

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT LEXINGTON,

MARCH 31, 1813,

THE DAY WHICH COMPLETED A CENTURY FROM THE
INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN.

BY AVERY WILLIAMS,
FIFTH PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN LEXINGTON.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,
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CENTURY DISCOURSE.

I SAMUEL vii, 12.

HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US.

IT was a memorable day, on which Samuel expressed this grateful and pious acknowledgement of the goodness of God to Israel. By a wonderful interposition of providence the nation had been delivered from impending ruin. When they were trembling in expectation of a calamitous defeat, *the Lord thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines, and they were smitten before Israel. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it up between Mispah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED US*

The subjects of God's providential care and gracious smiles have constant occasion to erect monuments to his goodness. It is a duty we owe our divine Benefactor to maintain a lively sense of our dependence upon him, and to review with gratitude and humility his past dealings with us. There are periods in our lives, when we should, in a special manner, *regard the work of the Lord, and consider the operations of his hands*; and there are particular seasons which every civil and religious community should spend in calling to mind events, the fruits of which they are reaping. The ancient people of God were

required to *remember the days of old, the years of many generations*; and the practice of observing certain fixed portions of time for commemorating past dispensations of providence was enjoined upon them by divine authority. *God established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded their fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children;* THAT THEY MIGHT SET THEIR HOPE IN GOD, AND NOT FORGET THE WORKS OF GOD; BUT KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.

It is no less beneficial than pleasing to cultivate an acquaintance with the history of ancient times. The inquisitive and serious are not only amused, but essentially improved, by inquiring into the origin and progress of states and empires, and especially of the church of God. "By knowing the things that have been, they become better judges of the things that are;" and by tracing the footsteps of Jehovah through past ages, they obtained more elevated and affecting views of his character and government.

If a knowledge of history in general be thus useful, it certainly cannot be unprofitable to know the character and circumstances of our ancestors, and the past events which are intimately connected with our present condition. The displays of divine goodness in the settlement and growth of the towns and churches in this vicinity demand a grateful acknowledgment and perpetuation. Durable as the everlasting hills should be the monuments raised in honor of Him, who was the God of our fathers, and who has been the Friend and Shield of their offspring. We are under sacred obli-

gations to remember, and shew to the generation to come, THE PRAISES OF THE LORD, AND HIS STRENGTH, AND HIS WONDERFUL WORKS THAT HE HATH DONE.

Having obtained help of God, we continue unto this day, and are assembled in his house for the purpose of reviewing a series of events, which should remind us of our obligations to love, and fear, and serve him. The last of one hundred years since the incorporation of this town is now closing. With the elapse of these years many things have taken place, which are worthy of recollection. The occasion invites, curiosity impels, and a sense of duty should incline us to look back to our "day of small things" and examine the progress we have been making to our present condition. One generation shall praise thy works, O Lord, to another. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and sing of thy righteousness.*

The territory we inhabit was, for many years, included within the bounds of Cambridge, and distinguished from other parts of the town by the name of *Cambridge Farms*. "Cambridge appears, in the first instance, to have contained merely a sufficient tract of land for a fortified town." As early as 1634, only three years after the first settlement of the place, "the number of inhabitants had become disproportioned to the township." They "complained of straitness for want of land, especially meadow, and desired leave of the Council to look out either for enlargement or re-

* The act of incorporation bears date, March 20, 1712. When it is remembered that the year was then considered as beginning on the 25th of March, and that a difference of eleven days between Old and New Style must be allowed, it will at once be perceived that the date of the incorporating act, according to the present mode of computing time, would be March 31, 1713.

removal, which was granted.”* In 1636, about a hundred of the inhabitants, consisting of the principal part of Rev. Mr. Hooker’s church and congregation, who came there in 1632, removed, “through a hideous and trackless wilderness to Connecticut.”† The inhabitants which remained, soon finding their limits too narrow, discovered a like propensity to emigrate. In the spring of 1644, the church was about to remove to Mattakeese, (now Yarmouth) where a settlement had then lately commenced.‡ To prevent this removal, “the General Court was pleased to grant them a tract of land at Shawshine, (Billerica) and another parcel adjoining to Concord line, for the enlargement of their boundaries, and to enable the church and town to maintain the ministry.”§ It was at this time that the limits of Cambridge were so extended as to include what now constitutes the territory of this town.

Previous to this, however, and probably as early as 1640, some of the inhabitants of Cambridge took possession of several tracts of land and began to erect buildings within the limits of this place.¶ They first occupied the meadows, some of which were found open and fertile, and hence better prepared for imme-

* Dr. Holmes’ Hist. of Cam. Gov. Winthrop’s Journal.

†Ibid.

‡ Winthrop’s Journal, p. 152, 183.

§ Records and Documents in the Secretary of State’s Office, under the date of 1644, and 1683.—The act referred to passed in the following words: “Shawshine is granted to Cambridge without any condition of making a village there; and the land between them and Concord is granted them, all save what is formerly granted to the military company, provided the church present continue at Cambridge.”

¶ In 1642, the proprietors of land in this town were Herbert Pelham, Richard Champney, Edward Goffe, John Bridge, Edward Collins, John Russell, Goldon Moore, Edward Winship, Richard Park, John Betts, and Thomas Danforth.—N. B. For this note and several other particulars I am indebted to the kind assistance of William Winthrop, Esq. of Cambridge.

mediate improvement than the upland. It cannot certainly be ascertained at what period permanent settlements were effected; but it must have been not far from the time when the land was granted to Cambridge—The inhabitants, for several years, were few, and had numerous inconveniences and hardships to encounter. They were necessarily destitute of many things which we regard as essential to a comfortable subsistence. In addition to the labor of subduing a wilderness, they long endured severe trials in being often threatened with savage violence and cruelty, and in having but few advantages for religious instruction and social enjoyment.

