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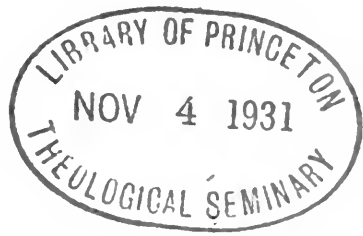
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Sam. C. Bartlett,



With sincere affection,

S. Worcester



THE

✓
LIFE AND LABORS

OF
✓

REV. SAMUEL WORCESTER, D. D.

FORMER PASTOR OF THE TABERNACLE CHURCH, SALEM, MASS.

BY HIS SON,

✓
SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, D. D.

PRESENT PASTOR OF THE TABERNACLE CHURCH.

VOL. I.

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TO MY MOTHER,

WITH GRATITUDE TO GOD,

• FOR HER MANY VIRTUES,

AND HER "LENGTH OF DAYS;"

THIS MEMORIAL OF AN ENDEARED LIFE,

IN HONOR OF "OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

OF WHOM THE WHOLE FAMILY

IN HEAVEN AND EARTH IS NAMED."—

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY AND

DUTIFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HER ELDEST SON,

SAMUEL MELANCTHON WORCESTER.

Salem, Jan. 1, 1852.

CONTENTS.

Introduction, vii-xii

CHAPTER I.

Nativity and Extraction. Sketches of Rev. William Worcester, of Salisbury, Mass.; Mr. Samuel Worcester and Mr. Francis Worcester, of Bradford, Mass.; Rev. Francis Worcester, of Sandwich, Mass., and of Hollis, N. H.; and Noah Worcester, Esq., of Hollis, N. H.; with illustrative references to events, persons, and circumstances of their times respectively. 1-50

CHAPTER II.

Personal appearance. Dangerous sickness in infancy. Early indications of disposition and future character. General view of his intellectual powers and tendencies. Family education. The elder brothers and sisters. Fraternal and other reminiscences. Teaches school. Revival of religion, 1756. Hopeful conversion. Happy impressions from the triumphant death of a sister. 81-108

CHAPTER III.

Desire of professional life. Resistance by his father. A student at New Ipswich Academy. Oration before the Demosthenian Society, 11th of October, 1791. Enters Dartmouth College. Feelings towards the Faculty. Surrounding influences. Joins the Church of Salisbury, N. H. General spirit of character. A martial element. Pecuniary pressure. High standard of scholarship. Tokens of esteem and respect. Correspondence. Fourth of July Oration, 1795. Choice of profession. Valedictory, at Hanover. 108-149

CHAPTER IV.

Studies for the ministry. State of the times. Residence at Worcester. Correspondence. Palemon to Alexis. Teaches at Hollis. Preceptor of the Academy at New Ipswich. Licensed to preach. First Sermons. His manner in the pulpit. Prejudices in his native town. Oration, Fourth of July, 1796. Leaves New Ipswich. Correspondence. Settlement at Fitchburg, Mass.. . . . 149-203

CHAPTER V.

Habits and modes of procedure, as a settled minister. Marriage. Domestic management. Instruction of young men. Renewal of covenant in the Church, with the adoption of new Articles of Faith, &c. Palemon to Alexis. Parental feelings and character. Anecdote of the preaching of the brothers, Noah, Thomas, and Samuel. Revival at Fitchburg. Revivals in many places. Missionary spirit promoted. Formation of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. Vindication of the truth, and of ministerial rights. Oration on the death of Washington, &c., &c. . . . 204-262

CHAPTER VI.

Sermons on the punishment of the wicked. The "Fitchburg controversy." Efforts of the legal voters of the town, to control the pastor and the church. Mutual Council, June 22, 1801. Ex parte Council, Sept. 15, 1801. Protest of the church. "Facts and Documents," &c. Further measures of opposition. Proposals of conciliation, &c. Second Ex parte Council. Council of advice to the church. Third Ex parte Council. Second Mutual Council. Farewell to Fitchburg. 263-356

CHAPTER VII.

Invited to preach at Salem. The Tabernacle Church. Movements at Rowley and Fitchburg. Embarrassed question of duty. First parental affliction. Installation at Salem. Mass. Miss. Magazine. Popular estimation of his preaching and devotional services. Appointment at Dartmouth College. Revival. Death of his eldest daughter. Committee of Advice, on the subject of Professorship. Regard for the Pulpit. Burning of Sermons. Solicitude for church members. Courses of Sermons and Lectures. Occasional Sermons. Models of prayers. 356-415

CHAPTER VIII.

Weekly meetings. Church discipline. Report on "disorderly walk." Answers to questions of order and usage. Declaratory Articles, and Correspondence respecting dismissions to Baptist churches. Illustrations of Christian fellowship. Catholic and noble spirit. Discourses on the Abrahamic Covenant. Failure of health. Southern tour. Letters to Dr. Baldwin, in vindication of Discourses, &c. Reflections on his birth-day, Nov. 1, 1807. 415-468

INTRODUCTION.

WHATEVER reason may be assigned, the history of the Church and of our country has been too little known among us, or too little regarded. This remark applies to some, whose reputation for general intelligence should denote "a perfect understanding of all things from the very first." We may thus explain the very illusive views and erroneous opinions of many, as it respects the introduction of the MISSIONARY ELEMENT into the spirit and character of our institutions and our times.

Some appear to be well satisfied, by doing honor to a few more recent names. Others may find it sufficiently agreeable, to exult in the advanced position, which it is our privilege to have reached. It is not very strange, perhaps, since as compared with the early part of the present century, the objects and anticipations of christian philanthropy have so entirely changed the prevailing habits of thought and modes of expression. The minds of the people are not now absorbed in watching the progress of the revolution in France; nor is the word "march" applied, with a thrill of military sensation, to every political and moral movement. At the present day, the language of literature and popular eloquence has not a more favorite or acceptable term, than the word MISSION.

This is a truly auspicious token of progress in the right direction, and is of itself a volume in proof of such progress. But there were "days of old," which are not now to be "despised," as "days of small things." And there is "a record on high," we may be grateful to believe, which "Time's effacing fingers" can never touch; and which it is wise in all to consider, if they would

"share a glorious part"

in the recompense of "works of faith," and "labors of love," and "afflictions accomplished in brethren," "of whom the world was not worthy."

