and institutions, was a public service, called **LECTURE.** In addition to the exercises of worship on the Lord's day, a discourse was delivered, "as often as every other week at least, to the good satisfaction and content of the Church and town."*

Upon the death of the Rev. Messrs. Curwen and Noyes, in 1717, the Lecture was suspended. But soon after the ordination of their successor, the Rev. Samuel Fisk, in October, 1718, the expediency of reviving it was a topic of conversation. Just at the close of a meeting of the Church on the 25th of December, the Pastor reminded the brethren, that they had neglected to act upon the Lecture. The suggestion was made in consequence of a vote, on the 15th, by which they were to consider at a sub-

* See Appendix A.

sequent meeting, “what may properly be done towards the carrying on of a Lecture every other week in this place.” At their meeting, however, on the 25th, much time was consumed in disposing of the request of the brethren and sisters in the east part of the town, to be dismissed, with a view to the organization of a new church.* So great interest had been taken in the more important business of the meeting, that the subject of the Lecture probably did not occur to any of them, until as they were preparing to disperse, the Pastor remarked, “*Brethren, you forget part of our business.*” When some asked what it was, he answered, “*The considering of some methods for the having a Lecture.*” There were various remarks, no doubt, expressive of the wishes of the members of the church; some choosing to act then upon the subject, and others to defer it to a more favorable opportunity. In the minutes which the Pastor made of the doings of the meeting, we find the following vote: “That the brethren of this Church will privately speedily consider of some proper method to revive a Lecture in this place — and when they are prepared, a number of them shall repair to the Pastor, and pray him to call a meeting further to prosecute the vote passed in the last church meeting concerning a Lecture.” Whether this vote was entered upon the records with the other votes of the meeting, at the same time, or some years afterwards; and whether any such vote was ever passed by the Church, ultimately became questions of serious import, in their bearings and consequences.

* See Appendix B.

If the vote was passed by the Church, it is unaccountable that there should have been no action upon it. That the Church did not again consider the point, is evident from the records and from private testimony.

The Pastor, however, must have become satisfied of the wishes of the people to have the Lecture revived: for, about two months after the meeting of December 25th, he revived it. By the aid of the Rev. Messrs. Prescott and Stanton, he sustained it to good acceptance, until February, 1726. He then discontinued it, and publicly assigned as reasons, that "it was more for the honor of religion to have no Lecture, than one so poorly attended; and that it was discouraging to preach to bare walls." This communication produced much uneasiness. Individuals and committees repeatedly waited upon the Pastor, entreating him "to set up the Lecture again, according to the practice and laudable custom of the First Parish in Salem." He took different ground at different times, in opposition to their votes and wishes, and resolutely maintained his purpose of non-compliance. His method of proceeding is a striking illustration of the practicability of so adhering to "letter" and "form," as to set the claims of equity at defiance. Meanwhile those members of the Church, who felt particularly aggrieved by the Pastor's conduct, refrained from appearing in the First Church at the table of the Lord, and took other measures to evince their dissatisfaction and unhappiness.

At length, in the early part of 1728, an article was inserted in the warrant for a Parish Meeting,

“to consider what further may be proper in order to reviving the Lecture.” Hearing of this, the Pastor soon preached a sermon from Eccles. 5:4—6. In enforcing the obligation of vows, he adverted to the sin of the church in neglecting the vote of Dec. 25, 1718, *to revive the Lecture!* This was a most unexpected and astounding accusation. It was a perilous effort to fasten upon the Church the very responsibility and blame, which for two years had been charged upon him. A warm controversy immediately ensued. The “aggrieved brethren” denied that the Church ever passed any such vote, as that to which the Pastor referred; and, therefore, they intimated or affirmed, that what purported to be such a vote, was a forgery and an interpolation. And it may be added here, that in the Result of a large council convened in July, 1733, it is stated: “That we are much affected to find such grounds for a strong presumption of the interpolation charged upon the Pastor, and that the aggrieved have so much reason to fear that the vote is not genuine.”

In a communication bearing date March 16, 1731, the aggrieved brethren laid before the Pastor, “the principal matters of their offence.” This expression the Pastor considered “as necessarily implying that there were other matters, though less principal, at which they were offended.” He demanded of them, that they should either state the whole, or should give him assurance, that the grievances already alleged, “should be the alone subject of consideration.” The brethren disclaimed all intention of reserving any “matters” for future disputes, and expressed their readiness “to bury in oblivion those less prin-

cipal matters (which he thought necessarily implied) when he had given them the satisfaction due to them as men and Christians, upon the articles already exhibited." With this reply the Pastor was not satisfied.

Having tried in vain to induce the Pastor to call a Church meeting for an investigation and settlement of the difficulties, the aggrieved brethren solicited advice from some of the neighboring clergy. The Rev. Mr. Fisk and his friends, consisting of a majority of the Church and Society, utterly refused to listen to any advice or admonition from sister churches. An ex-parte council was convened in July, 1733, and justified the aggrieved brethren; but advised them to return to the communion of the Church and seek earnestly for a healing of their divisions.

The divisions were not healed, and no hope of reconciliation remained. In accordance, therefore, with the provisions of the Cambridge Platform, twenty-one aggrieved brethren, on the 20th of December following, invited the Second Church in Boston to deal with the First Church in Salem, agreeable to the third way of communion, because, as they would not settle their difficulties, they were guilty of walking disorderly.* The Rev. Messrs. Mather and Gee of the Second Church in Boston, attended to the subject, in a regular and christian manner. Finding Mr. Fisk immovable, steadfastly denying the authority of other churches to interfere in the concerns of the First Church in Salem, they addressed a letter of admonition to this Church, as the first leading

* See Appendix C.

step of discipline. Pursuant to the second step with an offending church, a council of four churches was convened in April, 1734. The First Church treated their proceedings with absolute contempt. They left an admonitory epistle and closed the session. The four churches, whose representatives had attempted in vain "to heal the scandalous divisions," now made arrangements for the convention of a very large and formidable council. Twenty-seven churches, having thirty ministers, were invited to meet at Salem, July 16. Nineteen of these churches sent their delegates. In consequence of some difference of opinion upon the course to be pursued, a few of the council withdrew. In their Result the council confirmed the proceedings of the four churches. A letter of advice to the First Church was adopted, and the council adjourned to meet October 15. Mr. Fisk and his friends were advised to close the controversy with the aggrieved brethren, during the adjournment, and, in failure of the same, were threatened with the highest censure which the churches composing the council were able to inflict. The advice was still in vain. Accordingly the council, at their adjourned meeting, voted, that the First Church in Salem had forfeited the privilege of communion with the churches represented in their body. The sentence of non-communication, however, was delayed for three months. It then went into effect; and the churches of New England were called to witness the singular spectacle of a sister church excluded from the pale of fellowship.

On the 18th of April, 1735, the party dissatisfied

with Mr. Fisk, voted to dismiss him, and to hire Samuel Mather, of Boston, to supply their pulpit. And in the forenoon on the last Sabbath of the month, Mr. Fisk was forcibly prevented from preaching. In the afternoon, while attempting to conduct the services as usual, he was so disturbed by the uproar and confusion of the assembly, that he was compelled to leave the house. The civil authorities laid him under bonds to keep the peace until the session of court. Never again did he make an effort to occupy his pulpit. Accompanied by three fourths at least, of the Church and Society, he abandoned the house of worship to the aggrieved brethren and their associates. That a minority should thus be able to triumph, is easily explained, when we consider how much moral power was wielded by an Ecclesiastical Council, whose decision was just, and whose sentence was ratified by the voice of public opinion. The majority of the First Church were under the ban of excommunication according to the 'Third way of Communion.' The churches generally, though not unanimously, approved the measure. Not only so, but the Colonial Legislature sanctioned the votes of the aggrieved party, and cut off Mr. F. and his friends from all hope of relief. Such was the energy and the efficiency of Congregationalism, one hundred years since! And such was the origin of the Church and Society now worshipping in the Tabernacle!

The Rev. Mr. Fisk and his friends proceeded to establish themselves upon a separate foundation. Neither the day nor the month can be ascertained when they determined upon this measure, or when

they consummated their determination by any formal process. They doubtless assembled under the pastoral charge of Mr. Fisk, from the time that they were expelled from their former sanctuary.

They soon commenced a house for their accommodation. The frame was at first located so near to the house of the First Church, that they were compelled by order of the Colonial Assembly to remove it.* The new house was completed early in 1736. There Mr. Fisk officiated. His adherents claimed the title of First Church, and gave the name of "Confederate Church" to that which was formed by the aggrieved brethren.

Early in 1744, the Church were called to consider a proposal of the Pastor to be furnished with a colleague. His memorial upon the subject induced them to take counsel of the ministers in the vicinity. The result of their consultations was a decision in favor of settling a new Pastor, but not as a colleague. By vote of February 1, 1744, "the deacons were authorised to procure occasional preaching for the church and congregation."

When it appeared certain that Mr. Fisk's ministerial connexion would soon be dissolved, several letters passed between his Church and the Confederate Church, then under the care of the Rev. Mr. Sparhawk, relative to an accommodation. But the parties were unable to come to terms of agreement. We find also, that sometime in the summer of this year, "the Church set apart a day of fasting and prayer with respect to their intended settlement of a Pastor in Mr. Fisk's room."

* See Appendix D.

In April, 1745, Mr. Dudley Leavitt was invited by the Church to become their Pastor. He was unwilling to accept the invitation, while the pastoral connexion of Mr. Fisk continued. The Church, therefore, after suitable counsel, voted on the 30th of July, that the Pastor be "discharged from his ecclesiastical relation." And the congregation, at a meeting on the 12th of August, passed a vote in concurrence with the church. The "call" to Mr. L. was then renewed by the church and the congregation.

They had now become fully sensible of their error in adhering to Mr. Fisk, in opposition to the Christian advice and solemn admonition of the churches, which had dealt with them previous to the separation. Happy were they to avail themselves of the aid of sister churches, to extricate them from the embarrassments and disasters into which they had been plunged, by their obstinate defiance of what they had pronounced unscriptural and unauthorized interference. They made a humble confession, and the sentence of non-communication was rescinded. The way was then prepared for the ordination of Mr. Leavitt.

A council was convened for this purpose, Oct. 2, 1745. After examining various papers submitted to them, they adjourned to the 23d of the same month, and then re-assembled, with an enlargement of their number. Although Mr. Fisk and several of his brethren objected, the council voted to proceed to the services of ordination on the next day.

When, however, the services commenced, the officiating clergyman was most rudely interrupted.

There was such an outrageous tumult, that the council retired from the house, and Mr. Leavitt was ordained under a tree in a field or garden.*

Mr. Fisk was a man of distinguished abilities. But the principles of ecclesiastical government for which he contended, were at war with the established usages of Congregationalism; and, as applied by himself, would expose the churches to all the evils of anarchy in general and despotism in particular. Aggrieved minorities could have no possible redress or relief.

Of the state of the Church and Society, during the ministry of Mr. Fisk, we have no particular information. The records of eight years were in his hands, and they have never yet been found.†

Mr. Leavitt's ministry was prosperous. He was a man of sound orthodox sentiments, and the Church became more and more Calvinistic under his preaching.‡ His memory was very precious to those who had enjoyed his ministrations. He died February 7, 1762.

During his life, repeated unsuccessful attempts were made to settle the differences between this Church and that from which they had separated. Soon after his decease the object was accomplished.|| The title of First Church was relinquished to the Confederate Church, and the Confederate Church, on their part, surrendered a portion of the plate and other property. From August 2, 1762, this Church was called "the Church of which Rev. Dudley Leavitt was late Pastor," until May 23, 1763, when by a formal vote, the Church assumed the name of

* See Appendix E. † See Appendix F. ‡ See Appendix G. || See Appendix H.

Third Church. Thus the controversy, which in divers forms, had been protracted through more than thirty years, was brought to a close. Such was the harmony between the two churches, that when the Rev. John Huntington was ordained as the Pastor of the Third Church, he received the right hand of fellowship from the Rev. Thomas Barnard of the First Church.

