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DR. CODMAN'S

Plymouth Sermon.

1831.

The Faith of the Pilgrims.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT PLYMOUTH,

ON THE

TWENTY-SECOND OF DECEMBER,

1821.

By JOHN COLMAN, D. D.

BOSTON:
PERKINS & MARVIN, 114, WASHINGTON STREET.

1832.

PLYMOUTH, DEC. 22, 1831.

Rev. and dear Sir,—At a meeting of the Pilgrim Association, held at Plymouth, Dec. 22, 1831,

"*Voted Unanimously,*

"That the Scribe of this Association present the thanks of this body to the Rev. Dr. CODMAN, for his interesting and appropriate Discourse, delivered by him at our request, this day, in commemoration of the Landing of the Pilgrims, and solicit of him a copy for publication.

A true extract of the minutes.

F. P. HOWLAND,
Scribe of Association.

In the above request and expression of thanks we cordially unite.

With sentiments of great respect, we are, dear Sir,

Your most obedient and humble servants,

JOSIAH ROBBINS,
FREDERICK FREEMAN, } *Com. of Arrang'ts.*

Rev. Dr. CODMAN.

SERMON.

HEBREWS, XI. 8.

BY FAITH ABRAHAM, WHEN HE WAS CALLED TO GO OUT INTO A PLACE WHICH HE SHOULD AFTER RRCEIVE FOR AN INHERITANCE, OBEYED; AND HE WENT OUT, NOT KNOWING WHITHER HE WENT.

THE occasion, upon which I have been invited to address you, is exceeded by none of our public anniversaries in deep and absorbing interest. It compares with none, indeed, but that, which recognizes our standing among the nations of the earth, as a free and independent empire; a day, rescued, as long as the sun and moon shall endure, from oblivion, alike by the great event which it commemorates, and the astonishing and providential coincidences by which it has since been distinguished. But to that part of this great nation, who people the shores of New England, and whose descendants have planted themselves in almost every part of this western continent, no anniversary can be more interesting than that which we are this day called to celebrate. It is the anniversary, not, it is true,

of our nation's manhood, when she sought and obtained deliverance from parentage, that had become unnatural, oppressive and tyranical, and took her proper place among the nations of the earth,—but it is the anniversary of her infancy, and its return will ever be hailed with emotions of holy gratitude and fervent praise by the sons of the pilgrims in every part of the land.

That the occasion has ever been esteemed one of no ordinary interest, is evident from the respect that has attended its observance for a series of years. The ministers of the altar, and the most distinguished of our public orators have successively employed their talents and their eloquence in perpetuating the memory of those devoted men, who left the land of their fathers, braved the boisterous deep, and encountered the dangers of a savage wilderness, for the sake of worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences. While there is so much occasion for all the descendants of the pilgrims gratefully to observe the return of this anniversary, no one can doubt that there is a peculiar propriety for those of them, who profess to adhere to the same system of Christian faith, in which their fathers believed, and on account of which they were exiled from their native land, to cherish the memory of those holy men, with whom, even at this distance of time, they feel a peculiar union, and an attachment, stronger than that which mere patriotism can inspire, springing from congeniality of thought and feeling on subjects of the most momentous interest ;—for it will

not be denied by the faithful historian of New England that the religious opinions of that little band of devoted Christian heroes, who first made a lodgement in this western world, were most decidedly orthodox or Calvinistic.

It is not our design, at the present time, to enter into a controversial defence of their religious peculiarities, nor to condemn those who have departed from their faith, and have embraced a more liberal theology. In this free and happy land, we would be the last to bind, by any other means than rational conviction, the descendants of the Puritans to the faith of their ancestors, much as we revere and cordially as we ourselves embrace it,—but, while we would allow to others the same right we claim ourselves of private judgment in matters of religious faith,—we shall not be denied the satisfaction of feeling a peculiar interest in this memerable occasion, arising from our sympathies with our pilgrim fathers in religious principle. Nor do we esteem it a thing of small moment that we are permitted to claim lineage in our religious faith with such men as settled the colony at Plymouth. Though we would call no man Master, and would ever keep our minds open, in accordance with the parting counsel of the venerable pastor of the church at Leyden, to all the light, which may break from the sacred volume of divine truth,—yet we would esteem it a source of unfeigned gratitude to that Being, who alone can preserve us from error, that, after the lapse of two centuries, there are to

be found among the descendants of the Pilgrims, those, who are not ashamed of their fathers' faith,—who believe in the same cardinal doctrines of revelalation,—who worship the same triune Jehovah,—and trust in the same atoning blood for the salvation of their souls. It is, therefore, most fit and proper that the adherents to the faith of the Pilgrims should cherish their memory, and observe, with devout gratitude, the return of this anniversary.

In selecting a subject appropriate to the present occasion, it would be impracticable to mark out ground which had not been traversed before. Information respecting the early history of our country has been very generally and universally diffused throughout our intelligent community. It is, indeed, a circumstance, for which we cannot be too grateful, and which we owe to the prudent foresight and pious care of those excellent men, whose memory we would this day revive, that knowledge is so universally disseminated among all ranks and classes of the community. The establishment of public schools throughout all their towns and villages, will remain a monument, more durable than brass, of the wisdom and true patriotism of our pious ancestors.

But, although we cannot dwell on all the particulars of their early history, it may be proper to notice the circumstances attending the event which we this day commemorate.

The origin and settlement of New England may be traced to ecclesiastical tyranny. At the close

of the sixteenth, and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, a severe and cruel persecution arose in England against those, who refused to conform, in every particular, to the liturgy, ceremonies, and observances, of the Church of England, and who, on account of their desires and attempts to obtain a purer mode of worship, were denominated *Puritans*. This appellation, though probably given, at first, in derision, has become an honorable distinction, and is now used to designate a class of men, of whom the world was not worthy, and among whom New England boasts her progenitors.

Such was the persecution which the Puritans experienced, that several of them were induced to remove to other countries, for the peaceable enjoyment of their religious privileges. In 1607, a small congregation of dissenters, in the north of England, under the pastoral care of Rev. John Robinson, being extremely harrassed and persecuted, were obliged to leave their native land, and take refuge in Holland, that they might enjoy purity of worship, and liberty of conscience. Here they continued for several years, when they were induced, from various considerations, to project the plan of emigrating to North America. At that period this extensive continent was but little known. It was the intention of the emigrants to effect a settlement, south of what is now denominated New England, and, for this purpose, they obtained a patent from a company in London, called the Virginia Company. But this plan was singularly overruled in Provi

dence. A part only of Mr. Robinson's congregation embarked in this perilous enterprize, and, after having been devoutly commended to the divine benediction by their beloved pastor, who never lived to join them, they set sail, after several unsuccessful attempts, in the early part of September, 1620. After a tedious and uncomfortable passage of about two months, they discovered land, several degrees north of the place to which they were directed in their charter. Thus their charter became useless, and they determined to effect a settlement upon their own responsibility. After remaining in Massachusetts Bay a short time, exploring a suitable place for a permanent abode, they finally fixed upon a spot convenient for their purpose, to which they gave the name of Plymouth, in memory of the last town they left in their native land.

Our time will not permit us to dwell upon their subsequent history. Many and severe were the trials which these religious heroes endured in the early part of their settlement. Their number, which consisted, at their disembarkation, of one hundred and one souls, was reduced nearly one half by prevailing sickness, before the opening of the spring. Their prospects were gloomy beyond description. At a distance of three thousand miles from their country and friends,—surrounded by savages, of whose disposition and intentions they were not yet aware, they must have been of all men the most miserable, had they not been supported by the consolations and hopes of the Christian faith. It

was the religion of the gospel, that animated, and cheered, and encouraged those devoted men,—that consoled them under all their trials, and strengthened them under all their discouragements. They were men of faith and of prayer, and the Lord did not forsake them, but gave them favour, even in the eyes of their Indian neighbors, blessed the labours of their hands, prospered the infant settlement, caused the little vine to take deep root and fill the land, so that the hills are now covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof are like the goodly cedars.

In calling your attention to the character of the pilgrims, I might dwell upon that spirit of enterprize, by which they were distinguished, and hold them up to your imitation, as a bold and hardy race, who feared not danger, nor regarded life, in their persevering course ;—I might, as has often been done by others, enlarge on that love of freedom, which, at that period of the world, when liberty was hardly known in name, distinguished your ancestors from the age of hereditary rank and aristocratic pride, in which they lived ;—but themes, like these, would better become the orator than the preacher, and would be more consonant to a civic than a religious celebration. It is to the Christian character of our fathers, that I would, on this occasion, invite your attention, and more particularly to the exhibition of that holy principle of faith, which was never more strikingly illustrated in the history of any number of uninspired men, and which,

in many of its peculiarities and attending circumstances, possesses a strong resemblance to that heavenly grace, which shone so bright in the distinguished patriarchal example recorded in divine revelation. By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should afterwards receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

It will not be thought sacrilegious nor presuming, to institute a comparison between the ancestor of the Jewish nation and our pilgrim fathers; for every one, acquainted with the history of God's ancient people, and with the history of New England, must have been affected with the wonderful resemblance between them. It is true, indeed, they were not called by an audible voice from heaven, nor by visions of the Almighty, like Abraham, to leave their country, and their kindred, and their fathers' house, and go unto a land which God would show them;—but who shall say, that they were not moved by an impulse from heaven, operating upon their minds, through the dealings of an overruling and all-directing Providence, to leave their native land, and seek a settlement on this western continent, of which they knew as little as Abraham did of the promised land? Who will deny, that it was the same holy principle, that operated on the mind of Abraham, that led the congregation of the pious Robinson to embark in the perilous undertaking of a winter's voyage to a land, where, at that period, but few of the

civilized world had made a lodgement, and which was well known to be inhabited by savages and beasts of prey?

All the circumstances, attending their emigration to this western world, unequivocally demonstrate, that their undertaking, from first to last, was inspired by strong religious principle. It was faith, that holy trust and confidence in God, which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, that sustained the little persecuted remnant, that fled over the stormy wave to a land of religious tolerance, while their less favored brethren, unable to make their escape, were surrounded by the emissaries of ecclesiastical domination. It was the same divine principle, that bound the exiled flock together in holy love in a land of strangers, and kept them, in the midst of foreign customs and habits, a distinct and separate people;—and it was the same precious faith, that led them to look beyond themselves and their own generation, that their children after them might remain the same peculiar people. It was faith, that led them to bid adieu to the comforts and refinements of civilized life in the old world, and to seek their future abode beyond the waste of waters, in a land uncleared, untilled, and unpeopled by civilized man. We have reason to believe, that, in this momentous enterprize, they took no step without their eye fixed upon God, for light, guidance, and direction. Besides their private duties of devotion, they observed seasons of special fasting and prayer, in

which they unitedly laid their cause before him, from whom all good counsels and holy desires proceed. On these occasions, several of which are on record, their beloved pastor, previous to their embarkation, addressed them from the word of God, and strengthened their faith. On one occasion, he preached from that memorable passage in Samuel,—And David's men said, Behold we be afraid here in Judah, how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines. Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hands. On another occasion he addressed them from Ezra viii. 21. I proclaimed a fast there at the river Ahava, that we might afflict our souls before God to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

In all their previous steps and preparations for their important and hazardous enterprize, they appear to have been actuated by this divine principle of faith. They embarked in it,—not like the first discoverer of the western continent, from a zeal for discovery, and an ambition to hand down their names to posterity as the discoverers of a new world ;—nor, like many of their successors, from motives of cupidity and self interest. Neither the love of gold, nor the love of fame influenced the exiled congregation at Leyden in their emigration to the new world. Had the first of these motives operated upon their minds, they would have long before amalgamated

with the hospitable nation, with whom they sojourned—and, had they been influenced by the last, they would never have left their native land, which held out so many inducements for honorable distinction.

No!—they were influenced by higher, nobler, purer motives. It was faith in the divine promises, an assured trust and confidence in an overruling Providence, and a firm and unwavering conviction of the truth of God's revealed will in his holy word,—that sustained them amidst all their trials, cheered them in all their undertakings, and animated them in all their efforts. It was the same holy principle, that led the Jewish patriarch to quit Haran, at the divine command, for the land of Canaan, that induced them to emigrate to this western world. The knowledge, which our fathers possessed of the western continent, while resident in Holland, must have been exceedingly limited and imperfect. Doubtless, they availed themselves of every source of information, within their reach, of the nature, extent and peculiarities of the country to which they were about to emigrate. A few settlements had been commenced by the Virginia colony, and others. But so little had been effected in the way of civilization and improvement,—and so rare and uncertain was the intercourse between the distant colonies and the mother country,—that, with every source of information which the times afforded, our fathers could have known very little of the condition and prospects of the new world.

To them it must have been as little known as the

land of promise to the believing patriarch. They were actuated by the same principle of holy faith in the efforts and sacrifices which they made for the attainment of their desired object. Of these efforts and sacrifices, we can form but very inadequate ideas, at this distant period, and surrounded as we are by the improvements in the comforts and conveniences of life of modern times.

In these days of refinement,—when there is more luxury and extravagance on that very soil, which was at the time of the landing of our fathers a dreary wilderness, and the abode of savage man, than existed in the long settled country of their nativity at the time of their embarkation, it is difficult to conceive of the sacrifices, which they must have made, and the hardships, which they must have endured, in leaving their homes and firesides, and in effecting a settlement in a savage wilderness. We are accustomed, in these times, to speak of the sacrifices, made by the missionaries of the cross, and of the trials, to which they are exposed, in leaving their native country to preach the gospel in foreign lands. But what are they, when compared with the sacrifices and hardships endured by our pilgrim fathers! The servant of the cross, bound to distant India, is as intimately acquainted with Calcutta, Bombay, and Ceylon, as if he had himself been a resident in those pagan cities,—and the little missionary band, who have recently left our shores for the islands of the Pacific, are already familiar with the natural history of the places of their intended

residence,—the former and the present improved character of the inhabitants,—the present state and prospects of the mission, and even with the names, if not with the persons of the individuals, who are expecting to greet their arrival on those distant shores. Not so, with our pilgrim fathers;—they knew little or nothing of the place where they intended to settle. They had no knowledge of the manners, customs, and language of the savage tribes, that inhabited the country where they expected to reside. All that they knew, and all that they cared to know, was, that it was far away from ecclesiastical domination,—that there was no hierarchy, to control their faith and mode of worship,—no star chamber to test their conformity with fire and faggot,—no royal prerogative of lordship over the conscience. Of almost every thing else, respecting the state and condition of the new world, they were ignorant. But they listened to the voice of conscience, as the voice of God,—commanding them to go out from their country and from their kindred to a land which he would show them, and by faith, like Abraham of old,—when he was called to go out into a place, which he should after receive for an inheritance, they obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither they went.

Never was there a more striking and complete exemplification of the power of faith in overcoming difficulties, that appeared to the eye of sense almost insurmountable,—and in obtaining blessings, which, in the distant prospective, seemed wild and visionary,—than is afforded us by the history of our pilgrim

fathers. They went out, like the progenitors of the Jewish nation,—not knowing whither they went,—and their covenant keeping God, at whose command, so plainly indicated by the dispensations of his providence,—they embarked on their perilous enterprize, made of them, as he did of faithful Abraham, a great people and a mighty nation.

Such was the faith of the Pilgrims,—considered as a vital and operative principle. It may be emphatically said of them—They were men of faith.

It cannot but be a subject of the deepest interest to inquire what were the particular views which they entertained of divine truth. On this subject we are not left in doubt. Their creed was well known,—and will not be called in question by any. It recognized all those great and leading doctrines of the gospel, which have, within the last sixty years, been made subjects of controversy on that very soil on which they trod, and in the bosom of those churches which they planted.

The Fathers of New England were decided Trinitarians and Calvinists. Their doctrinal views did not differ from the articles of the Church of England. It was only in reference to their forms of church government, and their outward rites and ceremonies, that they felt bound in conscience to dissent. Their faith was in correspondence with the formularies of all the reformed churches,—and it is well known that, soon after the assembly of divines agreed upon that admirable system of Christian doctrine at Westminster, our fathers deliber-

ately adopted it,—and uniformly taught it in their congregations and in their families. And it is not, until within a very few years, in the memory of many of us, that this most excellent summary of our religious belief has been disused in any of the churches, founded by the pilgrims. That those, who have openly and professedly departed from the faith of the pilgrims, should have laid aside this religious formula, is not surprising; but that those, who not only profess to agree with their fathers in their religious opinions, but zealously to contend for them, should have become indifferent to that compendium of Christian doctrine, which was so precious to their ancestors, is truly deplorable.

It is much to be desired that the good old practice of catechetical instruction, once so common, if not universal, in New England, was revived among us. While we rejoice in the system of Sabbath school instruction, which is the glory of the age in which we live, and in the use of the Bible, as the great text book in these little nurseries of the church, we must be allowed, as descendants of the puritans, and as conscientiously attached to their faith, to express the earnest wish, that, in those families and congregations, who still profess to adhere to the faith of the pilgrims, *the Shorter Catechism* may hold the same conspicuous place, that it occupied in the households and public assemblies of their pious ancestors.

We do not contend for this, or any other summary of faith, as, in all its phraseology, perfectly unex-

ceptionable. There may be some few expressions, for which we might have substituted different language. Our fathers were not so philosophical and critical, as many of their descendants profess to be, who agree with them in their views of religious truth. But, if their manner of expression was not, in every respect, such as would be used at the present day, no objection can, from that consideration, be urged against the doctrines, which they professed to believe. Modes of expression will vary with the times ; but truth is eternal, and can never change.

The puritans, if not so philosophical and critical in their use of language, were men of great learning, strong sense, and sound judgment. For theological science, they have not been exceeded by any former or later age. Many of those, who constituted the first Plymouth colony, were highly respectable for intellectual power. Surely no man of candor can think or speak lightly of the religious faith of such men as Robinson, and Brewster, and Carver, and Winslow, and Bradford. I know it has been said, that they lived in a comparatively unenlightened age, and that, had they lived in these days of the march of mind, they would have renounced their theological dogmas, and embraced a more liberal creed.

The farewell advice of the beloved Robinson is often made an excuse for a wide departure from his faith. But can it be supposed, for a moment, that, that truly great and liberal man, in that

admirable exhortation, ever meant to countenance such departures from the Christian faith, as the denial of our Lord's divinity and atonement, when he expressed his belief, that the Lord had more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word?—They, who can indulge such an idea, must be strangely, if not perversely, ignorant. The Arian and Socinian heresies were well known to the learned pastor of the church at Leyden, and, doubtless, were held by him, as by all the orthodox of his day, as most dangerous and fatal errors. Nothing could be farther from his mind, than to sanction them by his parting counsel to his beloved people. It is more probable, that he had reference to doctrinal views of minor importance, or to the order and discipline of the church, which, at that period, was the subject of no inconsiderable controversy. But, whatever might have been his meaning, he certainly could never have intended to have given the sanction of his venerable name to the revival of errors, that had infested the Christian church from the earliest period, when he exhorted his beloved flock to receive whatever truth should be made known to them from the written word of God.

Let not that truly Catholic and excellent valedictory of the pious Robinson any longer be perverted to favor religious views, which would have filled his holy soul with grief and with horror, but, in the true spirit of that remarkable document, let us ever keep our minds open to the reception of truth, by whatever instrument it may be communi-

cated. Let us call no man master,—neither Luther, nor Calvin, nor any uninspired man;—but, while we are not ashamed to acknowledge, that we agree with any of them in their views of divine truth, let us make the Scriptures the only standard of our faith and practice. This, we believe, is the true spirit of Protestantism, and the true spirit of the celebrated and often quoted address of the pastor of the church at Leyden.

We freely confess our attachment to the faith of our fathers. But it is not simply because it was our fathers' faith, that we feel this attachment. We readily allow, that our faith in those great truths of revelation, to which the pilgrims gave their assent, is, by that circumstance, strengthened and established. We feel a satisfaction, which we cannot, and would not disguise, in the reflection, that our views of divine truth harmonize with those of our puritan ancestors. We cannot deny that our faith receives additional confirmation from the fact, that men of such purity of motive, of such strength of mind, of such a disinterested and devoted spirit, and of such active and persevering effort, entertained the same views, with ourselves, of religious truth. But if, upon an attentive and prayerful examination, we did not find the faith of our fathers agree with the law and the testimony,—highly as we revere their memory, we would, unhesitatingly, reject it. We acknowledge no other authority than the Scriptures, no other Master than the Lord Jesus Christ.

The sufficiency of the Scriptures was the great principle of the reformation ; it was acknowledged by our fathers, and we hope will never be abandoned by their posterity. The pilgrims took the Bible for the standard of their faith, and the regulation of their conduct ; and the humble and diligent study of the sacred volume, with the firm and unwavering conviction of its entire inspiration, led to the acknowledgment of that system of Christian doctrine, which has been so long associated with their memory, and which, we doubt not, will be handed down, with the recollection of their virtues, to the end of time.

The faith of the pilgrims, therefore, is not to be regarded as of mere human authority, but as drawn, directly and immediately, from the unadulterated source of all truth, the word of God.

No men more highly reverenced, and more laboriously and faithfully investigated the meaning of the Spirit in the dispensation of the word, than the puritans. Some of them were men of extensive learning and critical research, and, as a body of divines, we hesitate not to say, spent far more time, in the acquisition of profound and varied learning, than the active and stirring spirits of the present age. They were not only profoundly studious, but eminently holy men. They studied the Scriptures on their knees, and wet the sacred pages with their tears. They lifted up their souls to heaven, with the prayer of the psalmist,—Open

thou our eyes, that we may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Who will not reverence those principles, by whatever name they may be distinguished, that had an influence in the formation of such characters as our puritan ancestors?

It will not be denied, that any system of religious belief will, in some measure, be appreciated by the character of its disciples. By their fruits ye shall know them,—was the test established by the divine Author of our religion. And, if we judge of the excellence of their system of faith by the effects it produced, we shall obtain a testimony, highly honorable and satisfactory to the creed which they professed. That their characters were formed, in a great degree, by their religious principles, no candid man will, I think, be disposed to deny. What their characters were, as men of the purest and most exemplary morals, the impartial historian of their times will decide.

We would not, blindly, receive the creed of any men, however excellent, and however deserving our esteem and regard; but we cannot withhold our admiration from those principles, which evidently had such a controlling influence on the minds and pursuits of the fathers of New England,—which led them to make such sacrifices of personal ease and comfort, and, like Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive as an inheritance, to obey, and to go out, not knowing whither they went.

On a review of the brief sketch, which we have given of the history of the first settlement of New England, and a consideration of that faith, by which our pilgrim fathers were so eminently distinguished, we are led to admire and adore the wonderful providence of God.