In the Protestant and Puritan settlement of New England, before the Jesuits had made the conquest of the territory, God's hand is to be adoringly acknowledged, as also in preserving the secret of the vast American continent, until the approaching struggle of the Reformation. The enterprise of 1620 was not of human device or worldly policy. From Him, who is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," the sublime conception of a Commonwealth, to be founded in the North American wilderness by a few exiled Puritans, must have originated. And by his favor only, in sovereign election or preference, were those institutions established by our forefathers, which, in less than fifty years from the commencement of the Massachusetts Colony, afforded such occasion for the admiring and rejoicing testimony of the fourth President of Harvard College:—"I look upon this as a little model of the glorious kingdom of Christ on earth. Christ reigns among us in the Commonwealth, as well as in the Church, and hath his glorious interest involved in the good of both Societies respectively."*

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 in some places, 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 any prefer to call it by other terms, it may be called a *Mission of Evangelical Colonization*; and it may be proclaimed in every language, as the sublimest mission of modern times.

* Election Sermon of Pres. Oakes, 1675.

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 prophetic 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 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 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.

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 distinct objects of early and intense solicitude. In less than two years, one of the Plymouth settlers was specially designated to promote the conversion of the Indians; and as early as Dec. 1621, Elder Robert Cushman made an appeal to his friends in England, in behalf of “those poor heathen.” In 1636, the Plymouth Colony provided by law for the “preaching of the Gospel among them.”

In the labors of Eliot, the Mayhews, and others of no less renown, it may be, in heaven; 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 pure missionary zeal, as has ever yet found a record or a grateful notice in the uninspired annals of redemption. And to all human appearance, far distant is 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 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.

For almost two hundred years, the condition of our country and the state of the world at large, very naturally defined, and, it may not be too much to say, very properly circumscribed, the missionary field of these churches. They were poor, and there were "many adversaries." They may not have "done what they could." But they did a great and marvellous work. And the spread of the Gospel throughout the earth, was ever in the minds and the supplications of many "faithful men in Christ Jesus."

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 dying injunction of David Brainerd to his beloved Christian Indians. But the time had not really come, until the last generation, when a Gordon Hall could reasonably be expected to take up the mantle of Brainerd ; and leaving the heathen of our own territories, go forth to the far distant Gentiles. And it is very wide from the truth, to assume or believe, that any who first went from these shores to the heathen of the Oriental continent and islands, or that any others, who, like Nettleton and Mills, so ardently and early desired, without ever enjoying, a foreign field of personal toil and trial, are entitled to an emblazoned remembrance ; as if the conception of the arduous and glorious work to which so many are now consecrated, had never entered the minds of the fathers, who had not yet fallen asleep, or of brethren in the Lord, who, in some domestic locality, were bearing the burden and heat of the day.

Pre-eminent among these last was the revered and beloved man, whose name is so inseparably and honorably identified with the more recent and renowned developement of the spirit and power of American Missions.

Considered by himself alone, it would be comparatively easy to narrate the leading events of his life, and portray the lineaments

of his character. No one, perhaps, who has made a deep and indelible impression upon his contemporaries, ever had a more decided individuality or a more independent personality. It may be equally true, that no one was ever more powerfully affected by hereditary and posthumous influences. A Memoir of his life, therefore, would be essentially incomplete, without some detailed sketches of his godly ancestry; and, in general also, a free if not discursive reference or allusion to events and persons, whether of the times in which he lived, or of the times before him.

It is now the entire period of a generation, since at the age of fifty he rested from his labors. The common supposition is, that he was then sixty, if not sixty-five or seventy years old. He lived indeed to a great age, but his years were few. It was the space which he filled, with somewhat also of his personal appearance, that will fully account for the impression, that he died "an old man and full of days." Other men also have accomplished so much in a brief term of life, that the community and the world think of them as prodigies. The literature and the familiar discourse of Christian lands, has yet to acknowledge with more appropriate reverence, that there "is a God in history."

Most certainly there *is* a God in the lives of those, who are created after his image in righteousness and true holiness. And if there is a God, that still "keepeth covenant" as with Abraham and his seed, the genealogy of a distinguished Servant of Christ, will not often be found a dead letter of names, but an animated, fragrant memorial of "good men and just." Such is the genealogy, which it is thought expedient to trace and illustrate, as no unimportant exposition of the native endowments and the inherent characteristic tendencies of the subject of this Memoir. His ancestors were the arche-type of himself.

The memorials of no inconsiderable number of the worthies of New England, are more ample and reliable, than those of any who had preceded them in the work of founding nations and empires. "The history of New England," it has been truly said, "has been more entirely preserved, and better authenticated, from its first settlement, than that of any other portion of the globe, of equal magnitude and importance." And while a single word is often a golden key to the treasures of the past, the eye of prophetic vision may discern the most cheering signs of promise, in the lingering rays of a resplendence, which not all

"Melts away into the light of heaven."

MEMOIR OF THE LIFE
OF THE
REV. SAMUEL WORCESTER, D. D.

CHAPTER I.

Nativity and Extraction. Sketches of Rev. William Worcester, of Salisbury, Mass; Mr. Samuel Worcester and Mr. Francis Worcester, of Bradford, Mass.; Rev. Francis Worcester, of Sandwich, Mass., and of Hollis, N. H.; and Noah Worcester, Esq., of Hollis, N. H; with illustrative references to events, persons, and circumstances of their times respectively.

“ They who never look back to their ancestors, will never look forward to posterity.”—*Burke*.

IN the retrospect of the half century, which has so recently expired, an intelligent observer will not be slow to appreciate the centennial and other commemorative celebrations. The most important of these have been in our New England, and have added greatly to the renown and the influence of departed worth. In some instances, also, a very unexpected, but most welcome memorial of the forgotten or the unknown, has been contributed by the orator of the day, or the speakers at the festive board.

At a centennial celebration in 1831, it appeared that there are but few, if any of the towns of New England, more remarkable as the birth-place of emi-

ment ministers of the Gospel and of other professional men, than Hollis, New Hampshire. This is an unpretending, agricultural town, pleasantly situated on the southern line of the State,—a few miles from the junction of the Nashua with the pure waters of the Merrimac from the White Mountains. A traveller would notice with pleasure the general appearance of the roads, farms, and dwellings. As a lover of the beautiful, he would find much to admire in the scenery. If, in the neat little village of the centre, he should wish to learn something of “the ancient men,” whose memory is embalmed among the native inhabitants, he would be quite sure to hear the name, and be directed to the former residence of Noah Worcester, Esq. He would also be informed or reminded, that among his sons were Dr. Noah Worcester of Brighton, and Dr. Samuel Worcester, of Salem, Mass.

The subject of this Memoir was the fifth son in the family. He was born Nov. 1, 1770. The principal part of the first twenty years of his life he spent at home,—faithfully obeying “the first commandment with promise.” But with a filial piety very strongly marked in his earliest years, and in riper age a model, even for the times when the honor of parents was so universally sacred,—his godly ancestry was hardly less dear to him than his immediate parentage. During all his life, he loved to recognize the goodness of God in his favored descent, through “devout men,” and “mothers in Israel,” from the

REV. WILLIAM WORCESTER, of Salisbury, Mass.