The settlement, however, progressed, and the embarrassments, with which it was at first attended, gradually diminished. In 1682, the number of families had increased to about thirty, and the number of souls to one hundred and eighty. They had now no opportunity of attending public worship without travelling from five to ten miles. Earnestly desirous that they and their children might enjoy, in a much greater degree than it was possible for them under such circumstances to enjoy, the ordinances of the Gospel, in October, 1682, they presented a petition to the General Court, praying for liberty to become a parish.* The inhabitants of Cambridge zealously opposed their being separated, and the petition was not granted. They renewed their application in 1684: and the Court, at this time, so far listened to their request as to appoint a committee to examine the place and establish

* This petition was signed and presented in behalf of the inhabitants, by James Cutler, Matthew Bridge, jun. David Fiske, sen. Samuel Stone, sen. Francis Whitmore, John Tidd, Ephraim Winship, and John Winter.

bounds for a parish. This committee performed the service assigned them; but the opposition of Cambridge was so great that the prayer of the petitioners was again rejected. Conscious of the rectitude of their intentions, they again renewed their petition in 1691. The Court, convinced of the propriety of their request, "ordered and granted," December 15, 1691, "that the petitioners be permitted and allowed to invite and settle an able and orthodox minister for the dispensing of the Gospel among them." The bounds of the parish were ordered to be the same as those pointed out by the committee in 1684, and very near the same as those of the town at the present day.*

Previous to their being thus formed into a parish, the inhabitants of this place were under the pastoral care of the Rev. Messrs. Thomas Shepherd, Jonathan Mitchell, Urian Oaks, and Nathaniel Gookin. Mr. Shepherd came to New England, "with the people which were to constitute his society," in 1635. The church, over which he presided till his death, was gathered, February 1, 1636. It was the eleventh church organized in the colony, and the first permanent church in Cambridge. Mr. Shepherd, died, August 25, 1649. He was succeeded by Mr. Mitchell, August 21, 1650, who died, July 9, 1668. Mr. Oaks succeeded Mr. Mitchell, November 8, 1671, and died, July 25, 1681. Mr. Gookin was ordained, November 15, 1682, and died, August 7, 1692.†—Under the min-

* Records and documents in the Secretary's office.—Lexington originally included a part of Lincoln and a part of Bedford. It has of late had a small part of Burlington annexed to it. It is now bounded on the north-east by Burlington and Woburn, on the south-east by West-Cambridge and Waltham, on the south west by Waltham, on the west by Lincoln and on the north-west by Bedford. It contains 10,300 acres.

† Dr. Holmes' Hist. of Cam, and Century Sermon.

istry of these learned and eminently pious servants of Christ, our ancestors were instructed in those doctrines of grace, which are the pillars and the glory of the christian system. It was not in consequence of any disaffection to their religious teacher, or to the church and society with which they were connected, that they requested to be separated from them, but it was, that they and the generations which should succeed them might enjoy the privilege of uniformly waiting upon God in the way of his appointment.

Immediately after they were constituted a parish they began to make provision for carrying the objects of their incorporation into effect. A sum of money was raised by subscription for the purpose of erecting a house of public worship; and it was probably early in the summer of 1692 that the first house was erected. April 22, 1692, they invited Mr. Benjamin Estabrook to preach with them a year, and made provision for his support. He accepted the invitation and commenced his labors on the first sabbath in May.

At this early period the inhabitants discovered a provident and pious care for the support of the ministry. In April, 1693, they purchased of the town, for this purpose, "twelve acres of common land on the east side of the causeway, and the rest of the common land on the other side, and on the south side of vinebrook meadow."* By this purchase they laid the foundation of a fund, the income of which is now adequate to the support of a minister.

* This land was surveyed in 1762, and the three pieces found to contain 148 acres, and 55 and a half rods. The piece on the northerly side of the causeway, containing about five acres, was sold in 1770.

Mr. Estabrook continued in the place and enjoyed the confidence and esteem of the people. The anxiety they manifested for his settlement and their exertions to provide for his support indicate a strong attachment to him. In the summer of 1694, they built and gave him a house, on condition of his becoming and continuing their minister.* Their pecuniary embarrassments, however, were such that they made but slow progress in preparations for his settlement. It was not till April 13, 1696, that they made him their final propositions for his maintenance. On the third of June following he gave an affirmative answer to their call, and on the twenty-first of the ensuing October the services of his ordination were performed.

At the time of his ordination, Mr. Estabrook had been laboring with the people *in word and doctrine* about four years and six months. They were bound to each other by many strong and endearing ties. Satisfied with means of support which could promise him no more than a comfortable subsistence, he was encouraged and animated by the prospect of doing good and obtaining the final reward of a faithful servant; and the little flock intrusted to his care were rejoicing in the hope of being long blessed with the labors of one, whom they loved as a friend and revered as a good minister of Christ.—But the period was short in which they were permitted to rejoice in his light. He, *who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, saw fit to disappoint their expectations and damp their joy by soon depriving them of

* The house was 42 by 18 feet. It stood a few rods east of vinebrook and back of the house now occupied by Mr. Benjamin Green.

their pastor. He died, July 22, 1697, having lived to complete only nine months of his ministry.*

The church, which was gathered on the day of Mr. Estabrook's ordination, consisted, at the time of his decease, of thirty three members. The original number was twelve.† During his ministry twenty-one were added, nine of which were by letters of dismission from other churches.

Soon after the death of Mr. Estabrook, the attention of the society was directed to Mr. John Hancock‡. On the seventeenth of November, 1697, they made choice of him to preach with them till May following, as a candidate for settlement. He complied with the invitation they gave him, accepted proposals for ordination which were made to him in February succeeding, and was consecrated to the pastoral office, November 2, 1698.§

* Mr Estabrook graduated at Harvard College in 1690.—On his tombstone is the following inscription:

HERE LIETH INTERRED THE REMAINS OF
MR. BENJAMIN ESTABROOK,
LATE AND FIRST PASTOR OF THE CHURCH
OF CHRIST IN THIS PLACE,
SON TO THE REV. MR. JOSEPH ESTABROOK,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN CONCORD,
WHO DEPARTED FROM US TO CHRIST,
JULY 22, A. D. 1697.
AGED 26 YEARS AND FIVE MONTHS.
VIRTUS ANTEIT ANNOS.