We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us the wonderful works of God in their days,—in the times of old. He must be a skeptic, indeed, who can read the history of New England, without acknowledging a particular Providence. The history of the Jewish theocracy does not afford a more unequivocal evidence of the special agency of Jehovah, than the history of our venerable ancestors. View the hand of God in conducting the little flock, that sought refuge from ecclesiastical domination, from their native land to a neighboring country. To what, but the suggestions of his good Spirit, can we attribute the design of emigration to this western world?

How signally were the circumstances, attending their removal, overruled for good! He, who holds the waters in the hollow of his hand, preserved them on the mighty ocean, and directed them, contrary to their own design, to effect a settlement in this part of the country,—a part of the country, prepared, as it were, in the most wonderful manner, for their reception,—a fatal epidemic among the Indians, a few years before, having depopulated the place where they landed, so that there were none to disturb and molest them. Had they arrived

at almost any other spot, than the one to which they were divinely directed, they might have found it exceedingly difficult, if not impracticable, to have effected a settlement.

The hand of God is also gratefully to be acknowledged, in their subsequent prospects and success. With few exceptions, they experienced the most friendly attentions from their Indian neighbors. Little can we conceive of their joyful surprise, when the first native, they beheld, addressed them in their own language,—Welcome, Englishmen !—Welcome, Englishmen !

In the whole course of their history, the pious mind will not fail, gratefully to acknowledge the wonderful providence of God. Their descendants would be ungrateful indeed, did they neglect to make this acknowledgment ; for how great is our debt to that Being, who planted our fathers in this good land !

Let us dwell, for a moment, upon the wonderful change, effected in this western hemisphere, particularly in our own vicinity, within the last two centuries.

This land was once a wilderness, the abode of savage men, and of the wild beasts of the forest. No cultivated fields, no thriving farms, no comfortable dwellings, then met the eye on every side,—no busy hum of industry, no songs of praise, no voice of prayer, then reached the delighted ear,—but all was dreary, wild, and comfortless. No object relieved the eye, wandering over the gloomy

waste, save where the curling smoke denoted the vicinity of savage man. No mortal sound disturbed the death-like silence, unless it were the war whoop, arousing the savage tribes to blood and slaughter.

How different the scene we now behold! On every side we witness cultivation and improvement. The cleared woods now open the most delightful vistas to the wondering eye. The splendid dwellings of the opulent, and the no less comfortable and neat habitations of the industrious and enterprising,—the lofty domes of the capital, and the innumerable spires that adorn our villages,—the labours of the husbandman, the mechanic, and the artizan, united with the various employments of other classes of society,—the colleges, academies, and schools, which are continually watering, with their salubrious streams, the cities, and churches of our God,—all conspire to produce, in the hearts of the sons of the pilgrims, admiring thoughts of the wonderful providence of God. Truly the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage!

From a review of our subject, we perceive the power of faith, and the energy of religious principle.

It was faith in the promises of God, and a regard to religious truth, that influenced our fathers in their emigration to this country. We do not say that no other principle is strong enough to lead men to leave their native shores, brave a boisterous

ocean, and, in the midst of accumulated difficulties, effect a settlement in a savage land. Ambition, and love of conquest, have often done it.

But we have reason to bless heaven, that we are indebted to the operation of no such principle for the settlement of New England. It was faith, like that of Abraham's,—it was the energy of religious principle, that supported those holy men, who landed on the shores of Plymouth. It was the same divine principle, that breathed through all their institutions, and made them perpetual, so that we now enjoy their benefits, and partake of their advantages.

How strong,—how sacred, must have been those principles, which have not yet ceased to operate, and, we trust, will never cease to operate, as long as the sun and moon endure!

While we venerate the religious principles of our fathers, let us adopt them, so far as they were agreeable to the gospel. Let us remember, that it was their religious principle, that gives, even at this remote period, such a splendor to their character. While we would not implicitly receive their faith, nor that of any body of uninspired men, without searching the Scriptures, whether it is agreeable to the sacred oracles, we ought to be more than careful, how we renounce a creed, which had a powerful influence in forming such characters as the fathers of New England.

In view of our subject, we perceive the blessing of a pious ancestry.

The pride of ancestry, so far as it relates to birth, and wealth, and honor, cannot be justified. It is of little consequence, whether we are descended from a prince or a peasant,—whether noble blood flows in our veins, or whether our origin is humble and obscure. But it, surely, is of no trifling importance, to be descended from pious ancestors; for, in addition to the divine promise, that the blessing of the fathers shall descend upon the children, we may rationally expect much from the prayers, instructions, and example, of godly progenitors.

The circumstance of having pious ancestors, furnishes a powerful motive to follow their example, to imbibe their spirit, and to imitate their virtues. Let us follow them so far, and so far only, as they followed Christ. "An affectionate and respectful remembrance of those worthies, who have laid the foundation of our multiplied enjoyments," says one of our own orators,* "is a debt of gratitude. We possess a goodly heritage, and it should heighten our sense of obligation, to recollect, that a generous foresight was a distinguished characteristic of our ancestors. An ardent desire to lay a solid and lasting foundation, for the best interests of posterity, influenced all their plans of policy, so expressive of their wisdom. In every stage of their enterprise, they were prompted by an enlightened humanity, and a prospective reference to the happiness of their descendants. To contemplate the

* Judge Davis.

character of such men, is no less our interest than our duty.

> "Just men they were,
> And all their study bent
> To worship God aright, and know his works,
> Not hid, nor those things least which might preserve
> Freedom and peace to man."

To be descended from such an ancestry, is, indeed, a high and inestimable privilege. Let us, then, my respected hearers, realize that we are the children of the pilgrims, and let us live as pilgrims and strangers on the earth. Our fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? Several generations have passed away, since the scenes were transacted, which have, this day, been brought to remembrance. In a little while, we, too, shall be gathered to our fathers. The clods of the valley will cover our dust, and the spirits, by which it is now animated, will take their flight to other regions. Happy shall we be, if we can leave to our children such a legacy, as we have received from our fathers.

No. 2

MR. FRANCIS'

ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,

AT PLYMOUTH.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT PLYMOUTH, MASS. DEC. 22, 1832,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE

LANDING OF THE FATHERS.

BY CONVERS FRANCIS,

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTER OF WATERTOWN.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE FIRST PARISH.

PLYMOUTH:
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1832.

SERMON.

John iv. 38.
OTHER MEN LABOURED, AND YE ARE ENTERED INTO THEIR LABOURS.

THERE is a meaning involved in these words not inappropriate to the present occasion. Jesus reminds his disciples of the foundation already laid for the labors, on which they would enter in the exercise of their office as his ministers. In doing this, he uses expressions that may be applied in a general sense to the relation, in which all men stand to those who have gone before them in the way of duty, enterprise, or suffering.

We devote this day to the memory of our Fathers. It is theirs, and not our own. There is a spirit of fellowship in the occasion, which recreates the heart. Whatever may be the strife or toil, to which we are called elsewhere, here we come together in the tie of a common relation to a past age and a past generation. As dutiful children we are willing, I trust, to hush every unkind or unworthy feeling, while we stand in the presence of the patriarchs of New-England. I would not do wrong to this anniversary by bringing it to bear on the passing disputes of our day. Let this ground at least, first trodden by the feet

of the Pilgrim Fathers, be dedicated to peaceful and elevated considerations. Let it be to us what Elis was to Greece of old, a territory which was never suffered to be the scene of war, where Greeks of hostile States became for the time brothers, where soldiers laid down their arms, and resumed them not till they had left the consecrated region.

The story belonging to this day has been so often and so well told, and the reflections it awakens have been set forth in so many forms of eloquence and piety, that every fit topic may seem to be exhausted. I am encouraged, however, with the belief that our interest in the Fathers is not of a nature to grow old, and that he who speaks of them, though feebly and inadequately, has that in his subject which will supply in some degree his own poverty or defects. Indeed the simple and somewhat rude annals of the first days of New-England must gather a continually increasing attractiveness, as the distance lengthens through which we look back upon them, and as the consequences of the movement then made in the world's affairs, and so little regarded at the time, are more thoroughly or more extensively developed. It may be true that, strictly speaking, antiquity is yet a word almost without meaning among us. Our community in the utmost extent of its history is comparatively but a young community, and our oldest age but a green age.* When we look at nations, who count the years on their annals by thousands, whose land is covered

*See Appendix A.

with remnants that point to a period beyond the reach of authentic story, with fallen columns or shattered monuments, still forming in their melancholy beauty a magical connexion between the present moment and the days of classical antiquity, we seem as it were in the childhood of our existence as a distinct people, and are made to feel that when we speak of our Fathers we speak of modern men. But such is the rapidity, with which the generations of mankind rush down through the gates of death, that the venerable strangeness of olden times has grown over the deeds and characters of the men, who two hundred and twelve years ago, here took the wilderness for their portion. Such are the revolutions of taste, customs, and opinions, that between them and us a space is already interposed, in some respects apparently as wide, as if it were measured by the course of half the ages in man's history, and that even two centuries are sufficient to excite the associations, the conjectures, and the reverend interest, which belong to antiquity.

It may be thought, perhaps, that the scenes and the days commemorated on this anniversary are not sufficiently great or brilliant to require or sustain these frequent calls upon our attention. It may be thought, that the filial duty of celebrating the Fathers has been already overdone, and that the humble adventure of the New-England settlement is, at the best, but a meagre and barren story. The present, with its boasted improvements, its restless spirit of activity, its great achievements and still greater promises, presses

upon us with a power so stirring and absorbing, that the past, with its poor and unimposing appearance, may seem worthy only to be consigned to the curious industry of the speculative antiquarian. But it is a weak philosophy, which overlooks or despises the day of small things.—The record of the Plymouth settlers seems to me the more attractive, because it is the record of poverty and of humble efforts. There is something refreshing to the spirit in stealing away, as it were, from the imposing greatness of the topics and events that now crowd upon the mind with even painful interest, to the quiet and narrow spot in history occupied by the devoted pilgrims, steadfast and unbroken in their wants, their loneliness, and their sorrows. And when we turn from the picture of our republic as it now is, its apparent destiny as a new and mighty element of influence on the condition of man, the important attitude which, with a rapidity almost miraculous, it has assumed among the nations, the gigantic results of its untired enterprise, its tide of population ever rolling on and pouring itself through the vallies and around the rivers of the West,—when we turn from such a survey to that little band who sought an asylum on this winterbeaten shore, we must look upon them with any thing but indifference; we must feel that there is a fascination in this scene of depression and of unpretending perseverance in a good cause, which takes from it, even in the eye of the mere man of taste, all appearance of coarseness or littleness. It seems rather to be just the scene on

which the mind loves to repose, not tame nor spiritless, yet undisturbed by the glare of a mighty and prosperous community. Travellers tell us that they have felt even more pleasure, when standing in solitude by the small sources of rivers that sweep their long course through flourishing and fertile lands, than when gazing on the outlets at which they meet the ocean, where their waters are beaten into foam by the keels of commerce, or reflect the towers and walls of a crowded city. In history, as in the traveller's experience, the splendid is not always the most interesting.*

It is my purpose to arrange the views I may present under two divisions, corresponding to the suggestion in the text. Our Fathers laboured, and we have entered into their labors. They subdued and prepared the field; we have inherited the results of their toils, as materials for further cultivation and ceaseless improvement.

I. In estimating the labors of the men, who gave the first impulse to the settlement of New-England, we must by no means confine our view to the affecting story of their personal sufferings. We must regard them as occupying an important place in the long line of reformers, who have staked all that men hold dear, and life itself, in the cause of valued principles. It is not mere hardship or self-sacrificing toil, that stamps a noble character on human efforts. The vicious man will sometimes suffer more and work harder to gratify his passions, than the demands of virtue would require him to do in order to subdue them.

* See Appendix B.

The votary of avarice cheerfully endures privations more rigorous than those of monastic discipline, and gives himself up to a base martyrdom for gold with an unwavering spirit of constancy and self-denial. It is only when we regard men as devoted, heart and hand, to the sentiment of duty and to the solemn law of conscience, that their courage, firmness, and endurance assume a character of moral dignity. It is the conviction of a righteous cause, which sanctifies the qualities. We feel that there is a privilege in belonging to the same species with those who have defied power, smiled upon danger, and stood up against contempt, in strong allegiance to what they believed to be the right and the true. These have been the working-men in the world's advancement. Great principles and important privileges have gained a safe establishment among mankind chiefly at the expense of the labors and lives of reformers; and the effective improvement of the race has been measured by the progress of successive reformations. This has been the case, for the most part, in civil affairs, in science, and in religion.

These steps in the moral or intellectual progress of man have sometimes been the result of gradual and quiet changes, unobtrusive, perhaps unobserved at the successive stages, but producing at last a large amount of improvement in standards of thought, or habits of action. A diffusion of light, slow but continually expansive, takes place in the altered opinions or enlarged conceptions of individual minds, by the added contributions of a

long series of years. Errors are undermined, rather than beaten down. Unreasonable usages are suffered to die out, instead of being demolished. The stream is fed by secret rills and obscure rivulets, till its course becomes wide and its current irresistible; and we ascertain that the world has gone forward, only by comparing with each other periods of time somewhat distant, or countries somewhat remote.

But, for the most part, the advances of mankind have not been so peaceful and silent. The most powerful changes have been the effects of strong and rapid revolutions. Improvement breaks forth, as it were, in irruptions. The elements of the social state are shaken, heaved, and thrown into new forms by impulses that came apparently all at once, though in fact the materials for the explosion were gathered slowly and in secret. When the crisis arrives, ardent minds start up prepared to act upon it, and to be acted upon by it. They speak in tones, the echos of which ring far and wide, and awaken the slumbering, or summon those who were only waiting for the call. Then old institutions are questioned boldly by minds that have thrown themselves into the encounter, determined not to be turned aside; and the unprepared supporters of established abuses, alarmed by the storm bursting over their heads, find themselves suddenly compelled to rally to the defence of what they had been accustomed to receive lazily, as an unquestioned inheritance. The work of ages seems to be done in a few years; or rather, a few years seem to pre-

pare work for ages. The spirit of man leaps from under the burden of oppression, misrule, and worn-out errors, and enters upon a path that opens into regions of broader and clearer light, as it reaches forward through the tract of time.—The consequences of such striking and powerful movements are not soon developed. The impulse may be given by a few single blows ; but it will require centuries to estimate the extent and action of the vibrations, that will thus be propagated through the world's affairs.

Such a revolution had been in operation about a century, when our ancestors came to these shores, as the forlorn hope in carrying forward the work in a new quarter of the world. They stood in their lot at one of the most agitating periods of a contest of principle against authority, which is even now far from being brought to a close. The sound, which had gone forth from Germany, was repeated with some variations in other places, and English Puritans were the legitimate successors of Luther and Zwingle. That movement, which history emphatically and exclusively denominates the Reformation, as it was itself the mighty and concentrated effect of preceding events, became, in its turn, perhaps the most powerful and expansive in the series of causes that have given character and direction to the progress of the human race.* It was introduced into England under circumstances unfavorable to the speedy operation of its true principles and genuine influence. It was made the ally of the

* See Appendix C.

profligate passions and the haughty ambition of a monarch, whose highest praise is, that his brute energy was an instrument of more good than he intended. Henry the eighth would have the reformation proceed no further than as it might minister to his own aggrandizement, his revenge, or his policy.* His arbitrary and tyrannical daughter, the Maiden Queen, loved power and its glittering pomp too well, not to foster with all care whatever might gather veneration around the throne and its appendages. Of course she looked with angry jealousy on the disposition to introduce simplicity into the spirit or the rites of religion, or to shake the fabric of ecclesiastical aristocracy. She hovered around the suburbs of popery, and was withheld from it, probably, only by the persuasion that it was better to exercise power herself, than to submit to the exercise of it from a foreign potentate. But though so powerful a party were, to use the expressive words of the Leyden pastor, "enamoured of the Romish hierarchie as of a stately and potent ladie,"† yet the authority of the old church, which had so long overshadowed the Christian world, was defied and overthrown. That was a large and important step. The spirit of reform had gained an entrance; and though it was compelled to struggle against the selfish or narrow views of sovereigns, of courts, and of a hierarchy, and to take a circuitous course amidst the wiles of state policy, still it could nowise be banished or suppressed.

* The causes of this are well stated by Neal, *Hist. of the Puritans*, I, 74.

† John Robinson's *Just and Necessary Apologie, &c.* p. 3.

The cause of English reformation, enthralled and shackled as it was, failed not to find advocates consistently faithful to its interests. Among those, who desired that the good work should not stop at the beginning, we must place that devoted class of men, whose spirit and principles were deeply imbibed by the Plymouth colonists.—Those, whom the fierce bigotry of Mary had driven into exile, returned with a strong love for that simplicity of worship and equality of rights, which they had witnessed on the continent in the churches of Geneva, Frankfort, and other places. But they found on the throne a Queen, who was not long in letting them know that such a wide departure from the old religion was by no means agreeable to her taste, and who was determined to uphold, in all its completeness, the cumbrous and gorgeous array of the English church. The rigorous execution of the Act of Uniformity laid the foundation for that definite separation from the establishment, which has ever since existed. A numerous and continually increasing party was thenceforth distinctly known under the name of Puritans, who aimed at that purer form of faith and worship, which they believed themselves bound to seek and maintain in conformity with the true principles of the reformation. This name, however, was not confined to the separatists from the Church. It was applied to many who found reasons to satisfy their consciences in still remaining within its pale. It seems, indeed, to have been a name of ignominy affixed to all, whether within or without the Church, who were

the friends of a more thorough reform, than was agreeable to such as refused the yoke of Popery indeed, but were willing to take upon their necks another nearly as heavy.*

Of the distinguished body, thus memorable in British history, the men, whose services it is our pride and our happiness to commemorate this day, were a worthy portion. The story of the Leyden church, formed, to use the words of Secretary Morton, of "divers godly Christians of our English nation in the North of England, not only witnessing against human inventions and additions in the worship of God, but minding most the positive and practical part of divine institutions," is too familiarly known to you, that I should repeat it. The character and direction, which this little community took from the influence of John Robinson,—a man scarcely to be mentioned without a pause for eulogy and respectful remembrance,—were such as to qualify it well for the high vocation to which it was called, as the vanguard of religion and freedom in a new world. His good sense led him to shun the extravagance of Brown, and to discard the name derived from that inconstant man, at first a fiery separatist, and at last an eager conformist; and his catholic spirit and enlarged views were well adapted to correct the errors or temper the ill directed fervor, to which even good men are liable at a period of religious revolution or of righteous resistance.†

We are, then, to consider our ancestors as con-

*See Appendix D. †See Appendix E.

stituting a part—an important part—of a long line of reformers; and it is with reference to this fact that their labors are to be regarded as peculiarly interesting and valuable. It is also necessary to take this fact into the account, in order to make a fair estimate of their characteristic virtues and faults. We must remember that they were cradled, reared, and grew old in the midst of conflict,—that theirs was a lot of continual struggle and sacrifice; and we must expect to find in them both the good and the evil, which naturally spring from such circumstances. The providence of God watches for our race in ways that are not as our ways, and with thoughts that are not as our thoughts, requiring us to purchase good at the price of contending with evil, and compelling even bad passions and selfish aims to minister to happy results. We may think it would be better for the great interests of mankind, if improvement might always be had regularly in the quiet progress of common causes and effects, in what may be termed the natural order of things, with healthful impulses, and in easy developements. We may imagine that an advantage thus gained by an individual or a nation, coming, as it were, naturally in its place, would be more justly appreciated, and, as a matter of course, would be a starting point, from which men would peacefully proceed to other advantages. But in all this theory there is doubtless a fairer promise than the reality, if it could be had, would fulfil. At any rate, such is not the actual state of the case. The world always has

been, and perhaps always will be, a battle ground, where from time to time the true and the false, the right and the wrong, the warm love of the new and the zealous attachment to the old, measure strength and struggle for victory. Good is to be gained, in a great part at least, irregularly and out of the ferment produced by peculiar exigencies. Not unfrequently it must spring out of evil itself, and be wrung from hostile circumstances by a strong pressure. It is no little consolation to the spirit, when it sickens over the darker pages of man's history, to see that even from the midst of oppression, injustice, and misrule have come great efforts, which have rapidly carried forward the improvement, or vindicated the rights of communities. The case of the Fathers of New-England was one of these. They would never have engaged in that perilous enterprise, the result of which was so glorious,—they would not have loosed themselves from the strong ties of country, friendship, and domestic charities,—they would not have crossed the wide ocean, and gathered new homes on a shore untraced by the foot of civilized man,—they would not have adventured upon all the forms of danger and want that must belong to the office of being the first to subdue the wilderness of a new continent,—if they could have found safety and toleration in their father-land. The event has shown that God meant the exigency for good; but it was good necessarily wrought out through the medium of hardship to be endured, and of wrong to be suffered or resisted.

In these circumstances was found the blessing of that trying discipline, by which our Forefathers were prepared for the part they were destined to accomplish in the great designs of Providence. The hardships of their situation, as reformers, trained them to the arduous office of colonizing the wilds of America. It was this stern influence which nerved their minds for the heroic enterprise, and enabled them to bring hither, amidst circumstances of deep depression and discouragement, the germ of those forms of freedom and improvement, to which the world is now looking with ever increasing interest, as furnishing signal and exciting lessons of instruction. The energy of the human character is not only powerfully exhibited, but mainly created, in the process of overcoming difficulties. The progress, which begins and is continued in struggle, at length stimulates men to a degree of unwavering courage, strong endurance, and resolute self-sacrifice, of which they could not have believed themselves capable. When we see them compelled to contend inch by inch for the ground, which should in justice have been conceded at once, and pressing onward and upward in a righteous cause against a host of obstacles, our compassion or indignation may be strongly excited; but we are relieved by reflecting that this is precisely the way, in which they are most effectually braced and strengthened to accomplish a great amount of good. Without this discipline, the settlement of our country might have taken place, at another time, under influences far less favorable to the production of

happy consequences, and the colonists of New-England would probably have passed away unnoticed in the common mass of worthy men.—The hard necessity of their case revealed to them their own strength. The power that was in them might have slumbered unused, had not the strong pressure of their condition taught them what they could do or bear, as the rich mine beneath the surface may be disclosed by the lightning's flash, which rends the earth.*

But while there was good in all this discipline, there was also evil scarcely to be avoided. To extract from a tuition so harsh and exasperating none but happy influences, is a task requiring such circumspection as can hardly be expected of man. In all such cases, so much vigilant caution, so much strenuous self-command are necessary, in order, by a sort of moral chemistry, to disentangle the pure from the impure in the midst of which it is found, that the separation is, perhaps, never entirely effected. Strong feeling is unavoidably brought into action; and this, though it be a necessary agent in great movements, can never act long and sharply without bringing into jeopardy the consistency and dignity even of the best men. The blessings, which spring from action and reaction, are in their nature exposed to this peril. A blow is given from one side and a rebound takes place from the other; and amidst the fermentation and strife of the crisis, amidst the zeal of the onset on one part and of defence on the other, it rarely happens that men see the

*See Appendix F.

point at which they ought to stop, or, if they see it, are willing to stop there.