Mr. Huntington's ministry commenced on the 28th of September, 1763. It was of brief duration. His health soon failed; and in less than three years from the time of his ordination, his people were overwhelmed with the sorrows of pastoral bereavement. Of all the ministers who have labored in this town, no one was ever more distinguished for loveliness of disposition and fervor of piety. His sun went down at an early hour; but its mild and benignant radiance left an unfading impression of moral beauty upon many hearts.

Dr. Nathaniel Whitaker succeeded Mr. Huntington. When he had received the invitation of the Church and Society to take the oversight of them in the Lord, he prescribed certain important conditions of settlement. One of these was, that a new form of church government should be substituted for the Congregational; and another, that he should enter upon his duties without the accustomed ceremonies of installation. The conditions were accepted.

The 28th of July, 1769, was appointed for public services at the commencement of his ministry here, and several clergymen were invited by the Church to be present, "as friends to the Society and the common cause of religion." The Rev. Messrs. Di-

mond, Barnard, and Holt declined giving their countenance to such an irregular proceeding. In a very friendly letter they remonstrated against the course.* But the people were so charmed with the man of their choice, that they went forward as if under the reckless impulse of infatuation. After a sermon by the Pastor elect, one of the members of the Church read the invitation which had been given to him to settle with them in the ministry, and the Pastor read his answer to the invitation. In this manner was the Rev. Dr. Whitaker inducted into his office as Pastor of this Church! Dazzled by the brilliancy of his intellect and eloquence; captivated "by fair words and goodly speeches," they threw up their ecclesiastical liberties, and took upon their necks a yoke of bondage, which they soon found to be grievous beyond endurance.

The Constitution of Church Government presented by Dr. Whitaker in the Articles of Agreement between him and the Church, was essentially Presbyterian. It went beyond Presbyterianism, by giving to the Pastor a right to negative the votes of the elders and of the whole Church. On the contrary, it fell short of Presbyterianism, by providing for a reference of difficulties to congregational councils, until a stated Judicature should be determined. That this Judicature was intended by Dr. W. to be a Presbytery, is evident from the measures which he took in 1774, to bring the Church under the Boston Presbytery.

Hardly had the Church begun to experience the effects of the new mode of administration, when a

* See Appendix I.

very respectable number were aroused to make a determined effort to return to the former state. They endeavored, but ineffectually, to avail themselves of an article in the Constitution by which the existing government might be modified or abolished. Some proposals, however, were made by the Pastor to prevent "the fourteen uneasy brethren" from prosecuting their opposition. Those members of the Church who preferred to be governed by the Constitution, and those who chose the Cambridge Platform, were to have their option. The Pastor was to preside at the meetings of each party in the Church. He was not to have the power to *negative* any votes of such meetings; *neither was he to be obliged to execute any judgment which they should make, unless he should think best!*

It is amazing that Dr. Whitaker should have supposed it possible, that a Church would consent to be thus virtually divided into two bodies, or that the aggrieved brethren would be ensnared by such a frivolous artifice. They replied to him with great force, and not a little of stinging severity. At the close of their letter, bearing date Nov. 18, 1773, they express "their earnest desire, that his plan of Church Government be totally demolished; and that the Church be allowed to return and rest upon the stable basis of pure and unmixed Congregationalism."*

It was not long before these brethren proposed to the Pastor to take a dismission from the Church. He at first waived the subject, being as unwilling to resign his office, as to demolish his favorite Consti-

* See Appendix J.

tution of Church Government. If at this time the brethren had demanded a Congregational Council, they would have acted in full accordance with the terms upon which that Constitution was received by the Church.

Having, by an adroit and clandestine process, placed the Church under the jurisdiction of the Boston Presbytery, he purposed to bring the subject before that body, in May, 1774.* His plan did not succeed. In September, the Presbytery held a meeting in this place. They recommended a reference of the difficulties to a mutual council, consisting equally of Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The recommendation was not accepted; and in consequence, the fourteen aggrieved brethren were dismissed from the Church by an act of the Presbytery. It may be added here, that these brethren were in February of 1775, regularly constituted a Congregational Church. Hence the origin of the Church now under the care of the Rev. Mr. Emerson.†

When the new Church was formed, a very respectable Society soon surrounded and sustained the brethren. Reports unfavorable to Dr. Whitaker's moral character, were so current and so credible, that his congregation constantly decreased.

It should also be mentioned, that it was only a few months before the formation of the new church, that the meeting house erected for Mr. Fisk in 1735-6, was entirely consumed. Nothing but the pulpit bible and cushion were saved from the flames.

By very great efforts, the frame of the present

* See Appendix K.

† See Appendix L.

house was erected in 1776. It was covered, and pews were made in 1777. But it was without galleries, without pulpit, and without even plaistering upon the walls. In this condition, so emblematic of the miserable circumstances of the people, it was then dedicated as a house of God. It was fashioned after the model of Whitefield's Tabernacle in London, and received its name in honor of his memory. He had preached for Dr. Whitaker but a short time before his sudden decease at Newburyport. Dr. Whitaker when in England a few years previous to his settlement in Salem, had also received marked attentions from some of the most intimate friends and patrons of this eminent evangelist. Soon after Whitefield's death, he rendered an appropriate tribute to his character in two very able Sermons. And when the present house was opened for the worship of God, he gave it the name which has ever since designated the edifice, the Church, and the Society.

Dr. Whitaker's feelings were much enlisted in the revolutionary contest. By his sermons he endeavored to animate the people to great exertion, and in various other ways, some of which were very unclerical, he labored to promote the cause of American Independence. While thus engaged in other employments than those which pertained to the warfare of a soldier of the cross, his christian character became more and more questionable.

In the autumn of 1783, the Church were compelled to investigate the current reports, so unfavorable to their Pastor. They had long been accustomed to frown upon them with indignant contempt.

They now applied to Dr. Whitaker to take some proper measures to relieve himself and the Church from the stigma of general reproach. They were answered with severe rebuke, and were bidden to continue their attendance upon his ministry; meanwhile preparing their charges and proof, if they pleased to present the case before the Presbytery.

Of the Presbytery Dr. Whitaker himself was the moderator. It consisted of but a very few ministers; and not more than two or three of them had any pastoral charge. They were to meet at Groton in June of the next year. The length of time which must elapse before the Church could have a hearing, the distance of the place of meeting, and the consequent inconvenience and expense of appearing there with the requisite committee and witnesses, and the improbability of obtaining an impartial and righteous adjudication, filled the minds of all who were specially interested, with impatient dissatisfaction and painful solicitude. Besides, the number of worshippers in the Tabernacle diminished with such appalling rapidity, that the building soon became a frightful picture of moral desolation. According to the testimony of a venerable member of the Church,* still living among us, and to whom I am much indebted in the compilation of this narrative, "the whole congregation, except the families of *three* individuals, had scattered themselves among other religious assemblies."

The attention of the Church was now directed in solemn earnest, to the nature and tendency of that form of government, by which they were so embar-

* See Appendix M.

rassed and afflicted. The result of their deliberations was a full persuasion of the expediency of returning to the privileges of Congregationalism. Wishing to have a regular action upon the subject, they requested the Pastor to warn a Church meeting. This was refused. A meeting was then called by the elders. Votes were passed, abjuring all allegiance to any Presbyterian authority, adopting the mode of administration prescribed by the Cambridge Platform, and inviting a Council to inquire whether the Pastor had not forfeited his office, by his disorderly life.

When the Council assembled, they made some investigation of the subjects referred to them, and then proposed to Dr. Whitaker to unite with the Church in a mutual Council, consisting equally of Presbyterians and Congregationalists. He would listen to no such proposal, and utterly refused to acknowledge their title to sit in judgment upon the case. They met on the 10th of February, 1784, and adjourned to meet on the 24th. Their Result vindicates the right of the Church to appeal to a Congregational Council, confirms the doings of the Church in renouncing Presbyterian government, and declares Dr. Whitaker's connexion with the Tabernacle to be dissolved.*

This Result was hailed with great satisfaction throughout the community. Dr. Whitaker's labors were brought to a close on the 25th of March. The doors of the Tabernacle were barred against him. Such was now the situation of the man who, in 1769, was settled by acclamation. It is true, that the

* See Appendix N.

Presbytery at Groton, in June following, honored him as their head, and listened to him as their father. They excommunicated the Tabernacle Church, and gave Dr. Whitaker a certificate of their approbation and confidence.* He also obtained from the Proprietors of the Tabernacle a considerable sum of money, as an award for alleged losses and arrearages during his ministry here.

My heart has bled within me, while I have been contemplating this disastrous period of our history. In the lapse of fifteen years, the Church had been dismembered, and but few had been admitted to supply the places of those, who, for various reasons, sought the privilege of communion and fellowship elsewhere. No special season of revival was enjoyed, while Dr. Whitaker was connected with the Church, unless we may so consider the interest awakened by the faithful preaching of an earnest young clergyman, who supplied the pulpit for a few weeks, in the absence of the Pastor. His labors were evidently blessed of the Lord, and one among us still lives to remember him with special gratitude.

The immediate predecessors of Dr. Whitaker, were men of devoted piety. They spake boldly in the name of Jesus. And their daily example gave a delightful witness of the sincerity and fervor of their faith. Such was the divine seal of blessing upon their ministry, that in 1770 this congregation embraced 380 families and 1900 souls,—a greater number than can now be enrolled as connected with the Tabernacle. When, however, Dr. Whitaker was ejected from his office in 1784, the great and

* See Appendix O.

flourishing Society had dwindled to the merest handful. It may be questioned whether the ecclesiastical records of New England furnish a parallel to the scenes of disaster, which I have but faintly delineated.

The personal character of Dr. Whitaker was made the occasion of much reproach upon evangelical Christianity. Its professors were sometimes hooted in the streets. Many there were, who like the foes of Zion in the days of the Psalmist, cried, "Aha, Aha." To add to all these grievances and agonies, the Proprietors of the Tabernacle were burdened with a debt, which had well nigh crushed them. If it had not been for the resources and generous spirit of a single individual, whose pecuniary circumstances have since felt the blight of misfortune, it is doubtful whether the Tabernacle Society would not have lost forever its organized existence.*

The little remnant of the Church did not utterly despair, that the day of small things would eventually usher in a period of spiritual enlargement and rejoicing. They often met in a private room to take counsel together, and make supplication to the Most High. Even here they were frequently disturbed and insulted. But they laid hold on the promises, and the Lord heard their prayers.

Within a few months after Dr. Whitaker's dismissal, the Tabernacle was again open for worship. Each of the members of the Council of February 10th and 24th, gave his services for a Sabbath. Occasional preaching was then hired, until March, 1785. The congregation, which at first hardly

* See Appendix P.

equalled the pews in number, now began to exhibit indications of returning strength. Still, it is said, that of all who had rejoined the Tabernacle, not more than *seventeen* owned any part of a pew. And beside the influence of local causes to create a pecuniary embarrassment in the Society, it should be remembered, that the whole community was suffering under that dreadful scarcity of money and credit which was one of the immediate consequences of the war of Independence.

It will not surprise you, therefore, that when the Rev. Joshua Spaulding was ordained in October of this year, the salary amounted only to \$416.66.* Even this sum was not raised. Distressed by the failure to secure the salary of the Pastor, some of the Proprietors waited upon him, and fully apprized him of their inability to fulfil their contract. With great readiness he offered to receive whatever might be collected for his support; and pledged himself to pass to the credit of the Society any excess beyond the terms of settlement. His liberality had such a grateful and animating influence upon the people, that in a few years they canceled all arrearages.

To the new Pastor's noble spirit of enterprise and pecuniary self-denial, the Proprietors of the house were also indebted for an example, which stimulated them to plaister the walls, and erect galleries and a pulpit. And to the warm piety and liberal contributions of the same excellent man, must be ascribed the purchase and preparation of that venerable old building, the first Vestry of the Tabernacle.