I. In the “Magnalia” of Mather, this self-denying servant of Christ is enrolled as one of “the reverend,

learned, and holy divines, arriving such from Europe to America, by whose evangelical ministry the churches of New England have been illuminated." There is no doubt that he came from Salisbury, in England. But inquiries in the father-land have as yet furnished no information, in respect to his nativity or genealogy. He is known to have been liberally educated, and to have been in the pastoral office, when, with so many of the purest and best sons of "dear England," he was compelled to become a fugitive, flying from persecution and tyranny. It was God that sent him to assist in laying broad and deep the foundations of our goodly heritage; as Joseph was sent into Egypt, "to preserve a posterity in the earth," and be the instrument "of a great deliverance."

The character which he sustained in his manhood affords a safe presumption, that, "from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures." His parental training was probably that of the most exemplary families of the Puritans, in the latter part of the 16th century,—the period when the faithful witnesses of the Reformation in England so restored the sanctity of the Sabbath, and, at the hazard of burning at the stake, determined to serve God, according to "the truth and simplicity of Christ."

"I have often wished,"—the late Noah Worcester once remarked to the writer,—"that I could know who were our forefathers in England. But I have been afraid, that we should find ourselves descended from some of those *bloody Norman barons*; and such is my abhorrence of war, that I am contented to remain in my present ignorance." There was a Richard Worcester—he may have known—in the retinue of Henry V., at the battle of Agincourt,

Oct., 1415. There is something of *war*, also, in the very name of Worcester,—if *cester* is from the Roman *castra*, or if the Saxon *wegeara-ceaster*, or *weogare-ceaster*, or *wegeorna-ceaster*, signifies *war-castle*.* But the venerable apostle of peace—as he may justly be called—appeared to have forgotten, that the family coat of arms very plainly directs the genealogist to a spiritual or sacramental, rather than to a martial or baronial distinction. “THE FIELD IS ARGENT. TEN TORTEAUXES,† FOUR, THREE, TWO AND ONE,—WHICH ARE SO MANY CAKES OF BREAD, AND SIGNIFIES THE FIRST BEARER TO HAVE BEEN A PRIEST, OR SOME RELIGIOUS PERSON; OR ELSE ONE THAT HAD DONE MUCH FOR THE CHURCH.”

Of this device of heraldry, there is no extant engraving, or any pictorial illustration. But a small manuscript, handsomely written, containing a copy of the foregoing description and interpretation—without date, or sign of origin—has been preserved, as the oldest relic of family history, for “the name of Worcester.” While it agrees perfectly with the character of the Rev. William Worcester, it doubtless was intended to commemorate some one of his progenitors, and perhaps one who sympathized with Wickliffe and the other “Reformers before the Reformation.” However this may be, the pastor of Salisbury could

* Henry’s England, vol. ii., p. 538. The name in Latin was written Wigornia, or Vigornia. In the registries of Domesday Book, it is written *Wirecestre*. No such name appears in the famous “Roll of Battle Abbey,” (New Eng. His. and Genl. Reg. vol. ii.,) while various records or monuments identify it, as existing among the Saxons, long before the landing of William of Normandy, A. D. 1066. There may, of course, be a mixture of blood, as in other families; but the progenitors of the Worcesters in New England were Anglo-Saxon, rather than Anglo-Norman.

† May be pronounced as if written *tor-toox-es*. *Tortean*, in Heraldry, signifies a red “roundel,” or “circular spot.”

not have gone farther back than to his great-grandparents, to find a Romish ancestry; nor have counted forty generations from the last of his forefathers, who “*did evil in the sight of the Lord after the abominations of the heathen.*”*

From a recent search of an antiquarian, whose intimate knowledge of the antiquities of Salisbury, England, gives the highest value to his witness, it would seem to be quite certain, that the Rev. William Worcester was not a native of the city, from which he emigrated to New England. “Of the Rev. William Worcester, I find no trace. Indeed I think Worcester is not a Salisbury name.”† It is not unlikely, that, at the time he left for America, all the persons who would have been interested to preserve a record of his ecclesiastical or social relations, either accompanied him, or were scattered abroad, during the civil war which almost immediately followed.

It is a family tradition, that two brothers came with him to New England. One of these is supposed to have died without issue. The other went to Connecticut, and became the head of several families, who have written their name *Wooster*. Of these was Gen. David Wooster, a revolutionary patriot and

* It should silence the most plausible arguments against the expediency and duty of prosecuting the work of missions—simply to say to an objector: “Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite.” Eze. xvi. 3. Forty generations only, or at most a few more, will carry us back to the heathenism of our ancestors; sixty generations will carry all the heathenism now existing back to the heathenism of the days of Paul and the other apostles; and less than ninety more, or less than one hundred and fifty in all, will reach the very beginning of all the idolatrous religions, which have any name or shadow of a name in the history of the world.

† Henry Hatcher, Esq., to the Dean of Salisbury, in answer to inquiries proposed by Hon. James Savage, Pres. of the Mass. His. Society,—Nov. 20, 1842. See a paper, communicated by Mr. Savage, Mass. His. Collections, 3d Ser., vol. x., p. 138.

martyr; and more recently, Rev. Benjamin Wooster, of Fairfield, Vt.,—who laid aside his shepherd's crook, at the call of the state-militant, and, as commander of a company of volunteers from his own parish, was among the bravest at the battle of Plattsburg, on the 11th of Sept. 1814.

The clerical brother in Massachusetts, and the lay brother in Connecticut, each placed himself in circumstances of great personal exposure; and the former, especially, encountered perils and hardships, which required no small measure of natural and moral courage. If it had been written of them both, that they were of more than common stature and muscular development, it would not surprise those who have seen any considerable number of their progeny. What can now be ascertained in regard to them in general, is suited to awaken an earnest desire for a knowledge of their parentage and early education. But as in regard to many others, associated with them in that most honorable generation of New England Puritans, there is too much reason to recall the words of Goldsmith, when lamenting the scantiness of his materials for his life of Parnell: "The dews of the morning are past, and we vainly try to continue the chase by the meridian splendor."