Do we ask too much, when we require that these considerations may be allowed to mitigate the censure passed upon the faults of that noble band of confessors, among whom we find the Plymouth and Massachusetts settlers? I do not refer to the miserable abuse heaped upon their character and cause, in the keen excitement of controversy, by the bigoted churchmen of their day, like the *sanbenitos* in which the Inquisition dressed out its victims. That may well be suffered to pass into the oblivion, to which the extravagance of heated partizans should gladly be consigned. I allude to those grave accusations, which men of moderation and sober judgment have sometimes brought against that whole body of reformers, who are classed under the general name of Puritans. We are told of their unworthy and absurd prejudices, their unreasonable scruples, and their strong passions. We are reminded of stern and uncompromising qualities, amounting, it is alleged, almost to a renouncement of the graces, the courtesy, and the respect, which dignify and sweeten life. We are presented with the image of men of dark and severe countenances, of harsh demeanor, stiffly devoted to whimsical peculiarities, and frowning on the innocent liberties of social existence.* If, however, there were a foundation for such charges in their full extent, shall we discard the apology that may be found in the oppressive and exasperating

*See Appendix G.

circumstances that weighed heavily upon these men for a long series of years, and forget that such faults are not worthy for a moment to be laid in the balance against those sterling qualities of excellence, those substantial merits, which enabled them to become the benefactors of the world by their deeds and sufferings ? Trace the history of the treatment they received at the hands of church and state from the time of the eighth Henry through that of the first Charles, and shall we, sitting at ease in our Zion, wonder to find the feelings of those, who were spurned as outcasts for claiming the common rights of conscience, becoming sometimes stern, rigid, or sour during such a process ? When, for instance, the Leyden church sought a grant from the Virginia company, and craved permission, as for a privilege, to banish themselves across the pathless ocean to the forests of these shores, the only boon they could obtain, with regard to religious freedom, was, that "the king would connive at and not molest them, provided that they carried peaceably," but would allow them no toleration under his seal. Shall we think that we have made a surprising discovery, if men are found not free from asperity, when they are taught to esteem it a favor to be permitted to exist in a wilderness, and take their portion with the wolf and the savage during good behavior ?

But these accusations are by no means well founded to the extent, in which they are generally stated. At the period when our ancestors came to this country, the Puritans were a respect-

able, grave, and dignified class, austere in their general character doubtless, but not inclined to despise the elegancies or refinements of life.—Some of the best scholars in the kingdom were in their number. A charge implying that they were factious and vulgar disorganizers is without truth. There were bad and wrong headed men among them, undoubtedly; and when was there a cause requiring boldness and energy in its advocates, that was not sometimes tarnished by extravagance or folly? But in the earlier part of their course,—and it is that of which I now speak,—before the pressure of circumstances had betrayed the party into bitterness and excess, they were as a body distinguished by conscientious moderation. They looked indeed with but little favor on the trappings, the stateliness, and the official pomp of the establishment; but it was because they believed, as they said without affectation and in the honesty of their hearts, that these things were not according to the simplicity of the Gospel. For a long time they cherished kind and filial feelings towards the church of their country, though they thought and lamented that she had stopped midway on the path of reform.—Even Barrow, a warm leader among the Independents, when he was asked upon his trial, whether the church of England were a true church or not, went no further in his reply than to say,—"as it is now formed, it is not; but there are many excellent Christians who belong to its communion."* They did not look with so much

*Bogue & Bennett's *History of Dissenters*, I, 133.—The kind and

veneration on the carved work of the sanctuary, as some of their cotemporaries; but they did not therefore aim to demolish the temple. Was it moroseness, that they reverenced the Sabbath, and were shocked with the Book of Sports,—that they deemed the Lord's day more profitably and appropriately spent in the sobriety of religious occupations, than in may-games and morris-dances? If so, some even of the dignitaries of the church must share the reproach; for they were equally grieved at these violations of decency.—That these persecuted but unbroken champions of a righteous cause were, for many years, good and dutiful subjects of the king, cannot be denied except on the authority of the slanders of such men as Bancroft and Laud. When we consider how intimately the religious errors and abuses, which they opposed, were connected with the throne and the civil establishment, it is remarkable that they so long discriminated with patience and caution between the duties of remonstrance against the former and of obedience to the latter, manifesting a reasonable though not servile loyalty, while they kept consciences void of offence.—Their situation in this respect was not unlike that of some of the early Christians, whom the emperor Julian endeavored to entrap into idolatry by placing near his own statues the images of Jupiter and other gods, so that while, in conformity to the custom of the Romans, they bowed to the former as a token of submission and honor, they

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respectful disposition manifested in the well known letter "aboard the Arbella," by the leaders of the Massachusetts settlement, should be remembered in this connexion.

might seem to render the homage of worship to the latter.* Williams, bishop of Lincoln, once ventured to say, "that the Puritans were the king's best subjects and he was sure would carry all at last, and that the king had assured him that he would treat them more mildly for the future." It is a curious fact, that for saying this, Laud caused an accusation to be brought against Williams in the Star-Chamber, *for revealing the king's secrets.*†

We are sometimes told that the class, to whom our Fathers belonged, were bigots in unimportant matters, and wasted a disproportionate strength of zeal on little things. But it should be remembered that the points, about which mankind interest themselves, are little or great according to the consequences to which they lead or the principles they involve. Estimated by this standard, the ardor with which these reformers entered even into questions about the white surplice, or the sign of the cross, will scarcely appear misplaced or exaggerated. And even if they did sometimes think too much of trifles, and if their conduct on some occasions seems to us like a strong man lifting his arm to strike a feather, still we should remember that by the constitution of our nature an overstrained enthusiasm is a sort of necessary stimulus to those who have a great cause in hand, and that without the disposition

*Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, p. 72.

†Jones's *Life of Bp. Hall*, p. 150.—See the touching and indignant remonstrance of the ministers of Devon and Cornwall, as given by Neal, *Hist. of the Puritans*, II, 92.—The testimony of the Dutch to the exemplary and peaceable character of the Leyden congregation is too well known to be adduced here.

to magnify the importance of contested points, few undertakings of much toil or danger would be attempted or successfully accomplished.

Are we reminded that our Fathers, the eager vindicators of religious liberty for themselves, were in their turn guilty of persecution? We can but say, that this fact adds another to the many melancholy lessons of human inconsistency. But where and when have the champions of the right and the just been always right and just themselves? The reformation from Popery was soon disgraced by some of the very errors, from which it undertook to set men free. But the principles, which it vindicated and established, were none the less valuable on that account. So the cause of religious liberty, for which our Fathers entered the breach in contest with the power of a proud hierarchy, was not less to be prized, nor the debt of gratitude we owe them for waging battle for it the less, because they were not always true to it in their own example. If their conduct in this respect be viewed comparatively, as it ought partly to be viewed, it may be fairly said that with more excuse for intolerance, they were less intolerant than their oppressors. It should not be forgotten that legal toleration for dissenters was a thing unknown in England until 1689, and then was but a grudged and imperfect concession.* With respect to this point, it should always be observed that the Plymouth colony was in a considerable degree honorably distin-

*See Appendix H.

guished from that of Massachusetts, by a more tolerant and forbearing spirit.†

I have adverted to the labors, which the colonists of New-England shared in common with the great company of reformers. But we must not pass unnoticed, on this occasion, those personal labors and personal sufferings, which laid the foundation of a flourishing community on these shores. The whole transaction seems to me to wear an aspect of peculiar moral greatness. You know it all. You know the anxious apprehensions, which gathered over the little congregation in Holland, their vexatious negociations, the fraud that in different forms spread its snares around their removal, their devout confidence in God and in "the omen of a good cause," their prayers, and their tears. You have often thought of that solitary vessel, which, having been abandoned by her companion, as if to leave her alone with the glory of the heroic enterprize, pursued her cheerless course over the wide waste of waters. I venture to say, you have felt that with that ship are connected associations, in some respects not less touching and great than those, which history has attached to the little and crazy fleet of that wonderful man who, somewhat less than a century and a half before, reposing with dauntless trust on the conclusions of his own mind, revealed a new and vast continent to the gaze of the old world. Your thoughts have followed her course with a solemn interest, arising from the persuasion that a great experiment for

†Hutchinson's *Hist. of Massachusetts*, II, 421.

humanity was hanging on her fate. Your hearts have sunk to see her shaken with the fierce winds, and tossing amidst the fury and blackness of the tempest; and you have almost heard the cries for deliverance poured forth by those devoted men, with no reliance but their faith, yet strong in that as in an overcoming power. You have marked how the providence of God, having chosen this vessel to be the messenger of high purposes, held its watch over her amidst danger and distress; and if the Roman chieftain could say in his pride to his dismayed pilot—"wherefore do you fear while you carry Cæsar,"—with how much better reason might it have been said to him who sat at the helm of the Mayflower—fear not, for you carry the hope of freedom and of piety! At length you have found them on this barren coast, thanking God on their knees for deliverance from peril and death. You have accompanied them, as if side by side, while they explored the country, and finally marked this spot for their rest.—You have seen the desolation of disease and death spreading among the little band, while under the stern severity of winter they sat at their board with want and famine. You have followed them in their intercourse with the savages,—an intercourse of fearful apprehension, relieved occasionally by the kindness of Massasoit, Hobamak, and him who, when he died, made the affecting request that they would pray for him "that he might go to the Englishman's God in heaven."—The story of all that was projected, done, or endured from the first motion of the proposal for

emigration to the time, when the remnant of the sufferers found themselves here at last in comfortable homes, is as familiar to you all "as household words." Here at least *the genius of the place* will not permit the toil and sufferings of the pilgrims to be forgotten. Here at least you will feel, that "as an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange god with them." How much meaning may we now attach to that affecting salutation, which fell upon the ears of the surprised pilgrims with startling pleasure,—"Welcome Englishmen!" Yes, welcome to the wants and the labors of a wilderness,—welcome to privation, distress, and wasting toil,—but welcome too to the high honor of kindling the beacon-light of the Gospel in a region of darkness, and welcome to the glorious reward of martyrs for truth and servants to God!*

II. It is time that I should pass to a brief consideration of the other portion of my subject, and remind you that we have entered into the labors of the Fathers, that their sufferings and their courage were the price of an inheritance to us, concerning which our prayer should be, that we may know how to prize it as we ought. It was the lot of the pilgrims,—a lot to which the benefactors of mankind have been often called,—

> To sow in peril, and let others reap
> The jocund harvest.

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* See Appendix I.

Their own phrase, was that "they should be but as stepping-stones to others, who might come after them."*

The planting of New-England under such circumstances and by such men gave birth to consequences of far more important and extensive operation, than could have been anticipated. It is one of the most impressive of those instances, in which God teaches us that events such as man despises sometimes contain the moving springs of the greatest interests. How utterly hidden from the eyes of the hierarchy and the government of England was the nature of that work, of which they were the unconscious instruments! Emphatically might it be said to them, as the favorite son of Jacob said to his brethren, "that which ye devised for evil, God devised for good, to bring about, as it now appears, the preservation of a numerous people."† While they were framing and urging the severest measures against trifling forms of dissent, while they were inflicting fines, imprisonment, or death, as the penalty of nonconformity, while they were authorizing inquisitorial persecutions under the name of judicial proceedings,—all unknown to themselves they were in fact preparing the foundations of a new empire; they were casting abroad seeds which on another continent were to yield fruits for the healing of the nations; they were driving from themselves men, who carried with them principles and feelings, the operation of which has added a

*Belknap's *Amer. Biography*, II. 168.—See Appendix K.
†Gen. L, 20, Geddes's Translation.

volume of new meaning to man's history. So that if here a refuge has been opened for the spirit of enlightened freedom, if here an opportunity is presented of trying fairly the experiment whether man is worthy of the high privilege of self-government, and can keep it, the whole may be regarded as the result of the insupportable action of that bad spirit, which banished from England some of her best minds and purest hearts.* I suppose few events could have been deemed more insignificant by James and his court, than the departure of the puritan emigrants for the wilds of America. At that time their interest was absorbed and their minds agitated by the negotiation with Spain for Prince Charles's match, and the question of neutrality in the contest between the house of Austria and the states of Bohemia. Yet how do subjects like these dwindle and vanish in the true estimate of great influences, when contrasted with the voyage of that small vessel, which, on the 6th of September, 1620, sailed from the harbor of Plymouth in the Old World, and finally cast her anchor in that of Plymouth in the New World!

We have entered into the labors of the Fathers in the blessings of our civil institutions; for these may justly be regarded as the ultimate result of the impulses imparted by them. The English puritans, though faithful and loyal subjects till they were forced by circumstances into resistance, had adopted principles which were destined, as they were progressively developed, to operate as a strong check on arbitrary power. They con-

*See Appendix L.

tended strenuously for some of the elementary rights of conscience; and these are so intimately connected with civil rights, that the questions relating to the exercise of power with regard to both could not long be separated. Religious enthusiasm is very likely to contain within itself the germ of the general principles of freedom, and to open the way for political speculations tending towards the doctrine, so harsh to royal ears, that power is a trust to be bestowed or revoked at the pleasure of those for whose good alone it should be exercised. England herself at this hour owes much to the men who, even by the confession of some writers whose partialities were all the other way, had the honor of infusing into her Constitution its most vigorous portions of liberty; for have not recent events in that kingdom borne testimony to the productive energy of the same spirit that for two centuries and a half has been at work there, sometimes flashing out in violence, sometimes struggling onwards slowly, and sometimes enthralled or fiercely driven back, but always alive, always watchful, always ready for action?

At the period when New-England was colonized, the notions of civil freedom in the mother country, even among its best friends, were not a little confused and immature. But there were some principles, and more feelings, on this subject sufficiently distinct and vital to render it probable, that with the aid of opportunity they would ripen into clearness, consistency, and strength.—Such opportunity was found on these shores.—When the pilgrims, by the treachery of their cap-

tain, were placed beyond the limits of the Virginia Company, and their patent of course was useless, before they landed they entered into a compact which, as their Memorialist says, "was the first foundation of the government of New Plymouth," and which, as you know, is considered as containing the essential principle of popular and republican institutions.* This fact is of importance, as showing that when left to themselves they spontaneously adopted ideas, the whole value and distinct character of which they probably did not fully understand. It indicates that at the outset a principle was in existence, which in its gradual and sure expansion would produce the most extensive effects. And never was it lost, though the occasions for its full operation were comparatively long in coming. We trace its manifestations from time to time through the whole course of our history, in the strong jealousy of encroachment, in the clear apprehension and bold support of rights, even at a period when the colonists were sincerely loyal, and when the suspicion of a wish to throw off their allegiance to the crown was indignantly repelled. At length it was brought into intense and efficient action, as an element of popular character and feeling, in the struggle which placed the colonies in the attitude of a separate and sovereign people among the nations of the earth. At that fearful crisis the spirit of the pilgrims was matured in the resolute wisdom, the moral courage of their descend-

*Baylies's *Hist. Memoir of the Colony of New Plymouth*, I, 29, and Hutchinson's *Hist. of Mass.* II, 409.

ants; and the voice which then echoed over our hills and along our shores, and mustered the forces of a common cause, was but the louder proclamation of what had been spoken many years before in a manner less audible and distinct. In this connexion, I cannot but remark a striking coincidence appropriate to the present occasion. It was in the year 1769, a time when the dark storm was gathering, and men suspected that the hour of open and final resistance was at hand, that the Old Colony Club of Plymouth proposed and observed the first Celebration of the Landing,*—as if the memory of the Fathers was awakened with new interest to hallow the coming struggle, that was to finish a work, which they may well be said to have begun in the solitary places of their infant settlements. And when to the arduous conflict succeeded the yet more arduous task of building the frame-work of political and social institutions, when the hard trial of achieving the prize was followed by the still harder one of deciding how it should be preserved and used, when a new and great experiment was to be made in the philosophy of government, when the mechanism that might constitute a durable commonwealth was to be erected among a people embarrassed by none of the rubbish of old institutions, and fettered by no remnants of Gothic establishments, and when under unexampled circumstan-

*Dr. Thacher's *Hist. of Plymouth*, p. 180. The same writer informs us (p. 202) that when the Rock was elevated from its bed in 1774, it fell asunder without violence. No flaw had been previously observed in it; and some of the patriots found in it an omen of the division of the British empire.

ces of interest and responsibleness a choice was to be made, where—to use the words of one of the greatest men of that day*—"a wrong election might be considered as the general misfortune of mankind,"—then was at length reared the structure of a confederate republic, of which we may justly say, that it stands as a monument to the principles and labors of our pilgrim ancestors.

Again: we have a blessing from the labors of the Fathers in the character, which religious institutions have hitherto taken among us. Amidst the frailties of superstition and of narrow prejudice, some of which the colonists of New-England shared in common with their age, and some of which grew out of their peculiar circumstances, it is refreshing to find that they recognized distinctly and fully certain leading principles, which lie at the foundation of the most expansive forms of religious freedom. They had been driven in self-defence to institute inquiries, from which resulted views of far reaching import; and if there were times when these views were mingled with bitterness or darkened by unhappy errors of judgment, they were neither the first nor the last body of men who have not been always as good as their principles. The great elements of the character, which religion has taken in our community, were brought to the Rock of Plymouth and to the shores of Massachusetts Bay. Here were established the important principles, now so familiar to us, that Christians are to look to the Scriptures for the binding rule of faith and prac-

*Alexander Hamilton in the Federalist.

tice, to judge for themselves of their meaning, and to believe and worship accordingly,—that every church is an entirely independent body,—and that all churches are in every respect equal. The covenants of some of the earliest churches were remarkable for the Christian simplicity and the elevated spirit, in which they were framed. They were so free from a sectarian character, that they could not have excluded from religious communion the sincere Christian of any denomination,—as if designed to exemplify the fine remark of John Robinson, who, in his very interesting vindication of his fellow-believers, says that their faith consisted not "in the condemning of others, and wipeing their names out of the bead-roul of churches."*

No men ever felt more deeply than our Fathers the necessity of religion to the good of the community, as well as to the improvement and salvation of the individual. They believed this power to be one of those elements of social union, which are vitally essential. They did not suppose that all which can or ought to be said of it is finished, when it is affirmed to be a concern between the individual and his God. In their estimate it was this indeed; but then it was likewise a concern between the members of society, a matter in which they are mutually interested; and they would as soon have thought of a world without a sun, as of a community without religion, or without a provision for its support. Whether in all this they judged wisely or not, let the wild exper-

*Just and Necessary Apologie, ch. xii.

iments, which have sometimes been made in defiance of such principles, bear testimony. But while they felt the importance of giving religion a strong and safe lodgement among the elements of security and wellbeing in the social state, they set themselves in the spirit of self-sacrifice against the impositions of man in this sacred interest, against the assumed right, questioned by few but themselves in their day, to bind conscience or to fetter the soul. Though the merit of uniform consistency was wanting to render their praise complete, still we must remember that if there has hitherto been in our community a happy union of profound respect for religion with the entire religious freedom of each individual,—if public opinion has regarded it in all its forms as the safeguard of society, while every man has been left in perfect liberty to choose among its forms according to his own convictions,—we are bound in justice to trace the blessing to its origin in the labors and character of the men who laid the foundations of New-England.

We are accustomed to believe that nothing in our condition demands a more hearty offering of gratitude, than that the soul is free, and that the relation between man and his Maker is untouched by the arm of civil authority. We deem it a precious privilege that we are not compelled to judge in spiritual matters by prescribed and fixed formularies,—that, so far as outward force is concerned, religious truth is not driven into by-paths and circuitous routes, nor compelled to find its way in silence and secrecy, but may stand forth,

and announce its claims, and win what minds or hearts it can,—that Christianity, the messenger of God's mercy to the world, is not chained, and manacled, and made to work out a task prescribed for her by arbitrary power, but that for aught government can do she retains her native freedom, and scatters her blessings from an open hand wherever there is a willing mind, or a soul that has sought happiness in vain from other sources. There may be indirect influences among us, which in some cases embarrass true liberty of conscience if not as cruelly, yet as surely, as the prospect of the prison or the fagot. But these are not evils constituted and sanctioned by our institutions; and the man among us who bears an enslaved mind, does so by his own choice. The whole apparatus of established creeds and cumbrous ceremonies, by which the civil power seeks to bind religion fast in its service, is unknown to us; and we are accustomed to congratulate ourselves that we are allowed to try the experiment of what religion can do for man where difference of opinion is not regarded as a crime, except in the impotent denunciations of the bigot. If in all this there be a great good, though the good may be perverted by a melancholy abuse into licentiousness, let the praise be given to those who breasted the shock of that stern contest with kings and prelates, out of which sprung the redemption of the faith of Jesus from bondage. If in all this there be a blessing, to which we point with exulting thankfulness, however unworthily we may use it, let the honor be paid to those who, in a season of fear-

ful struggle, stood up in the strength of heaven's cause for the rights of conscience against time-hallowed usurpations and consecrated abuses, and who at length, carrying forth victory in their retreat, like the church personified in the sublime visions of the Apocalypse, "fled into the wilderness where they had a place prepared of God."

There is an aspect, in which the freedom of mind thus won by our progenitors, and transmitted to us, may long render an important service to the cause of religious improvement. I refer to the facility, with which religion may thus change its outward forms to meet the variations arising from the progress of society. The difference between the religious sentiment, and the modes in which it is manifested or sustained externally, must have occurred to every attentive observer of man. The sentiment itself is the only thing, which can be, or ought to be, permanent. The forms, which it takes or abandons, at one period or another, are only helps, in their nature temporary. They are of great importance, doubtless, so long as they are fitted to answer their true purpose as the defence and support of solemn realities. But they are necessarily changeable, and must be so while man is a progressive being. It is the part of a wisely constituted society to provide that these changes may take place easily, and without that violence which is apt to react injuriously upon the religious sentiment itself.—Truth is grossly wronged, when it is bound fast to human forms in such a manner, as to fix the impression that it must live or die with them. If

it be not free to break away from them and take new ones, the essential, life-giving spirit will be brought into subjection to what is necessarily perishable,—the everlasting power will be enthralled by external circumstance. If then our puritan ancestors, by maintaining the entire freedom of the Christian believer as to all the forms and helps instituted by man, while at the same time they were firmly persuaded that the religious sentiment belongs to the very life-blood of society, and that without it there is rottenness at the heart of all institutions, shall be found to have given a strong impulse to the development of the interior power, the spiritual life of Christianity, they will have done more perhaps than any other men to send it forth on the free and glorified course, which as a principle of moral sanctification, we believe, it is destined to run.