† The following are the names of the first members, viz. Benjamin Estabrook, David Fisk, Samuel Stone, John Russell, Israel Mead, Thomas Cutler, David Fiske, jun. Samuel Whittemore, William Read, John Miriam, Samuel Stone, jun. Thomas Miriam.

‡ He was a son of Mr. Nathaniel Hancock of Cambridge. He graduated at Harvard College in 1689.

§ The Rev. Mr. Willard of Boston gave the charge, and the Rev. Mr. Estabrook of Concord the right hand of fellowship.

The increase of inhabitants and property, and various inconveniences to which they were subjected by remaining a part of Cambridge, inclined the people to petition for a separation from the town. Accordingly a committee was appointed in October, 1712, to 'present their address to the town of Cambridge and to the General Court,' requesting that they might be "confirmed and established as a township." The terms of separation were amicably adjusted, and an act passed, March 20, O. S. 1713, incorporating the town by the name of LEXINGTON.

The house, in which they had now worshipped about twenty years, being found too small for the accommodation of the inhabitants and too inelegant for their taste, they voted, January 26, 1713, to build a new one; and, in the course of the two following seasons, the second house of public worship was erected and completed. Religious services were performed in it, the first time, October 17, 1714.

The records of the town afford evidence of the faithful exertions of our ancestors to discountenance idleness and vice, and to maintain a respectful observance of divine institutions. In December, 1728, the selectmen summoned a person to appear before them and "answer to a complaint, they being informed that he loitered about, and spent his time idly, and behaved himself very disorderly;" and committees were repeatedly appointed to 'take prudent care that children and youth be restrained from irregular conduct in time of public worship, and to prevent the profanation of the Sabbath.'

In 1734, a thousand acres of land were granted the town by the General Court, to assist in defraying its proportion of the expense of supporting the bridge over

Charles river in Cambridge. Portions of this land were annually leased, till it was sold in 1757. The proceeds of the sale afforded the town a considerable income for several years; but were finally lost in consequence of the depreciation of paper money.*

In November, 1733, Mr. Ebenezer Hancock was invited to settle in this place, as colleague with his father. After completing his collegiate studies in 1728, he took the charge of a school in town, in which employment he continued till nearly three years after his ordination. His distinguished talents and virtues secured him the high esteem and ardent affection of the people. The advantages they hoped to derive from his pastoral labors among them disposed them cheerfully to undertake the additional expense of his support, when the annual demands upon them already were a burden which they seemed hardly able to bear. He was pressed "with repeated earnestness to a settlement elsewhere;" but "the advice and counsel of men of judgment and letters," his desire to ease the task of a beloved father in the evening of his life, his attachments to the people with whom he had spent the first of his years, and his belief that *this* was the place which God had pointed out for his ministerial labors, induced him to accept proposals for a settlement here. He was ordained, January 2, 1734.†

* One of the propositions made by Cambridge to the inhabitants of this town, in 1713, and to which they agreed, as a condition of separation, was the following, viz. "The *farmers*, upon their being dismissed from the town, shall annually pay to our town treasurer such a proportion of our part of the charge of the great bridge over Charles river in Cambridge, as shall fall to them according to their annual proportion with us in the province tax." The land granted the town to assist in defraying this expense, lay in Dorchester-Canada, now Ashburnham.

† His father preached and gave the charge. The Rev. Mr. Williams of Weston expressed the fellowship of the churches.

Mr. E. Hancock entered upon his ministerial labors with bright and encouraging prospects. The Holy Ghost had made him an overseer of a flock which he tenderly loved, and whose confidence he enjoyed. The church was large and respectable, and religion was in a flourishing state.—But, alas! he was *not suffered to continue by reason of death*. Having *served as a son with his father in the gospel* only about six years, he died suddenly, January 28, 1740, in the thirtieth year of his age.—He was highly esteemed as a scholar, a man of eminent piety, and an able and faithful minister of Christ. He was *an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*. His praise was in all the churches, and he “died greatly and universally lamented.”

After his death, his venerable father, though far advanced in life, and visited with affliction upon affliction,* continued to perform the duties of his office nearly thirteen years. “Instead of sinking in the day of adversity, or having his gray hairs brought with sorrow to the grave, his spirit revived, his health returned, and his strength was so far confirmed, that he carried on the work of the ministry with as much or more zeal and fervency of spirit than ever.”† His people were attentive to his necessities, gave him comfort by manifesting an increasing love and tenderness to him, and encouraged his heart by faithfully attending his ministrations.

But the time of his departure at length came. He preached with uncommon fervor the sabbath previous

* His eldest son, the Rev. John Hancock of Braintree, “a very elegant and accomplished preacher,” died in 1744.

† Dr. Appleton’s discourses on his death.

to his decease,* and enjoyed his usual health till the night after Tuesday, the fifth of December, 1752, when he was awoke from sleep by pains, from which he was soon relieved by the sleep of death. He died in the eighty second year of his age, and fifty fourth of his ministry.

The Rev. John Hancock was possessed, in an unusual degree, of qualifications which fitted him for the station in which he was placed. The great Father of spirits formed him for the people of this town. He was *gentle among them, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; and being affectionately desirous of them, was willing to have imparted to them, not the gospel of God only, but also his own soul, because they were dear to him.* "I have studied," said he in one of his addresses to them, "that I might not be burdensome to you. You know how these hands of mine have ministered unto my necessities, and how I have borne the burden with you in the day of your small things." His natural capacities, acquired accomplishments, and gracious endowments, not only made him a pleasant companion, but gained him a general esteem and respect, and rendered him eminently and extensively useful in a great variety of ways. He was a lover of peace, and peculiarly calculated to heal existing contentions and prevent discords and animosities. His facetious temper and ready wit enabled him often to scatter the clouds of melancholy that hung upon people's spirits, and excite a pleasant cheerfulness; and his mild and gentle counsels and reproofs frequently had the effect of softening the tempers and correcting the ill humors of men. He had an uncommon vivacity of spirit.

* His texts were, Luke 2, 49. and Rom. 5, 12.