There is some ground to suppose, that they came to New England, in 1637, or the year in which Cromwell and others, who afterwards were so prominent in resisting the tyranny of Charles 1st., and in sustaining the Commonwealth,—had purposed to embark for the same asylum.* The spirit of emigration was now

* 1637. "A number of English *Puritans* embarked for *America*, to lay the foundation of a government which might ensure them religious and civil liberty. A proclamation was then issued to prevent such emigrations, in

greatly stimulated by the intolerance of Archbishop Laud, and the manifold grievances of evangelical pastors and their adherents;—while the most encouraging reports were received of the success of the colonists, who had now begun to present to the world a noble organization, civil and religious. At least twenty ships, with about 3000 emigrants, reached the Salem or Massachusetts Colony, in 1638. Rev. William Worcester and family may have been in that company. He must have arrived at this time, if not as early as 1637; for, according to the best authorities, it was in 1638, that he became the pastor of the church in Salisbury.”*

This was the eighteenth church in the colony. The town,—at first a part of the territory of Rowley and called Colchester,—is the oldest in Massachusetts, on the north bank of the Merrimac. When incorporated in 1640, it took the name of Salisbury, either in honor of the pastor, as may be conjectured; or, because the pastor was accompanied by a portion of his church in England, and they together wished to preserve the associations of the name of their former residence, as among others Mr. Cotton had given an example in Boston, and Mr. Rogers,—a grandson of the “protomartyr,”—with his at Rowley.†

which were Sir *Arthur Hazelrig*, *John Hampden*, *John Pym*, and *Oliver Cromwell*, who had resolved to abandon their country forever.”—*Universal Chronologist and Historical Register*, &c. Part I., pp. 599, 600.

The same year the Jesuits were expelled from Japan, on account of a conspiracy to seize the Government.

The same year, also, the *Covenanters* were actively organizing their forces to defeat the efforts of Charles I., to impose upon Scotland the English Church Establishment.

* His arrival was less than ten years after that of Higginson and his associates at Salem.

† A similar reason could scarcely be assigned for *Charlestown*.

In May previous to the change of the name of the town, he was admitted by the General Court, to the privileges of a freeman of the Colony. A large number of others were admitted with him.* And from this time, it may be added, the state of things in England put an end to the rush of emigration. While Cromwell was lord of the ascendant, as many persons returned home, it has been said, as there were who came to settle in the new world.

The ancient records of the church of Salisbury having been lost, there are no means of ascertaining the numbers or increase of the church, during the ministry of the first pastor. There is evidence from tradition, that the church was in general much united, and the pastor highly respected and beloved. His ministry left an enduring impression of his learning, devotedness, wisdom, meekness, and patience.

He had much of that personal discipline, which, in its appropriate effect, prepares a pastor to "weep with them that weep," as well as to "rejoice with them that do rejoice." He knew the occasion and import of the word *sympathy*; and had "learned what that meaneth:"—"The heart knoweth his own bitterness: and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."

After noticing "the town of Hampton, in the county of Northfolk,"† Mr. Johnson, in the "Wonder-working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England," pro-

* Savage's Winthrop.

† Not the present Norfolk County, Mass. At the period, when Capt. Edward Johnson, of Woburn, wrote the "Wonder-working Providence, &c." or the History of New England, from 1628 to 1651,—all the towns between the Merrimac and Piscataqua Rivers were included in one county, which was named Northfolk or Norfolk, because of the geographical position of this part of the colony. The people were the *North-folks*, as those of Suffolk, were *South-folks*.

ceeds to "the planting the eighteenth church of Christ at the town of Salisbury."

"For further perfecting this wilderness-work; not far from the Towne of Hampton was erected another Towne called Salisbury, being brought forth as Twins, sometime contending for eldership: * * * the situation of this Towne is very pleasant, were the rivers navigable farre up,—the branches thereof abound in faire and goodly meadowes with good store of stately timber upon the uplands in many places; * * * the people joyned in church-relation or brotherhood, nere about the time the other did, and have desired and obtained the reverend and graciously godly, M. Thomas Woster* to be their Pastor.

With mickle labor and distressed wants
 Woster, thou hast in desart's depth remain'd
 Thy chiefest dayes, Christ's Gospel there to plant,
 And water well, such toil shall yield great gaine.
 O happy day! may Woster say, that I
 Was singled out for this great work in hand;
 Christ by distresse doth gold for 's Temple try:
 Thrice blest are they may in his Presence stand,
 But more, thou art by him reserved yet,
 To see on earth Christ's kingdom's exaltation;
 More yet, thou art by him prepared fit
 To help it on, among our English Nation."

* Mr. Johnson evidently wrote much of his work from memory and general impressions; and was not minutely accurate in names and dates. It is conjectured, that *Thomas* was the name of a brother of the pastor of Salisbury, whose name in the Records of the town was invariably written, William Worcester. It is so written in his will.

Mr. Johnson's date for the gathering of the church is 1639. He may have been correct. But the weight of authority is decidedly in favor of 1638. See Mass. His. Colls. 2 Series, vol. v. p. 242. Cols. Am. Stat. Asso. vol i., p. 32.

Thomas Lechford, in his "Plaine Dealing, or Newes from New England," published in London, 1641,—speaks also of the minister of Salisbury, as *Master Worster*; writing the name, doubtless, according to the mode of pronunciation, which was probably then in use, and which is now generally sanctioned by his descendants. At the present day, we have *Worcester*, *Worster*, *Wooster*, and *Woster*,—the three last being variations or corruptions of the first, and very naturally occasioned by the pronunciation of the name, as if but of two syllables. At the time of the settlement of New England, *Worcester* appears to have been the uniform orthography, in the designation of the city and shire, the bishopric and earldom, so called in the mother-country.—To commemorate the second battle of Worcester, in 1651,

The work, in which the pastor of Salisbury is thus honorably mentioned, appears to have been completed, in 1651, or just about two centuries since. The author was one of the most estimable men in the Massachusetts Colony; and his testimony in respect to character was that of "a good man and a just." Of the mode in which he was pleased to present the portraits of his Christian heroes, he has spoken for himself: "And now let no man be offended at the Author's rude verse, penned of purpose to keepe in memory the Names of such worthies as Christ made strong for himselfe, in this unwonted work of his."*

In calling Mr. Worcester "the reverend and graciously godly," he was far from meaning to "give flattering titles to man." The term "reverend" was not used in New England, as a designation of ministerial office, until long afterwards. It was intended to denote a truly devout and earnest minister of Christ,— "sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he had been taught, that he might be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." The same term is used in the Salisbury Records, and with the same import of high respect and esteem, after the pastor's decease. In other places he is called *Mister*.†

Cromwell was present at the launching of "a new freegot of the States, carrying three-score pieces of ordnance, and called her the WORCESTER."—*Rees' Cyclopaedia*.

* Mass. His. Colls, 2d Ser., vol. ii., p. 69.