It would be easy to enlarge the details of that inheritance, into which we have entered from the labors of the Fathers. The impulse, which the cause of learning and of good education so early received in this part of our land, and which has been perpetuated ever since with increased vigor, is a rich part of the inheritance. There are names—I need not enumerate them, for they are familiar to us all—in the first half century of New-England's settlement, sufficient to show that it was not mere illiterate rudeness which took refuge in the wilderness,—men, both among the clergy and the laity, of large scholarship, of hard study, of minds ripened under the tuition of books as well as under the stern discipline of circum-

stances. It was, indeed, the natural result of the principles which brought them hither, that the means and the love of knowledge should be among the constituent elements of the new community. The good seeds were sown as plentifully as circumstances permitted; and without making any idle boast of the intelligence of our people, we may say that a healthy and profitable growth has sprung from them. It is a well known fact, that "during the greater part of the seventeenth century, the literature of the American colonies was in a great measure confined to New-England."* I am far from wishing to boast of comparative superiority at present over other parts of our union in this respect; for we rejoice to believe that the several portions of our confederacy are pressing forward earnestly on the path of mental improvement. But we must bear record, that if the means of diffusing knowledge, if free schools and literary seminaries grew up first on the soil of New-England, we owe, for the happy fruits that are springing from them in our country, a tribute of gratitude to the worthies of old who planted and watered the germ at a time, when most men would have thought they were doing much, amply enough, if they could provide for the pressing wants of the passing day, and find safety for their persons and settlements.

From these and kindred considerations it is manifest, that the men of whom I have spoken were called, in the providence of God, to perform a most important part in the world's affairs, and

*Miller's *Retrospect of the eighteenth Century*, II, 332.

performed it well. The great idea, so to say, of which it was their office to sketch at least the outline on the map of man's history, is instinct with a vitality, the full power of which the world is yet to learn. It is taking its course among the nations, as a quickening and elastic element in the combinations of thought and action that are in progress, or are yet to be formed. It is the interior spirit which stirs in those omens of new developments, that are believed to be now abroad in the world. The sounds are heard from deep and distant places, which may in time be formed into a distinct and articulate utterance, announcing that man has learned to read better than before the design of God in the purposes of the social state. If the history of a large part of mankind for a century to come shall, as we are prone to believe, be fraught with such interest, dear to the friends of improvement, as no previous century has exhibited, it is not perhaps too much to say, that the pilgrim spirit will then be understood to have borne within its latent energy a measureless power of good for our race, and that the voice which cried in the American wilderness will have returned to the old world, whence it came, to awaken corresponding voices there.—But if such a view must be deemed too much like the dreams of prospective romance, still we may not forget that the name and the doings of the Plymouth and Massachusetts pilgrims are bound up in inseparable association with the fact, that here on this Western continent a scene has been opened for a grand experiment on the capacity

of man for self-direction and independent action, an experiment of new forms of society and of principles never before recognised as the basis of a community, an experiment, we may add, on which the eyes of some of the wisest and best on the other continent are earnestly intent, with prophetic anticipations of a refuge for the high interests of humanity, when worn-out systems with their abuses shall have passed away.* God save us from the shame and the guilt of betraying such hopes to a bitter and inglorious disappointment!

Such then were some of the labors of those, whom on this anniversary we delight to commemorate; and such is the inheritance which has fallen to our lot. We love to come hither, and in the spirit of filial reverence bring our tribute of grateful remembrance to the spot, which is forever hallowed by the names of Carver, Bradford, Brewster, Winslow, and Standish, and where the dust of our ancestors is mingled with the earth on which we tread. The Fathers, where are they? They have joined the mighty congregation of the dead: their witness is in heaven: their record is on high. In every thought of the past we hear

> The due beat
> Of Time's slow-sweeping pendulum, that marks
> The momentary march of death on man.

It is the presence of mind, which imparts a solemn and touching interest to the ravages of time among the generations of men. Without this, even the most magnificent ruins of inanimate na-

*See Appendix M.

ture have comparatively but little to affect us.—There are convulsions, which shiver in pieces the rock and rend fragments from the mountain; the river may be turned aside from its deep bed; the restless ocean wears away the land on which it beats, and again the shore gains upon the dominion of the mighty waters; the forest goes down to the dust in the slow progress of decay, and a new growth comes in its place to fall likewise in its own time. On changes like these we look with wonder, as objects of study or of curiosity. But where living, thinking, acting man has been, there the retrospect presents an interest of another sort,—an interest that kindles our hearts as if by the touch of an invisible power, and constitutes a hallowed fellowship between our minds and minds that have long since gone upward to higher scenes of action and improvement. Why is it that the traveller visits, with an emotion altogether different from the feeling excited by the common wrecks of nature, those ancient cities that have been partly recovered by the labors of modern times from the mass of earth and lava, under which they had been buried for ages? It is because they speak to him of man—of man in other times—of his intellect, his works, and inventions, of his social arrangements, his habits, his sufferings, and his joys. The soul of those, who trod the streets and reposed in the dwellings, lingers around the imagination of the spectator; and the most common utensil, the most ordinary edifice, becomes a symbol to signify that spirit abode and wrought there. Such is the natural

sentiment of the human heart all over the world. We do right then, though here we have no ancient ruins and but few memorials of the past, to venerate this place as the cradle of our community, "gentis cunabula nostræ;" we do right to come hither when winter is sending its blasts along these shores, or has laid its snow-wreaths on these hills, that we may gather salutary excitement from our kindred with the departed wise and good.

And now, Christian friends, it becomes us to ask whether we have honored the memory of the Pilgrim Fathers in the only manner worthy of them, or profitable for us, by imitating all that was good in their example, by imbibing all that was pure and holy in their spirit. I am not about to repeat the complaint, which has been reiterated from some of the remotest ages on record, that "the former days were better than these."—The complaint in general is idle and unfounded. What is called degeneracy is often only an alteration, and not necessarily an alteration for the worse. The lesson to be collected from history, frequently, is that the mass of men rather change their virtues and vices, than become actually better or worse. Our faults and virtues belong to our period of society, as the faults and virtues of our Fathers did to theirs; and a comparative estimate involves the checks and balances of so many different considerations, that it is not so easily despatched as may seem to some indiscriminate praisers of the past time. But, without discussing the relative merits of present and former days,

we must remember that our praises of the pilgrim band are nothing worth, if they do not express and cherish on our part the love of high and holy principles. The martyrs to truth and freedom have ever deemed their own dearest honor to be the honor paid to their beloved cause. They have sought no better reward in this world, than that their good work should be taken up and carried on by willing hands, pure hearts, and wise minds. They have desired that their eulogy should be written in the completeness of results, to which the brevity of human effort allowed them only to point the way and direct the tendencies. They have not asked of their successors to walk in their steps, any further than their path shall be found to coincide with the great line of duty and improvement. They wrought out the idea that dawned and brightened in their souls, and thus brought their part nobly and well to the treasury of man's highest good. It remains only that those, who come after them, work out some idea of kindred excellence, not necessarily in the old form, but as it glows in their own spirits, and thus do their part for the common race as faithfully and fearlessly.

Such is the bond of moral connexion, which links the men of the present to the great and good of the past, to those who have turned back the dark waters, that threatened to break over and bury the landmarks of man's best possessions, his rights of conscience, his mental and moral freedom. And such, I believe, is the relation we are called to sustain toward the ancestors of New-

England, not the relation of servile imitators, but that of fellow-workers in a good and righteous cause. We fulfil well the duty we owe to their memory, not when we cleave blindly to their forms of faith or modes of conduct,—for these may have been right or wrong,—but when we welcome and cherish those manly principles, that sustaining, sanctifying spirit, which upheld them in their work in the midst of darkness, sorrow, and sickness of heart. That work was indeed no delusion of a heated imagination; but even had it been so, the spirit in which it was accomplished would have been left to enrich the moral history of our race. They stood in awe of the human soul, of her dignity and freedom; and however rudely they might sometimes assert her cause, yet there was the stirring of God's power within them, which told them that they were right and must press on and die in a labor, which others would finish. We honor the Fathers then, I repeat, not by believing all that they believed, nor by doing what they did, but by seizing on the great principles which gave to their doings all the real value they have, all the just praise they deserve, and by following out these in their true consequences honestly, wisely, faithfully. We honor them, when the representation of them which we exhibit is that of children, in whose veins flows the blood of their sires, not that of dead pictures, though the resemblance should be true in every line and feature.* This is the homage we would render to the piety, the long tried

*See Appendix N.

endurance, the moral courage of our Fathers,—the only homage, as we believe, fit for them to accept or for us to give. The pilgrim spirit, we trust in God, has not deserted our land; we trust it has gone forth far and wide among us, to be our light and hope in every day of darkness or of fear,

> Till the waves of the bay, where the May-Flower lay,
> Shall foam and freeze no more.

Let the cause of education among us be wisely cherished in the belief that the outlay we make on mind is the noblest use of our treasure; let liberty rest on the foundation of those great principles of the human constitution, which may not be neglected with impunity; let the sanctifying influences of the Gospel be interwoven with the whole structure of society, and the church of Christ be permitted to go forth on an unshackled course and be glorified;—then the men of other lands shall know that beyond the waves lies the home of the free and the good, the dwelling of man as God designed him to be, and of the Christian as Jesus would have him; and then it shall be seen that from the precious seed the pilgrims bore, when they went forth in sorrow, have come the sheaves of a glorious harvest!

APPENDIX.

A.

A striking illustration of the youthfulness of our country may be found in the fact, that within a very few years it has required only the memory of two men to reach back to the first Plymouth colonists. The Hon. Ephraim Spooner, who died in March 1818, was acquainted with the venerable Elder Faunce, who died in 1745 in the 99th year of his age, and Elder Faunce was well acquainted with some of the the first settlers.

B.

Ernesti, in the fine dedication prefixed to his edition of Cicero, has well and truly said—"Nescio enim, naturane nobis hoc datum sit, an errore quodam ipsa antiquitate vehementer moveamur, magisque rebus antiquis, quamvis tenuibus et parvis, quam recentibus vel maximis afficiamur."

C.

The causes and consequences of Luther's reformation have furnished a most fertile topic for ingenious and profound speculation. The subject has perhaps never been investigated in a more truly philosophical spirit, than in the work of Villers.—That great revolution was doubtless aided in its progress by many concurrent labors, some of which were apparently trivial, but really important. Warton has observed, that "the lively colloquies of Erasmus, which exposed the superstitious practices of the papists with much humour and in pure Latinity, made more protestants than the ten tomes of John Calvin."—*Hist. of English Poetry*, III. 267. The materials for the final manifestation, which was brought out under the agency of the great reformer, had been long in accumulation, when the matchless energy of that most courageous man put them in action. The immediate causes of remarkable changes are generally not those, which deserve the most attention. It is said that a work was once projected, to be entitled *Historia Reformationis ante Reformationem*. A similar history might be desired with regard to almost all important changes. But the humor of tracing a long series of connexions and dependences among events is too pleasant an exercise of ingenuity not to be abused. I do not remember a more striking instance of the absurd length to which speculations of this kind may be carried

than in the concatenation of causes and effects, by which John Newton of Olney seriously attempts to show, that if Joseph had not dreamed, "mankind had been still in their sins without hope, and the counsels of God's eternal love in favour of sinners defeated."! See his *Authentic Narrative*, &c. Letter VI.

D.

The term *Puritan*, for some time after its origin, was not the exclusive designation of those who separated from the Church, but was applied to all such as were remarkable for strictness or severe piety, or such as entertained scruples about complying with some ecclesiastical requisitions. The remarks of Fuller on this subject deserve to be quoted. "The English Bishops," says he, "conceiving themselves impowered by their Canons, began to show their authority in urging the Clergy of their Diocess to subscribe to the liturgie, ceremonies, and discipline of the Church, and such as refused the same were branded with the odious name of Puritans. A name which in this nation first began in this year (1564), and the grief had not been great, if it had ended in the same. The philosopher banisheth the term, (which is *polysæmon)* that is subject to several senses, out of the Predicaments, as affording too much covert for cavill by the latitude thereof. On the same account could I wish that the word *Puritan* were banished common discourse, because so various in the acceptions thereof. We need not speak of the ancient *Cathari* or primitive Puritans, sufficiently known by their hereticall opinions. Puritan here was taken for the opposers of the Hierarchie and Church-service, as resenting of superstition. But prophane mouths quickly improved this *Nickname*, therewith on every occasion to abuse pious people, some of them so far from opposing the liturgie, that they endeavoured (according to the instructions thereof in the preparative to the Confession) to accompany the Minister with a *pure* heart, and laboured (as it is in the Absolution) for a life *pure* and holy."—*The Church History of Britain*, b. IX, p. 76. Some of the best prelates in the Church, such as Hall, bishop of Norwich, were reproached with being puritanically inclined, because they would not fall in with the fashionable laxity of principle, while they were willing to abate the rigor of ceremonies and unimportant matters for the sake of tender consciences. Under these circumstances the name became an honor, instead of a disgrace; and there was reason for the prayer expressed by an admirer of these good men—"sit anima mea cum Puritanis Anglicanis." In process of time, however, the term *Puritan* was appropriated entirely to separatists from the Church, and other names to designate the same body succeeded this. "It now appeared," say Bogue and Bennett, "that there were some who wished to make the church of England the half-way house of the reformation, while others were for going all the lengths to which the Scriptures might lead. Hence the latter party, who pleaded for a church more pure from all the corruptions of pope-

ry, were denominated puritans; when the act of uniformity was passed, in the reign of Charles the second, they were called nonconformists; and at the revolution they obtained, from the toleration act, the title of dissenters. Hooper, bishop of Glocester, who was burnt alive as a martyr for the protestant religion under queen Mary, was the first puritan or dissenter." *History of Dissenters*, I, 49. See Neal's *Hist. of New England*, ch. II, Peirce's *Vindication of the Dissenters*, Part I, and Burnet's *Hist. of the Reformation.* Part III.

E.

Brown and Robinson seem to have differed not so much in principles, as in spirit. Robinson has been called "the Father of the Independents;" but Brown had before him zealously inculcated the principles of the Independents. They both maintained the equality and "independence of churches, the right of the brethren to elect and invest with office their minister without the sanction of ecclesiastical governors, and in general those views with regard to the nature and power of churches, which rendered the Brownists so odious to the hierarchy. I am not aware that Robinson ever receded in any degree from these principles. The difference between the two men was chiefly in temper and character. Brown was fiery, rash, and unstable, and, as might have been expected, soon deserted his own principles. Robinson was calm, considerate, and steadfast; and therefore though he adhered to his views to the last, yet from being at first one of the rigid separatists he became afterwards, by intercourse with Dr. Ames whom he found in Holland, much more mild and lenient with regard to other churches,—insomuch as to give great offence to the violent Brownists who stigmatized him as a *Semi-separatist.* In his *Apologia quorundam Christianorum*, &c., printed in 1619, and afterwards translated into English with the title of "A just and necessary Apologie of certain Christians," &c., he was more charitable and less for separation than in his "Justification of Separation from the Church of England, against Mr. Richard Bernard his invective," &c., published in 1610. Robinson was involved at one time in a controversy with one of the brightest ornaments of the English church, Hall, afterwards bishop of Norwich. Hall wrote an Epistle addressed to him in connexion with John Smith, the pastor at Amsterdam, styled the *Se-baptist* because he baptized himself by immersion. This letter was directed to them as "ringleaders of the late Separation," and was full of strong and earnest expostulation. Robinson replied to it in "An Answer to a censorious Epistle," in which he complained of being stigmatized by the term *ringleader.* Hall rejoined in his "Common Apology of the Church of England," &c., in which, with the contemptuous asperity to which even good men are sometimes betrayed by the warmth of controversy, he says—"as for the title of ringleader, wherewith I styled this pamphleteer, if I have given him too much honour in his sect, I am sorry. Per-

haps I should have put him (pardon a homely, but, in this sense, not unusual word) in the tail of this train. Perhaps I should have endorsed my Letter 'To M. Smith, and his Shadow."—So I perceive he was."—See *The Works of Joseph Hall, D. D.* &c., edited by Pratt, vol. VII, p. 171, and vol. IX, p. 401.—Little reason had the churchman to speak thus of a man, whose talents and learning were such that he was selected to hold a public disputation with Episcopius. The maturity, which Robinson's charitable and enlarged views at length reached, is evinced by those admirable passages, so often quoted, in the well known Fast Sermon in July 1620, which justly deserve the high praise bestowed upon them by Prince.

F.

Foxcroft, pastor of the First Church in Boston, reported it as a saying of our Forefathers, that "they esteemed *brown bread and the Gospel good fare.*" The severity of their circumstances would naturally tend to secure them from idle and corrupt self-seekers, from those who might have been tempted to join them by the lure of wealth or power. Cushman, in the Epistle Dedicatory to his Sermon at Plymouth in 1621, describing the sort of men who were wanted for the new settlement, says—"if there be any who are content to lay out their estates, spend their time, labours, and endeavours for the benefit of them that shall come after, and in desire to further the Gospel among those poor Heathens, quietly contenting themselves with such hardship and difficulties, as by God's Providence shall fall upon them, being yet young and in their strength, such men I would advise and encourage to go, for their ends cannot fail them."—Yet even then the preacher, it seems, did not think the colonists exempt from the danger of selfish motives and purposes; for in the Sermon (p. 16) he says—"It is reported, that there are many men gone to that other plantation in Virginia, which, whilst they lived in England, seemed very religious, zealous, and conscionable, and have now lost even the sap of grace and edge to all goodness, and are become mere worldlings. This testimony I believe to be partly true, and amongst many causes of it, this self-love is not the least. It is indeed a matter of some commendations for a man to remove himself out of a thronged place into a wide wilderness, to take in hand so long and dangerous a journey to be an instrument to carry the Gospel and humanity among the brutish heathen; but there may be many goodly shews and glosses, and yet a pad in the straw; men may make a great appearance of respect unto God, and yet but dissemble with him, having their own lusts carrying them: and out of doubt, men that have taken in hand hitherto come, out of discontentment, in regard of their estates in England; and aiming at great matters here, affecting it to be gentlemen, landed men, or hoping for office, place, dignity, or fleshly liberty; let the shew be what it will, the substance is naught, and that bird of self-love which was hatched at home, if it be not looked to,

will eat out the life of all grace and goodness; and though men have escaped the danger of the sea, and that cruel mortality which swept away so many of our loving friends and brethren, yet except they purge out this self-love, a worse mischief is prepared for them." Still it may truly be said of those who sustained the enterprise of the first settlement of New England, and infused into it the spirit of devotedness without which it would have perished, that—in the language of Stoughton in his Election Sermon,—"God sifted a whole nation, that he might send a choice grain over into this wilderness."

G.

The Edinburgh Review (No. XXV, 1808), in an article on Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs of the Life of Col. Hutchinson, has some excellent remarks on the difference between the character of the *earlier* Puritans, and that which they acquired after the Restoration, when they were a defeated, and degraded party,—a difference which has not been sufficiently considered.—"It is from the wits of that court (the court of Charles the second) however, and the writers of that party," says the reviewer, "that the succeeding and the present age have derived their notions of the puritans. In reducing these notions to the standard of truth, it is not easy to determine how large an allowance ought to be made for the exaggerations of party hatred, the perversions of witty malice, and the illusions of habitual superiority. It is certain, however, that ridicule, toleration, and luxury gradually annihilated the puritans in the higher ranks of society; and after times seeing their practices and principles exemplified only among the lowest and most illiterate of mankind, readily caught the tone of contempt which had been assumed by their triumphant enemies, and found no absurdity in believing that the base and contemptible beings who were described under the name of puritans by the courtiers of Charles II, were true representatives of that valiant and conscientious party, which once numbered half the gentry of England among its votaries and adherents."

No one, who has read it, can forget the powerful description of the puritan character in the same Review, in the splendid article on Milton, No. LXXXIV, 1825.

H.

Locke's admirable Letters on Toleration first placed the subject in a clear light, and on the foundation of great general principles. They have been justly called "the best treatise on religious liberty, which has ever appeared since the day that the chief priests and captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, committed Peter and John to prison for preaching Christ." Locke felt obliged to introduce the first Letter to the world in a very guarded and cautious manner. It was written while he was living as a proscribed man in Holland, and published first in Latin with an evidently studied obscurity, on the title page, as

to its author. Limborch, to whom it was dedicated, disclosed the secret to a friend. Locke was much vexed at this, and in a Latin letter to Limborch complains of it, as a piece of treachery he did not expect in his friend, with a tone of almost angry petulance, which seems curiously in contrast with the calm and equable character of the philosopher. "Nescis," says he, " in quas res me conjecisti," and begs Limborch to prevent the further circulation of the secret. It is to the honor of Locke that he is known to have been dissatisfied with the terms granted in the Toleration Act by the new Government after the Revolution, and considered them as very inadequate and insufficient.—Lord King's *Life of John Locke*, &c. vol. 1. p. 291, 327, and vol. II, p. 310.

It would seem as if the sound maxim of Turretin must approve itself at once to the common sense of mankind,—" in rebus ad salutem necessariis, unusquisque sibi ipsi Theologus esto." Yet so it is, that men have learned nothing more slowly and reluctantly, than to tolerate one another's opinions. On this subject they would seem to have supposed, that they were absolutely required to renounce those principles of forbearance, upon which they were accustomed readily to act in other things, —as if a belief different from theirs were an offence against God, which they were bound not to pardon. Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in his *Life* (p. 169) tells us that when he was in France, " Pere Segnerand, confessor to the king, made a sermon before his majesty upon the text, that we shou'd forgive our enemies, upon which argument having said many good things, he at last distinguished forgiveness, and said, we were indeed to forgive our enemies, but not the enemies of God, such as were hereticks, and particularly those of the religion (i. e. of the Protestant faith); and that his majesty, as the Most Christian King, ought to extirpate them, wheresoever they cou'd be found." Thus it is, that intolerance can practice no cruelty, for which sophistry cannot find a shelter in some paltry quibble or some miserable distinction. The principles of the Reformation ought, from their very nature, to produce a spirit of toleration; and on the whole they unquestionably have progressively had this effect, notwithstanding the frequent and lamentable unfaithfulness of Protestants to these principles. Voltaire, who had no partiality for any form of Christianity to bias his judgment, in the *Essai sur les Mœurs* remarks,—" Le principe d'examen adopte par les Protestants conduisait necessairement a la tolerance, au lieu que le principe de l'autorite, point fondamental de la croyance Romaine, en ecarte non moins necessairement: enfin l'intolerance des Protestants n'etait qu'un reste de papisme, que les principes memes sur lesquels la reforme etait fondee devaient detruire un jour." But whether Protestantism can throw off all blame so easily, or can account for all its own intolerance by calling it " a remnant of popery," may be doubted.