He was hospitable, cheerful, active, diligent, and ready to every good work. He was early in the morning and early in the week at his studies and in his preparations for the sabbath. By the sound doctrines, the wise counsels, and the moving exhortations with which he entertained his hearers, he made it appear that he gave attention to reading and meditation and was a scribe well instructed to the kingdom of heaven. He was an able and zealous advocate of the distinguishing doctrines of christianity. His preaching was such as is calculated to alarm the impenitent, to make sinners in Zion afraid, to guide inquiring souls to Christ, and to encourage saints to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The usefulness of Mr. Hancock was not confined to the church and people in this place. He was much resorted to for counsel and assistance, so that the care of neighboring churches in a manner came upon him.* Wherever he was known, he was respected and loved by the people of God for his learning, his wisdom, his piety, and his fidelity in the cause of Christ.†

*For more than 30 years, he was the senior minister in this part of the country. On account of his age and gravity he was long honored with the title of *Bishop*. He gave the solemn charge to twenty one ministers, the last of which was the late Dr. Cushing of Waltham.

† The above remarks upon the character of Mr. Hancock are principally compiled from one of the sermons preached the sabbath after his funeral by Dr. Appleton of Cambridge.—His printed discourses are,

1. A sermon at the General Election, 1722, Luke 22, 25.
2. A sermon at the ordination of his son in Braintree, 1726. Luke 24, 49.
3. A sermon at the ordination of his son in Lexington, 1734. 2 Cor 1. 24.
4. A sermon at the public lecture in Boston, November 21, 1734, before his Excellency the Governor and the General Court. Jer. 5, 5.
5. A sermon at the installation of the Rev. Timothy Harrington in Lancaster, November 16, 1748. 1 Cor. 9, 19.

During his ministry, 445 were added to the church by profession, and 32 by letter; 180 owned the covenant, and 1637 were baptized.

After his death, several gentlemen were employed as candidates for settlement. April 25, 1754, was observed as a day of fasting and prayer, preparatory to the choice of a minister. In June following, Mr. Aaron Putnam received an invitation to settle here; but, in consequence of opposition to his settlement, gave a negative answer.

In July, 1755, my worthy predecessor, the Rev. Jonas Clark, was called to the pastoral office in this place, and was ordained on the fifth of the ensuing November.*—Between the death of Mr. Hancock and the ordination of Mr. Clark, six were admitted to the church by letters of dismissal from other churches; four owned the covenant, and fifty-six were baptized.

The inhabitants of this town early manifested a firm and spirited attachment to the rights and liberties of the country. In October, 1765, they publicly expressed their apprehension of the dangers which threatened the colonies, and particularly their opposition to the noted *Stamp Act*. In December, 1767, they “unanimously voted to concur with the town of Boston in their resolves respecting importing and using foreign commodities.” Sensible of the importance of seeking divine direction in times of public difficulty and distress, they set apart a day for public fasting and prayer, in the autumn of 1768, on account of the alarming sit-

* Mr. Clark was a native of Newton. He graduated at Harvard College, 1752. At his ordination, the Rev. Mr. Lawrence of Lincoln made the introductory prayer; the Rev. Dr. Appleton of Cambridge preached; the Rev. Mr. Cotton of Newton gave the charge; and the Rev. Mr. Cook of Cambridge, the right hand of fellowship.

tation of the country. In December, 1772, a committee was appointed to correspond with committees of other towns "on matters of common concern;" and at the same time, the town instructed their representative "in the great Court of Inquest for the province," to 'use his utmost influence that all matters, in which the rights and liberties of the people were concerned, might be impartially inquired into, and dispassionately considered by the General Assembly; and that measures be pursued, by petition to the throne, or otherwise, as the Court in their wisdom should see fit, for a radical and lasting redress of grievances; that, whether successful or not, succeeding generations might know that they understood their rights and liberties, and were neither afraid nor ashamed to maintain them; and also that they might have this consolation, at least, in their chains, that it was not through their neglect that the people were enslaved.' In December, 1773, resolves were passed prohibiting the use of teas, imported by the East-India company and expressing the readiness and determination of the people to concur with their brethren in Boston and other towns in every rational measure that might be necessary for the recovery and preservation of their rights and liberties.—It is but just to observe that, from the commencement of the contest between this country and Great Britain to the close of the revolution, the inhabitants of this town manifested a spirit worthy of freemen.

It was here, and but a few rods from the place in which we are now assembled, that the first sacrifice of lives, in defence of our country's rights, was made. Yonder monument revives a lively recollection of the alarms, anxieties, and distresses of the day, which open-

ed a long protracted scene of bloodshed and war in the land.—The mournful catastrophe of the NINETEENTH of April, 1775, is fresh in the memory of many of my hearers. You beheld the slaughter of your inoffending fellow-citizens and friends. You heard the cries of the wounded and the dying. You saw your dwellings forsaken, plundered, and threatened with devouring flames. You beheld and shared in the calamities of that gloomy day.—Ten of the inhabitants of this town were slain, and ten wounded by the British troops; five buildings were destroyed by fire; and cloathing, furniture, and provisions and goods of various description, to a large amount were pillaged and wasted.*

The *nineteenth* of April was “statedly observed” in this place, during the war, “by a respectable appearance of the militia in arms, and a solemn assembly of the *whole congregation* in the house of God, to drop a tear upon the graves, and mourn over the ashes of their slaughtered friends; religiously to notice and acknowledge the hand of God; humbly to express their confidence in him, as the righteous and powerful

* A particular account of the interesting events of this day was published in an appendix to the Rev. Mr. Clark’s sermon, delivered April 19, 1776. General statements of the same facts may be found in the histories of the revolution. Referring my readers to these sources of information, I shall only add here the following list of sufferers in Lexington. The persons killed in the morning were, Robert Munroe, Jonas Parker, Samuel Hadley, Jonathan Harrington, jun. Isaac Muzzy, Caleb Harrington, and John Brown; wounded, Jedediah Munroe, Thomas Winship, Nathaniel Farmer, John Robbins, Solomon Pierce, John Tidd, Joseph Comee, Ebenezer Munroe, jun. and Prince, a negro. In the afternoon, as the British troops were returning from Concord, Jedediah Munroe, John Raymond, and Nathaniel Wyman were killed; Francis Brown was wounded. The buildings destroyed by fire were, a house and barn of Deacon Loring, a house of Mr. Joshua Bond, a house of Mrs. Lydia Mulliken, and a shop of Mr. Nathaniel Mulliken.