† *Mister*, *Master*, or *Magister*, was the title of all educated men,—of magistrates, school-teachers, and military officers above the rank of lieutenant, &c. Hence a difficulty in determining the real profession or occupation of some of the early fathers, e. g. whether a man was a lawyer or a physician. "Reverend," as the title of an accredited clergyman, was adopted, perhaps, for public convenience; as well as because the general character of the ministers who first received it *did honor* to the title. For about half a century, "Goodman" was a common title for any one, who had not a claim to be called *Mister*.

The allusions to "the desert's depth,"* and to "mickle labor and distressed wants," should be interpreted, in the most literal manner. The pastor of Salisbury had an undisputed pre-eminence among his clerical brethren, in labors and privations. His worldly circumstances, however, it is supposed, were improved, in the latter years of his life. But in respect to wealth, he must always have presented quite a contrast to his excellent neighbor, Ezekiel Rogers, of Rowley.†

In what is said of his "distresse," there may also be some reference to the afflictions, which he had had in the death of children, and of the wife that came with him to New England. Mrs. Sarah Worcester died in April, 1650,—leaving an infant, of less than three months old. Before the end of the year, Mr. Worcester was united in marriage with Mrs. Rebecca Hall, who was a lady of excellent parentage in England, and much known and respected for her virtues.‡

In Mr. Johnson's notice of Salisbury, it is said: "The people of this town have of late placed their dwellings so much distanced the one from the other,

* An idea of *distance*, in those days, may be taken from an incident in the gathering of the churches of Haverhill and Andover, in 1644. The magistrates and ministers, who were notified to attend, desired that "*from the remoteness of those towns and the scarcity of houses,*" the meeting might be at Rowley. The desire was granted. The distance from Rowley to Haverhill may have been six or eight miles; that to Andover, ten or twelve!

† Christ for this work Rogers *doth riches give,*
Rich graces fit his people for to feed,
Wealth to supply his wants whilst here he live,
Free thou receiv'st to serve his peoples need.

—"Wonder-working, &c." *Mass. His. Col. 2d Ser. Vol. vii. p. 13.*

Mr. Rogers had a large estate to distribute by his will, at his decease.

‡ She had been twice married, before she became the consort of Rev. Wm. Worcester. She married, for a fourth husband, Samuel Symonds, who was Deputy Governor of the Colony. She died at Ipswich, July 21st., 1695, in the 79th year of her age.

that they are like to divide into two churches." He refers to the settlements in what was called "New Town,"—and is now known as Amesbury. This removal of a part of the inhabitants much increased the labors of the pastor. It led also to some opposition and resistance in the payment of his salary. The subject was ultimately carried up to the General Court; and thus gave occasion, providentially, for a record of the sentiments of the most intelligent and respectable men in the colony, in regard to the high standing of the pastor.

It had been voted, that he receive £80, a year. In opposition to some who were unwilling to pay their proportion, the General Court, in 1658, ordered that he be paid this sum. It was also decided by that body, that "it is not expedient for Mr. Worcester to travel once a month to preach (Sabbath) at New Town, but that the people there should attend his preaching at Old Town; and those of New Town should help pay his salary, until they are legally dismissed." The Court also say, that "they of New Town should forbear to content themselves with private help, whilst the Lord pleased to continue *so bright a star in their candlestick.*"

Among the papers of Dr. Worcester, very carefully preserved, was a long letter from Rev. Daniel Gould, a worthy clergyman, who for a time supplied the pulpit of the first church of Salisbury. A more recent investigation fully confirms the writer's statements and opinions.

Salisbury, Nov. 5th, 1810.

Rev. and Dear Sir:—

In compliance with your request, when I saw you at Rev. Mr. Huntington's, last September, at Topsfield,

I have examined the records of the Town and Proprietors of Salisbury; and have likewise made all the inquiries I could, relative to your venerable ancestor, Mr. Worcester, formerly a minister in this town; and beg leave to lay before you the result of my inquiries, with such remarks as naturally occurred to my mind, from the face and spirit of the records to which I have had recourse, and also from tradition.

I find that all that tract of land, lying in the neighborhood of Merrimack, or Moonomick, as the Indians called it, was granted to be a plantation, unto Mr. Simon Bradstreet, Mr. Daniel Dennison, Christopher Ball, Samuel Winslow, and others, in the year 1638. And at a General Court held at Boston, the 4th day of the 7th month, 1639, [it was decided that] Mr. Ezekiel Roger's plantation shall be called Rowley; and the plantation beyond Merrimack river shall be called Colchester. At a General Court held at Boston, the 7th day of the 8th m., 1640, Colchester is henceforth to be called Salisbury. This gives us the history of this town and to whom it was first granted. But by whom, or by what means, and in what manner, it was first settled, we are not informed. I find, however, records of births, as early as the year 1637—but no records of anything else until the year 1640, when the town was incorporated.

I find their first Minister's name was William Worcester.* But when he was settled here, I find no records to show, nor anything which leads to a conjecture. William Worcester is mentioned at the settlement of the town; and it appears, that, at all times, he had his proportion of the lands, in the several divisions of the Town lands, as a free commoner.

There is a meeting-house and a bell mentioned

* The writer's explicit statement on this point was occasioned by the fact, that there was still a question in the family, whether the name was William or Thomas. Dr. Worcester's brother *Thomas* received his name, under the impression, that this was the true name of the ancestor at Salisbury,—an impression derived, probably, from the mistake of Mr. Johnson in his history of New England.

nearly at the time of the incorporation of the town. As early as 1642, the freemen voted to levy a tax for Mr. Worcester's maintenance, of £27, for his half year's salary last past, which is spoken of not as a new, but as an old thing. He is frequently mentioned from time to time, as it respects his salary, until the year 1659 or 1660.

[Details of various matters here follow.]

I find a record of the death of Mr. William Worcester, in these words, viz.: "The reverend William Worcester, pastor of the Church of Salisbury, departed this life, the 28th of the 8th Month, 1662." It appears that he was minister here upwards of twenty years. Of his age and the time of his ministry in this town, I have found no account in the records, which I have consulted. I have been told that the place where his house stood, the cellar and some old bricks are still visible. Lieut. Josiah French,* one of the descendants of the family, informed me, that he knew the grave where Mr. Worcester was buried, as he had received it from tradition.

I have learned, that he came from Cape Ann when he came to this town. Possibly, something may be obtained there, relative to your venerable ancestor, or his posterity. It appears that your venerable ancestor was learned in all the wisdom of Europe, and well versed in divine knowledge. He was judicious, benevolent, and pious; an able minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and a great comfort to the people of his charge. He animated and comforted them under the many hardships, difficulties, and dangers, which they had to encounter in settling a wild and inhospitable country, and also arising from a fierce and numerous enemy, by whom he and his people were kept in constant alarm.† He was a great promoter of the

* His father, Josiah French, married Mary Worcester, daughter of Francis, and grand-daughter of Samuel, of Bradford, Nov. 10, 1736.