In connexion with this subject, I am reminded of a mistake

of Hume, who affirms that "even so great a reasoner as Lord Bacon thought that uniformity in religion was absolutely necessary to the support of government, and that no toleration could with safety be given to sectaries." For this assertion he refers to the essay *De unitate ecclesiæ*. Now that Essay does by no means warrant so broad an inference, as any one may see by an examination of it. It contains indeed exceptionable expressions, but it is manifestly not a plea for intolerance; and Bacon closes it by quoting with approbation from one of the Fathers the remark, "that those which held and persuaded pressure of consciences, were commonly interested therein themselves for their own ends."

The noble stand which Roger Williams, at so early a period, took in favor of the broadest principles of toleration, does great honor to his memory.

I.

The account of the sufferings, wanderings and adventures of the pilgrims, when they arrived on these shores, is given in a manner extremely interesting from its primitive simplicity and minuteness by Mourt in his "Relation or Journal of the Beginning and Proceedings of the English Plantation settled at Plimoth in New England," &c., published in London 1622, and in Winslow's "Good Newes from New England; or a True Relation of things very remarkable at the Plantation of Plimoth," &c., published in London 1624. The disjointed manner, in which these Relations were published by our Historical Society, owing to the circumstance that the abridgement of them in Purchas's Pilgrims was the only authority accessible for a long time, is much to be regretted. *Coll. of Mass. Hist. Soc.* 1*st Series*. vol. VIII, p. 203 and 239, and 2*d Series*. vol. IX, p. 26 and 74. The original edition of Mourt's Relation, as well as that of Winslow, is now in the Library of Harvard College, in which the collection of books and tracts relating to American history and antiquities has become very extensive and valuable. Morton's New England's Memorial, which has been so greatly enriched by the labors of the Hon. John Davis in his very valuable edition of the book, is so familiarly known that it need scarcely be mentioned as an authority.

In connexion with the reference to the Landing of the Fathers at Plymouth, it may be observed that there is and has been an error of one day in the celebration of that event. It is now established, I believe, that the difference between O. S. and N. S. was but ten days in the 17th century, and consequently that the Landing should in strict propriety be commemorated on the 21st instead of the 22d of December. Dr. Thacher has discussed this subject, and given the authorities, in a note to his History of Plymouth, p. 25. The error, however, is not of much importance. Whether it be sufficiently important to induce a change in the day of the celebration, must be left to others to judge.

Notwithstanding the severe hardships attending the situtation of the first settlers at Plymouth, I know not what reason Hutchinson had for his doubt, whether, if they had not been encouraged and strengthened by the arrival of Endicot at Salem, who prepared the way for the settlement of Massachusetts, "the plantation would not in a few years have been deserted, and the settlers have removed to some more fertile part of America, or, which is more probable, have returned to England, where, from the change of times, they might have enjoyed civil and religious liberty, for the sake of which they first quitted it, in as great a latitude as their hearts could wish." *Hist. of Mass.* vol. II, p. 420. The most appalling of their difficulties were probably over, before Endicot settled at Salem.

The Rev. Dr. Harris, one of the most learned and thorough antiquarians in our country, insists upon a distinction between the Plymouth and the Massachusetts settlers, maintaining that the former were "*Separatists*, and, as respected ecclesiastical polity, *Independents*," while the latter, to whom appropriately belonged the name of Puritans, "were only *Dissenters*, and as regarded ecclesiastical polity were *Congregationalists*, and held an accordance and union of churches." *Memorials of the First Church in Dorchester*, &c. *in two Discourses July* 4, 1830.—Perhaps there was at one time a good foundation for this distinction; but Hutchinson was probably correct in the remark, that "the Massachusetts people refined and took the name of Congregationalists, although it will perhaps be difficult at this day to show any material difference between the churches of the two colonies; for although Plymouth never established by act of government the Massachusetts platform, yet in practice they seem generally to have conformed to it."—Vol. II, p. 415.

K.

To the case of our Fathers may be applied the spirit of that beautiful passage in which Lord Bacon, at the close of his review of philosophy, describes himself as having made an attempt to tune the instruments, from which others might produce a full and harmonious concert." "Tandem igitur paululum respirantes, atque ad ea, quæ prætervecti sumus, oculos retroflectentes, hunc tractatum nostrum non absimilem esse censemus sonis illis et præludiis, quæ prætentant musici, dum fides ad modulationem concinnant; quæ ipsa quidem auribus ingratum quiddam et asperum exhibent; at in causa sunt, ut quæ sequuntur omnia sint suaviora; sic nimirum nos in animum induximus, ut in cithara musarum concinnanda, et ad harmoniam veram redigenda, operam navaremus, quo ab aliis postea pulsentur chordæ meliore digito aut plectro." *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, lib. VIII, c. III.

L.

Milton, in one of the fine strains of his indignant eloquence, mourns over the folly of the English government in driving from

their country such multitudes of good men and devoted Christians:—"Next, what numbers of faithful and freeborn Englishmen and good Christians, have been constrained to forsake their dearest home, their friends and kindred, whom nothing but the wide ocean, and the savage deserts of America could hide and shelter from the fury of the bishops. O sir, if we could but see the shape of our dear mother England, as poets are wont to give a personal form to what they please, how would she appear, think ye, but in a mourning weed, with ashes upon her head, and tears abundantly flowing from her eyes, to behold so many of her children exposed at once, and thrust from things of dearest necessity, because their conscience could not assent to things which the bishops thought indifferent? What more binding than conscience? What more free than indifferency? Cruel then must that indifferency needs be, that shall violate the strict necessity of conscience! merciless and inhuman that free choice and liberty that shall break asunder the bonds of religion! Let the astrologer be dismayed at the portentous blaze of comets, and impressions in the air, as foretelling troubles and changes to states; I shall believe there cannot be a more ill-boding sign to a nation, God turn the omen from us! than when the inhabitants, to avoid insufferable grievances at home, are enforced by heaps to forsake their native country."—*Of Reformation in England*, &c. book II.

M.

Berkeley's beautiful "Verses on the Prospect of planting Arts and Learning in America" (*Works*, vol. III, p. 233) have been so often quoted in whole or in part, that it is merely necessary to refer to them in this connexion. One of his biographers has said of them, that "in them another age, perhaps, will acknowledge the old conjunction of the prophetic character with that of the poet to have again taken place."

Bishop Watson, in a letter written to Dr. Falconer in 1804, speaking of the probability of new positions to be taken by the political powers of the word, gives it as his opinion, "that America will become the greatest naval power on the globe, and be replenished by migrations of oppressed and discontented people from every part of Europe."—*Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson, written by himself*, &c. p. 327.

There is wisdom in cherishing bright hopes of the future; and we should cleave to them till duty or facts forbid us to be blind to darker prospects. But it remains yet to be seen, whether it shall be the high vocation of our country to realize the splendid promise written for her in the following stanzas of an English poet, who, with great faults, has many passages of striking power and beauty.

> There is a People mighty in its youth,
> A land beyond the Oceans of the West,
> Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth
> Are worshipp'd; from a glorious mother's breast,

Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest
Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,
By inbred monsters outraged and oppress'd,
Turns to her chainless child for succor now,
It draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

That land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze
Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume
Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze
Of sunrise gleams when Earth is wrapt in gloom;
An epitaph of glory for the tomb
Of murder'd Europe may thy fame be made,
Great People: as the sands shalt thou become;
Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;
The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

I would fain hope that no conflict of interests or of heated passions, in our confederacy, may compel us to read so beautiful a tribute with the feeling of sadness arising from dark and fearful apprehensions. The old Roman maxim was *never to despair of the republic;* and it is a maxim which we should not lightly abandon.

N.

This illustration is borrowed from Sprat, who, in speaking of the proper manner of imitating the ancients, says—"There are two principal ways of preserving the names of those that are past; the one by *pictures*, the other by *children*. The pictures may be so made, that they may far nearer resemble the original, than children do their parents; and yet all mankind choose rather to keep themselves alive by children, than by the other. It is best for the philosophers of this age to imitate the ancients as their *children*, to have their blood derived down to them, but to add a new complexion and life of their own;—while those that endeavour to come near them in every line and feature, may rather be called their dead *pictures* or statues, than their genuine offspring." *History of the Royal Society of London*, &c. London. 1734. p. 51.

REV. MR. BLAGDEN'S ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

PILGRIM SOCIETY OF PLYMOUTH,

DECEMBER 22, 1834.

REV. DR. WORCESTER'S

PLYMOUTH DISCOURSE.

1848.

New England's Glory and Crown.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT PLYMOUTH, MASS.,

DECEMBER 22, 1848.

BY SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, D. D.,
Pastor of the Tabernacle Church, Salem.

Second Edition.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.
1849.

It has been designed in the following pages, to exhibit "The Pilgrims" and "The Fathers," in their true evangelical spirit; and to present a rapid, yet distinct outline of the ecclesiastical history of New England, in somewhat more of a *missionary* point of view, than has been common. Some passages of the Discourse were omitted, at the time it was delivered.

The day was very unfavorable for a large gathering, and but a small number assembled in the house of God. There were just about as many present, as the whole number of the emigrants, who came in the Mayflower; which, some may forget, was one hundred and one. But there was a grandeur in the scene, as the storm sounded from the ocean and above the summits of the hills, which few would venture to describe. All nature around seemed to unite in the celebration of the "Landing of the Pilgrims." No one who joined in the religious exercises, could have needed much aid to his imagination and sensibilities, as he silently remembered those, whom he had come to honor,—when,

> 'Amidst the storm they sang,
> And the stars heard and the sea!
> And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
> To the anthem of the free!'

DISCOURSE.

PROVERBS, xvii. 6.

CHILDREN'S CHILDREN ARE THE CROWN OF OLD MEN, AND THE GLORY OF CHILDREN ARE THEIR FATHERS.

In respect to human happiness and glory, there is a remarkable difference between the words of the "holy men who of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and those of other men generally, whatever their land or their language. Other men speak of happiness, without any reference to "joy in God," or "delight in his law"; and of glory, when the Most High, who only is "great," "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," "is not in all their thoughts" of greatness, of wisdom, and of excellency. But they, who, "at sundry times and in divers manners," have spoken of happiness and glory, in the name of the "Father of lights" and "the God of comfort," always speak of *happiness*, as but "the pleasure of sin," and of *glory*, as but "a vain show" and a fatal delusion, unless the "soul doth magnify the Lord," and the "spirit rejoice in God" the "Saviour."

It is, therefore, undoubtedly to be understood, that the "old men" who would find the "crown" of their earthly satisfactions and hopes in "children's children," were those pre-eminently, who had feared the Lord from their youth, and whose "hoary head was a crown of glory," because "found in the way of righteousness." And while

the ancient people of God accounted a numerous family and posterity a very special and signal favor, it was one of the most dreadful of all bitter experiences, to have sons and daughters, whose vicious and impious conduct would bring down their "grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." Hence "children's children" could never be the "crown" of the "old men," whom God would "not cast off in their old age,"—unless they "walked in the statutes and ordinances of the law of the Lord," and gave promise of transmitting the legacy of a godly example to their own "children's children."

"A man's descendants," says one of our wisest commentators, "ought to be his honor and comfort in old age. His children should be educated in such a manner, as may warrant a confidence that their pious and prudent conduct will render them such, and that they will train up their families in like manner; and it is the duty of children, and children's children, to consult the credit of their progenitors, as far as it can be made consistent with superior obligations. Parents also should act in such a manner, that their children and posterity may be respected for their sakes, and have cause to rejoice in their relation to persons of such piety and wisdom. And thus it will be, in proportion as men attend to the dictates of heavenly wisdom."

In this free exposition of the spirit of the significant and beautiful language of the text, we have, as I conceive, a just and interesting view of the relation of children to parents, and of posterity to their ancestors. Natural talents and dispositions are very far from being always hereditary. Yet we often perceive as marked a likeness of intellectual endowments and original elements of character, between a parent and his offspring, and between progenitors and their progeny, as we ever see of correspondence and resemblance in the features of countenance, which unequivocally proclaim kindred blood and

a common lineage. And while "that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," by a divine and not a human generation, we are so instructed by the "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and by the history of Providence, in respect to the covenant with Abraham, comprehending all believers in Christ among the Gentiles as well as the Jews,—that it should be accounted no strange thing, but a delightful fulfilment of the promises, if children, in this our beloved New England, should be found partakers of the richest of all the blessings of a God of love. And this too by their relation, not merely to parents, friends and benefactors whom they have seen and known, but to those fore-*fathers* and fore-*mothers*, who, for our sakes, and for God's purposes, endured so much, and who have long since been translated from the duties, responsibilities, and trials of earth to a glorified immortality in heaven.

The nations of this Western hemisphere and of the Old world, are now a spectacle of extraordinary interest to every intelligent and reflecting man in this country. We have hopes or fears, or hopes *and* fears, for our own, and for other lands. These are different in different individuals, but in all are materially affected by personal religious principles and opinions. We may be unanimous in believing and proclaiming our own, our "native land, of every land the pride," while yet we may widely differ, when we trace our distinction as a people, to its real origin or source, through all the connected agencies, circumstances, and influences. And as we judge of our own land, in its early history and its present and prospective condition, so are we likely to judge of the state and prospects of those kingdoms or republics, which are now as "raging waves of the sea;" and so are we likely to determine what may be our duty, as a nation, or as individuals, at this eventful conjuncture of the world's affairs.

In general terms, we refer to our ancestors and to the institutions which the Pilgrims and the Fathers of New

England have founded and cherished, when we would explain the peculiar characteristics of their descendants, and rationally account for the manifold and unequalled excellency of "our goodly heritage." Some will make this reference, but with very large reservations, if not very significant and somewhat inconsistent qualifications. There are those who will "garnish the sepulchres" of the "Pilgrims" of Plymouth Rock, and the "Fathers" * their associates of Salem, Charlestown, Boston, and other primitive settlements; while they are slow to recognize the true secret of the moral worth, and energy, and endurance, by which those godly sires achieved their noble deeds and won their renowned conquests and possessions. There are theorists and dreamers, who would have all forsake "the old paths," and enter upon one or another individual or social experiment, in full confidence of a progress and happiness, which no received form of Christianity can ever secure or promote. On the other hand, we have those, and I bless God that the number is not small, who are more and more persuaded, that it was the distinctive faith, and the life inspired by that faith, of our ancestors, to which, under the watchful and beneficent care of their covenant God, we are now indebted for all that makes the difference between New England and New Grenada, or between Massachusetts and Mexico. It is believed also, with all the confidence of a self-evident certainty, that to the same causes we are to ascribe the marvellous contrast of the American Revolution to the first revolution in France, and to all the other revolutions which have followed, on either side of the Atlantic.

If we differ in regard to the leading and legitimate causes, which, working out their effects in past genera-

* Those who came to Plymouth are properly called "*The Pilgrims*";—because they had sojourned in Holland. We speak of them as "the Fathers." But "the Fathers" were not all "Pilgrims."

tions, have crowned the present with its chief blessing and glory, we shall of course differ in our judgment of the best means and aims, for the highest good of the generations which shall come after us. In our amazing increase of territory and population, we have some startling questions to be settled, in respect to which we must act in our political capacity, as citizens. But it is to me a great comfort to know, that there is a Power and Wisdom above all mortal power and policy; and that whatever rulers or statesmen may decree, or may strive to accomplish, He who says to the ocean billows—"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further,"—will, in his faithfulness and loving kindness, and in his own sovereign right and appointed time, extend the dominion of truth and holiness; and will multiply, by thousands of thousands, the FREEMEN, who can shout the triumphs and rejoice in the felicities of "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Of all that have ever lived, there have never been any, upon the broad face of the earth, who more devoutly, than the "old men," our *fathers'* fathers, adopted the true sentiment of the words, that "children's children are the crown of old men." They are such, be it remembered, not by their numbers, or wealth, or worldly eminence, but *by serving their generation according to the will of God;* or by cherishing and spreading the institutions and influences of that kingdom, which is established in the hearts of the "faithful in Christ Jesus." And the day is far distant, before any who reverence the memory of illustrious progenitors, will have more reason than ourselves, to respond their loud AMEN to the words—"And the glory of children are their fathers!"

From the character of the Fathers of New England, and from the history of their children and "children's children," I propose to show, that, in accordance with the genuine import of the sacred aphorism of the text,—we

have the most grateful occasion to praise God, both for the "Glory" and the "Crown."

For a long period, America was to Christians of Europe the great field of *missionary* effort. It is even maintained, that the inspiring idea of Columbus was derived from the prophecies; and that Isabella, his patron, made the conversion of the heathen an object "paramount to all the rest." When our Fathers came hither, these were all "*foreign parts:*" it was all *heathen* ground. Long after their coming, the churches in England were accustomed to pray in their songs:—

> "Dark *America* convert,
> And every pagan land."

And if I do not mistake, these lines are still sung, strangely as they sound to the ear of a New England man who may chance to hear them. So vast is the change; so accustomed are we to our Christian institutions; that we are all in danger of forgetting that we live upon the soil that has been rescued from Paganism. *Never, never should it be forgotten!* And never should it be forgotten, that the settlement of New England was in reality, though not in name, a Missionary Enterprise. Or if you please to call it by other terms, you may call it *a Mission of Evangelical Colonization;* and you may proclaim it in every language, as the sublimest mission of modern times.

The History of New England is yet to be written. Posterity may, perhaps, do justice to the memory of our Fathers. But it is incumbent on their living "children's children" to acquaint themselves with their character, and never be unmindful of their extraordinary virtues and achievements. Those persecuted and exiled Puritans had no such purpose in coming hither, as has often been ascribed to them, even by some of their favored descendants. It was not for political immunities, nor republican institutions. In the "love of Christ constraining" them,

it was for the advancement of that *Reformation*, which, a century after it had moved all Christendom, was still but in part accomplished; for they were not satisfied, that the "Prince of life" should only be acknowledged by the church, in his prophetical and priestly offices. It was, that as "the Lord's freemen," they might give him his KINGLY RIGHT, and thus be "complete in him, which is the Head of all principality and power." It was, that in the "liberty," "wherewith the Son makes free," they might enjoy the gospel, without "human mixtures and temptations;" and worship in peace, "while worshipping in spirit and in truth." It was for the holier and surer training of a consecrated progeny, at the distance of a "nine hundred league ocean," from the corruptions of the old world. And not least of all in their desires and hopes, was the salvation of the benighted heathen, while in every way which should be prepared before them, they would toil and pray for the enlargement of the kingdom of "the Lord of all."*

These were their motives and ends in separating themselves from the Church of England, which originally adopted the Reformation from paramount purposes of state policy. Above all things, it was in their hearts to call no man master, but to obey HIM as their King, whose inspired word was their sun, and whose atoning blood was their eternal life. For *this* it was, that in the pure and undying "love of their espousals," they "went after him in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." And in their own graphic expression, it was indeed in a "wilderness world," that they built their habitations and their sanctuaries. For an object, holy and sublime as ever angels celebrated, they lived here in hunger and in cold, and toiled and watched in weariness and in painfulness; where, when the bullock lowed, the wild beast answered him; and where, at the rustling of a leaf, the fond mother

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* See Appendix, A.

clasped her infant closer to her bosom. All the charters enjoined upon the colonists the duty of instructing and christianizing the pagan aborigines. The seal of the Massachusetts colony is a true exponent of the aims and aspirations of our fathers. In expressive harmony with their benignant desires, they adopted the figure of an aboriginal, with the memorable words of "the man of Macedonia." Nothing, therefore, was further from their hearts than the wish or the thought of colonizing an immense "howling wilderness," and redeeming it for "a goodly heritage," at the price of the blood of the children of its forests and its streams. And if the venerated Robinson had occasion to write to the Governor of Plymouth,—'O that you had converted some, before you had killed any,'—it was not because these were wantonly destroyed, or hunted down as "tawny and bloody salvages;" nor because their moral ignorance and wretchedness were not a distinct object of early and intense solicitude. In less than two years, I think it was, one of the Plymouth settlers was specially designated to promote the conversion of the Indians.

In the labors of several pastors before Eliot and the first Mayhew, as well as in the more celebrated exertions of these devoted evangelists, and in the contributions and personal sacrifices of those who out of their "deep poverty" sustained them, the first generation of New England furnished examples of as self-denying and exalted missionary spirit, as has ever yet found a record or a memorial in the uninspired annals of redemption. And to all appearance, we may ourselves hardly expect to see the day, when "the thousand of thousands" shall become as "the little one" was, and the "strong nation" as "the small one," in the all-pervading and ennobling power of such zeal, for the salvation of the perishing.

The honor of the first plan in England, for sending missionaries to the heathen, has by mistake been given to

that wonderful man, whose character is now at last receiving a just and brilliant vindication, against the atrocious calumnies, which have prevailed for two centuries. But the magnificent design of Cromwell, which contemplated the establishment of a Council for the Protestant religion, in opposition to the jesuitical combination at Rome, and which was intended to embrace the East and West Indies, in its fourth department of operation,—was more than thirty years later, than the manifesto of the Pilgrims,—declaratory of the "great hope and inward zeal they had, of laying some good foundation for the propagation and advancement of the gospel in these remote parts of the world"!

A Society had been formed in England, and collections had been taken, in aid of the missions of Eliot and his associates. It is beyond a doubt, that the *first settlers of New England* were the *first Englishmen*, who devised and executed a mission to the heathen!

As early as 1646, the Legislature of Massachusetts passed an act for the propagation of the gospel among the Indians. From that day onward, more or less of legislative provision has been made for their religious instruction, as well as their social comfort. And it may be remarked in a word, that with all the changes that have passed over the "fathers" and the "children's children," there never has been a time, when they have not furnished some laborers in the heathen part of this western world.*

As it respects *the religious faith* of the Fathers of New England, there can be no good reason for any misunderstanding, mistake, or misstatement. They were Trinitarians and Calvinists, intelligently, thoroughly, and most earnestly. In church government, they were much per-

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* See Appendix, B.

plexed, in shaping their mould of Congregationalism, so as to be neither Brownists or Independents, nor Presbyterians. A great and arduous work it was which fashioned and executed the Cambridge Platform of 1648;—according to which, mainly and substantially, we have the prevailing ecclesiastical polity of New England.

Some turbulent and innovating spirits, like Roger Williams, bewildered enthusiasts like the antinomian Ann Hutchinson, and incomprehensible schismatics like the pestilent Gorton, made no small trouble by their opposition to the earliest civil and religious order of the Massachusetts Colony. But out of more than seventy ministers among a population of thirty thousand, there is no reason to suppose, that there was a single one, who did not receive the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as one God; or who did not receive as well as avow, most openly and decidedly, the fundamental doctrines of the present faith of our evangelical Congregational churches.