avenger of injured innocence; and devoutly to implore his presence and aid in the cause of their country, of posterity, and mankind.”*

In 1776, a large addition was made to the funded property of the town by the sale of wood on the ministerial land for the use of the continental troops then stationed at Cambridge. The foundation of this fund, as I have before observed, was laid by the purchase of this land in 1693. From the time of the purchase, it afforded the town a gradually increasing income. At what period a *permanent fund* was established, I have not been able to ascertain; but it was not till the year 1781, that the annual interest and the income from the land were appropriated particularly to the support of the ministry. A large proportion of what now constitutes the principal of the fund has been obtained by sales of timber and fuel in the course of forty years past.† The judicious management of these sales and of the proceeds of them entitles the gentlemen, who have composed the committees appointed for the purpose, to the gratitude of the town. It is, in no small degree, owing to their fidelity and economy, that the people have not been incumbered with a ministerial tax for more than fifteen years.

* Appendix to Rev. Mr. Adams's sermon...The ministers who officiated on these occasions were,

- In 1776, Rev. Jonas Clark, of this town... Joel iii, 19, 20, 21.
- 1777, Rev. Samuel Cooke of Cambridge... Exodus xvii, 14, 15, 16.
- 1778, Rev. Jacob Cushing of Waltham... Deut. xxxii, 43.
- 1779, Rev. Samuel Woodward of Weston... 1 Sam. vii, 12.
- 1780, Rev. Isaac Morrill of Wilmington... Psalm xxvii, 13, 14.
- 1781, Rev. Henry Cummings of Billerica... Psalm lxxvi, 10.
- 1782, Rev. Phillips Payson of Chelsea... Exodus xii, 14.
- 1783, Rev. Zabdiel Adams of Lunenburgh... Gen. i, 20.

† An addition of about 2300 dollars, the amount of what the pews in the meeting house sold for above the cost of the house, was made in 1795.

In 1784, the house, now improved by the town for the accommodation of the poor, was built.

The people of this town were firm and resolute in opposition to the rebellious spirit which confused the state in 1786. In an address to the town of Boston, they observed, "we feel ourselves, equally with you, interested and affected in the commotions and disorders that have taken place in the Commonwealth, to the weakening of constitutional government, the obstruction of a due administration of justice, and preventing the course of the laws of the land; and while we stand ready to every exertion, which wisdom may dictate, for obtaining a redress of any grievances under which we or our fellow citizens may groan, you may rest assured that nothing on our part shall be wanting, for the confirmation and establishment of the social compact, the support of the honor, dignity, and authority of constitutional government and the execution of the laws of the land."

The house, in which we are now assembled, was built in 1794.* The service of dedication was performed by the Rev. Mr. Clark, January 15, 1795.—May the sacred edifice long stand, a house of habitation for God, a temple filled from sabbath to sabbath with solemn worshippers.

In 1799, the monument, which bears the names, of those who were slain on the morning of the *nineteenth* of April, 1775, was erected "by the inhabitants of this

* It stands 20 feet back of the ground covered by the former one. The house, which was built in 1691, stood not far from the same place.

town, under the patronage and at the expense of the Commonwealth.”*

On the fifteenth of November, 1805, the church and society were again deprived of a pastor.—The Rev. Jonas Clark lived to enter upon the fifty-first year of his ministry, and to complete nearly the seventy-fifth of his age. To a large proportion of my hearers he was endeared by an intimate acquaintance and many labors of love. He was with you in seasons of prosperity and joy, and in times of peril and distress. You

* On the monument is the following inscription;
 Sacred to Liberty and the Rights of Mankind!!!
 The Freedom and Independence of America,
 Sealed and defended by the Blood of her Sons,
 This monument is erected
 By the Inhabitants of Lexington,
 Under the Patronage and at the Expense of
 The Commonwealth of MASSACHUSETTS,
 To the Memory of their Fellow-Citizens,
 Ensign *Robert Munroe*, and Messrs. *Jonas Parker*,
Samuel Hadley, *Jonathan Harrington, jun.*
Issac Muzzy, *Caleb Harrington*, and *John Brown*
 Of Lexington, and *Ashael Porter* of Woburn,
 Who fell, on this Field, the first Victims to the
 Sword of British Tyranny and Oppression,
 On the Morning of the ever Memorable
 NINETEENTH of April An. Dom. 1775.
 The Die was cast!!!

The blood of these Martyrs
 Was the Cement of the Union of these States, then
 Colonies; and gave the Spring to the Spirit, Firmness,
 And Resolution of their Fellow-citizens.
 They rose as one Man to revenge their Brethren's
 Blood, and at the Point of the Sword to assert and
 Defend their native Rights.
 They nobly dar'd to be free!!
 The contest was long, bloody, and affecting,
 Righteous Heaven approved the solemn Appeal.
 Victory crowned their arms: and
 The Peace, Liberty, and Independence of the UNITED
 STATES of America, was their GLORIOUS REWARD.

well knew his manner of life, faith, charity, patience, and afflictions. You remember with what seriousness and ardor he engaged in the services of religion; how instructive and consoling was his conversation in the chamber of sickness and the house of mourning; how appropriate, solemn, and impressive were his addresses to the throne of grace, especially on unexpected and mournful occasions; with what wisdom and prudence he sought to preserve the harmony and promote the temporal and spiritual interests of the people of his charge; how firm and inflexible were his attachments to his country in "the days which tried men's souls;" and how willing he was to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ.—That he was a believer in what are usually denominated *the doctrines of grace*, and that he was deeply sensible of the importance of a zealous and persevering defence of these doctrines, they who enjoyed his ministry can testify and his printed discourses afford ample evidence. In the following solemn and impressive language he described the necessity of ministerial fidelity. "To be influenced by the fear, or flattery of men; to truckle to the humors of the vicious or depraved; to shun to declare the counsel of God for fear of offending, or striking at the darling sins, lusts, or appetites of men; to deal deceitfully with the word of God, out of regard to favorites or friends; or to cause the truth of Christ to bow to the preconceived sentiments of fallible mortals, is utterly inconsistent with the dignity of the sacred character, and altogether unworthy the heavenly trust reposed in the ministers of his kingdom. And should venal motives, fondness for applause or any other sordid desire, influence any to aim at pleas-

ing men rather than God, so far the end of the ministry is subverted, God dishonored, and the religion of Christ exposed to the malice and power of its bitterest enemies. And as to wretches in office, who are chargeable with such conduct as this, it is easy to see, that of all men, they are most justly exposed to the severest resentments of an angry God and the hottest thunderbolts of divine vengeance, for meanly betraying the very cause, which, by every sacred and endearing tie, they were so solemnly engaged to defend.”*