† Many facts might be given, in proof of what Mr. Gould here states: e. g.—"Upon the warrant which went to Ipswich, Rowlye, and Newberry, to disarm Passaconamy, who lived by Merrimack, they sent forth 40 men

settling of this part of the country; and instead of complaining, was a pattern of patience in hunger and cold, and of fortitude under poverty and danger, to encourage his people.

During this time of danger and poverty, the inhabitants lived like the old patriarchs. They labored to promote each other's best interests, and the good of the whole. They conceded to each other, as is abundantly evident from their often exchanging lands, for the sake of accommodating each other's farms. Mutual benevolence seems to have prevailed among them. They made a common interest of their necessities and dangers, and did every thing to promote peace and harmony.

It likewise appears, that they would support their dignity and honor, and the authority which they exercised for their protection and safety. They prevented everything which had a tendency to irritate, and disturb the peace of society. They made such laws and regulations, from time to time, as they found necessary.—It is left on record, that Mr. Samuel Hall was fined in open meeting 5s. for his abusive language before the freemen, in open meeting,—which was: “*Ye are all lords, all monarchs, your will must be your law, and such like.*”

The only difficulty which seems to have occupied their attention, during Mr. Worcester's ministry among them, related to his support. Nothing appears, but that they paid him promptly according to agreement, and to his satisfaction; for he never complained on that account. His salary was various, sometimes £50, and sometimes £60, as extremes. But the man-

armed the next day, being the Lord's day, but it rained all the day, as it had done divers days before and also after, so that they could not go to his wigwam, but they came to his son's and took him, &c.”—*Winthrop's Journal*, Mo. 7. 1642.

This movement to disarm the Indians was prompted by the suspicion of a general conspiracy against the colonists. For many years, the able-bodied men in the most exposed settlements, carried their guns and swords with them to the house of God, on the Sabbath, and were always ready for an alarm.

ner of raising it occupied their attention. Generally they paid him by a tax, which was equally laid upon each of the inhabitants, according to their ability.

With regard to the church government and the state of religion in particular, we are not informed, as his church records are lost or concealed. There are no church records, until the time of Mr. Allen's ministry in 1687. Suffice it to say, that we [have reason to] conclude, that they were a wise, virtuous, benevolent, and pious people; and that they duly attended upon the preaching and ordinances of the Gospel, duly and properly exercised discipline in the church, and labored to suppress vice, and immorality, and disorder, and promote virtue, order, piety and religion among them, according to the rules of the Gospel, in both church and state.

Finally, it appears that Mr. Worcester was one of those who were willing to endure afflictions with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of Egypt. They deserve to be had in everlasting remembrance. Their names are precious, and ought to be sought up and to be handed down to the latest posterity, as the precious of the earth. They are those to whom, under God, we are indebted for our country, and for the high privileges we enjoy, as a people, both civil and religious, which are greater than those of any other nation on the face of the earth;—a consideration of which, I hope, will prepare us to celebrate the approaching annual thanksgiving, which is derived from their example, with a grateful acknowledgment of the mercies of God to us, who is the beneficent giver of every good and perfect gift.

Sir, you will be so obliging as to tender my sincere regards to your lady, while you will accept of them yourself; and while I subscribe myself your friend and brother in the Lord,—

DANIEL GOULD.

REV. SAMUEL WORCESTER.

It is all but impossible, after the lapse of two hundred years, to appreciate such toils and endur-

ances, as those which are briefly indicated in the foregoing letter. The early inhabitants of New England were not from the lower classes of society, and their life had not been that of manual labor. A large number of those "first good men" were eminent scholars of Oxford and Cambridge. Others were of families occupying a social position, in which every worldly advantage was enjoyed, or might be an object of hope to the emulous and aspiring. "These forsooke a powerfull land, stately buildings, goodly Gardens, orchards, yea, deare friends, and neere relations, to goe to a desart wilderness, thousands of leagues by sea, both turbulent and dangerous. Many have travelled to see famous cities, strong fortifications, &c., or in hope to enjoy a settled habitation, where riches are attained with ease. But here the only encouragements were the laborious breaking up of bushy ground, with the continued toyle of erecting houses, for themselves and cattell, in this howling desart; all which they underwent with much cheerfulness, that they might enjoy Christ and his ordinances in their primitive purity."*

The twenty-four years of William Worcester's ministry, in New England, were signalized by numerous events, on each side of the Atlantic, which must have deeply moved a heart like his. The celebrated "*Thirty Years War*" between the Catholics and Protestants, in Europe, terminated about two years before his death. In Scotland, the noble Covenanters, with the indomitable resolution of John Knox, were resisting, like true martyrs, the establishment of Episcopacy. An open insurrection in 1638, with subsequent movements, both in England and Scotland, gave employ-

* Wonder-working Providence, &c.

ment enough to Charles I., without leaving any time for an effective effort to subjugate the Puritanical spirit of the New England Colonies.* Long before he was beheaded, these had become real *republics*, and were immovably grounded and fixed in "the foundations of many generations." Under the guidance of their spiritual teachers, the first generation of New England, while acting as members of Congregational churches, and as freemen, administering affairs of town, county, and colony, commenced that obedience to law, and that general discipline of self-government, which, in its progress, has made the American people the mightiest embodiment that the world has ever seen, of true constitutional liberty.

The "firm and perpetual league, offensive and defensive," between "the United Colonies of New England, viz. Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven," was duly consummated in 1643.† The leading pastors of the churches, with the concurrence of the magistrates, completed the "Platform of

* At the period, when the bigotry and tyranny of Charles I. cost him his life, the term *Puritan* was not always used with the same meaning. "The appellation of *Puritan* was applied to three distinct parties; which, though united, were actuated by different views and motives. The *Political Puritans* maintained the most exalted opinions of *civil liberty*; the *Puritans in discipline* were averse to the ceremonies and episcopal government of the church; while the *Doctrinal Puritans* rigidly defended the speculative system of the early Reformers. In opposition to these were the *Court Party*, the *Hierarchy*, and the *Arminians*; with this distinction, that the latter having been introduced a few years previous, did not then [1620] comprehend all those who were favorable to the church and monarchy."—*Note by Editor of M. St. Martin's Universal Chronologist and Elements of General History, Part I., p. 592.*

The Puritans of New England combined the characteristic peculiarities of the "three distinct parties" above-mentioned.

† The articles of the confederation of 1643, were the pattern of the confederation, during the war of independence, and of the constitutional union of the States, in 1789.