It was to a few individuals among the laity, beyond a doubt, that Edward Johnson refers, who, as early as 1654, had published the fact, which I here notice, without any invidious intent, that, besides the *Antinomians*, *Familists*, *Conformitants*, and *Seekers*, "there were *Arrians*, *Arminians*, and *Quakers*."

A most egregious and singular error has been committed in representing the founders of the First Church in Salem,—the first, as I need not say, in the Massachusetts Colony,—as having organized themselves, without any Confession of Faith; and as having had a form of Covenant, designedly so framed, as to give liberty to all, who might choose to call themselves *Christians*, to enter their communion and fellowship. What has been generally printed, for a hundred and fifty years, as the First Covenant of that Church, and adopted Aug. 6, 1629, *is not that Cove-*

nant. It was adopted as a Special Covenant, in 1636.—The Covenant of 1629 was a very brief and comprehensive document, by which the signers pledged themselves to walk together in obedience to the rules of the Gospel; while the "Confession of Faith" was as explicit and decided,—*Trinitarian and Calvinistic*,—as would of course be expected from men, who would rather have been burnt at the stake, than have given the least occasion for a doubt, concerning their interpretation of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

The error in respect to the Covenant, commonly printed as the First Covenant in the Massachusetts Colony,—was discovered a few years ago, during an investigation of the history of the Tabernacle Church, a Church which originated in a secession from the First Church, in 1735. Soon afterwards, a printed copy was found of the Confession and Covenant, *for substance*, as adopted in Salem, 6th of August, 1629. It is the identical document, which was printed for the use of the churches, when they so generally renewed their covenant in 1680; and when the design was, as far as possible, to unite all together in one common concert of recognition of the doctrinal and practical sentiments of the venerable Church, of which Higginson and Skelton were jointly pastor and teacher, and of which Endicott, the first Governor of Massachusetts Colony, was a leading member.

Hugh Peters was the pastor of the First Church, in Salem, at the time the Covenant was propounded and adopted, which has so unaccountably passed into so many "Historical Collections" and discourses, as if that of 1629. The evidence that it was a new covenant, which was required by the disorders occasioned more especially by the movements of Roger Williams, is perfectly conclusive. And as the very preamble, as well as other *internal* evidence, is so palpably against the idea of its being the *first* Covenant,—it would seem to be most ex-

traordinary, that so important an error of history should have been committed and blindly perpetuated.*

With the doctrines of Arius and Pelagius, of Arminius and Socinus, and with all the prominent objections to the Trinitarian and Calvinistic faith, the first pastors and members of the New England churches were no less, if not more perfectly acquainted, than at the present day are pastors and members of the churches generally, which are built upon the same foundation.—Those early ministers had been educated in the English universities, and had been called to investigate every article of their religious belief,—with every advantage which was needed for a correct judgment.

When in 1648, the ministers of the four Colonies of Plymouth, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Haven, (as the Colonies were then geographically divided and named,) assembled in the Synod at Cambridge, "their learning, their holiness, their purity struck all men that knew them, with admiration. They were Timothies in their houses, Chrysostoms in their pulpits, and Augustines in their disputations." Such was the witness of the venerable John Higginson, of the First Church in Salem, and of William Hubbard of Ipswich, who, at the time they wrote, near the close of the seventeenth century, were the two oldest ministers of New England.

The idea, which some have attempted to disseminate, —that our fathers lived in a dark age, and would not have been what they were in their denominational sentiments, if they had lived at a later period, for example, in our times, has not the least foundation in history or in reason. It might just as well be asserted and argued, that they would have been atheistical transcendentalists or Fourierites, as that, in any essential point, they would have been otherwise than what they were, namely,—avowed

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* See Appendix, C.

and firm believers in the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines!—And it has been stated as a fact, which speaks whole volumes in few words,—that, for one hundred and fifty years, such a wretched creature, such a living monstrosity, as an *infidel*, was not known among their children!

How could they have been otherwise than they were, with their holy reverence for the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament throughout, as the inspired Word of God; as the infallible repository of their faith and the rules of their life in Christ; and as the ultimate appeal in all questions of theology and of morals? The Bible they exalted above all things human. They were "not ashamed of the Gospel," any more than was Paul. They "gloried in the cross." They "sanctified the Lord God in their hearts;" and were "ready always to give an answer to every man that asked a reason of the hope that was in" them, "with meekness and fear,"—*fear of God*, not that "fear of man" which "bringeth a snare." They were *honest*, as every one must admit, who knows anything of them,—and were most *hearty* in all which they professed to believe, in answer to the question,—"What saith the Scripture?"

With special allusion to the early ministers, it was written a century and a half since;—"Indeed the ministers of New England have this to recommend them unto a good regard with the crown of England, that the most flourishing plantation in all the American dominions of that crown, is more owing to *them* than to any sort of men whatever." They well deserved that eulogium. It is almost impossible to estimate their influence upon the world, in an epoch which Merle D'Aubigné has characterized as "one of the most important in modern times, so far as concerns the new developments of nations."

At no time, since the settlement of the country, have the people at large had so much, probably, of direct pas-

toral supervision, as in the first years of the colonies. A number of the churches, though quite small, had in effect two pastors, one of whom, called *Teacher*, had it in charge to discourse of systematic theology, rather than deliver words of "exhortation," upon matters of daily Christian practice. And of more than one, doubtless, it might have been said, as it was of a pastor in the neighborhood of Salem,—that "he was a tree of knowledge laden with fruit, *which the children could reach.*"

By the laws of the Massachusetts Colony, all dwellings must be located within half a mile, or at farthest within a mile, of the place of worship. This was doubtless for mutual defence against the Indians, when almost every man carried his fire-arms to the sanctuary, as well as into the field of his labor; also for the greater convenience of assembling on the Lord's day, and for the weekly lecture of Thursday, which was of hardly less account than the services of the Sabbath. There was thus a more frequent and intimate communion with one another as of the same "household of God," and fellow-citizens of "the commonwealth of Israel." This was a very different mode of living from that of the Southern colonists, upon scattered plantations.

At the first, the greater part of adults, both male and female, were church-members, by profession of hope in Christ, as pardoned and renewed. There were delightful seasons of special awakening in those days; and in some of the churches, as in that of Cambridge, under the ministry of Thomas Shepard, it was expected as a matter of course, that some new cases of conviction, if not of conversion, would be manifest every Sabbath.

So indispensable was family prayer to the order of every dwelling, that you might have visited a hundred or several hundred contiguous families in succession, without finding one, in which the morning and evening sacrifice were not offered. For a long period, exceptions were

extremely few. And would, that in our day, those who offer prayer in the family, in the closet, and in other places, were, in as great a proportion, as strong as were the fathers in the faith of the Abrahamic covenant, and all the promises to God's people!

"Prayer and preaching were the living principle of their institutions; special prayer upon special emergencies, with the confident expectation of direct and specific answers; preaching, the most plain and pungent, enforcing those peculiar doctrines of grace which humble man and exalt God, and which have in every age been made powerful to 'the pulling down of strong holds.' There was much also in the state of their infant settlements to favor the desired results. They were a world within themselves, cut off by their distance and poverty from most of the alluring objects which seize on the hearts of the unconverted in a more advanced state of society. They were all of one faith [in every vital point]; there was none among them to question or deny the necessity of a work of the Spirit; and the minds of their children were prepared, by their early religious training, to bow submissive under the sacred influence. In these circumstances, how natural was it to multiply the means of grace, upon any appearance of increased seriousness; to press with redoubled zeal and frequency to the throne of God in prayer; to urge their children and dependents, with all the fervor of Christian affection, to seize the golden opportunity, and 'make their calling and election sure'; to remove, as far as possible, every obstacle of business or amusement out of the way; and to concentrate the entire interest of their little communities on the one object of the soul's salvation! How natural that these labors and prayers should be blessed of God; that the truth preached under these circumstances should be made, like 'the fire and the hammer, to break in pieces the flinty rock'; that extraordinary effusions of the Holy Spirit should be granted,

and that there should be an 'awakening,' as it was then called, or, in modern language, a REVIVAL OF RELIGION."*

There were some sad departures from a strict and close walk with God; and flagrant instances of breach of church covenant. New England was better far than the Goshen of Egypt, but it was no part of the garden of Eden, from which "God drove out the man," from whom our fathers had their descent. Of the general state of morals, however, in a comprehensive view, we shall probably not be much misled, if we draw our inferences from the witness of an intelligent contemporary, who, with the prejudices of the Church Establishment in the mother country, resided a few years in New England, previous to 1641. According to him, one might spend a year in going from place to place, and not "see a drunkard, or hear an oath, or see a beggar"! †

As the statutes of the Mosaic code were taken as the general laws of the colonists, the Sabbath was begun at sunset on Saturday evening. It was observed also with great strictness, in all domestic arrangements and duties. And it was, as many may not be fully aware, *the strictness of the observance of the Sabbath*, as compared with the practice on the Continent and in Great Britain, from which, more than from any other difference, the *Puritans* first obtained their specific name.

"It was happy for our progenitors," said the late amiable and accomplished Dr. Kirkland, in his discourse delivered at Plymouth, forty-five years since,—"that they brought with them into the wilderness the confidential associates of their domestic labors and domestic cares. Throughout their arduous enterprise, they experienced the inexpressible value of that conjugal friendship, which no change of fortune can weaken or interrupt; in which

* C. A. Goodrich, D. D., in Baird's "Religion in America," p. 197.
† Thomas Lechford.

'tenderness is heightened by distress, and attachment cemented by the tears of sorrow.' The family society began with the civil and ecclesiastical society. Family religion and order began with the family society. To Him who had directed them in a right way for themselves, for their little ones, and for all their substance, 'the saint, the father and the husband' was accustomed to offer in the presence of his household his daily and nightly sacrifices of praise. Regular and beautiful was the church, in which he who ministered, had only to place in order in the building, those materials, which parents had previously framed and adjusted to his house."

I need only allude to the early establishment of free schools, that every child might be taught the elements of what is understood by "popular education";—and for the express purpose, that all might be able to read for themselves the Word of God, and be fortified against the machinations, both of Papacy and Prelacy, in particular, and of all the pretences and allurements of "false apostles" in general. And within ten years after the beginning of the permanent settlements in Massachusetts, the College at Cambridge was established, that "the children of the old men" might not fail of a supply of pastors, who would "feed the flock of God," "with knowledge and understanding." *

It was eminently of divine favor, that so many learned, evangelical, and eloquent ministers arrived in New England before 1640. Some few of them went back at the time of the civil wars, and after the establishment of the Commonwealth, under Cromwell. Such was the change of times, it has been quaintly recorded,—"that instead of *Old England's* driving its best people into New, it was itself turned into New." During the troubles at home, opportunity was given for the progress of the experi-

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* See Appendix, D.

mental institutions of the colonists, to a maturity of consolidation, which could bid defiance, though not without some misgiving of alarm, to the insidious and deadly machinations of the profligate court and the godless hierarchy of Charles II. And from that day to the present, it is undeniable, that the mother country has experienced an incessant and most powerful reaction upon herself, of the principles and the example of the exiled founders of the mighty fabric, which is now the wonder of all nations.

But of the first ministers, who, under the pressure of intolerance, or in despair of the progress of the Reformation in their native island, came to these "foreign parts," and to a pagan and savage wilderness of an extent unknown and unimagined, by far the greater part remained, died among their own people, and were gathered by devout men to their burial, amidst lamentations and gratulations. They displayed a faith in God, as a Rewarder, an energy in view of obstacles, a constancy under discouragements, and a fortitude in suffering, which are beyond all human praise or reward.

And, my brethren, if *we* would inherit the same promises, which sustained them so triumphantly to the last, we shall be slow to forget, that, from the ordinance of Heaven, a New England was originated by self-denial for Christ's supremacy; implicit reliance upon the witness of the Holy Scriptures, to the utter exclusion of all "philosophy and vain deceit;" a well-educated and truly pious ministry, who "shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God;" sound Calvinistic doctrine, fearlessly addressed to the understanding and the conscience; prayer without ceasing, like that at Bethel, at Carmel, and in "the upper room" at Jerusalem; family religion, with a confiding, grateful self-application of the Abrahamic covenant; fraternal or congregational independence of the churches; universal instruction, literary and Chris-

tian; and the remembrance of the Lord's day, according to the Fourth Commandment, in its original import, and as written by the "finger of God," for an everlasting statute and memorial.

It is, as I regard it, a most instructive fact of our early history, that the period during which the "*old* ministers" flourished in New England, was most remarkable for prayer of Puritan fathers and mothers, on both sides of the Atlantic, that all those who were "bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh" might be "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." They deprecated as the direst of curses "a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters." "No greater joy" could they have, than "to see their children walking in the truth." And many were the supplications of the pastors, like that of the venerable Higginson and Hubbard, at the close of the century in which New England began,—"that God would raise up from time to time, those who may be the happy instruments of *bringing down the hearts of the parents into the children!*"

Born of such parents, baptized in real faith, and nurtured for Christ and the church, not for worldly aggrandizement or splendor, a very large number, as would be inferred from the sketches already drawn, became sincere followers of the Son of God, and shone brightly as "lights in the world." "Plain mechanics have I known," says a writer in 1681, "well catechised and humble Christians, excellent in practical piety; they kept their station; did not aspire to be preachers; but for gifts of prayer, few clergymen must come near them."*

Among the children and grand-children of "the fathers," it was not at all difficult to find those, who were as steadfast and efficient, as were Caleb and Joshua, in their co-operation with Moses and Aaron. Situated as they

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* Mather's Magn. Vol. I. 221.

were, in temporal privations and perils;—obliged to submit to every hardship and encounter innumerable obstacles to pecuniary advancement; an immense work to be done in the accomplishment of their purposes and measurable realization of their hopes and their faith,—their circumstances were highly suited to awaken the general mass to no ordinary degrees of physical, religious, and intellectual activity. The indomitable energy of the men of that early period, is vibrating yet in every pulsation of some millions of their resolute and still advancing posterity.

The Fathers held in common with other Puritans, "that all men are by nature destitute of true piety; that they naturally grow up in the practice of sin; and that no one becomes religious, except by a change in his habits of thought, feeling and conduct, which they ascribed to the special operation of the Holy Spirit as its supernatural cause. They believed that the truly pious are ordinarily conscious of this change in the action of their own minds when it takes place, and are able to describe it, though they may not then know that the change of which they are conscious is regeneration. In some cases, they admitted, the man is not aware of any change at the time of his conversion; yet he will be conscious of exercises afterward, such as no unregenerate man ever has. Some may be regenerated in infancy, which it is lawful for us to hope is the case with all who die before they are old enough to profit by the external means of grace. If any of them live to maturity, they will not be able to remember the time of their change, but they will be conscious of sensible love to God and holiness, penitence for sin and other pious exercises, and can give an account of them. They believed, therefore, that every converted person, who has arrived at the age of discretion, has a religious 'experience' which he can tell, and by hearing which, other pious persons may judge

of his piety. The evidence thus afforded, however, was to be compared with his conduct in all the relations of life, and if this also was 'such as becometh saints,' he was to be accounted a pious man."

Further; "a church they held to be 'a company of faithful persons, [so says the Platform of 1648,] i. e., persons who have saving faith, regenerate persons, agreeing and consenting to meet constantly together in one congregation for the public worship of God and their mutual edification; which real agreement and consent they do express by their constant practice in coming together for the worship of God, and by their religious subjection,' that is, by their subjecting themselves voluntarily from religious motives, 'to the ordinances of God therein.'" *

Moreover, it was most obvious, that the Congregational church government could never be administered properly, if all persons who pleased, could obtain admission to the churches. Men of no piety might soon outnumber all others, and the church would become but a name of distinction from the world.

Hence the mode of admission to the New England churches was entirely different from that which then obtained in almost every part of the Christian world. It was expected of all who joined them, to make a voluntary application, and furnish evidence of "fitness for membership."

Thus, in process of time, or about 1650 or 1655, arose a difficulty of a very serious nature. "Throughout Christendom in that age, neither Jews, Turks, pagans, infidels, nor excommunicated persons could enjoy the full privileges of citizenship. These privileges belonged only to persons who were in communion with the churches

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* Religion in America, Book VII. Chap. III. This chapter was furnished for the work, by Rev. Joseph Tracy.

established by law. The same rule was adopted in New England. None but members of churches could hold offices or vote at elections. Here, however, it operated as it did nowhere else. As the churches contained only those who were, in the judgment of charity, regenerate persons, a large portion of the people, among whom were many persons of intelligence, of good moral character, and orthodox in their creed, were excluded from valuable civil privileges."

It is probable, that the greatest dissatisfaction was expressed by those, who had newly arrived in the country, and who were quite different from the original colonists. But there were some of the children of the fathers, who gave no evidence of conversion, and were therefore not entitled to vote, or to hold civil offices. To meet the difficulty and the growing uneasiness, a part of the clergy, in a Synod at Cambridge, 1662, devised what has ever since been known, as the "half-way covenant;"— which, however effectual in quieting the discontent of such as felt aggrieved, was a very serious mistake, and productive of great evil.

Persons who had been baptized in infancy, were to be recognized as members of the church to which their parents belonged; excepting that they were not to be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper, until they should furnish the accredited evidence of personal regeneration. They were to profess their assent to the confession of faith, at some suitable time, after arriving at maturity of understanding. And if they were not scandalous in life, having owned the covenant of the church, they were entitled to bring their children to the ordinance of baptism.

This new system was strenuously resisted by a part of the ministers and of the laity. It never became universal; for the power of the synod, which recommended it, was only advisory. But a great change was effected;

and, in general, the collision between citizenship and church-membership was really at an end.

Not a few in New England were now ready to write "Ichabod" upon all the pillars of the churches. It has been thought, that such a change would have been impossible, during the lives of the most able and influential of the first generation of ministers. These were now nearly all gone, and the residue were just going.

It had become a common remark, it has been said, that the old and tried ministers, and other venerable men, were fast ceasing from the land; and a frequent lamentation anticipated a most disastrous withering of the hopes, which had been watered with their tears, at the feet of their sympathizing Redeemer and Lord. But the "vine out of Egypt" which had been "planted" among "the heathen," was not thus soon to be forsaken by Him, that "dwelleth between the cherubim." Already it had been "caused to take deep root." "The hills were covered with the shadow of it," and "the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars." The "hedges" were not "broken down," that "the boar out of the wood" should "waste it," and "the wild beast of the field devour it."

The predominant influence in all matters, both of State and Church, was decidedly that of the former generation. Troubles multiplied with the Indians, and much more blood was poured out, in wars offensive and defensive. Yet some thousands in the different tribes were brought under the power of the Gospel, and considerable villages were formed from among them, in which churches were built and schools supported. These were at times subjected to terrible slaughter and devastation, by the Pagan Indians; and suffered not a little also, in some instances, at the hands of the whites, who charged the Christian Indians, as being spies or accomplices of those who had taken up the tomahawk, for the extermination of the English.

A league for this end was formed, under the direction of the famous king Philip; and in the struggles which preceded and accompanied it, before his death, "every eleventh family was houseless, and every eleventh soldier had sunk to his grave."

It was just at this period, that the French were moving in Canada, to extend the power of France over all the immense region of the northwest; and to secure the dominion from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, through the great lakes and rivers to the Gulf of Mexico. But of their adventurous explorations, from Montreal to Michigan, and from Michigan to the Mississippi, the New England fathers, it is believed, knew little or nothing.*

So great was the impoverishment of the people, and their distress from Philip's war and divers calamities, that their condition awakened the compassionate sympathy of their relatives and others across the water. It is peculiarly interesting to us at this time to know, that a large donation was sent hither from *Ireland*, in January, 1677. Nathaniel Mather, pastor of a church in Dublin, and brother of Increase Mather, then pastor of the North Church in Boston, is supposed to have been the principal agent in procuring this donation. The amount distributed in Massachusetts was not less than £363; beside what was sent to the other Colonies;—which, with the necessary expenses, would make the whole collection, nearly if not quite *one thousand pounds.* Truly a generous donation in those days, and in proportion to numbers and means, fully equal to what has been considered a magnificent charity,—the relief sent to Ireland in the recent terrible famine!

Before 1680, there is no doubt, that there was a marked deterioration in the manners and morals of the population,

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* They had probably learned, however, some years before this time, that New England is not an "*island.*" See Appendix, E.

as compared with the communities of 1640. This may have been owing in a degree to the reaction of the strict enforcements of the previous generation; but far more, probably, to the irreligious example of immigrants from Europe, and more than all to the fashionable gaiety and licentiousness, which had such fearful ascendency in England, after the restoration of Charles II.; and which the "lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God" in the Colonies, particularly in the larger towns, were not reluctant to imitate. Thus we find the clergy and pious laymen deploring the neglect of baptismal obligations; profanation of God's name; desecration of the Sabbath; want of piety in heads of families; intemperance and lewdness,—temptations to which they could not but see with disgust and abhorrence, in certain indelicate and wanton modes of female dress, which, I may observe, would not be tolerated a day, in the present generation. The godly men also mourned over the dishonesty in traffic and unfaithfulness to promises, and the ambitious worldliness of some individuals, who had removed to a distance from churches, for the sake of more valuable farms or merchandize; forgetting, it was said, that "when Lot left Canaan and the church for better accommodations in Sodom, *God fired him out of all.*"

In May, 1679, a Synod of the churches in the Massachusetts Colony was convened by order of Court, to consider and answer these questions:—1st. What are the reasons that have provoked the Lord to bring his judgments upon New England? 2d. What is to be done that so these evils may be removed?

The consideration of the first question drew forth such intimations of alarming degeneracy, as those just described; while the second question was met, as might have been expected, without any apparent fear of man, whether high or low. The synod enjoin upon all, "who were above others" to "become every way exemplary;"

summoned the people to declare "their adherence to the faith and discipline of their fathers;" insisted upon the importance of guarding against receiving unworthy persons to church communion; urged the necessity of "a full supply of church officers, pastors, teachers and ruling elders," and a competent support of the same; recommended an explicit renewal of covenant in the churches, which implied a season of fasting and humiliation; and suggested other reformatory measures, in the use of which the people might have reason to expect a removal of their calamities.

Very good effects followed the meeting of that synod. The churches generally renewed their covenant. And as it would seem, in order that as far as possible the members might be brought to the same faith and practice, as "the fathers" professed and sanctioned, the original Confession and Covenant of the First Church in Salem, as formed August 6, 1629, were published for general circulation and adoption.

Much abatement must be made from the earnest language, which was employed by some of the good men of that period, in portraying the character of the times. Many circumstances conspired to spread a gloom over every aspect of affairs, both civil and religious. The pious old ministers especially, who remembered the best things of the earlier days, and forgot the worst, would not unnaturally make assertions or accusations, which (like some confessions in prayer) the historian and the reader must not interpret too literally.