Had I been favored with a personal acquaintance with my highly respected predecessor, I should feel more competent than I now do to a just delineation of his character. As I had not that privilege, I shall only subjoin the following observations of that venerable servant of Christ,† who addressed you from this place at his funeral. “Our deceased brother,” said he, “believed in the *fulness* of that redemption which is in Christ, and depended on him for sanctification, as well as for righteousness to justification, being equally concerned for both, convinced of the necessity and beauty of holiness, and desirous to glorify God in a holy obedience. He honored his Master, delighted in his work, and had a love for precious souls. His good natural parts, his attainments in human literature, and his spiritual gifts were a rich furniture for his ministerial office, and made him *a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*. He was a pattern of patience and resignation under his

* Sermon at the ordination of Mr. Muzzy, p. 17.

† The Rev. Dr. Cushing of Waltham.

many domestic afflictions and painful trials in the course of his ministry. Through all the enfeebling influence of his bodily diseases, he behaved with exemplary composure of spirit, and with resignation to the will of God. He was not insensible of the hand of God upon him, or of his own weakness and want of help from above; and while he found himself incapable of his Master's work, his heart continued in it, and quietly waited the events of Providence. For several of his last days, he was, by reason of an additional disorder, unable to discourse, perhaps incapable of reflection; but was in the hands of the Almighty, who is just and holy in all his ways and works."*

In the time of his ministry, the admissions to the church were, by profession, 387, and by letter, ten; 69 owned the covenant, and 1040 were baptized.

In May, 1807, Mr. Henry Colman, now pastor of a church in Hingham, received an invitation, which he declined accepting, to settle in this town.

* Mr. Clark's publications are,

1. A sermon preached to a religious society of young men in Lexington, 1761—Prov. i, 9.
2. A sermon at the ordination of the Rev. Josiah Bridge in E. Sudbury, 1761—Luke x, 3 and 16.
3. A sermon at the Artillery Election, 1768—2 Chron. xvii, 16.
4. A sermon on the use and excellence of vocal music in public worship, preached at an occasional lecture in Lexington, 1770—Psalm xlvi, 6, 7.
5. A sermon, delivered April 19, 1776, with an appendix containing a narrative of the events of April 19, 1775.
6. A sermon at the General Election, 1781—Psalm xlvi, 8, 9.
7. A sermon at the ordination of the Rev. Joseph Estabrook in Athol, 1787—Jer. iii, 15.
8. A sermon at the ordination of the Rev. William Muzzy in Sullivan, N. H. 1798—1 Thess. ii, 4.

On the fourth sabbath in August, 1807, your present pastor first addressed you from this desk. On the twelfth of the succeeding October, I received your unanimous call to take the oversight of you in the Lord; and on the thirtieth of December, was solemnly consecrated to the work of the ministry among you.* I have reason to acknowledge with gratitude the kindness you have manifested to me and my family. My heart's desire has been to preach to you *the truth as it is in Jesus*, to *declare all the counsel of God*, and to be instrumental of guiding you to *the Shepherd and Bishop of souls*; and my hands have been strengthened and heart encouraged by finding, as I trust I have found in some instances, that I have not *labored in vain*, or *spent my strength for naught*. It is my prayer to the Father of mercies and God of all grace, that I may discharge the duties of my office with increasing fidelity, and that you may feel and manifest the power and spirit of the Gospel.

After the death of Mr. Clark and previous to my settlement, four were added to the church, two owned the covenant, and eleven were baptized. Since my ordination, the admissions to the church have been thirty-seven; the baptisms seventy-five; two have owned the covenant, and seventy-five have been removed by death.

It is now 116 years and about five months since a church was gathered in this place. In this period,

* On this occasion, the Rev. Samuel Gile of Milton made the introductory prayer, the Rev. Dr. Kendal of Weston preached from Titus i, 9; the Rev. Mr. Marrett of Burlington made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. Dr. Cushing of Waltham gave the charge; the Rev. Mr. Fiske of West Cambridge gave the right hand of fellowship; and the Rev. Dr. Stearns of Lincoln made the concluding prayer.

seventeen deacons have been chosen and have officiated;* 954, including those who were engaged in forming it, have been admitted to the fellowship of the church; 257 have owned the covenant; and 2819 have been baptized—In the century, which is now closing, the admissions to the church have been 833; admissions to the baptismal covenant 200; baptisms 2410; and deaths 1446.

Laudable attention has been paid by the inhabitants of this town to the education of their youth. They have generally been careful to employ and have made liberal provision for the support of able instructors. Though for several years, in latter times, unpleasant contests existed concerning the division of districts, at present harmony prevails, and the arrangements for schooling are such as to afford the rising generation, good advantages to become prepared for usefulness and respectability in Society. Since the incorporation of the town, thirty one young gentlemen, who were natives of the town, or whose parents

* John Meriam,	chosen in	1696;	died in	1727,
Samuel Stone,	————	1696;	————	1703.
Samuel Stone, jun.	————	1715.	————	1732.
Joseph Estabrook,	————	1716;	————	1733.
Joseph Brown,	————	1727;	————	1764.
John Laughton,	————	1733; dismissed to Harvard chh.	1744.	
Joseph Estabrook,	————	1733;	died in	1740.
John Stone,	————	1743;	————	1762.
Joseph Loring,	————	1743;	————	1746.
James Brown,	————	1756;	————	1763.
Joseph Loring	————	1756;	————	1787.
Jonas Stone,	————	1766;	————	1790.
Benjamin Brown,	————	1768;	————	1802.
John Bridge,	————	1787;	————	1806.
Nathan Reed,	————	1787; resigned, 1808; died,	1811.	
James Brown,	————	1808.		
Isaac Hastings,	————	1808.		

resided here while they were members of college, have been favored with the privileges of a public education. Nineteen of these have been preachers, and seventeen ordained ministers.*

* John Hancock, A. M. graduated 1719; was ordained over the north church in Braintree, Nov. 2, 1726; died May 7, 1744, *Æ.* 41.