While the external aspect of the Society was as-

* See Appendix Q.

suming a more dignified character, under the administration of Rev. Mr. Spaulding, the interests of personal religion greatly revived and flourished. Immediately after his settlement, the half-way covenant,* which had come down from the days of Mr. Fisk, was abolished; the Church was organized with suitable officers; the present course of weekly meetings was introduced; and various other judicious methods were devised, to secure regular discipline and efficacious order, harmony, and love. A Code of Articles, embodying the principles and rules of Church Government, agreeable to the Cambridge Platform, was prepared, and, after thorough examination, adopted by the Church. It still exists, a simple and beautiful compend of ecclesiastical law, adapted to all our circumstances.

The efforts of the Pastor and the Church to purify their body, were eminently successful. The discipline of the Tabernacle Church became a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them who love to do well. I cannot speak too strongly in admiration of the energy and the Scriptural propriety, with which the discipline of the Church was administered under the guidance of Mr. Spaulding. A most excellent preparation was made for a continuance of the same system under the administration of his successors. It may be said in truth of this Church, for several years after his ordination, that it had rest, and walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied. The Spirit descended in large measure, and a rich harvest was gathered.

There were some peculiarities of person and man-

* See Appendix R.

ners in Mr. Spaulding, which rendered him less popular and influential than he would otherwise have been. The vehemence and pungency with which he preached the distinguishing doctrines of grace, often inflamed the enmity of the carnal mind. But his integrity as a man, a Christian, and a minister of the Lord Jesus, no one had the hardihood or the malice to defame. And those, who abhorred his doctrines, were constrained to admit, that he had been instrumental of much good, in reclaiming the vicious from the error of their ways.

Unfortunately for the peace and happiness of the people, the Pastor was drawn into the political controversy, which commenced near the close of the last century. He preached his political as well as religious sentiments. He also contributed to the public papers. Hence he exposed himself to the lash of anonymous invective ; and of those in his congregation who differed from him in politics, some of the most intelligent and active withdrew from his ministrations.

No alarming disaffection, however, occurred, until about the year 1800, when the Pastor, by some unaccountable reasoning or feeling, was led to assert a *right to negative the votes of the Church*. It is the more remarkable that this prerogative should be claimed, because he well knew the merits of the conflict between his Church and his immediate predecessor. The claim was no sooner distinctly avowed, than it was met with a resolute and energetic resistance.

It was not until 1802, that a Council was convened in order to settle the difficulties, which were

occasioned by this claim of Mr. Spaulding. Various measures had been previously taken by the Church, to induce him to renounce his favorite doctrine. The spirit which he ever manifested, was in striking contrast to that of Dr. Whitaker. He was doubtless sincere in the belief, "that a power belongs to the administrators over the seals and censures of Jesus Christ's kingdom, which might operate not only against the majority, but every individual brother." "The Church of Christ," he maintained, "is established upon the simple family principle, and the authority of the Elders is that of parents in a family." The Council sustained the Church in the course which they had pursued; and, in terms of marked Christian courtesy and affection, pronounced the views of the Pastor upon the points in dispute, to be inconsistent with the Articles of the Church and the established usages of Congregationalism. Mr. Spaulding asked and received a dismissal.

A minority adhered to him. They were subsequently organized as the Branch, now Howard St. Church. It was a very painful separation between brethren, who had lived together in entire harmony, until the period of disagreement upon the Pastor's claim to negative the votes of the Church. Thus in the short period of twenty-five years, a second dismemberment gave existence to a new Church and Society.

Most cordially do I rejoice to be able to say, that the narrative of strife is over. We have now reached a period, which has no such scenes of conflict, but abounds in the blessings and trophies of peace.

Of the successor of Mr. Spaulding, another might speak with a freedom and force, which the delicacy of an endeared filial relation will not allow to me. Aware, however, that I am expected, so far as I may be able, to do that justice to this portion of the history of the Tabernacle, which you would have required from any other person, who should have been called to officiate on this occasion, I shall endeavor, though a son, yet not as a son, to sketch the leading incidents and characteristics of my father's ministry.

It was on the 20th of April, 1803, that the Rev. Samuel Worcester was installed as Pastor of this Church. He had recently been dismissed, at his own urgent request, from a pastoral charge at Fitchburg. His ministry there had been an admirable school of discipline. He entered upon professional life with habits of laborious and intense application, and from the very first, his standard of pulpit performance was of high order. His sermons at Fitchburg were written with great care, as to their matter, their method, and their style. The mould was here cast, which was not broken, until the silver cord was loosed and the spirit had gone to its home in the heavens.

His preaching was so evangelical and impressive, that its effect upon the Church at Fitchburg was somewhat like the operation of "a new sharp threshing instrument." The discipline which became necessary in removing from the Church, such members as brought great reproach upon the name of Christ, created a stormy and malignant opposition to the Pastor. Several councils were convened;

sometimes with and sometimes without the approbation of the Church. A majority of the Church were fast friends of the Pastor; and some of them, it may be added, looked to *him* as their father in Christ, although they had made profession of faith previous to his connexion with them.

A little volume of "Facts and Documents," contains evidence, that the Pastor had studied the rights of the churches and the principles of Congregationalism, with uncommon perspicacity and patience. It was in the difficulties which he experienced in the management of the discipline of the Church in Fitchburg, that he laid the deep foundations of that ecclesiastical wisdom, which so pre-eminently distinguished him in his subsequent career.

Well qualified as he was in native strength of mind, in personal dignity and urbanity, in literary, theological, and pastoral attainments, to enter upon the work of the ministry in Salem, his answer to the invitation from the Tabernacle speaks the sentiments of great diffidence and apprehension. He was cordially welcomed by the people of his new charge. They had high expectations of enjoying a season of spiritual edification and advancement, and these were not disappointed.

It may be well to remark, that the influence of his predecessor over the new Church and Society, was very great; and the difference of opinion and feeling between the Tabernacle and Branch Churches, was not inconsiderable in its practical influence. The situation of the Pastor here was therefore critical. Great discretion was required on his part, in order that the way might be prepared for that reconciliation which was afterwards so happily secured.

It is also true, that the strength of the Society had been so weakened, that accessions to it were exceedingly desirable. Among the measures of the Pastor for the benefit of his own people and of others, was the establishment of a course of Sabbath Evening Lectures. He expounded the Book of Genesis, in a style so popular, as to bring together very crowded audiences. In the words of our venerable brother, to whom I have already referred, "it was not uncommon for the aisles to be filled with attentive listeners, *standing* till the Lecture was closed." "These exercises," it is added, "were the means of increasing the Society in numbers and respectability, and of doing much good. The Holy Spirit was poured upon the Society and others, and the Church enjoyed a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and additions were daily made to it."

The Pastor was also assiduous in parochial duties. He gave himself with great ardor and delight to the work of the Lord,—in season and out of season. So much had he a mind to work, that he actually committed to the flames a large portion of all the memorials of five years pulpit labor at Fitchburg, lest he should injure his mental habits by drawing too frequently upon the results of former industry and exertion. Such an example as this, I believe, is without precedent.

From the time of his Installation until about the year 1815, he devoted his best hours to the composition of sermons. Of their edifying and elevated character I need not particularly speak. Suffice it to say, that if he had any idol, which was the work

of mens' hands, it was the pulpit of the Tabernacle. Here he loved to be.

His evening Course of Lectures upon Genesis, was not the only important series of Sermons which he prepared. He delivered a regular and elaborate series upon the Gospel according to Matthew, and upon the Acts of the Apostles. In the Church meetings and in the Thursday evening conference, he also gave systematic expositions of different parts of the sacred volume. Other methods were employed occasionally or regularly, to persuade the people of his charge to make the Bible the man of their counsel and the guide of their lives. He wished them, as well as himself, to be "nourished by the words of faith and of good doctrine."

His instructions in every variety and upon every occasion, were *thoroughly biblical*. And the doctrine, to which his thoughts most constantly and feelingly referred, as the grand foundation of faith and holiness, was the *atonement*. There are those who hear me, who will remember with what melting interest he ever listened, in the social circle and the sanctuary, to the song and the music of "Redeeming Love."

His labors for the edification of the Church and conversion of sinners, were not without manifest tokens of the divine favor. Seldom did many months or weeks pass away, without bringing some of his hearers to be taught more fully the way of salvation. Those who visited him for this purpose, seldom if ever forgot his affectionate fidelity. And repeatedly did the Spirit come down, like rain upon the mown grass, and showers that water the earth.

It was not long after such a season of refreshing, that in 1805, he felt obliged to preach two Discourses upon the "Perpetuity of the Abrahamic Covenant." The publication of them drew him into a controversy with the Rev. Dr. Baldwin, of Boston. Here he displayed that ability as a reasoner and a divine, which he had long been cultivating, and which afterwards gained him a high distinction in Ecclesiastical Councils, and in public efforts to vindicate the faith once delivered to the saints,—as that faith was interpreted by the fathers of New England and the Reformers of the 16th century.

Though possessing rare qualifications for a controversial writer, he had no love for such composition. Nothing but an imperative sense of duty could have constrained him to take so conspicuous and responsible a part in the first open struggle in this country, between the defenders and opposers of the doctrine of the Trinity. He was at this time in feeble health, and his avocations were manifold and oppressive. But he came forth as "a mighty man," and made himself more than ever, "a man of renown." He contended earnestly and triumphantly for the doctrine of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, into the faith of which he was baptized. From far and near, he received the most cheering testimonials of approbation from the churches of "the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

He was often solicited to appear in Ecclesiastical Councils; and in the latter part of his life he seldom failed of being present in such cases of special importance as occurred within the limits of this Commonwealth.

His Occasional Sermons were quite frequent. Many of them were published. Among the more remarkable, was that delivered before the Massachusetts Missionary Society in 1809, and that, at the ordination of Missionaries at Newburyport, in 1815.

During the first twelve years of his ministry, his public labors, although very great, did not materially interfere with his pulpit preparations and his parochial duties. The Church steadily advanced under his guidance. Discipline was duly administered. Several very important cases were determined, with an exertion of mind like that of a profound Judge upon the bench. Great effort was made for the instruction of all classes in the congregation, that each might have a portion in due season. The young were objects of peculiar attention and solicitude. They revered the commanding presence of their Pastor, and loved his affectionate words. Wherever he went among his people, he found himself with friends, who gave him a most cordial reception. Those who saw him in the sick-chamber, and at the fire-side of affliction, ever bore a grateful testimony to his tenderness and his consolatory sympathies.

While pursuing his labors here, he was not undisturbed by applications for his entire services elsewhere. Within one year after his settlement in Salem, he was invited to the Professorship of Theology in Dartmouth College, with a distinct ultimate reference to the presidency. A Council of brethren decided against his acceptance of the office. It is well known that he was afterwards repeatedly requested to allow himself to be a candidate for the

highest station in our colleges. But he loved his people, and had no desire to leave them. And dear as was the missionary cause to his heart, he could not readily consent to an entire dissolution of his connexion with the Tabernacle. Hence when the path of duty plainly led him into labors as Corresponding Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which were more than sufficient for his whole time, he was solicitous to live and die as Pastor of this flock.

So it was. Borne down at last under an immense weight of responsibilities, labors, and infirmities, he fell asleep, far away from them and from his family, on the morning of June 7, 1821.* The affliction which his decease brought upon the Junior Pastor and upon the whole Church and Society, I shall not attempt to describe. Still less shall I attempt to describe the effect, as the mournful intelligence went out through the land, and to the ends of the earth. Filial affection prefers to unbosom itself in the solitude of retirement, rather than utter the faintest notes of public eulogy.

It was with extreme reluctance, that this Church and Society consented to an arrangement with the Board of Missions, by which their Pastor was allowed to spend three fourths of his time in the duties of Corresponding Secretary. It was evident, however, that unless such an arrangement could be made, the Pastor would be obliged to ask for a dismission.

The Rev. Elias Cornelius was inducted into the office of Associate Pastor, in July, 1819. This much

* See Appendix S.

lamented servant of the Lord Jesus, entered upon his work with a burning zeal in his Master's cause. And now while I speak, how does his manly form and his noble countenance, appear before the mind of every one that knew him! Wherever he was, it was impossible to refrain from admiring the finished courtesies of his manners and the hallowed purity of his discourse.