The truth was, probably, that with an indisputable falling away in some marked respects, there was yet a large majority of families, in which the memory and example of "the fathers" were cherished with a sincere and sacred veneration. And great as was the quantity of tares which the arch-enemy of all righteousness had sowed among the wheat, by himself or his servants, the wheat was still able

to grow for a harvest of "thirty" and "sixty," if not "an hundred fold."

Whenever, in our own day, "they that fear the Lord, speak often one to another" in the retired private meetings of prayer and conference,—it is an infallible proof, that the Holy Spirit has not been taken away from the surrounding community, and an auspicious token of a blessing to come. From the beginning of the colonial settlements, it had been common to sustain such meetings. At some seasons, these were multiplied or more frequently attended. Not far from 1680, or in the very time when the "degeneracy" from the practices of "the fathers" was so much lamented,—we find the statement of a writer, that "the country still is full of those little meetings." There are those, to whom this single item of history, is like opening a window upon a verdant landscape, where the rains have fallen, and the sun is shining, and the joy of harvest will erelong awaken the song of the reaper. Upon the whole, it may unhesitatingly be affirmed, that, in no part of the Christian world, was there so great encouragement for godly parents to hope for spiritual blessings upon their "children's children."

In the "Magnalia," we have an "ecclesiastical map of the country" for 1696. It affords conclusive witness of great religious advancement. And with good reason did an aged saint of that period remark upon his death-bed,—"Well, I am going to heaven, and I will there tell the faithful, who are long since gone from New England thither, that though they, who gathered our churches are all dead and gone,—the churches are still alive, with as numerous flocks of Christians, as were ever among them."

At this time also, notwithstanding all the obstacles and difficulties, so great had been the success of laborers among the Indians of different tribes, or different portions of the same tribe,—that, in 1696, there were not less than

thirty Indian churches in Massachusetts alone; and in 1698, there were three thousand reputed converts.

But it is painful to be obliged to say,—that there are those, who know little else of the religious history of New England, in the 17th century,—that is, during the eighty years after the Plymouth settlement,—excepting that Roger Williams was banished to Rhode Island; that some, who were called Baptists and Quakers, — very different people from those now so called, — were made to suffer severe penalties of law; and that, in Salem, innocent people were put to death, under accusation of witchcraft.

I would not assume the responsibility of justifying all that was done by "the fathers," in repelling the encroachments of conflicting religious opinions, and in suppressing the movements of disorganizers and fanatics; any more than I should be ready to vindicate the propriety of such executions as those in Salem, in 1692. But I am prepared to say, that the man who cannot find so much of an *apology* for the transactions in question, that he can most freely forgive the mistakes of the few, who were most concerned in them, and most heartily join in a tribute of grateful respect and reverence for those, who are properly styled "the Fathers of New England,"—can hardly be a man, who is entitled to a very high consideration, for his knowledge of the facts, his discrimination of truth, or his candor of judgment. Make the very most that can be made, of alleged intolerance, persecution, and bigotry, it can still be demonstrated, that our New England progenitors were entirely and most honorably in advance of all the rest of Christendom, in their conception of the rights of conscience, and their exemplification of Christian liberty. If they acted inconsistently with their principles, it was from the very necessity of their position. "It was not," as has been justly said, "so much a question of toleration as of the maintenance or defeat of the very de-

sign of their emigration ; they were well assured, that, if the malcontents could succeed in their designs, they themselves would not much longer be allowed their freedom in the worship of God."* It was not for *opinions*, but for corrupt, shameless, disorganizing, and demoralizing *words and deeds*,—that those were caused to suffer, who never deserved the least credit or sympathy, as if Christian martyrs. He that courts martyrdom, is no martyr. Let things be done now in Salem, on the Sabbath, or on other days, like those for which some are falsely said to have been persecuted ;—and not an hour would pass, before the offenders would be in custody.

And it really would seem a little too much for ordinary forbearance, that as honest and pure men as ever breathed, should be opposed and reproached in their own generation, as going a whole age or more, too fast and too far, and then, in generations afterwards, be calumniated and stigmatized, for not going, ages upon ages, farther than they did ;—calumniated and stigmatized by men too, who, if there never had been in the world such characters, as they thus outrageously abuse, would themselves have now been in benighted barbarism or polluted heathenism! Let who will, point the finger of derision at the pious founders of these associated States of the American Republic,—the history of man will be searched in vain for a people, that adopted wiser measures, or secured for their posterity more exalted privileges and means of knowledge and virtue, freedom and happiness! Toleration of religious opinions is one of the last lessons of human advancement. And it is much easier to denounce others, for illiberality and intolerance, than to be examples of true Christian charity. Those who complain the most of their fellow-men, for uncharitableness, are not seldom the greatest offenders, by being so "fierce for moderation."

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* See Appendix, F.

Passing out of the 17th into the 18th century, we soon notice another ecclesiastical innovation, which was the natural sequence of the half-way covenant of 1662. In 1707, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton, a highly influential divine, published a sermon, in which he maintained, that "unregenerate persons ought to partake of the Lord's Supper." He had avowed the belief, three years before, that the Lord's Supper should be considered a means of regeneration. It has been sometimes said, that he himself had had a religious experience, which would make such a belief very plausible, if not, in his own view, unquestionable.

One of his arguments, and plainly a very specious one, was, that "it is impossible to distinguish the regenerate from the unregenerate, so as to admit the former and exclude the latter." So far as his opinions received countenance, the practical effect was, to remove entirely that barrier to indiscriminate communion, which the old half-way covenant had not presumed to touch. And as it has been shrewdly remarked, "the church was now obliged to convict the applicant of a scandalous life, or of heresy, or admit him to full communion; and one reason for it was the supposed impossibility of judging whether he was regenerated or not!"

Mr. Stoddard was personally a decided Calvinist; but his system inevitably favored Arminianism, by "teaching that the impenitent have something to do *before repentance*, as a means of obtaining saving grace." The unregenerate communicant would of course consider himself as in the way appointed for his salvation. And assuming that it was impossible to distinguish the really converted from the unconverted, by any definite experience which could be described, there would naturally be no very great disquietude of conscience.

Mr. Stoddard's new doctrine was ably resisted. Still the influence was disastrous; as appeared from the gradual

adoption of it by churches, which had recognized the system of the half-way covenant. It paralyzed effort for immediate conversion. No awakenings were known in places, which had previously been highly favored; and many partook of the sacramental elements, who "had a name to live, but were dead." And that the disaster was not more extensive and deplorable, is only to be explained by the steadfast adherence of so large a portion of the ministers and church members to "the old paths," and "the good way" in which "the fathers found rest for their souls." There were those in large numbers, who protested against the assertion and assumption, that regenerate persons cannot be distinguished from the unregenerate, with any such certainty or probability, as would make a profession of Christian experience a suitable and just requirement for admission to the full privileges of church-membership.

As God, in the wonderful working of his providence would have it, an instrument of most formidable opposition to the doctrine and system of Stoddard, was raised up in his own grand-son, Jonathan Edwards; who, as the greatest theologian and metaphysician of this continent, commenced his career in the very place, where his much respected grand-parent had proclaimed his unfortunate errors. As early as 1735, a course of sermons on justification by faith, with others on kindred topics, such as the necessity of the Spirit's influences, were blessed of God with a marvellous accompanying of convictions and conversions. A similar awakening or revival was experienced in other towns of Massachusetts and Connecticut. "The work in Northampton was confined to no class or age." "Ten persons above ninety, more than fifty above forty years of age; nearly thirty between ten and fourteen, and one, of only four, became, in the view of Mr. Edwards, subjects of renewing grace. More than three hundred were added to the church."

A tremendous shock was now given to the doctrine, that the exercises of regenerate persons were not distinguishable from those of unregenerate. Several hundreds of new converts, in different towns, had such distinctive religious exercises, that they had not the least hesitation in speaking of them, as matters of fact in their consciousness, as much as any facts whatsoever. They could give a rational and most affecting account of their conviction of sin, their struggle before submission to God, their acceptance of Christ as the Saviour of the lost, and their subsequent trust or hope, peace or joy, as believers in Jesus. Among these were many persons of such acknowledged powers of intellect, and of such indisputable eminence, that no man could class them among the ignorant and the obscure.

Ministers were now called to very solemn searchings of heart, in regard to their own prospects of acceptance at the judgment-seat of Christ. A new encouragement was felt, in preaching the law and the gospel, from the expectation that hearers would be converted, and would be able to exhibit credible evidence of having passed from death unto life. Church members, also, could not all escape the question, so pungently asked by some in our own days, 'What reason have I to think myself a Christian?'

Intelligence of the revival in this country arrested the attention of a multitude in England and Scotland. Edwards wrote a narrative, under the title of "Surprising Conversions,"—which was published in London, "with an Introduction by Drs. Watts and Guise." It was soon reprinted in Boston, and was extensively read, and exerted a powerful influence in both hemispheres.

In 1740, revivals commenced anew at Northampton, Boston, and many other places, very nearly at the same time, and spread within a year and a half throughout all the English colonies. For some time, there was most evidently a silent, powerful, and sublime work of the Spirit

of God. Whitefield came, and preached like Peter on the day of Pentecost. Afterwards, the intemperate zeal of some preachers, like Davenport, with excesses of various kinds, gave occasion to open and violent contention in some towns, and, perhaps, in none more unhappily than in Boston.

Just in the hour of need, the great and good Edwards applied his gigantic powers, in a searching and refining operation, that all who would, might see the difference between the precious and the vile. His work, entitled "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England, and the way in which it ought to be acknowledged and promoted,"—begins and ends, as if his soul had been bathing for years in the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb."

Of the most respectable ministers in New England, New York, and New Jersey, *one hundred and sixty* united in a public attestation to the genuineness and purity of the Revival, in most places; while they joined with Mr. Edwards, in censuring and deploring those improprieties and excesses, which had given the enemies of God much occasion to blaspheme. Among these, I am grateful to know, was my honored father's godly grand-parent,—the Rev. Francis Worcester, who was at the time the pastor of the Second Church, in your neighboring town of Sandwich. An intimate acquaintance, and sometimes a fellow-traveller with Whitefield, he afterwards was a very successful evangelist and home missionary, in the more destitute parts of New England.

Those excellent men could not counteract, as they desired, the untoward effect of the spirit of controversy, which had been inflamed, and which has always proved fatal to the progress of a revival. As the Holy Spirit operates through the truth, as in Jesus, and the truth must be kept distinctly before the mind, that the legiti-

mate effect may be produced,—it is obvious, that whatever serves to divert the attention of the anxious inquirer from the truth itself in its manifestation to the conscience, will inevitably be injurious, if not fatal, to the progress of the work of grace. It is thus, that discussions on the subject of baptism have sometimes put an immediate end to a revival.

Hence, from the controversy which was occasioned, the GREAT AWAKENING appeared, in 1743, to have come to its close. It had wrought, however, a "great salvation:" for "it was the Lord's doing." And well might it be "MARVELLOUS" in the eyes of his people, notwithstanding all which they had seen or heard of human imperfections and extravagances. "Those who had the best means of judging," says a learned and careful writer, "estimated the number of true converts, as proved by their subsequent lives, at 30,000, in New England alone, at a time when the whole population was but 300,000; besides many thousands more among the Presbyterians of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the more southern settlements."

It was, then, as you may see, a result, which you will the more vividly apprehend, if you just consider, that it would be like adding to the churches in Massachusetts, within the next three years,—80,000 persons, young and old,—and of such as would continue to sustain a Christian character; and to the churches throughout the Union, not less than EIGHTEEN HUNDRED THOUSAND!!

The more I reflect upon the subject, the more am I persuaded, that no inconsiderable part of that which makes the true glory of New England, and which to human eye affords the brightest promise of the world's hastening and approaching salvation, would never have had an existence, but for those marvellous years of the right hand of the Most High.

I do not wonder that Edwards was led to believe, that

the millennium was to begin in New England. Most cordially did he respond to the proposal by the churches of Scotland, in 1746, for a Concert of Prayer for the Conversion of the World. And after being dismissed from Northampton, it was in the true spirit of missions, that he took charge of a church and school of Indians, at Stockbridge.

There were of old mighty men and men of renown. But who among "the fathers" was equal to him? And where now is his equal? His work on "Original Sin," his unanswerable Treatise on the "Will," his "History of Redemption," his analysis of the "Affections," are theological classics, of priceless value, and their influence is incalculable. David Brainerd, the most illustrious missionary in those times of extraordinary reviving, has never had his superior upon the earth, in all the essential qualities of an ambassador for God in Christ's stead. The wonders of divine grace were nowhere more wonderful, in all the wide extent of the memorable visitation of God's covenant love, than among the Indian tribes to whom he ministered in New Jersey. To pray for the conversion of the whole world, in the concert of prayer recommended the year previous by the churches of Scotland, was, in 1747, the farewell injunction of that lamented man of God, when he fell asleep in Jesus. And who can tell how many, less known by their memoirs, or by any other witness, than Henry Martyn and Robert Murray McCheyne, have been awakened or stimulated to a holier devotedness, by the refulgent and inextinguishable lustre of David Brainerd's example in imitation of Christ!

Much of missionary spirit was enkindled in the Revival of 1740. Hence the Indian school of Rev. Eleazer Wheelock, at Lebanon, Conn.; designed to educate preachers to the Indians. Hence other efforts which

cannot be specified. And if the French war and the Revolutionary war had not so soon followed, and so occupied all classes, very much more would undoubtedly have been attempted and accomplished. Nothing can be plainer, to my own view, than that the churches and people of New England grew and prospered, according as they enjoyed revivals of religion; and that in proportion as the *spirituality* of the churches was advanced or retarded, the active interest in missionary toils and sacrifices was evinced or suspended.

In 1745, Whitefield preached at Boston before the New England army,—I had almost called them "a sacramental host,"—which was just embarking for Louisburg, under command of Sir William Pepperell. The expedition was undertaken as in "a war of the Lord," against the "man of sin," and the power of mystical "Babylon." For wherever France prevailed, there Romanism and Jesuitism followed,—the Romanism and Jesuitism of the bloody night of Saint Bartholomew's. Unnumbered prayers, therefore, went up to the "Lord of Sabaoth." The triumph was as when Jerusalem had deliverance from Rabshakeh, and Sennacherib:—or as when the Maccabees returned to the holy city, after the overthrow of the legions of the ferocious Antiochus of Syria, who had sworn to exterminate the worshippers of Jehovah from every foot of soil in the land of promise.

From the capture of Louisburg to the fall of Quebec,—thence to the Peace of 1783,—and thence to 1795, when the volcano of the first French Revolution sent its lurid glare and desolating lava over the civilized world,—the Christian people of New England and of all the Colonies, for more than half of the whole period, had no rest from the alarms of war. Their patriotism was one with their piety. Tens of thousands went forth to battle, or suffered privations and hardships, with as pure a prin-

ciple of duty, and as firm a reliance upon the mighty God of Jacob, as ever emboldened and sustained those Hebrew worthies, "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens!"

There were earthly and ungodly elements that mingled in the strife. But if it had not been for the *religious* element; if it had not been for the baptism, into which the "children's children" had been baptized,—never, never, could the materials have been furnished for such volumes of history,—never have been known such unexampled occasion for the gratitude of posterity and the world, to them and to their fathers, and to their own and their fathers' God.

It would not be difficult to draw a portraiture, with some dark lines and shadows. Influences of evil, both in opinion and practice, were powerfully at work, in secret and in open day. Perhaps none were more decisive upon a part of the clergy, than the imported publications of Whitby, Taylor and Emlyn. The Socinian "Inquiries" of the latter were reprinted in Boston, without any responsible editor;—but not without a strong surmise of the real patron, in an eloquent minister of the city. But with all that was sadly incompatible with the "free course" of the gospel; with all that was positively demoralizing;—the foundations of the "fathers" remained, as unmoved as the everlasting hills.

Although in the metropolis and some of the interior towns, there was more of Arminius than of Calvin, both in the study and in the pulpit, if not also as much of Arius as of Arminius, or as much of Socinus and Taylor as of Edwards and Athanasius; yet a vast majority of the New England churches would not endure any other than

"sound doctrine" as they understood it, and would not support any other than liberally educated and strictly evangelical pastors. The theological system of the elder Edwards had most able advocates. His own son, a greater reasoner with somewhat less of the native power of reason than the father, vindicated New England divinity with amazing force of moral demonstration. There were others, like Bellamy, Smalley, Backus, West, Hopkins, Emmons, who were as the cedars of Lebanon to the trees of the field.

During the period from 1745 to 1795, the state of religion, according to the standard of the fathers, was, perhaps, nowhere more unpromising, than in the easterly part of Massachusetts, and within the limits of a great portion of the oldest churches. It may be accounted for, by the more immediate and frequent intercourse with foreigners, who had but little favor for experimental godliness; by the encouragement which a few distinguished names afforded to the open opposers of the "New Lights," as some chose to designate the friends of the "Great Awakening;" and by an ambiguous and indefinite mode of preaching, which naturally resulted from a real, but generally covert, hostility to the Trinitarian and Calvinistic forms of belief. There was no revival of any note, in any of the Congregational churches of the city of Boston, from the period of the revival of 1740, almost to our own day. With very inconsiderable exceptions, the same remark may be made of Salem, and other towns on the seacoast.

It was far otherwise in many places. There was not by any means such an apparent suspension of divine influence in reviving and enlarging the churches of New England, as has sometimes been represented. In the fifty years previous to the remarkable season of "refreshing," at the close of the last century, there were numerous insulated revivals,—as has been abundantly attested by re-

cent investigations; and also some that were contiguous or nearly associated, throughout all that period. There were no magazines or religious newspapers to report them; and hence mainly the mistake of some, who have supposed that there were few or none to report. Besides, many of the revivals were in towns which had but little communication with the capital.

When, however, the eyes of the Christian world were turned with consternation to the atheistical revolution in France, the pious people of this country, and nowhere more than in New England, gave themselves to prayer. There was also a new searching of the Scriptures, that, if possible, it might be known what God was about to reveal in his providence. From a concurrence or combination of causes, which cannot now be particularly described, the delightful tokens of a brighter day cheered the anxious and quivering hearts of the faithful in Christ Jesus. Revivals began to increase in number and in power. And soon it seemed as if the years of the former generation were again to pass over the land.

From 1797 and onward, so many revivals were enjoyed in the churches, that an eminent minister in Connecticut, as he stood at his door, could count upwards of seventy contiguous congregations, which all had participated in the outpouring from the gracious presence of the Lord. In different parts of New England, there were hundreds of ministers, whose hearts were gladdened by this great "refreshing." Some of them had personal recollections of the awakening of 1740, with which they gratefully compared the present auspicious visitation. Many had previously had, in some instances, a rich experience from Him, who "giveth the increase." Some, who were in the vigor of manhood, had seen the promise of the Spirit, like "the small rain upon the tender herb," but never before as a "mighty rushing wind." Others knew of revivals chiefly from records, which were fast growing old, and

going to decay. But when it is remembered, that there were so many churches ready for the wondrous ministration of the Spirit, and so many pastors qualified to act as co-workers with "the Lord of the harvest," he who writes the history of the Puritan Pilgrims of New England and their "children's children," may have ample evidence if he will but find it, that, in the fifty or more years previous to the close of the eighteenth century, by far the larger part of churches and ministers were of one mind and spirit with the "fathers," in their doctrinal and practical religion.

In the midst of those revivals near the close of the eighteenth century, the missionary spirit, as a legitimate consequence, received a new impulse. Evangelical Christians, across the Atlantic, had sent missionaries to India, Africa, and the islands of the South Pacific. Intelligence of their operations was hailed in New England with a lively gratitude. It is not strange that none went forth from our churches, to other continents or to the distant islands that were waiting for God's law. There was a loud call for more service at home, than could be rendered. The emigration to the wilderness of Maine, to Middle and Western New York, to Ohio, and to other parts of the Mississippi Valley, urged a powerful claim upon the benevolent sympathies of those who remained at home, fast by the old foundations. With many the thought was too painful for endurance, that the new settlements should be formed without the institutions of the gospel, and a competent supply of the means of grace.

Hence arose such societies, as the Connecticut Missionary Society, and the Massachusetts Missionary Society. This latter society was not at the beginning, nor for twenty years afterwards, what it now is, a *domestic* or *home* missionary society, but was organized upon the broad basis of a *foreign* missionary association. "*The object of this society*," says the constitution, adopted May,

1799, "*is to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel among the heathens, as well as other people in the remote parts of our country, where Christ is seldom or never preached.*"

"*Where Christ is seldom or never preached?*" inquired the Rev. Joshua Spaulding, then pastor of the Tabernacle Church: "if that is your object, you should send missionaries to *Boston!*" For two or three years, he had been urging his ministerial and lay brethren to form a society for missions at their very doors, as within the limits of Marblehead, at Boston, and in other places, where, as he believed, "CHRIST was seldom or never preached," as hundreds needed to hear!

It is remarkable, that his idea of *city missions* has now been adopted, with great interest and effect. But the Massachusetts Missionary Society, which owed its origin as much or more to him, than to any other single individual, could never have been formed, but with the distinct contemplation of a much more extended circumference for a field of labor.

The first address of the society breathes the genuine spirit of the charge from Mount Olivet. Recognizing "the glorious gospel of Christ as the adequate and only medium of recovering lost sinners to God and happiness," and responding to "the grand commission which Christ gave to his primitive disciples," the address "entreats" all "Christian brethren, in view of their immense indebtedness to redeeming grace, their solemn covenant vows, their accountability and their hopes, to cast the eye of attentive observation upon the condition of thousands and millions of our guilty race, in other countries and in our own, particularly among the heathen tribes, and on the frontiers of the United States, forming a vast line of new settlements, peculiarly embarrassed with respect to their religious interests and local circumstances; and ask whether, when their danger is so great, when their spiritual wants are so urgent, when there is so much zeal on

the part of wickedness, infidelity and atheism, counteracting the gospel—there be not reason to put forth every exertion for the spread of that precious gospel, which is the grand charter of our eternal inheritance."

The society was thus brought into the closest affinity and fellowship with others in Great Britain, like the Society for the Propagation of Christian knowledge in Scotland,—under the auspices of which the missionaries Sergeant and Kirkland were laboring among the Indian tribes in Western Massachusetts and New York; and part of which were then as far from Boston, as are now the tribes west of the Mississippi. If the means could have been procured, establishments precisely similar to those now sustained by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, might have been organized and cherished, in the strictest accordance with the purpose of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. And the simple fact is, that it was not until long after the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was formed, that this society and others, which are now purely *home* societies, were understood to be such, in the present acceptation of the term. By a missionary society, was meant an association to spread the gospel through all the world, by preaching it in any accessible region or place, where "CHRIST is seldom or never preached." And the Massachusetts Missionary Society, was a society of *Massachusetts missionary men;* not a missionary society *for* Massachusetts!