Jonathan Bowman, A. M. grad. 1724; was ordained at Dorchester, Nov. 5, 1729; died, May 30, 1775.

Ebenezer Hancock, A. M. grad. 1728; was ordained colleague with his father in this town, Jan. 2, 1734; died, Jan. 28, 1740, *Æ.* 29.

Edmund Bowman, A. M. grad. 1728; was a merchant in Portsmouth, N. H.

Thaddeus Mason, A. M. grad. 1728; was many years clerk of the Court of Common Pleas for Middlesex; died, May 1, 1802; *Æ.* 96.

Philemon Robbins, A. M, grad. 1729; was ordained at Branford, Con,

Josiah Brown, A. M. grad. 1735; was a preacher; died at Lancaster, March 4, 1774, *Æ.* 59.

Matthew Bridge, A. M. grad. 1741; was ordained at Framingham, February 19, 1746; died, September 3, 1775, *Æ.* 55.

Nathaniel Trask, A. M. grad. 1742; was ordained at Epping, N. H.—died in 1789, *Æ.* 67.

Nathaniel Robbins, A. M. grad 1747; was ordained at Milton, February 13, 1751; died May, 19, 1795, *Æ.* 69.

Jonas Meriam, A. M. grad. 1753; was ordained at Newton, March 22, 1758; died, Aug. 13, 1780, *Æ.* 50.

Josiah Bridge, A. M. grad. 1758; was ordained at East Sudbury, November 4, 1761; died June 19, 1801, *Æ.* 62.

Samuel Fiske, A. M. grad. 1759; was an episcopal minister in —Carolina.

Micah Lawrence, A. M. grad. 1759; was ordained at Winchester, N. H. November 14, 1764; died January 1794, *Æ.* 55.

Ephraim Woolson, A. B. grad. 1769; was a physician in Hanover, N. H; died, Jan.—1802, *Æ.* 61.

Joseph Brown. A. M. grad. 1763; was ordained at Winchendon, May 24, 1769; died,—1811.

Amos Winship, A. M. M. B. grad 1771.

Benjamin Muzzy, A. B. grad. 1774; sailed from Boston, Sept. 1777, in the privateer, Hero Revenge, as chaplain, and was lost at sea.

Isaac Reed, A. M. grad. 1780; was a merchant in Littleton; died, Dec. 5, 1789, *Æ.* 35.

Ebenezer Bowman, A. M. grad. 1782; attorney at law in Wilksbarre, Penn.

Joseph Estabrook, A. M. grad. 1782; was ordained at Athol, November 21, 1787.

It would be inexcusable to pass in silence those who have manifested their attachments to the church and town and their desires to promote the interests of virtue and religion by generous donations. The communion table has been richly furnished by the liberality of individuals.* In 1700, a bell was given the parish by the town of Cambridge. In 1731, the

Nathan Underwood, A. M. grad. 1788; was ordained at Harwich, November 21, 1792.

Samuel Chandler, A. M. grad. 1790; was ordained at Eliot, N. H. Oct. 27, 1792.

Joseph Dennie, A. B. grad. 1790; instituted and edited the Port Folio, a literary publication of high merit, in Philadelphia; died, Jan. 7, 1812.

Daniel Marrett, A. M. grad. 1790; was ordained at Standish, D. M. Sept. 21, 1796.

William Muzzy, A. B. grad. 1793, was ordained at Sullivan, N. H. Feb. 7, 1798.

Abiel Chandler, A. B. grad. 1798; died, Feb. 11, 1799.

Phineas Adams, A. B. grad. 1801.

Elias Phinney, A. M. grad. 1801; attorney at law in Charlestown.

Timothy Willington, A. M. M. B. grad. 1806; physician in West Cambridge.

Oliver Danforth, A. B. grad. at Williams College, 1811.

* The following articles of plate for the sacramental service have been given by individuals;

1 tankard by Mrs. Rachel Butterfield.	
1 cup by Deacon Samuel Stone, - - - - -	1715
1 — by Mr. William Reed, jun. - - - - -	1716
1 — by Mr. Samuel Haugh, - - - - -	1727
1 — by Messrs. David Fiske and Phillip Russel, -	1732
1 — by Rev. Ebenezer Hancock.	
1 — by Messrs. Matthew Bridge and Thomas Meriam,	1745
1 — by Capt. Samuel Stone, - - - - -	1752
1 — by Joseph Bowman, Esq. - - - - -	1755
1 — by Mr. Nathaniel Whittemore, - - - - -	1756
1 — by Deacon Joseph Brown, - - - - -	1759
1 — by Mr. Richard Arms, - - - - -	1763
2 — by Thomas Hancock. Esq. of Boston, - - -	1764
1 — by Mr. Isaac Stone - - - - -	1765
1 — by Francis Bowman, Esq.	

practical works of the Rev. Richard Baxter, in four folio volumes, were given the church by the Honorable Samuel Holden, Esq. of London. In 1762, the second bell was given the town by Mr. Isaac Stone.* In 1764, a legacy of twenty pounds, lawful money, was left the church by Thomas Hancock, Esq. of Boston.† In 1779, Mrs. Rachel Butterfield of Bridge-water gave the church “thirteen pounds, six shillings and eight pence for the purchase of a silver tankard, and fifty pounds more to be disposed of as the church should think fit.”‡ She also gave the town “fifty pounds, the interest of which to be annually improved for the use of a school.” In 1793, the late Governor Hancock presented the church and congregation this Bible, and gave the town one hundred dollars towards defraying the expense of building this house

*The bell, now in use, was purchased in 1801. The clock in the meeting-house was procured in 1802.