In the first year of his ministry he recommended to the Church the observance of a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, for a revival of religion. Such was the solemn impression of this season, that it was made by vote of the Church the commencement of the present series of Quarterly Fasts.

It was during this year also, that it became necessary to erect a new Vestry. The former building, as I have already mentioned, was procured at the instance of Mr. Spaulding. It was the first of its kind ever known in this place. Here from 1790 to 1820, the private religious meetings of the Church and Society were held. "It was," to use the words of the Senior Pastor, "evidently, and at times signally honored with the Divine presence." May not the same remark be applied to the neat and convenient edifice, in which we are now allowed so often to assemble for spiritual improvement?

Upon the death of the Senior Pastor, the Rev. Mr. Cornelius assumed the sole charge of the Tabernacle. His ministrations were greatly blessed of the Lord, especially during the years 1824 and 1825. Many of those who now hear me, remember him with the fervent love of spiritual children. They will never forget, I trust, how earnestly he labored,

that they might adorn the doctrine of the Savior, and be prepared to shine as the stars forever and ever.

While becoming increasingly interesting and useful as a Preacher and Pastor, he was invited by the Directors of the American Education Society, to be their Corresponding Secretary. The invitation produced here a very general and painful dissatisfaction. Under all the circumstances, I wonder not, that so much repugnance was felt towards a measure, which was about to sunder such bonds of attachment.

The proposal to leave the Tabernacle was by no means congenial to the feelings of Mr. Cornelius himself. I speak advisedly, when I thus speak. In a conversation which your present Pastor once had with him upon this subject, he laid open the secrets of his soul. It was, I believe, at Andover, when, having finished an agency in behalf of the Education Society, he received the direct request, that he would take the responsibilities of the office abovementioned. His feelings were much excited, and were of such a nature, that he was soon led to great searchings of heart. Riding towards Boston, he stopped his horse, retired into a grove, where he resolved to remain, until his mind should be brought into a state, which would seem to be more like a spirit of humble submission to the divine will. While there, pouring out his soul in supplication, he was led to take such a view of the Christian motives of the great and good men, who had submitted to him the exciting and agonizing question of duty, that he came to a full determination to consider the whole subject with candor, and follow, with unhesitating step, the lead-

ings of Providence. My own opinion is, that then and there, he became satisfied, that in all probability it was the Divine pleasure that he should soon bid farewell to his pastoral connexion. That he afterwards had the assurance of moral certainty, that it was his duty to resign his charge in Salem, and that in the whole proceeding he was actuated by the purest and sublimest motives, I never had a question, for a single moment. It was a great sacrifice of personal feeling, when in September, 1826, he asked a dismissal from his people.

And who of all that worshipped in the Tabernacle, while he was the minister and pastor, does not love the very sound of his name? Long may his example be remembered. Often may his eloquent appeals sound in our ears, and sink down into our hearts. "Though dead, he yet speaketh" to hundreds of thousands; and while the cause of benevolence can find a bosom in this country, to throb with gratitude, the name of Elias Cornelius will not be forgotten.

Of my immediate predecessor, the Rev. John P. Cleaveland, I surely cannot give you any new information; neither is it necessary that I make any attempt to stir up your minds by way of remembrance. He was ordained in February, 1827. His ministry was, as you know, a happy continuation of that prosperity, which had been enjoyed for about twenty-five years. How earnestly he toiled, by day and by night, and how unbounded were the expressions of his love for you, in your temporal and eternal welfare, you all understand and feel, far better than I can portray. When did ever children and youth love a Pastor more cordially?

The memorable year of 1831, will bear especial witness to his indefatigable exertions for the kingdom of Christ. In that season of general outpouring of the Spirit upon the Churches, *you* shared richly in the blessings of the extraordinary effusion. So many among you were in consequence led to cherish a hope, and to profess faith in the Lord Jesus, that the number admitted to the Church, during the seven years of Mr. Cleaveland's ministry, far exceeded the amount of admissions in the same length of time, at any former period.

My friend and brother resigned his office, in obedience to his convictions of duty. And as he still lives, occupying a most important post* in a great field of usefulness, what more can either you or he wish me to say of him, on this occasion, than that you will ever retain him in your warm affections, and often pray that he may long live to see increasing evidence, that his labors are honored of his Lord.

Thus I have endeavored to present an impartial outline of the history of this Church and Society, from the time when the Rev. Mr. Fisk and his friends withdrew from the First Church, until the close of the ministry of your late Pastor, the Rev. Mr. Cleaveland. No one can be more sensible than I am, that the unpleasant events may have seemed to occupy a disproportionate share of attention. It was unavoidable. I could not otherwise give a distinct view of the causes of the important changes which have occurred. And saddening as portions of the picture certainly are, I know not that any of us have any reason to be mortified by a narrative of errors in

* Detroit, Mich. Ter.

judgment and practice, of which we ourselves have not partaken. Besides, you must all be aware, that the history of any community or the genealogy of any family, that can be named, will lead us through chapters, which some at least would wish to be blotted out. You must also know, that in the voluminous records of the past, scores of pages are occupied by the details of a single battle; while a short paragraph, or a single sentence, may contain all that is said of ten thousand varieties of the blessings of peace. When, therefore, your minds revert to the commotions and troubles which I have narrated, do not forget the twenty years of peace and prosperity under Messrs. Leavitt and Huntington, and the fifteen years of great advancement and comfort under Mr. Spaulding, before we come to the last thirty-two years of almost unbroken tranquillity and enjoyment.

It is worthy of special remark, that the example of the Church in observing a day of fasting and prayer, previous to the invitation extended to the Rev. Mr. Leavitt to become their Pastor, has been imitated in every similar condition of circumstances.* The custom should be continued through future generations. But if the direction of the Lord is sincerely desired, that a right choice of a Pastor may be made, it is, I conceive, of high importance, that the Church should never, as they did, in one case at least, actually, though not formally resolve, that if it were possible to obtain him, they would certainly have an individual whom they had already selected. It was with great propriety that a cler-

* See Appendix T.

gyman of Boston declined his assistance in the services of a day of fasting appointed by this Church, in 1769. Upon inquiry he was distinctly informed by the messenger, *that they were determined to have Dr. Whitaker*. If the determination was made, it was of course egregious hypocrisy in pretending to ask counsel of the Lord. I cannot forbear to add, that if the Lord heard the prayers of the Church, the answer reminds us of that to the petition of Israel for a king to reign over them; and also of that to the impatient cry of their fathers for flesh, after loathing the manna. “While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague.”

It is also worthy of special remark, that in the whole century of the history of this Church, the same system of doctrines has been preached. Mr. Fisk was a man of reputed orthodoxy; and there is no doubt, that those who adhered to him, were the most evangelical portion of the First Church. Hence when Mr. Leavitt came among them as a candidate for settlement, his thorough Calvinism received a hearty response.* He probably sympathized with such men as Jonathan Edwards, and partook of the spirit of the glorious revival of religion, which had recently visited many of the New England churches.—A volume of Sermons of the Rev. Mr. Huntington, is still in existence. He was a zealous preacher of Christ and him crucified.—Dr. Whitaker was an able man in the pulpit. He had acquired such a discriminating knowledge of the Calvinistic method

* See Appendix U.

of expounding the law and the gospel, that his Sermons were truth, which, upon other tongues, would have “pierced like a two-edged sword.”

Of Mr. Spaulding’s preaching, many living witnesses can speak. He was unquestionably sound in the truth of God and the faith of Jesus. Yet he was led into some abstract and recondite speculations, afterwards embodied in a work entitled, “The Divine Theory,” which spread a veil of mysticism over his instructions, in the latter part of his ministry at the Tabernacle. That his successors have all been open and decided in their orthodoxy, no one will ever be likely to dispute.

The Records of the Church will show, that the preaching of Christ and him crucified, has been eminently owned of the Lord in the conversion of souls. More than one thousand have been induced here to profess faith in the Savior.* We cannot but believe that some hundreds of them are now uniting in the song of “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing”; while many others are of the Church militant on the way to the Church triumphant. May all of them make their calling and election sure. Let no one of those, who profess to have Christ formed in them the hope of glory, draw back unto perdition. And may the Lord add greatly to the number of such as shall be saved.

The history of this Society abounds in illustrations of the cardinal principle of genuine revivals—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the

* See Appendix V.

Lord.” And in looking back upon the scenes, in which even some now living have participated, we cannot but recall the language of the Psalmist,—“If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth’s sake.”

Having thus reviewed the past, we may now, for a few moments, contemplate our present position and circumstances. First of all, I observe, that in *doctrine* we stand upon the foundation of the Pilgrim Fathers, who established the First Church in this town; of the great Reformers in the 16th century, men who upon their knees studied the word of God; of the still greater Reformers, the Apostles, of the first century; of Jesus Christ, the “Light of the world,” the “Lamb of God,” “the Head of the Church,” “the Judge of quick and dead,” “the Creator of all things visible and invisible.” We receive “the Christian religion, as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and such a view of it, substantially, as the Westminster Catechism exhibits.” This formulary of faith we humbly believe to be directly deduced from the oracles of Everlasting Truth. We now recognize the Westminster Manual of Doctrine in our Church Covenant, because we regard it is a good criterion by which we may know, whether, in receiving Christianity, we “see eye to eye, and mind the

same things;" not because we would lord it over men's consciences, or in the least infringe upon the natural and imprescriptible rights of private judgment.*

Besides, we regard Christianity as a perfect science. It is not a discovery of man, and, therefore, is not like *human* sciences subject to changes and improvements. It came from the depths of the wisdom of the Omniscient. Immutable in its radical principles and fundamental requirements, it will, through every age, proclaim to sinners, "Love God with all the heart;" "Ye must be born again;" "Repent;" "Believe;" "Be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" "He that believeth, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned."

We retain the ancient distinction between the church and the congregation. Believers in Jesus, as they were called by the apostles, were such as gave credible evidence of faith in the heart, working by love. Communicants were those who professed to have become new creatures in Christ Jesus, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

The views of the fathers of this town, in regard to the terms of "communion," may be seen in Cotton Mather's account of a very interesting occurrence, at the time when they organized the First Church.—"A young gentleman belonging to another plantation, being at Salem, on this day when the Church was gathered, was at what he saw and heard so deeply affected, that he stood up express-

* See Appendix W.

ing with much affection his desire to be admitted into their number, *which when they demurred about,* he desired that they would at least admit him to make his profession before them. When they allowed this, he expressed himself so agreeably, and with so much ingenuity and simplicity, that they were extremely pleased with it; and the ministers told him that they highly approved of his profession; but inasmuch as he was a stranger to them, *they could not receive him into their communion, until they had a further acquaintance with his conversation.*”* The founders of the First Church in this town, demanded of those who partook of the emblems of a Savior’s dying love, not only a good confession of experimental knowledge of Christ, but a practical proof of holy conversation and godliness.

When the number of non-communicants had considerably increased, church-membership was, for some years, a civil qualification. The principle was wrong, and the measure disastrous in its influence upon vital religion.—But in every modification of the terms of church-membership, the voice of New England has ever been in most explicit and decided ratification of the primitive claims of the household of faith, *as consisting of those who have come out from the world.*

A Christian Church is, by the very act of formation, separated and distinguished from the Congregation or Society, with which, for the general purposes of public worship, it is intimately connected. The Congregation do not choose the officers of the Church, nor prescribe its Confession of Faith and

* See Appendix X.

Covenant. The "thirty brethren" who composed the First Church in this town, were not constituted a Church by the Congregation, but *by their own act*, in adopting a Confession of Faith and a Covenant, and electing appropriate officers. In all the proceedings, the voice of the other part of the community was not heard; for the very palpable reason, that they had no title to participate in the proceedings. The Church, *as such*, is as independent of the Congregation, as the Congregation is of the Church. Those judicial decisions, therefore, which in our age have identified the Church with the Congregation, are supported by arguments, which, I am constrained with a respectful deference to say, the history of the country proves to be, not of truth and justice, but of error and oppression.