Church Discipline," in the Synod, at Cambridge, in 1648. Matters of church and state were thus definitely settled. Excepting the troubles with the savages, the people were allowed "to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," until after the restoration of Charles II., in 1660. Meanwhile they were successfully cherishing and perfecting the institutions of their unexampled freedom, in the fear of God.

But before the pastor of Salisbury had finished his course, the ministers were called to meet an unexpected crisis. According to the analogy of usage in the old world, no person was allowed to exercise the rights of a freeman, who was not a church member. But as yet, none had been admitted as church members, except such as gave evidence of a personal experience of the truths of the Gospel. This made a great difference between New England and other parts of christendom. Many children had now come to manhood, and were not members of churches. Other persons, who had emigrated to New England, were in the same condition. Hence no small controversy had been excited, when, in 1662,—the last year of Mr. Worcester's life,—the third * Synod of Massachusetts

* Just before his arrival, or in 1637, the *first* synod of pastors was held at Cambridge. It was this, which, in the right use of the right means, so remarkably settled the *Antinomian* question, in connection with which the name of Mrs. Hutchinson became so famous. The same Synod very effectually disposed of errors of doctrine, "to the number of eighty," which individuals had invented or adopted, and were actively disseminating.

"It is well known to all our English Nation, that the most able-preaching ministers of Christ were most pursued by the lording clergy, and those that have spent all their dayes, even from a child, in searching the Scriptures, the Lord Christ preparing them by his blessed Spirit for this very work.

* * Those errors which you have heard mentioned in a former book, were so put to death, that they never have stood up in a living manner

was held, and, with much opposition, what has since been known as the *Half-way Covenant* was introduced. By the sanction of that Synod, all persons who had been baptised in infancy, were to be considered members of the church to which their parents belonged; although they were not to be admitted to the Lord's Table, without complying with such conditions, as had been prescribed at the beginning. Those who were thus formally recognized, might bring their children also to receive the ordinance of baptism.

What particular part Mr. Worcester had in that Synod, or whether he was numbered with the friends or opposers of the *Half-way Covenant*, cannot now be learned. The negative testimony is very decided, that he could never have had any favor for such a palpable innovation upon the order of the churches,—and for which the reason of all others was that of political expediency. The result of the doings of the Synod of 1662 was submitted to the General Court, Oct. 8.

among us since, but sometimes like wizards to peepe and mutter out of ground, fit for such people to resort unto, as will goe from the living to the dead * * The framing of arguments in a scholar-like way, did, (the Lord assisting) cleare up the truths of Christ more to the meanest capacity in one hour, than could be clouded again in seaven yeare by the new notion of any such, as boast so much of their unlettered knowledge." * * *Wonder-working Providence, &c.* Chap. vii. See also *Hubbard's General History of N. England*, Chaps. xxxviii—xl.

"This delicate business was managed with great prudence and address. No person was named as holding such errors; no person was inquired after, as the author of such opinions. Each error was recited, with only this short remark, this is contrary to such and such texts, which were subjoined. The result of the Synod was unanimous, and even Mr. Cotton [who had strongly sympathised with Mrs. Hutchinson, and "who *was not the least part of the country,*"] freely declared, 'that he disrelished all those opinions and expressions, as being some of them heretical, some of them blasphemous, some of them erroneous, and all of them incongruous.' The victory was as complete as the nature of the case admitted."—*Morse and Parish's New England*, Ch. xxi.

At this time, Mr. Worcester was "setting his house in order," in anticipation of a speedy departure to "the rest which remaineth to the people of God."

Of the "first good men, who were in the actual exercise of the ministry when they left England, and who were the instruments of settling churches here according to the order of the Gospel," it was recorded by one* who was well prepared to testify,—“I may now write of all these old ministers, ‘*These all died in the faith.*’”

It was thus that the Rev. Wm. Worcester rested from his labors. The tranquillity of his soul in death has been to his children's children a grateful evidence, that before his departure, "he had this testimony, that he pleased God." He had made his will, a short time before his final hour. When he found that this was very near, he requested, with the most perfect composure, to see the tokens of the advance of death from his extremities. "Uncover my feet; let me see them; I fear not to die."—These were among the last words which he uttered, as he fell asleep, glorifying the Lord Jesus and "the power of his resurrection."

The day of his death, according to the record which is correctly cited in the letter of Mr. Gould, was the 28th of October, (O. S.) 1662. His age could hardly have been less than sixty years.† He was buried near the entrance of the grave-yard of the first settlers of the town. If any monument was erected, it has long since disappeared. A rough flat stone was laid over

* Mather's Magnalia.

† Rev. J. B. Felt, in his Notes to the List of the Congregational and Presbyterian Ministers, who have been settled in the County of Essex, Mass., from its first settlement to the year 1834,—says:—"Mr. Worcester deceased at an advanced age."—*Am. Quar'y Register*, Vol. vii., p. 260.

his remains, to preserve them from the beasts of prey.* And though many changes have passed over the church and the town, the time has never been, when some of the inhabitants have not pointed to the place of his burial, as the grave of a godly minister, whose brightest "record is on high."†

He has been less known to fame, than some of his honored associates, whose locality was more favorable for historic remembrance, or whose parishioners were less harmonious among themselves, and less "diligent in sowing the fruit of righteousness in peace." But he was none the less beloved, or less useful, in the trying services of the perilous out-post, where "he endured hardness as a good soldier," "waxed valiant" in the "good fight" and was "faithful unto death."

The old and tried ministers were now passing to their celestial reward, in rapid succession. Their loss was greatly mourned, although the prosperity of the college, which had been so dedicated to "Christ and the Church," had removed all apprehension of deficiency of means, for a competent supply of able and evangelical pastors. The missionary spirit, encouraged by the benevolence of kindred minds in England, had also yielded some rich fruits, as an earnest for the future. More than forty churches, with more than seven thousand communicants, had been added, in less than twenty-two years, after the gathering of the first church of the Massachusetts colony, at Salem, 6th of August, 1629.‡ Still there were those, who spoke and wrote in a melancholy strain, as if the whole experi-

* The bodies of the dead were not unfrequently dug up by the wolves.

† Evidence of this fact was personally obtained, August 11th, 1851.

‡ In 1650, the white population of Massachusetts colony cannot have been more than 20,000.

ment of the New England colonists were about to prove a most disastrous failure.* This was not unnatural, perhaps, in view of some events and occurrences; and especially after the "act of uniformity," by which nearly two thousand godly ministers of the mother country were silenced in one day, and subjected to the most cruel persecution.†

There were those, however, who were full of hope. But not one, probably, had any imagination of the ulterior results, which have already invested the very least circumstance of the settlement and early history of New England, with a peculiar moral dignity and grandeur. And it is worthy of remark, for those particularly who are even now prone to look forward, with more of despondency than of joy, that there has been no period, since the days of the earliest forefathers, when some of the most conspicuous observers of "the signs of the times" have not sounded a wailing note; while a more scriptural, comprehensive, and grateful interpretation of the will and purposes of God has inspired their brethren, to sing aloud of his wonderful works of loving kindness and faithfulness.