† He was a son of the Rev. John Hancock of this town, one of the principal merchants of New England, a most useful member of society, and for many years one of his Majesty’s council. He left 1000 pounds for founding a professorship of the Hebrew and other oriental languages in Harvard college; 1000 pounds for the society for propagating the gospel; 600 pounds towards a hospital for the reception of persons deprived of their senses; and 200 pounds for a linen factory. Dr. Eliot’s Biog. Dict.

‡ In consequence of the depreciation of paper money, this legacy was found, in 1781, to have “sunk in its value, so as in a great measure to frustrate the benevolent and pious intentions of the donor.” That a memorial of her kindness might be possessed, Mr. Simeon Leonard, the executor of her will, generously offered the church “twenty dollars towards purchasing a handsome tankard for the communion table, in case the church agreed and saw fit to procure one, engraved with the inscription which Mrs. B. in her life time, had mentioned.” The proposal was accepted by the church, and the tankard, now in use, accordingly procured. Chh. Rec.

of public worship.* The same year, and for the same purpose, the town received twenty-two dollars from the Rev. Jonas Clark—Thankfully may we ever recollect, and carefully transmit to posterity, the names of our kind and pious benefactors.

The goodness of God has been distinguishingly manifested to the church and people in this place. *Our fathers trusted in Him, and he delivered them; they trusted in Him, and were not confounded.* In their seasons of peril and distress, he was their defence, and in their endeavors to honor him, he blessed them. He has favored the town with a good degree of health, and preserved an unusual number of its inhabitants to old age.† He has sent into this part of his vineyard faithful laborers; ministers of the everlasting gospel, who were “burning and shining lights.” He has blessed the church with seasons of refreshing from his presence. His spirit, at times, has come down *like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth.*‡ The days have been, when there were but few, very few, who did not regard the sabbath as “the holy of the Lord;” when the youth were

* Gov. Hancock, whose patriotic and benevolent deeds entitled him to a distinguished rank among the friends of his country and the benefactors of mankind, was a son of the Rev. John Hancock of Braintree, and grandson of the Rev. John Hancock of this town.

† There are now living in town fifty persons, who are over seventy years of age. Of the seventy-five, who have died since my ordination, twenty were seventy and over seventy, and eight over eighty years of age. The number of inhabitants, according to the last census, is 1052. The number of families is 198; of dwelling houses, 158.

‡ The admissions to the church, in 1755, were thirty-two; in 1742, forty two; in 1728, seventy four. Twenty nine, the greatest number added at any one time, were admitted, April 14, 1728.

generally united in inquiring the way to Zion;* and when the common voice of the people was, on every Lord's day, "Let us meet together in the house of God." Harmony has generally prevailed in the church and among the inhabitants. The interference and advice of ecclesiastical councils has, in no instance, been found necessary to heal divisions—Many and various are the instances of divine goodness, which we are permitted this day to review. Truly, we may say, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

Reflect, my brethren, on the years which are past, and contemplate the blessings your ancestors enjoyed. Survey the rich inheritance which has been transmitted from them to you, and let it be the desire of your hearts that THEIR GOD MAY BE YOUR GOD. If you would enjoy the friendship of that almighty Being, who was the fountain whence all their mercies flowed, let it be your constant and unwearied endeavor to imitate their virtues. Be faithful, like them in maintaining the ordinances of religion. Cultivate the piety which warmed their hearts and adorned their lives, and shun the vices which they avoided and reprov'd. Let your houses be houses of prayer, and let your youth be taught the fear of the Lord. If you be *followers of them who through faith and patience, inherit the promises*; if you be *steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*, the smiles of your fathers' God will rest upon you, and unborn generations shall arise and call you blessed. But if you be a disobedient and backsliding people, the

* For many years there was a society of young men, who regularly met on sabbath evenings for religious purposes.

Lord will fight against you with the sword of his mouth, and remove this candlestick out of its place.

The time may not be far distant, when he, who now addresses you, will be numbered with the dead. When that time arrives, and either you or your children shall be called to the important duty of seeking one to minister to you in holy things, *remember how you have heard, and let no man deceive you with enticing words.* As you love your own souls, and as you value the eternal interests of your posterity, guard against those who *pervert the Gospel of Christ.* *Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God; for many false prophets are gone out into the world.* You will need counsel and assistance. Ask it of them who feel the power and know the value of divine truth. Ask it, especially, of God. Earnestly implore his light and guidance. Importunately supplicate that he would give you a pastor after his own heart, and that he would never suffer this HOLY GROUND to be polluted by the feet of "wolves in sheep's clothing." *And we beseech you ever to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

Our time, my brethren, is short. *Man's days are as grass. As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.* A review of past scenes is powerfully calculated to remind us of the fleeting nature of time and the instability of all earthly things. How numerous and vast are the changes which have been effected in a century! What multitudes have been gathered to the congregation of

the dead! What commotions and revolutions has the world experienced!—Future years will unfold occurrences no less interesting and important. The millions of the human race, who now inhabit the earth, are in rapid succession going to *the house appointed for all the living*; and the present agitation of the nations is tending to the accomplishment of events, which will deeply and extensively affect the condition of future generations. With trembling fear and hope we contemplate the scenes which are passing, and desire to look into futurity—But, in the multitude of our thoughts, let us not be unmindful “what manner of persons we are.” Let us not forget that the ever-flowing stream of time is rapidly bearing us to the ocean of eternity.

—————Life speeds away
 From point to point, though seeming to stand still;
 The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth;
 Too subtle is the movement to be seen;
 Yet soon man’s hour is up, and we are gone.—YOUNG.

Sensible of the important errand on which we are sent into the world, and conscious of the worth of time, let us do with our might what our hands find to do; *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither we go.* Let us live the lives of the righteous, that we may die their death. Let us walk in those paths of godliness which our pious ancestors, now in glory, pursued: that we may stand with them hereafter on the holy hill of Zion, and unite our voices with theirs in ascribing BLESSING, AND HONOR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB FOR EVER AND EVER.