There has ever been a delightful harmony between this Church and Congregation. The rights of each have been duly recognized and respected. In no instance has a minister been settled or dismissed by a vote of the Congregation alone. And while as members of the Church, we conscientiously insist upon the present terms of admission to the Lord's table, our heart's desire and prayer to God is, that every member of the Congregation may be induced to own the Savior before men, and in the great day when "the books are opened," may find his name written in the "Book of Life."

I observe, finally, that *in our form of ecclesiastical government*, we are upon the foundation of the fathers of New England, and, as we believe, upon that of the early Christians. We have made some advances upon the attainments of the leaders of the

Church in Holland, from which our first churches were derived. It is well known, that in separating from the Establishment, the Puritans had no controversy in matters of doctrine. When, therefore, the pious Robinson gave his farewell charge to those of his flock who were embarking for the American wilderness, and expressed his "persuasion, that the Lord had more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word," he unquestionably anticipated that the churches of the Reformation, founded upon these shores, would embrace farther light upon the principles of government and discipline, as also upon points of faith and duty. His anticipations have been realized. The doctrines which he loved, have been vindicated and enforced by new arguments, and more impressive illustrations. And Congregationalism, as established in New England, is a decided improvement upon the scheme of Independence, which for a time, at least, he advocated.*

We have now had the experience of two centuries. The majority of the Churches in New England are convinced, not only that Congregationalism has the nearest resemblance to the earliest government of Christian communities, but that it is best adapted to protect and extend "the liberty wherewith Christ makes free." It is certainly most agreeable to the genius of our civil institutions. And although like these, liable to perversion and abuse, yet I am persuaded, that if Congregationalism were to be abolished, a most serious injury would be inflicted upon the cause both of our religious and civil freedom.

* See Appendix Y.

The Puritans were led to deny the divine authority of kings, as a legitimate result of their assertion of the rights of conscience in the worship of the "King of kings." Let it not soon be forgotten that it was John Calvin, who, more than any other man, gave that character to Protestantism, which made the Puritans the irreconcilable enemies of ecclesiastical and civil despotism.* The same stern, incorruptible integrity, the same uncompromising determination to enjoy the freedom of the Gospel, which distinguished *him*, had a counterpart in many thousands, who in "our father-land," resisted alike the tiara and the crown. Bone of their bone and soul of their soul, were the men who bequeathed to us these pleasant places and this goodly heritage. They established, improved, and transmitted such institutions of learning and religion, as have brought their descendants into possession of the most precious inheritance of liberty, which the sun, from the beginning of his days, has ever seen among the children of men.

I cannot even allude to all the kindly and powerful influences of the preaching of the faith of the Pilgrims, and the Reformers, and the Apostles, in churches governed like ours. I can only say in a word, that we have the strongest reasons to cherish Congregationalism as a tree, which hath borne most excellent fruit. Were I fond of denunciation, I might be tempted to say, palsied be the hand that would level an axe at its trunk or its branches. Rather would I say, let it grow; let it flourish, and bring forth abundantly of fruit after its kind; and let its leaves be for the healing of the nations.

* See Appendix Z.

And now, standing as we do, at the close of the first and at the commencement of the second century of the history of this Church and Society, what occasion we have to praise God and take courage! I shall not, like the prophet of old, “take a stone and set” it in a conspicuous place, as a monument. But I call upon you, my respected and beloved friends, to present your own bodies and spirits a *living* monument of gratitude for the mercies of the Lord, and to inscribe indelibly upon the tablet of your affections, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

Let us not, however, be too sanguine in our anticipations. We know not that which shall be on the morrow. We have need of great humility and of unfeigned contrition. God abaseth the proud, while he exalteth the humble. In him only can we repose our confidence for the future. If we fail of being conformed to his holy will, then an overflowing scourge may pass through and lay waste all the pleasant things of our present prosperity.

Do we wish here to protect an altar for the worship of our Divine Redeemer? It is not by ramparts of men’s device, nor by an array of carnal weapons, that our object can be accomplished. Let it ever be encircled with hearts of piety: and let our sacrifices be those of a broken and contrite spirit. Then will Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be as a wall of fire around this sanctuary of our holy solemnities, and a glory in the midst of us. And, while our Christian sympathies embrace the world, let us devoutly pray, that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, may have in Salem also a Tabernacle,

whose walls shall be **S**alvation, and whose gates shall be **P**raise, until time shall be no longer.

Where are those who mingled with such intense interest in the scenes of the last Sabbath of April, 1735? *All, all*, in eternity! And one hundred years hence, where shall *we* be, who now compose this far different assembly? *All, all—every one—* in eternity! As spirits redeemed by the blood of Christ, regenerated by the Holy Ghost, may we all be around the throne of God and the **L**amb.

APPENDIX.

A. Page 3.

This statement is made on the authority of a document found at p. 105, of a Pamphlet, entitled, "A Just and Impartial Narrative of the Controversy between the Rev. Mr. Samuel Fisk, the Pastor, and a Number of the Brethren of the First Church of Christ in Salem. Boston: Printed by Thomas Fleet, at the Heart and Crown in Cornhill." pp. 115.—To the same Pamphlet, I would here take occasion to refer those who may wish to investigate the merits of the Controversy more fully; and also, to "A Faithful Narrative of the Proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Council convened at Salem in 1731; occasioned by the scandalous Divisions in the first Church in that Town; continuing after repeated Admonitions given them in the way of Communion of Churches, expressing that concern and charity they owe to each other, according to the Laws of Christ, and the professed Principles of Congregational Churches." Boston. 1735. pp. 94.—These and other Pamphlets upon the same subject, may be found at the Salem Athenæum, in a volume lettered, "Controversy relating to First Church in Salem."

The first notice of a LECTURE in the Annals of Salem, is under date of Oct. 3, 1733. "The Court of Assistants having perceived that it was customary to have religious Lectures held at *Taverns* in the forenoon, enacted that none should be held there in future before one o'clock."—*Fell's Annals, &c.* p. 61.

"1649, Feb. 23. Thomas Rowell was fined 5s. and 2s. 6d. court fees, for neglecting to attend worship on *lecture-day*—*Ib.* p. 130.

"Lecture days" were of so much importance, that the exercises of the public schools were suspended. In process of time, *lecture-day* became synonymous with *holiday*. Hence, although "The Lecture" has long since departed from among us, the younger members of the community very early learn to say, "It is *lecture*, this afternoon; or, "It will be *lecture* at our school, all next week,"—meaning simply, there will be a *vacation*.

B. Page 4.

It was at this meeting that the request was granted. Hence the formation of the East Church. Rev. Robert Stanton was ordained over this Church, April 8, 1719. Until the close of the year 1713, the inhabitants of this town had but one Church and Society. The East Church is therefore the *Second* Church.

C. Page 7.

The aggrieved brethren, it will be recollected, first attempted to bring the Pastor to terms, by the aid of an Ex-Parte Council. Failing in this measure, they referred their grievance to the Second Church in Boston. All the subsequent proceedings were in strict accordance with Congregational rules.

“The Cambridge Platform, (Chap. XV,) in enumerating the methods of communion among churches, mentions as the THIRD, the dispensing of admonition; declaring not only the existence of the power, but the particular forms, according to which it is to be exercised. ‘A way, then, of communion of churches is by way of *admonition*; to wit, in case any public offence be found in a church, which they either discern not, or are slow in proceeding to use the means for the removing and healing of.

“‘Paul had no authority over Peter, yet when he saw Peter not walking with a right foot, he publicly rebuked him before the church, Gal. 2: 11—14. Though churches have no more authority, one over another, than one apostle had over another, so may one church admonish another, and yet without usurpation.

“‘In which case, if the church, that lieth under offence, do not hearken to the church, that doth admonish her, the church is to acquaint other neighboring churches with that offence, which the offending church still lieth under, together with the neglect of their brotherly admonition given unto them. Whereupon those other churches are to join in seconding the admonition formerly given. And, if still the offending church continue in obstinacy and impenitency, they may forbear communion with them, and are to proceed to make use of the help of a synod or council of neighbor churches walking orderly, (if a greater cannot be conveniently had,) for their conviction.

“‘If they hear not the synod, the synod, having declared them to be obstinate, particular churches, accepting and approving of the judgment of the synod, are to declare the sentence of *non-communion* respectively concerning them. And thereupon, out of religious care to keep their own communion pure, they may justly withdraw themselves from participation with them at the Lord’s table, and from such other acts of holy communion, as the communion of churches doth otherwise allow and require.’”—*Upham’s Ratio Disciplina*, p. 207.

D. Page 10.

Dec. 8, 1755. A Committee of the Legislature visit Salem and hold a session of three days in the Town House, concerning the new meeting-house, which Mr. Fisk’s supporters had begun for him. The Committee find that the frame was placed only twelve perches and eleven feet from the First Parish meeting-house; and their report, presented Jan. 1, and accepted, requires that the meeting-house of Mr. F.’s friends shall not stand nearer to the other than forty perches.—*Felt’s Annals*, &c. p. 411.

E. Page 12.

Oct. 23, 1745. Elders and delegates from the following Churches meet and form themselves into a Council for ordaining Mr. Leavitt; 2d of Boston, 1st of Gloucester, Kittery, 1st of Reading, Malden, and Topsfield. This Council ordained Mr. L. the next day, though Mr. Fisk and several of the brethren objected. So great was the disturbance on this occasion, that one of the Council desired silence. Some justices belonging to the town, ordered a sheriff to stop him; which he did in so uncivil a manner, as to force him from the pulpit. Tradition says that Mr. L. was ordained in Mr. Kitchen’s garden.

Mr. L.'s church had been some discommoded by the sentence of non-communication against them. As a specimen in which such non-communication was commenced and retracted, the following is given. "March 12, 1735. Then the First Church in Gloucester met by adjournment and voted—1st, That they concurred with the Grand Council met at Salem from time to time; 2d, and passed the sentence of non-communication with the First Church in Salem. And it was done deliberately, and with a great deal of awfulness and solemnity. At a Church meeting, 1745, upon a humble confession of the First Church in Salem, the First Church in Gloucester released her from the sentence of non-communication, and assisted in the ordination of Mr. Dudley Leavitt at their request." Churches in Boston and other towns passed similar votes.

Dec. 23d. The Confederate Church vote to commune with the members of Mr. Leavitt's Church, who had been admitted by Mr. Fisk since the separation;—to commune with those who adhered to Mr. F. at the separation, if they confess their fault for not using proper means of reconciliation;—to have a committee write and desire Churches, who had passed sentence of non-communication against the First Church, to withdraw such sentence.—*Felt's Annals*, §c. p. 430.

I am indebted to a friend for the following extract from a Journal of the Rev. Thomas Smith, of Portland, then Falmouth; dated Nov. 28, 1745. "Mr. Leavitt was ordained at Salem with vast disturbance."

In the Boston Evening Post, for Sept. 19, 1763, is a long communication from Timothy Pickering, father of the late Timothy Pickering. He was one of the adherents of Mr. Fisk, and was for many years an elder in the Church. In narrating the difficulties and grievances, which he and his brethren had experienced, he thus speaks of the "disturbance" at the ordination of Mr. Leavitt. "When Mr. L. was ordained, a number of our adversaries, some of them Justices and members of Mr. Barnard's Church, came into our meeting-house, and made a great disturbance, talking and menacing, and when one of the ministers desired silence, and was going to begin the Exercises, one of the Justices told the Sheriff to stop him. Accordingly he threw his hat in his face, drove the minister out of the pulpit," &c.

F. Page 12.

The existing Records of the Church commenced at the time, when the Rev. Mr. Fisk formally requested an Assistant in the ministry. The brethren of the Church assembled at the house of Mr. Samuel Ruck, and proceeded to consider the Pastor's request, after having appointed Dea. James Ruck, Moderator, and Timothy Pickering, Scribe. The first entry upon the Records begins as follows:—"At a meeting of the Brethren of the First Church of Christ in Salem, at the Desire of the Pastor, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Fisk, at the Dwelling House of Mr. Samuel Ruck, one of the Brethren of said Church, on Monday, Feb. the 20th, A. D. 1743—Duly warned," etc.