In June, 1803, appeared the first number of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine,—in which there is the same foreign missionary spirit and general character, as you now see in the Missionary Herald. But what a change in forty-five years! If any one would see an amazing contrast, and the thrilling demonstration of an immense progress in the enterprise of the world's evangelization, let him read some of the last numbers of the

Herald of the American Board, and some of the first of the Magazine of the Massachusetts Missionary Society.

And let him compare also the Massachusetts Missionary Society, in 1800, with its two or three missionaries, a part of the year, with the present American Home Missionary Society, with its more than one thousand missionaries from the Aroostook to Oregon and California!

So rapidly did the missionary spirit advance, after intelligence of foreign and domestic operations was brought before the churches, that in 1804, the constitution of the society was modified, so that the article defining the object was made to read;—"The object of the society is, to diffuse the gospel among the people of the newly settled and remote parts of our country, among the Indians of the country, and *through more distant regions of the earth*, as circumstances shall invite, and the ability of the society shall admit." And if the men could have been had, and the money could have been obtained, missionaries could have been sent by the Massachusetts Missionary Society to Bombay, Ceylon, or the Sandwich Islands, just as *constitutionally* as they were afterwards sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

This great organization came into form and life, in the year 1810. It was necessary to unite the friends of missions in all the land, and under the sign and seal of an *American*, rather than a *State* designation, to solicit contributions from all the churches of the Union, with express reference to missions in Asia, and among the far-distant Gentiles of other parts of the known world. Other Societies followed, one after another, as the eyes of God's people were opened and enlightened.

The first missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, were from the Theological Seminary at Andover,—an institution which owed its

origin, chiefly, to the alarm which was felt, after the successor of Dr. Tappan was appointed at Harvard. The oldest and most venerable college of the land,—which was so early and so piously dedicated to "Christ and the Church,"—had received a Professor of Theology, who taught a very different mode of doctrine from that of the "fathers." Yet it has been said by those who ought to be acknowledged as indisputable authority, that if at that time he had avowed himself to be what he undoubtedly was, and what afterwards he freely admitted, he could not have been chosen to be the incumbent of a chair, which, by the express provision of the pious Hollis, was never to be filled, but by a man "*of sound or orthodox principles*"! What was meant by such principles, there is no more reason to doubt, than there is to deny that there ever was any such man as Hollis. The purpose of his donation should be sacredly regarded; or the trust should be relinquished.

Far be it from me to speak invidiously or any wise reproachfully. It is but sober, candid history that I would write of the past. But the truth, once denied with no ordinary vehemence if not virulence, is now fully conceded, viz:—that in all but one of the Congregational churches in Boston, and in perhaps fifty others elsewhere, there was a *concealment* of the real sentiments of the pastors. It was not until 1815, and after a most exciting controversy, that *that* "*concealment*," which had been so vigilantly and sagaciously maintained, for nearly or quite a whole generation, was no longer possible. And it certainly is a consideration, of some historical interest, if not theological importance, that the same mode of religious doctrine which was thus introduced and fostered in New England, had a similar introduction and development in Old England, in Scotland, in Holland, in Switzerland, and in Germany.

More than thirty years have now passed, since what

those most interested prefer to call "Liberal Christianity" has been openly and eloquently defended in this country. Talents, wealth, literature, refinement, with other powerful auxiliaries, have not been wanting. And now what is the prospect, that in any of its modes or forms, it will ever supplant the faith of the "fathers" among the "children's children"? And if this will not supplant that faith, what form of doctrine will?

According to returns and estimates,* a few years since, there were in the United States, nearly fifty thousand churches, Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist. But according to the best authorities, the whole number of Unitarian churches or congregations,† throughout the country, at the present time, is about two hundred and forty! Three-fifths of these are in Massachusetts alone; and quite a proportion of them are very small. Not one half of the number were gathered and organized, as Unitarian. *Ninety* of them exist within the limits of the old evangelical organizations.

Of more than seven hundred Congregational churches in Massachusetts, at the present time, nearly five hundred and fifty are *orthodox*. And of these, full two hundred and twenty-five have been *gathered* within the last twenty-five years! The number of other Congregational churches has, in the same period, remained nearly *stationary!* And the proportion of communicants in the orthodox Congregational churches, is very much greater; being, at a moderate calculation, as ten to one!

In general, also, the efficiency of the evangelical Congregational churches has been vastly augmented. It is as yet susceptible of a ten fold, if not a hundred fold augmentation. Upon all the great points of doctrinal dispute, there is a feeling that the work of public controversy is finished. We have a far more congenial work to do,—

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* Baird's Religion in America. † Unitarian Almanac, &c.

in carrying forward the numerous enterprises of true evangelical charity.

There is no antidote to error, like the truth as in Jesus, when it comes upon the conscience, in demonstration of the Spirit. Hence there is no available power, like a genuine revival, to give the advantage and the victory to the friends of the Saviour. Most abundant and most striking has been the witness of this, in the progress which evangelical religion has made in our Commonwealth, within twenty-five years.

Look at Boston, and see what it is, as compared with what it was forty and thirty years since. Look over all New England, and see what mode of religious sentiment has the sway over the masses. Make the most that you can out of all the various sects and names, which are antagonistical to the faith, or at variance with the ecclesiastical order of *the founders* of New England. You will find a most decided preponderance of the intellectual and the moral strength of their descendants, where they would wish, above all things, that it should be ;—upholding and advancing the institutions of "the glorious gospel," and "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

An hour more would scarcely suffice, that I should only name our largest associations of Christian philanthropy,—which every day are adding new gems or a brighter effulgence to the "crown" of the rejoicing of "the fathers," at the coming of the Lord.

And, my brethren, as we now look back upon the past, and around upon the present, how can we despair of the Religion of the "fathers?" Can we with such seminaries of learning and theology,—more than forty of the latter existing, where we had but one, forty years ago; with such increasing advantages of popular education; with such an immense distribution of the Bible and of books illustrative of the Bible; with so many thousand

evangelical churches, and so many hundred thousand children, taught the "words" which are "spirit and life,"—every Sabbath day? What Religion, what Doctrine is it, which more than twenty-five thousand ministers are preaching in the thirty States of this Union? Radically and essentially the Religion of faith in the atoning blood of an All-sufficient, because Almighty Redeemer; and the Doctrine, that "*God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"

I have no time to enlarge. My limits are more than occupied already. But from the review now presented of our New England history, you will not, I trust, think of me, as uttering more than the words of truth and soberness, when I proclaim the sentiment, that of all people in the world, we are under the highest obligations to support munificently, and communicate to the ends of the earth, the knowledge and the institutions of the "everlasting gospel."

The period during which our country has so amazingly developed our resources of every description, most needful and important, for the sustenance, protection, and exaltation of a more intelligent, more benevolent, more powerful, because more *Christian* people, than has ever existed,—has been the period since the great battle of Waterloo. Peace has blessed our land, and so far other nations also, that a vastly greater proportion of well-educated or of aspiring mind, than ever before, since the world began, has been employed in devising ways and means, by which labor shall have the largest ratio of product with the least amount of physical or mental exhaustion; and by which all the powers of nature shall be constrained to pay their richest and noblest tribute to him, who was "made" but "a little lower than the angels"; and thus the world receive the fullest demon-

stration, that he who fell with "the first man," rises by "the second" — "the Lord from heaven,"—higher and higher in the original dignity and grandeur of his immortal nature,—recovering and re-assuming one measure after another of his lost dominion over the whole inferior creation.

When before were such opportunities, facilities, and incitements to mental and moral activity, afforded to so large a number, as now constitute the substantial and reliable portions of our community? Since Europe has been brought within less than twelve days from our greatest cities; and the magnetic telegraph outstrips the sun, by thousands of miles per hour,—what next may we not expect to see, among the merely "*incidental benefits*," as they were termed by Robert Hall,—"which Christianity scatters along her way in her sublime march to immortality?" What a spectacle are we now as a nation? And what is yet to be?

When Calvin was dying, he reached his emaciated hand towards an open Bible;—"*there* is the safety of the Church and the State!" So felt the "fathers" of New England, to their inmost soul. In the Bible—Old Testament and New—one and inseparable,—they found the Rock of Ages. They lived and they died, triumphantly "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Let *us*, therefore, as their children's children, cherish like precious faith; and with them give God the glory of all that we have, and all that we hope. Let us send the gospel to the farthest bounds of the globe. It is the greatest gift, which man can impart to his brother man.

It is God's appointed method for the intellectual, moral, civil, and political regeneration of all the various nations and tribes of the earth; as well as for the personal salvation of each individual, whatever his honor or dishonor, his wealth or poverty, his virtue or his corruption, his enjoyment or his wretchedness.

In fulfilling the grand commission of our ascending Saviour and Lord, we would begin at our own Jerusalem. We would remember those who are like sheep in the wilderness, without a shepherd; and as we the more remember *them*, would still the less forget the famishing and the perishing upon the dark mountains of far-distant idolatries and cruel sorrows. We would publish the adorable name of Jesus to every creature. And that the children who will take our places may have our exalted and priceless privileges unimpaired; that those thousands, those millions who are following "the star of empire" westward to the Pacific shores, may never lose sight of the "Bright and Morning Star"; that the mighty people that now are, and all that may arise from them, or be added to them, may be mightier far in the eyes of all the world, and in the sight of the Supreme Lawgiver and the Judge of all, be "a wise and understanding people";—may we all most gratefully honor the memory of our fathers, and with the same love of Christ and of souls, the same faith and hope, may we enter into their labors. And the greater the number, the unanimity, the energy, and the unfaltering resolution and perseverance of those who thus enter into their labors,—the greater is the moral certainty, that, for all ages to come, the Scripture will here have a most magnificent and sublime witness,—that "CHILDREN'S CHILDREN ARE THE CROWN OF OLD MEN, AND THE GLORY OF CHILDREN ARE THEIR FATHERS"!

APPENDIX.

A. [p. 9.]

The Pilgrims, before they landed, made a civil compact, as follows:

"In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are vnder-written, the loyall Subiects of our dread soveraigne Lord King IAMES, by the grace of God of Great *Britaine*, *Francc*, and *Ireland* King, Defender of the Faith, &c.

"Having vnder-taken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian Faith, and honour of our King and Countrey, a Voyage to plant the first Colony in the Northerne parts of VIRGINIA, doe by these presents solemnly & mutually in the presence of *God* and one of another, covenant, and combine our selues together into a civill body politike, for our better ordering and preservation, and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame such iust and equall Lawes, Ordinances, acts, constitutions, offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the generall good of the Colony; vnto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witnesse whereof we haue here-vnder subscribed our names. *Cape Cod*, 11th of *November*, in the yeare of the raigne of our sovraigne Lord King IAMES, of *England*, *France*, and *Ireland*, 18. and of *Scotland* 54. *Anno Domino* 1620."

"The elder President Adams," says Dr. Pierce in his recent Election Sermon, "was in the habit of referring to this compact, as the germ of our republican institutions."

It does not appear, that the Pilgrims had any very definite idea of the manner in which they should attempt to manage civil affairs, until they were on the very point of disembarking.

"This day before we came to harbour, obseruing some not well affected to vnitie and concord, but gaue some appearance of faction, it was thought good there should be an association and agreement, that we should combine together in one body, and to submit to such government and governours, as we should by common consent agree to make and choose, and set our hands to this that followes word for word."

But in their ecclesiastical action, as church-members upon the basis of equality and fraternity, and in their "Town-Meetings," we cannot fail to recognize what Mr. Bancroft has called "the seminal principles of republican freedom and national independence." If, however, they had found the river Hudson, for which they had searched, they would have been so near the limits of the Virginia Company, that they might not have formed the Compact, "which," as Dr. Cheever justly remarks in his recent work,—"whatever may have been their original intention or foresight, constituted them a self-governing republic, although named 'loyal subjects of our dread sovereign lord, King James.'"

Yet it is to be remembered, that the real purpose of the founders of our civil and political institutions was *religious*, in the strictest sense of the term. This is indicated by the first words of the above Compact. Elsewhere the witness is most explicit. The reasons for leaving Holland are "recited," says Morton's Memorial, "as received from themselves."

"First, Because themselves were of a different Language from the *Dutch*, where they Lived, and were settled in their way, insomuch that in ten years time, whilst their Church sojourned amongst them, they could not bring them to reform the neglect of Observation of the Lord's Day as a Sabbath, or any other thing amiss amongst them.

"Secondly, Because their Countrymen, who came over to joyn with them, by reason of the hardness of the Country, soon spent their Estates, and were then forced either to return back to *England*, or to live very meanly.

"Thirdly, That many of their Children, through the extream necessity that was upon them, altho' of the best dispositions, and graciously inclined, and willing to bear part of their Parents burthens, were oftentimes so oppressed with their heavy labours, that although their Spirits were free and willing, yet their Bodies bowed under the weight of the same, and became decrepid in their early youth, and the vigour of Nature consumed in the very bud. And that which was very lamentable, and of all sorrows most heavy to be born, was, that many by these occasions, and the great licentiousness of Youth in that Country, and the manifold temptations of the place, were drawn away by evil examples into extravagant and dangerous courses, getting the reins on their necks, and departing from their Parents: Some became Souldiers, others took upon them far Voyages by Sea, and othersome worse courses tending to dissoluteness, and the destruction of their Souls, to the great grief of their Parents, and the dishonour of God; and that the place being of great licentiousness and liberty to Children, they could not educate them, nor could they give them due correction without reproof or reproach from their Neighbours.

"Fourthly, That their Posterity would in few generations become *Dutch* and so lose their interest in the *English* Nation; they being desirous rather to enlarge His Majesties Dominions, and to live under their Natural PRINCE.

"Fifthly and lastly, and which was not the least, a great hope and inward Zeal they had of laying some good Foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagating and advancement of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the World, yea, altho' they should be but as stepping stones unto others for the performance of so great a Work."

In the Preamble of the Articles of Confederation, in 1643, it is said: "Whereas we all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely, to advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to enjoy the liberties of the Gospel in purity with peace," &c.—*Winthrop's Journal.*

B. [p. 11.]

For illustrations of these statements, see Baird's "Religion in America," "Synopsis of Missions," Morse and Parish's History of New England, Thomas Robbins's "New England Fathers," &c. &c. But the subject demands more attention, than it has ever received.

C. [p. 14.]

The Records of the First Church, previous to 1660, are supposed to be lost. 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.

"1. 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."

The other articles are the same, as commonly published in what has erroneously been said, so many times, to be "doubtless the first Church Covenant ever drawn in America."

In a printed Tract, without date, but undoubtedly issued in the year 1680, we have the "Confession of Faith" with a form of "Covenant," "for substance," as adopted 6th of August, 1629. The expression "*for substance*" implies, of course, that the original was neither less in quantity, nor different in quality. The Tract may be found in the Boston Athenæum, B. 76, Sermons. It is entitled,

"A Direction for a public profession in the Church Assembly, after private examination by the elders. Which direction is taken out of the Scripture, and points unto that faith and covenant contained in the Scripture. Being the same for substance which was propounded to and agreed upon by the Church of Salem, at their begining, the *sixth of the sixth month*, 1629."

"THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

"I do believe with my heart and confess with my mouth.

"*Concerning God.*—That there is but one only true God in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, each of them God, and all of them one and the same Infinite, Eternal God, most Holy, Just, Merciful and Blessed forever.

"*Concerning the works of God.*—That this God is the Maker, Preserver and Governor of all things according to the counsel of his own will, and that God made man in his own Image, in Knowledge, Holiness and Righteousness.

"*Concerning the fall of Man.*—That Adam by transgressing the command of God, fell from God and brought himself and his posterity into a state of sin and death, under the wrath and curse of God, which I do believe to be my own condition by nature as well as any other.

"*Concerning Jesus Christ.*—That God sent his Son into the world, who for our sakes became man, that he might redeem us and save us by his obedience unto death, and that he arose from the dead, ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, from whence he shall come to judge the world.

"*Concerning the Holy Ghost.*—That God the Holy Ghost hath fully revealed the doctrine of Christ and the will of God in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which are the word of God, the perfect, perpetual, and only rule of our Faith and obedience.

"*Concerning the benefits we have by Christ.*—That the same Spirit by working faith in God's Elect, applyeth unto them Christ with all his benefits of justification and sanctification unto salvation, in the use of those ordinances which God hath appointed in his written word, which therefore ought to be observed by us unto the coming of Christ.

"*Concerning the Church of Christ.*—That all true believers being committed unto Christ as the head, make up one Mistical Church, which is the body of Christ, the members whereof, having fellowship with the Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost by faith, and one with another in love, do receive here upon earth forgiveness of sins, with the life of grace, and at the resurrection of the body they shall receive everlasting life.

"THE COVENANT.

"I do heartily take and avouch this one God who is made known to us in the Scripture, by the name of God the Father, and God the Son even Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Ghost, to be my God, according to the tenour of the Covenant of Grace; wherein he hath promised to be a God to the faithful and their seed after them in their generations, and taketh them to be his people, and therefore unfeignedly repenting of all my sins, I do give up myself wholly to this God, to believe in, to love, serve, and obey him sincerely and faithfully, according to his written word, against all the temptations of the devil, the world, and my own flesh, and this unto the death.

"I do also consent to be a member of this particular Church, promising to continue steadfastly in fellowship with it, in the public worship of God, to submit to the Order, Discipline, and Goverment of Christ in it, and to the ministerial teaching, guidance and oversight of the Elders of it, and to the brotherly watch of the Fellow-Members; and all this according to God's word and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, enabling me thereunto. AMEN."

D. [p. 19.]

"After God had carried us safe to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government,—one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance Learning, and perpetuate it to posterity—dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches, when our present ministers shall lie in the dust.

"And as we were thinking and consulting how to effect this great work, it pleased God to stir up the heart of one Mr. Harvard, a godly gentleman and a lover of learning, there living amongst us, to give the one-half of his estate, it being in all about £1,700, towards the erecting of a College, and all his Library. After him another gave £300; others after them cast in more; and the public hand of the State added the rest."—*New England's First Fruits.—Young's Chronicles of Massachusetts.* p. 551. NOTE.

Free schools had been previously established in Holland. In New England they began in the Church. The first free school, *as a civil institution*, is believed to have been in Salem.

E. [p. 26.]

Robert Cushman, in his "Epistle Dedicatory" of his Sermon preached at Plymouth, in 1621, gives some geographical account of New England. He speaks of it as 'being Champion ground, but no high mountains, &c.; full of Rivers and Sweet Springs, as *England* is. But principally, so far as we can yet find, it is an island, and near about the quantity of *England*, being cut out from the main Land in *America*, as *England* is from the main of *Europe*, by a great arm of the Sea, which entereth in forty Degrees, and runneth up North West and by West, and goeth out either into the South-Sea, or else into the Bay of *Canada*. The certainty whereof, and secrets of which, we have not yet so found as that as eye-witnesses we can make narration thereof, but if God give time and means, we shall, ere long, discover both the extent of that River, together with the secrets thereof; and so try what Territories, Habitation, or Commodities, may be found, either in it, or about it.'

F. [p. 31.]

As it regards the difficulties with Roger Williams, and his true character, the reader is referred to several very able articles in the "Christian Observatory." The Editor has investigated the whole subject, in the most thorough manner. See also Dr. Cheever's "Journal of the Pilgrims," &c. Chap. XVIII. "Our fathers," says Mr. McClure, "turned Mr. Williams

out of doors, because he was tearing their house to pieces. For performing this necessary act of self-preservation, we leave them to be vindicated by John Quincy Adams, that foe of bigotry, and firm friend of civil and religious liberty. In a discourse published by him some six years since, after a candid statement of the facts, he asks: 'Can we blame the founders of the Massachusetts Colony for banishing him from within their jurisdiction? In the annals of religious persecution, is there to be found a martyr more gently dealt with by those against whom he began the war of intolerance? whose authority he persisted, even after professions of penitence and submission, in defying, till deserted even by the wife of his bosom? and whose utmost severity of punishment upon him was only an order for his removal as a *nuisance* from among them?'" * * "Williams's colony was obliged to procure the help of Massachusetts in banishing the fanatical Gorton and his outlaws; obtaining an illegal extension, over their own territory, of the very laws by which Williams was then excluded from Massachusetts. This hard necessity of theirs, may amply excuse the like necessity on the part of 'the people of the Bay.'"

If any one will read Morton's account of the dismission of Roger Williams from the Church of Plymouth, and of the subsequent proceedings at Salem and Boston, it will be seen, that the same view was taken of him in both colonies. The Church "consented" to his dismission, "through the prudent counsel of Mr. Brewster, (the Ruling Elder there,) fearing that his continuance amongst them might cause divisions, and there being many able men in the Bay, *they would better deal with him than themselves could*, and foreseeing (what he feared concerning Mr. *Williams*, which afterwards came to pass) that he would run the same course of rigid separation and Anabaptistry, which Mr. *John Smith*, the Sebaptist at *Amsterdam* had done," &c.

Roger Williams was not banished for being a Baptist. He NEVER WAS A BAPTIST *in Massachusetts*, and but "*for three months*" in Rhode Island.

In respect to the "intolerance" attributed to "the fathers," Dr. Cheever's remarks concerning the "Brownes" at Salem, are much to the purpose. Take, for example, a single paragraph.

"'I will be tolerant of every thing else,' said Mr. Coleridge, 'but every other man's intolerance.' Now here it was plainly the intolerance of others, not their religion, of which Governor Endicott would not be tolerant. And in this thing he and the colonists were evidently guided by Infinite Wisdom. For, if the churchmen had been permitted to go on, there would have been an end to this sanctuary of freedom in the wilderness. There would have been no New England in existence, in the history of which there should be scope for a sneer at the piety, or the freedom, or the superstition of its founders. Their *not* being suffered to go on, is the reason why they, and all other sects, even Bunyan's Giant Grim, with his nails pared, are here in quiet now. God, in his gracious divine providence, would not suffer any others than the persecuted Puritanic Dissenters to get footing here, until both in the Old World and the New, the great lesson of religious liberty had been more fully taught and understood. He had much light yet for Cromwell and the Independents of England to pour upon this question. The sneers at the course of our Pilgrim Fathers are sneers against the providence of God and the freedom of man."

It was "in the Bay," that the innovating spirits were disposed to settle. The attractions to emigrants were very few at Plymouth. In ten years the Colony had but three hundred souls. And although it has sometimes been intimated, that the Church there was much more tolerant than the Churches "in the Bay," there really is no valid proof, as yet furnished, that there was any difference in *principle*, or prevailing opinions. And if there be any *appearance* in favor of Plymouth, it is at once explained by a difference of the circumstances; or the operation of such causes as make some men more "prudent" than others, and not unwilling to evade personal responsibility, instead of acting with decision and firmness.