It should be mentioned, that, as until 1752 the year began on the 25th of March, the date 1743 of the Records should be 1744, in order to correspond with our present method of computing time from the 1st of January.

Church Meetings were simply meetings for business, until the time of the Rev. Mr. Spaulding. They were then held weekly; and most of the time was spent in prayer and other exercises for spiritual improvement. The *Sisters* of the Church were also now permitted and expected to be present. Ever since the ministry of Mr. S., the Church Meetings have been held in the same manner and for the same purpose.

G. Page 12.

In confirmation of this statement, suffice it to refer to the fact, that, in 1752, Dr. Watts' Psalms and Hymns were introduced into the services of public worship, by vote of the Church.

H. Page 12.

The following is the Letter of this Church to the Church then under the care of the Rev. Mr. Barnard.

BRETHREN—As the comfort and edification of Christians undoubtedly depends very much on keeping the unity of the Spirit, which is the bonds of peace; a spirit of discord and animosity must be directly contrary to the true interest of religion;

And whereas such a spirit, has too apparently reigned for a long time among us, to the great detriment of religion, and which has rendered us in a manner infamous, (though of late, we hope it has in some good measure subsided,) and especially as our difference is about temporal things, which makes it still more shameful;

We do hereby manifest our sincere desire of coming to an amicable accommodation; that all differences and disputes being settled between us, fellowship and communion may take the place of animosity and alienation, which we pray God may no more be heard of among us.

As to terms, our differences and disputes being about the name and estate of the First Church, we are willing to leave it to the decision of indifferent men, that may be mutually chosen among us; by whose determination we will abide satisfied.

But as this will necessarily bring things to mind, that had better be forgotten; if you should think it more proper to make any proposals in order for settling our affairs privately between ourselves, we will receive and consider such proposals, and if found reasonable, comply therewith; and indeed should prefer this method as most conducive to peace and good will. We trust you will comply with this, our reasonable request, and desire you would give us an answer, that we may know your minds in this affair as soon as you conveniently can.

And now our name being one thing in dispute, we will at present call ourselves by no other name than the Church of which the Rev. Dudley Leavitt was late Pastor.

Signed by desire of the Church,

JOHN GARDNER,
RICHARD LEE,
BENJAMIN ROPES.

Salem, May 6th, 1762.

To Rev. Mr. Barnard, to be communicated.

I. Page 14.

To the Brethren of the Third Church in Salem,

BRETHREN—Messrs. Procter and Pickering, two of your members, have communicated your vote of the 25th inst., signifying that it will be very agreeable to you and that you desire we would be present as friends to you, and the common cause of Religion at your lecture to-morrow; when all the Instalment of Dr. Whittaker which is designed will be performed.

It is with regret we decline complying with any request of our Christian brethren; but in this transaction you design something so unusual among our Churches, and so unfriendly to our Ecclesiastical Constitution, that we think we shall rather show ourselves "friends to you and the common cause of Religion," in absenting ourselves at a time when our presence would be construed an approbation of such measures.

Our worthy and pious ancestors of this Province esteemed the Congregational plan of Church polity most agreeable to the Gospel and most favorable to the religious liberties and rights of individuals and societies. The First Church in Salem (and in the Province) from which we all descended, did formerly from time to time solemnly renew their original covenant, and professed their adherence to Congregational principles, and particularly that they will no way slight their sister churches; but use their counsel as need shall be.

Now it has been the constant usage of these Churches from the beginning to ask the presence of sister churches in the settlement of pastors whether at their first ordination or instalment, and that for such obvious reasons, among others as follows, to testify their union and charity—to derive mutual help and strength from each other—to be so satisfied of the qualifications of pastors, as to embrace them in their public characters, and open their doors to them in all occasional acts of their ministry, and thereby maintain that friendly correspondence and communion which is so beneficial to the common cause of religion.

It is a maxim of prudence not to deviate from established customs but for weighty reasons. Your departing therefore from the practice of these churches into a mode savoring of independency will we fear be found inconvenient to yourselves in consequence; and any act of ours showing an approbation of it, may so far as our small influence reaches, be hurtful to the communion of churches, give umbrage to our own churches in particular, and bring us under blame from those who wish well to our ecclesiastical state.

We cannot but wish therefore that you would reconsider your proceedings, and shew the usual respect to neighbor churches walking in the order of the Gospel, and desire their presence and counsel in your intended instalment.

But if you think it best to proceed in this singular and novel manner, yet God forbid, that we should cease to pray for your peace, and that pure religion and undefiled may flourish among you; and your intended Pastor be an instrument of greatly promoting these happy interests.

We remain your brethren in truth and fellowship of the gospel,

JAMES DIMOND,
THOMAS BARNARD,
NATHANIEL HOLT.

The foregoing is extracted from a copy in the Church Records, which is in the hand-writing and with the attest of Dr. Whitaker. Accompanying the copy is a marginal note from the same pen. "N. B. The Wednesday after the instalment, the Rev. Mr. Barnard invited Dr. Whitaker to preach, and soon after the Rev. Mr. Dimond did the same; and both have preached for the Doctor, and have prayed for him as the Pastor of this Church."

J. Page 15.

The late Hon. Timothy Pickering was undoubtedly the writer of the Letter which follows. He was the individual who officiated in behalf of the Church and Society, when Dr. W. was inducted into his office.

To the Rev. Dr. Whitaker,

SIR—Some proposals in your hand-writing are presented to us the aggrieved brethren of your Church, which *seem* to import an intentional remedy, or palliate the mischiefs which we think are and will be occasioned by the plan of government, you with fair words and goodly speeches persuaded us to adopt; but unhappily they only *seem* to do this. For not to remark upon the absurdity of your making

two churches of one, which is nevertheless to continue to be but one ; what will signify the ordinary acts of the brotherhood, if the ordinary executive officer refuses to execute them ?

And by your proposals you are to be at liberty to do this or not as you think best. In what does this differ from an effectual negative ? Judge, Doctor, so much artifice appears in these proposals, we cannot but consider them a fresh attempt to impose on our too credulous simplicity.

At the time we accepted your plan of Church Government, we must by our vote have thought ourselves at liberty to alter it if found mischievous or inconsistent. The reservation in that vote, must otherwise be most trifling and impertinent.

But Doctor, if your proposals above mentioned, to us appeared candid and ingenuous ; if they contained any valuable concessions ; nay, if you were to consent to erase from its very foundations, your whole system of church government ; what would it avail ? Would the proud, the arrogant, the haughty man, hereby be rendered humble ? or the violent and overbearing be inspired with the mild and gentle spirit of the Gospel ? and all the difficulties in your Church and Society be removed ?

Nevertheless, we would not refuse to reform one because we cannot reform every evil. And your church government we account a great one ; and the more grievous, because we think you have essentially departed from the spirit of it, and your professed intention in setting it up. We therefore earnestly desire to have it totally demolished ; and that this Church may return and rest upon the solid basis of pure and unmixed Congregationalism.

We are, Rev. Sir, your aggrieved brethren,

Signed,	Adison Richardson,	Stephen Abbot,	Benjamin Ropes,
	James Nichols,	John Waters,	John Saunders,
	Timothy Pickering, jr.	Thorndike Procter,	Samuel Very,
	Robert Peele,	Samuel Symonds,	John Gardner.
	Daniel Cheever,	Thomas Needham,	

November 18th, 1773.

K. Page 16.

“ It was *clandestine*, if there was no regular act of the church for it, but only the petition to the Pastor, signed by twenty-one particular persons, (several of which say, they *never were members of the Third Church in Salem*, but were urged to sign it by the Doctor ;) and if their signing it was neither in an open church meeting, nor in consequence of a church vote, passed in a regular church meeting, authorizing them to do it ; nor in any sense by the church as an organic body ; but separately and severally, by one here and another there, as the Doctor’s words imply, viz : ‘ I do not remember *I ever shewed it to any*, except two, who signed it freely,’ and in the Doctor’s kitchen, (while a church meeting was held in his sitting room,) one by one going in and signing it, and returning, while some of the members present were entirely ignorant that they were signing the petition in the kitchen. And if this signing the petition was carried on so privately, that the fourteen brethren knew nothing of it till the church meeting to offer objections to the motion, which, the Doctor says, was ‘ almost six months after the date of the address,’ then the method was *clandestine*. Some of the fourteen brethren tell me, they can testify, that they knew nothing of the petition and its being signed, nor of the design to apply to the Presbytery, till the Doctor announced it at his church meeting on the Friday and on the Sabbath before the Presbytery was to set at Palmer, and where the objectors were to appear to prosecute their objections.”

At a Proprietors' Meeting, warned by authority, to meet on October 17th, 1774, the two following votes were passed.

Vote 3. It was put, Whether they approve of the late innovation of a Presbyterian government? And carried in the negative unanimously.

Voted 4. It was put to vote, Whether they approved of the Rev. Dr. Whitaker's manner of making the late innovation? And it was carried in the negative unanimously.

Test, BENJ. ROPES, Proprietors' Clerk.

See a Pamphlet entitled: "The Rev. Dr. N. Whitaker's Neighbor is come, and searcheth him: or a Brief Defence of the late Council's Result, &c., by John Cleaveland, A. M. A member of said Council. Salem, 1784."

L. Page 16.

The North Church, or the Church now under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Brazer, was formed in 1772. This Church then is the *Fourth* Congregational Church. The South Church is of course, the *Fifth*, in order of time. The Council, however, which organized the South Church, gave it the name of the *Third* Church; because the Third Church was then regarded as Presbyterian and not Congregational.

M. Page 18.

I here allude to John Punchard, Esq., an elder and one of the oldest members of the Church. He made a public profession of religion at the Tabernacle in 1733; and participated in all the movements which immediately preceded Dr. Whitaker's dismissal. From July 3, 1793, to July 3, 1833, he very faithfully discharged the office of Clerk of the Church. In this period of forty years, his office was no sinecure. The Records of the Church bear witness to great labor, diligence, and accuracy on the part of their Clerk. Having been for fifty years most intimately and actively acquainted with their history; being in possession of many facts which they deemed worthy of preservation; and enjoying their entire confidence in respect to his private worth and his ability to perform the service; he was unanimously and urgently desired to prepare a Memoir of the Church. This work he undertook and executed in 1833. It occupies 133 full manuscript (160) pages; beside a valuable Appendix of about 50 pages. When it was completed, it was read to the Church, at successive meetings, and was heard with profound interest and satisfaction. A copy of it, in a very neat style of chirography, was deposited by the Author among the Documents of the Church.

N. Page 19.

Extract from the Result.—"At an adjournment, the 24th inst., we were so unhappy as to find, that Dr. Whitaker had taken no measures to remove the difficulties subsisting between him and the Church and Society over which he had presided; but on the contrary, under his hand explicitly resigned his pastoral relation to them, yea absolutely denied that he ever was a Pastor over them as a Congregational Church, and declared that he never will be the Pastor of a Church of that description; and the Church on their part declared before the Council, that they cannot receive Dr. N. Whitaker as their Pastor —"

Therefore, resolved, That it is the opinion of this Council that the pastoral relation, which they have heretofore mutually acknowledged, is now as mutually dissolved by them.

Resolved, therefore, That the acknowledged pastoral relation is, *Ipsa Facto*, dissolved; and they think it is their duty to declare, that Doctor Nathaniel Whitaker is no longer the Pastor of the Church and Society usually meeting in the Tabernacle.

That since Doctor Whitaker has absolutely and in the most peremptory terms refused to submit his cause to this Council or any Judicatory mutually chosen between him and the aggrieved brethren of the Church, even though one half should consist of Presbyterians; we were constrained to take a general review of the Doctor's character and conduct since his settlement in Salem; and upon such view, the Council do declare that in their opinion he has *forfeited* his character as a minister of the Gospel of Christ, and therefore ought to be suspended from the exercise of his office.

We cannot conclude without expressing with a very painful sense, the unhappy breach that has been made between Doctor Whitaker and the people of his charge; nor can we help expressing our surprise, that a gentleman of such ministerial accomplishments, should appear so deaf to the cries of his brethren, and so insensible of the deep wounds which a conduct like his must give, not only to his own character and usefulness, but to the ministry in general, and to the cause and interest of the Redeemer. * * * * And as for our brethren in whose service we have spent so much time, we exhort them to prize and improve those blessings and immunities they claim for themselves, and which they and we apprehend they may enjoy under the Congregational form of government. We earnestly enjoin it upon them to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and not to be entangled with the yoke of bondage. Brethren, you are called to liberty; only use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. Finally, brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Library Chamber, February 26th, 1784.

ELI FORBES, Scribe.

JOSEPH ROBIE, Moderator."

O. Page 20.

1784. Salem Presbytery at Groton, June 11th, justify Dr. W.; decide that his relation to his Church shall be dissolved when his Society shall have paid him his due, and withdraw fellowship from his Church. The Presbytery say, Sept. 9th, that they cited the twenty brethren of Dr. W.'s Church to appear before them, to prove their charges against him, and show cause why they should not be cut off from the Presbytery; but that these brethren had done neither. The Presbytery renew their excommunication of Dr. W.'s Church, and their recommendation of him.—*Felt's Annals*, &c., p. 520.

P. Page 21.

Dea. Wm. Safford.—To raise \$1100, which was awarded by the Referees to Dr. W., he made a forced sale of stocks at 5s 3d on the £, for a large part of the amount. The Proprietors of the Tabernacle were not aware of being at all indebted to the Pastor, until the award was given. And when they were called to make payment, it was almost impossible to obtain even very small sums of money, and upon the very best securities.

Q. Page 22.

It ought here to be stated, that the relative value of money was at that time much greater than it is now.

R. Page 23.

The "Half-Way Covenant" required of those who assented to it, that they should be strict in the duties of morality.

"The plan, briefly stated, was this:—All persons, who had been baptized in infancy, or at some subsequent period, and who sustained a good moral character, were admitted, on requesting it, to a *Covenant*. And on condition of their assuming such covenant, their infants and young children were admitted to baptism, although neither of the parents had been members of the church in full communion. The covenant, which they assented to, was not in the same terms in all churches, although of similar import."—*Upham's Ratio Disciplina*, p. 221.

S. Page 32.

He died, and was buried at Brainerd, one of the "stations" of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, among the Cherokees. He left home in January, 1821, upon a voyage to New Orleans, and a visit to the Indian Missionary establishments, in hope of thereby recruiting his health.

T. Page 37.

Among the principles and rules of this Church, those which relate to the choice and settlement of a Pastor, may be interesting to some, into whose hands this Discourse may fall.

"That, in the choice of a Pastor, the church must obtain satisfaction respecting the person's qualifications for the office, agreeably to the Apostle's directions to Timothy and Titus; respecting his experimental acquaintance with Christianity, as well as competent gifts, abilities, knowledge, and wisdom, for the office, agreeable to chap. viii, sect. 4, of Platform.

"To prevent as much as possible any unconverted minister ever having the charge of this church, we think it necessary, that such persons as may be set over us in the Lord, should give the church a particular account of what God has done for them, by a work of grace upon their hearts, and sign the articles of the church, before ordination to the pastoral office over it."—*Articles XV and XVI, of the Tabernacle Church.*

U. Page 38.

Extracts from the Covenant of the First Church, as adopted April 15th, 1680— which was subscribed by Mr. Leavitt and twenty-one brethren of his Church on the day of his ordination, 24th of October, 1745.

"We, who (through the mercy of God) are members of this Church of Salem, being now assembled in the presence of God, and in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, after humble confession of our manifold breaches of covenant with the Lord our God, and earnest supplication for his pardoning mercy through the blood of Christ, and deep acknowledgement of our own unworthiness to be owned as the Lord's covenant people; also acknowledging our inability to keep covenant with God, or to perform any spiritual duty unless the Lord enable us thereunto by the grace of his Spirit, and yet being awfully sensible that in these times by the loud voice of his judgments both felt and feared, the Lord is calling us all to repentance and reformation: we do, therefore, in humble confidence of his gracious assistance through Christ, renew our covenant with God, and one with another in the manner following:—

1. We do give up ourselves to that God whose name alone is Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, as the only true and living God, and unto our Lord Jesus Christ

as our only Redeemer and Saviour, as the only Prophet, Priest, and King over our souls, and only Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, engaging our hearts unto this God in Christ by the help of his Spirit of grace, to cleave unto him as our God and chief good, and unto Jesus Christ as our Mediator by faith, in a way of Gospel obedience, as becometh his covenant people forever.

2. We do also give up our offspring unto God in Jesus Christ, avouching the Lord to be our God and the God of our children, and ourselves with our children to be his people, humbly adoring the grace of God in Christ Jesus, that we and our children may be looked upon as the Lord's.

3. We do also give up ourselves one to another in the Lord according to the will of God, to walk together as a Church of Christ in all the ways of his worship and service; according to the rules of the word of God, promising in brotherly love, faithfully to watch over one another's souls, and to submit ourselves to the discipline and government of Christ in his Church, and duly to attend the Seals and Censures, and whatever ordinances Christ hath commanded to be observed by his people according to the order of the Gospel, so far as the Lord hath or shall reveal unto us."

These extracts, although from a Covenant, are sufficient to show what kind of doctrine the Church believed, at the time of Mr. L.'s ordination. It was about seven years afterwards, that Dr. Watts' Version of the Psalms, &c. was introduced into their worship. It is not probable, that this work could have gained admission into any of the other churches in town.

I would here take occasion to notice an error, which has long been entertained, concerning the COVENANTS OF THE FIRST CHURCH.

In the Letter of Messrs. Dimond, Barnard, and Holt, (Appendix I,) it is stated that the First Church in Salem were accustomed formerly, from time to time, to renew their original Covenant. The language would seem to refer to the *first* covenant of the Church; that is, the covenant adopted in 1629. In the Records of the Tabernacle Church, there is a Transcript of a Pamphlet entitled, "A Copy of the Church Covenants which have been used in the Church of Salem, formerly, and in their late reviewing of the Covenant on the day of the Public Fast, April 15th, 1680. * * * Boston, printed at the desire and for the use of many in Salem, for themselves and children, by J. F., 1680." It begins as follows:—"There was a Church Covenant agreed upon and consented to by the Church of Salem at their first beginning in the year 1629, Aug. 6th."

"The following Covenant was propounded by the Pastor, was agreed upon and consented to by the brethren of the Church, in the year 1636.

"We whose names are here underwritten, members of the present Church of Christ in Salem, having found by sad experience how dangerous it is to sit loose from the covenant we make with our God, and how apt we are to wander into by-paths, even unto the loosing (losing?) of our first aims in entering into church fellowship; do therefore solemnly in the presence of the eternal God, both for our own comforts, and those who shall or may be joined unto us, *renew the Church Covenant we find this Church bound unto at their first beginning*, viz: 'That we covenant with the Lord, and one with another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his blessed word of truth;' *and do more explicitly, in the name and fear of God, profess and protest to walk as followeth*, through the power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. We avouch the Lord to be our God, and ourselves to be his people, in the truth and simplicity of our spirits.

2. We give ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the word of his grace, for the teaching, ruling, and sanctifying of us in matters of worship and conversation, resolving to cleave unto him alone for life and glory, and to reject all contrary ways, canons, and institutions of men in his worship.

3. We promise to walk with our brethren, with all watchfulness and tenderness, avoiding jealousies and suspicions, back-bitings, censurings, provokings, secret risings of spirit against them; but in all offences to follow the rule of our Lord Jesus, and to bear and forbear, give and forgive, as he hath taught us.

4. In public or private, we will willingly do nothing to the offence of the Church; but will be willing to take advice for ourselves and ours, as occasion shall be presented.

5. We will not in the congregation be forward either to show our own gifts and parts in speaking or scrupling, or there discover the weakness or failings of our brethren; but attend an orderly call thereunto, knowing how much the Lord may be dishonored, and his gospel, and the profession of it, slighted by our distempers and weaknesses in public.

6. We bind ourselves to study the advancement of the gospel in all truth and peace; both in regard to those that are within or without; no way slighting our sister churches, but using their counsel, as need shall be; not laying a stumbling-block before any, no, not the Indians, whose good we desire to promote; and so to converse, as we may avoid the very appearance of evil.

7. We do hereby promise to carry ourselves in all lawful obedience to those that are over us, in Church or Commonwealth, knowing how well pleasing it will be to the Lord, that they should have encouragement in their places, by our not grieving their spirits through our irregularities.

8. We resolve to approve ourselves to the Lord in our particular callings; shunning idleness as the bane of any State; nor will we deal hardly or oppressingly with any, wherein we are the Lord's stewards.

9. Promising also unto our best ability to teach our children and servants the knowledge of God, and of His Will, that they may serve him also; and all this not by any strength of our own, but by the Lord Christ; whose blood we desire may sprinkle this our Covenant made in His name."

I have seen fit to throw into the form of a quotation that part of the Preamble of the foregoing Covenant, which I suspect was, in substance at least, *the Covenant* "which the Church was bound unto at their first beginning." And I have italicised the sentences immediately preceding and following, so that the sense of the whole may be more obvious. It was the *first* covenant which was *renewed*. Not satisfied, I suppose, with this brief formula, and wishing to notice some points suggested by the circumstances of the times, the members of the Church in 1636, "did more explicitly profess and protest to walk as followeth;" that is, according to the more detailed expression of their obligations and engagements. Any one who is acquainted with the history of the town from 1630 to 1637, will perceive that this "more explicit profession and protestation," contains *divers local allusions* which would be utterly inexplicable upon the supposition, that it was prepared for the Church at its beginning. In fact, almost the whole of it implies that the Church had been for some years in existence, had had "sad experience of the danger of sitting loose" from their covenant, and had suffered grievously from "jealousies," etc. from unwillingness "to take advice," etc. from "forwardness to show gifts or parts in speaking," etc. etc. The dissensions which were occasioned by Roger Williams, shed light upon the 6th and 7th Articles. It would not have been so natural, in August 1629, as in 1636, to speak of the duty of "not laying a stumbling-block before any, no, not the Indians." The conclusion is to my mind irresistible,

from the *internal evidence alone*, that the Covenant, printed in the *Magnalia of Mather*, and often cited as the Covenant of the First Church at its beginning, could not have been the *first* Covenant of that Church. It was, as is stated in the Transcript alluded to above, "the Covenant propounded by the Pastor, agreed upon, and consented to, by the brethren in 1636." Hugh Peters was at this time the Pastor.

Not apprehending, perhaps, the limitation of the term "*renewed*" to the brief or condensed Covenant of 1629, and overlooking the import of several qualifying or discriminating words, the learned author of the *Magnalia*, or some one before him, may have been led into a mistake, which all subsequent writers have adopted, and from which some have deduced inferences entirely at variance with historical fact.

The Rev. Mr. Fisk, or some other person, who copied the Covenant of 1636 into the existing Records of the First Church, has a marginal note to this effect: "Sixth of 6th month, 1629, this Covenant was publicly signed and declared." Hence the "Copy from the Salem Church Book," as published in the Appendix to Dr. Bentley's "Description of Salem,"—His. Col. Vol. VI. How these gentlemen and others ever interpreted the Preamble, in consistency with the date thus assigned to the whole, I am at a loss to conjecture.

Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candide imperti. Si non, his utere mecum.

Some further remarks upon this subject may be found in a subsequent Note. See Appendix W.

V. Page 39.

Of the sons of the Tabernacle now in the ministry, are Rev. Robert Crowell, of Essex; Rev. William Gould, of Fairhaven; Rev. Joseph B. Felt, of Boston; Rev. John Foote, of Beverly; Rev. Nehemiah Adams, of Boston; Rev. George Punchard, of Plymouth, N. H.; Rev. Stephen C. Millet, of Salem; Rev. Benjamin Obear, of Newbury. There are also several young gentlemen, who have recently been licensed to preach, or are in a course of preparatory studies.

W. Page 41.

In the settlement of New England, Creeds or Confessions of Faith were of much less importance than they now are. There was a delightful harmony among the colonists, in regard to their views of the doctrines of grace.

The First Church of this town, however, had a *Confession of Faith, as well as a Covenant*. I have already stated (Appendix U.) what I suppose that Covenant was. The Confession of Faith has not been discovered. From the subjoined authorities, it will be seen, that there *was* a Confession of Faith—a document not to be identified with the Covenant of 1629 or that of 1636—and that those who united with the Church gave their assent to the Confession of Faith as well as to the Covenant. It will also be seen what respect was shown to the brethren at Plymouth.

"*Mr. Higginson and Mr. Skelton*, and other good people that arrived at Salem, in the year 1629, resolved, like their father *Abraham*, to begin their plantation *with calling upon the name of the Lord*. The great *Mr. Hildersham* had advised our first planters to agree fully upon their form of *Church Government*, before their coming into *New England*; but they indeed agreed little further than in this general principle, *that the reformation of the Church was to be endeavored according to the written word of God*. Accordingly ours, now arrived at Salem, consulted with their brethren at *Plymouth*, what steps to take for the more exact acquainting of themselves *with*, and conforming themselves *to*, that *written word*: and the *Plymo-*

theans, to their great satisfaction, laid before them what *warrant*, they judged, that they had in the *laws* of Jesus Christ, for every particular in their *Church order*.

Whereupon, having the concurrence and countenance of their deputy governor, the worshipful John Endicott, Esq., and the approving presence of the messengers from the Church of *Plymouth*, they set apart the sixth day of August, after their arrival, for *fasting* and *prayer*, for the settling of a *Church State* among them, and for their making a *confession of their Faith*, and entering into an holy *Covenant*, whereby that *Church State* was formed."—*Magnalia*, vol. i, pp. 66, 67.

"The religious people at Salem, designing to settle in a church state, as near as they can to the rules of the gospel, apprehend it needful for the thirty who begin the church to enter solemnly into covenant, one with another, in the presence of God, to walk together before him according to his holy word, and then ordain their ministers to the several offices to which they had been chosen. Mr. Higginson being desired, draws up a confession of faith and church covenant according to Scripture; thirty copies are written, one delivered to every member; and the church at Plymouth invited to the solemnity, that the church at Salem may have the approbation and concurrence, if not the direction and assistance of the other.

August 6th, being Thursday, the appointed day being come, after the prayers and sermons of the two ministers, in the end of the day, the said confession and covenant being read in the public assembly, are solemnly consented to; and they immediately proceed to ordain their ministers."—*Prince's New England Chronology*. See also *Magnalia*, vol. i, pp. 323, 329.

"It was desired of Mr. Higginson, to draw up a Confession of Faith and Covenant in Scripture language; which being done, was agreed upon. ¶ And because they foresaw that this wilderness might be looked upon as a place of liberty, and therefore might be troubled with erroneous spirits, therefore they did put in one article into the Confession of Faith, on purpose, about the duty and power of the magistrate in matters of religion. 'Thirty copies,' etc.—*Morton's New England Memorial*, Boston Edition, 1826, pp. 145, 146.

It is to be regretted that the Confession of Faith is not now to be found. We can, however, have no question upon its general character. As the Pastors and the Members of the Church were Trinitarians and Calvinists, they would of course have a Trinitarian and Calvinistic Confession of Faith. From their whole proceedings it is indisputable, that the fathers of the First Church and of this town were not less rigorous and uncompromising than any of their descendants or successors have been, in respect to the terms of Church Membership and admission to the Table of the Lord. It would be great injustice to their memories, to represent them as disposed to make the Lord's Supper accessible to those who differed from them in what they considered the substantial and essential doctrines of grace.

In the citations which I have made, we have the true explanation of the absence of the doctrine of the Trinity, etc. from the Covenant of 1636; that is, the Covenant, which, as I believe, has been erroneously called the first Covenant of the First Church. That document was not intended to answer any other purpose than that of a Covenant.

The Covenant, of 1630, has an indirect recognition of the Trinity. And the whole spirit of it is very decidedly evangelic.

When the separation took place in 1735, it is probable, that there was no Confession of Faith in the Records of the Church. It was not, perhaps, thought necessary. The main object of a Confession of Faith was secured by the course which was taken with candidates for admission to the Church.

The present Covenant of the Tabernacle Church was so constructed or modified, as to be both a Confession of Faith and Covenant.

“ We, whose names are underwritten, apprehending ourselves called of God into a gospel church state, deeply sensible how unworthy we are of so high a privilege, cannot but admire that rich and free grace which triumphs over so great unworthiness. But with humble reliance on the aids of that grace, which is promised to all, who, with a true sense of their guilt and ruin, return to God for pardon and help, we thankfully lay hold on his covenant. Avouching, this day, the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be our God, our Father, our Savior, and our Leader, we humbly give up ourselves to him, and receive him as our portion forever. We give up ourselves and our all to the blessed Jesus, whom we acknowledge as Almighty God, and, in the covenant of grace, engage to adhere to him, as head over all things to his church and people, relying upon him as our Prophet, Priest, and King, to bring us to eternal blessedness. We acknowledge our everlasting and indispensable obligations to glorify our God, in all the duties of a holy, sober, and religious life. Depending, therefore, on his powerful grace, we engage to walk together, particularly in a church state, in the faith and order of the gospel, as far as we shall have the same revealed to us by the word and Spirit of God; conscientiously attending the worship of God in all its parts, in secret, in the family, and in public, upon the sacraments of the New Testament, baptism, and the Lord's supper, upon the discipline of his kingdom, and upon all his holy institutions. Declaring our firm belief of the Christian religion, as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and of such a view of it, substantially, as the Westminster Catechism exhibits, we heartily resolve to conform ourselves to it as long as we shall live in the world. Affectionately giving up ourselves to one another in the Lord, we solemnly covenant faithfully to watch over each other, to seek the promotion of each other's spiritual good, to submit ourselves to the discipline and government of Christ in his church, and watchfully to avoid all sinful stumbling-blocks and contentions, as become a people, whom the Lord hath bound up together in the same bundle of life. At the same time, we also dedicate our offspring with us to the Lord, purposing with his help faithfully to perform our duty to them in the methods of a religious education, that the Lord may be their God.

“ All this we do, relying on the blood of the everlasting covenant for the pardon of our many transgressions, and praying that the glorious Lord, who is the great Shepherd, would prepare and strengthen us in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”—*See Articles, &c. Tabernacle, pp. 3, 9.*

The present Covenant of the First Church is also a Confession of Faith as well as a Covenant.

“ We believe in Jesus Christ, as the Messiah; and we receive his religion as the rule of our lives, and as a revelation from God.

“ We have a deep sense of the imperfection of our past services, and of our need of improvement; and we are desirous of performing all our religious duties, and of using all the means of grace provided for us.

“ With such views and feelings, we enter into the Communion of Disciples of Christ, as members of his visible Church.

“ It is our earnest wish and prayer, that we may imitate his example, imbibe his spirit, and obey his precepts; and that by walking together in the fellowship of the Gospel here, we may become prepared for admission hereafter into the Church of the redeemed in Heaven.”—*Rev. Mr. Upham's Second Century Lecture, pp. 69, 70.*

X. Page 42.

“ However, such was the hold which the grace of God now took of him, that he became an eminent Christian, and a worthy and useful person, and not only after-

wards joined unto the Church in Boston, but also made a great figure in the *Commonwealth of New England*, as the *major-general* of all the forces in the colony: it was Major-General Gibbons."—*Magnalia*, vol. i, p. 329.

"As for the circumstances of admission into this church, they left it very much unto the discretion and faithfulness of their elders, together with the condition of the persons to be admitted. Some were admitted by expressing their consent unto their *confession* and *covenant*: some were admitted after their first answering to *questions* about *religion*, propounded unto them; some were admitted, when they had presented in *writing* such things as might give *satisfaction* unto the people of God concerning them; and some that were admitted, *orally* addressed the people of God in such terms as they thought proper to ask their *communion* with; which *diversity* was perhaps more *beautiful*, than would have been a more *punctilious uniformity*: but none were admitted without regard unto a blameless and holy *conversation*."—*Magnalia*, vol. i, p. 67.

It was by means of a personal and particular examination, or by some equivalent method, that the Brethren satisfied themselves in regard to the doctrinal and experimental views of candidates for admission to the Church. Their successors doubtless continued the practice, and thus always endeavored to ascertain what were the sentiments and feelings of those whom they permitted to subscribe or acknowledge their Covenant. Such, I suppose, was the practice at the time of the separation in 1735; and such is still the practice in the Tabernacle Church. We do not confine any one to that "form of words" which we hold fast, "but only to the substance, end, and scope of the matter contained therein." This, Morton says (see N. E. Memorial) was true of the First Church at its beginning. We, however, as did they, satisfy ourselves respecting the *sense*, in which Scripture language or canonical language is interpreted by those, who would be admitted to our communion and fellowship. If we do not "see eye to eye," we cannot "walk together," because we are not "agreed."

Y. Page 44.

"If God reveal any thing to you by any *other* instrument of *his*, be as ready to receive it, as ever you were to receive any truth by *my* ministry; for I am verily persuaded, I am very confident, the Lord hath *more truth* yet to break forth out of his holy Word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the *Reformed Churches*, who are come to a *period* in religion; and will go at present no further than the instruments of their *Reformation*. The *Lutherans* cannot be drawn to go beyond what *Luther* saw: whatever part of his will our good God has imparted and revealed unto *Calvin*, they will rather die than embrace it. And the *Calvinists*, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet *saw not all things*."

This is a misery much to be lamented; for though they were *burning and shining lights* in their time, yet they penetrated not into the *whole counsel of God*; but were they now living, they would be as willing to embrace *further light*, as that which they *first* received. I beseech you to remember it; it is an article of your *Church Covenant*, That you will *be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known unto you from the written word of God*. Remember that, and every other article of your most sacred covenant. But I must herewithal exhort you to take heed what you receive as *truth*; examine it, consider it, compare it with the other *Scriptures of truth*, before you do receive it."—See *Magnalia*, p. 60.

The excellent Robinson did not expect, that God had *less* "truth yet to break forth out of his holy Word," than Luther and Calvin had "seen." He had al-

ready taken a conspicuous part in the Arminian controversy. "Of such an eminent character was he, that when Arminianism so much prevailed, as it did in the *Low Countries*, those famous divines, Polyander, and Festus Hommius, employed this our learned Robinson to dispute publicly in the University of Leyden against Episcopius, and the other champions of that grand *choak-weed of true Christianity*." —See *Magnalia*, p. 46.

For remarks upon Robinson's Views of Church Government, see Upham's *Ratio Disciplina*, §20.

Z. Page 45.

"The settlement of New England was a result of the Reformation; not of the contest between the new opinions and of the authority of Rome, but of implacable differences between protestant dissenters and the established Anglican church.

"Who will venture to measure the consequences of actions by the humility or the remoteness of their origin? * * * A young French refugee, skilled alike in theology and civil law, in the duties of magistrates and the dialectics of religious controversy, entering the republic of Geneva, and conforming its ecclesiastical discipline to the principles of republican simplicity, established a party, of which Englishmen became members, and New England the asylum. The enfranchisement of the mind from religious despotism, led directly to inquiries into the nature of civil government; and the doctrines of popular liberty, which sheltered their infancy in the wildernesses of the newly discovered continent. within the short space of two centuries have infused themselves into the life-blood of every rising state from Labrador to Chili, established out-posts at the mouth of the Oregon and in Liberia, and, making a proselyte of enlightened France, have disturbed all the ancient governments of Europe, and awakened the public mind to resistless action from the shores of Portugal to the palaces of the Czars."—*Bancroft's History U. S. chap. 3.*

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