* "I tremble to think what will become of this glorious work, which we have begun, when the ancients shall be gathered unto their fathers."—*Rev. Ezekiel Rogers, of Rowley,—quoted, Morse and Parish's New England*, Chap. xv. He died, Jan. 23, 1660. See also a poem by Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, of Malden, 1662,—in which he describes "New England planted, prospered, declining, threatened, punished."—*Christian Observatory*, Vol. IV., pp. 166—168.

† "Could we but go among Tartars, Turks, and heathens, and speak their language," said Richard Baxter, "I should be but little troubled for the silencing of 1500 ministers at once in England, nor for all the rest that were cast out here, and in Scotland and in Ireland; there being no employment in the world so desirable, in my eyes, as to labor for the winning of such miserable souls,—which makes me greatly honor Mr. John Elliott, the apostle of the Indians in New England, and whoever else have labored in such a work."

II. Among the children and grand-children of the “fathers,” and not least of all among those, whose fathers ministered at the altar, it was not difficult to find a goodly number, in whom the parental heart had the greatest of earthly joys. Some of these can be identified, in the “great cloud of witnesses,” that “the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children: To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”

SAMUEL WORCESTER,

eldest son of Rev. William, may be regarded as an example of the “freemen” or “free-commoners,” who, in private life, were most useful and honored in the second generation of New England. He must have been several years old, when his father came to America. Piously nurtured amidst great hardships and perils, there are very plain indications, that he “feared the Lord from his youth,” and “increased in wisdom, and in favor with God and man.” In his father’s “will and testament,” he is noticed, as if the first-born and greatly beloved. The blessing of a child of promise descended upon him, as if an Isaac or an Israel. He was one of those, to whom with a glowing emphasis could have been applied the words of the Hebrew song—“*Blessed be our youth, which have not made our old men ashamed.*”*

It may increase the interest of some in these preliminary sketches of Dr. Worcester’s ancestry, to be

* From one of the songs, which are said to have been sung at the *Feast of Tabernacles*.

apprised, that this ancestor, whose name he bore, appears to have exemplified some of the best and most distinguishing traits of his own personal character. The same traits, probably, were seen in the "reverend" father; but they were certainly in the son, of whom more is particularly known, by family tradition.

He belonged to the generation, which, as a whole, received more pious care than any other, that has followed in New England. The period during which the "old ministers" flourished, and which long preceded the worst effects of the "Half-way Covenant," was in no respect, perhaps, so remarkable, as in the consistent and earnest application of God's covenant with Abraham, by Puritan fathers and mothers, on both sides of the Atlantic. They deprecated as the direst of curses, "a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters." Hence their unceasing supplication, that all who were "bone of their bones and flesh of their flesh" might early be "born of God," and thus be "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." And hence, also, in imitation of him whom the Most High deigned to honor, as pre-eminently his FRIEND,* they were not backward to *command their children and their households after them, to keep the way of the Lord*, that both parents and children might rejoice together, in the largest experience of the promises to believers and their offspring.

The pastors, generally, evinced a very active and affectionate solicitude for the rising generation. It could have been said of more than one, as of Rogers, of Rowley, that "he was a tree of knowledge, laden with fruit, which the children could reach. With the

* Isaiah xli: 8.

youth he took great pains, especially with those who had been committed to him by their dying parents." The aged John Higginson, of Salem, and William Hubbard, of Ipswich, when daily expecting their "call to that world, where to be is by far the best of all," prayed "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.*" Such doubtless was the frequent prayer of the pastors, whom those venerated "old disciples" so long survived.

The influence, also, of the *fore-mothers* in forming the character of their children, and in "raising up the foundations" for the glory of the Savior, should have an "everlasting remembrance." With a felicity of expression seldom equalled, it was once said in a commemorative Discourse at Plymouth :

"It was happy for our progenitors, 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, '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, the husband,' was accustomed to offer in the presence of his household, his daily and nightly sacrifice 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 formed and adjusted to his house."*

* J. T. Kirkland, Dec. 22, 1803.

In sustaining the pastors, there were numerous members of the churches, who were as steadfast and efficient, as were Caleb and Joshua, in their co-operation with Moses and Aaron. Born of parents, who were each in "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," dedicated in baptism with strong confidence in "the love of the Spirit," and thoroughly instructed in the doctrines, precepts, and ordinances of the Gospel, a large number shone brightly as "lights in the world." The theory of Christian life, as taught by "the fathers," was the simple "truth of God." Situated as they 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. And if it had not been for the church-meeting and the "town-meeting," those high schools of self-discipline and civil obedience, in which fathers and sons were taught together, side by side, it could never have been proclaimed to all nations by the mightiest voice of our American Union, and of the whole world,—that "learned Germany, fuller of ancient lore, than all the world beside," and "Italy, where Cicero lived," "have not the power of self-government, which a common town meeting, with us, possesses." *

* "Yes, I say, that those persons who have gone from our town-meetings to dig gold in California, are more fit to make a Republican Government,

“Plain mechanics have I known,” said 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.”*

The *farmers* cannot be supposed to have been inferior to the “mechanics.” Precisely such men, as just described, were among the children and grand-children of the Rev. William Worcester. No one of them, however, has left “his mark” of superiority to his son Samuel, who, at the time of his father’s death, was himself a father.† Want of means of support, and the need at home of his labor, during his minority, may have prevented him from studying for the pastoral office. But while in the occupation of “a tiller of the ground,” he was, perhaps, the instrument of no less good, in the faithful services, which, in various relations and responsibilities, he was enabled to perform.

Removing to Bradford, on the right bank of the Merrimac, he was one of the leaders in arranging and regulating the affairs of the new town. There were a few settlers there, in 1649. But until about 1668, there is no evidence of business, which was officially

than any body of men in Germany or Italy; because they have learned this one great lesson, that there is no security without law, and that, under the circumstances in which they are placed, where there is no military authority to cut their throats, there is no sovereign will but the will of the majority; that, therefore, if they remain, they must submit to that will.”—*Daniel Webster. See Address at Washington, July 4, 1851.*

* Mather’s *Magnalia*, I., 220.

† William, son of Samuel, received “a silver-rimmed bowl,” by the will of his grand-parent. This “bowl,” it is conjectured, was a kind of *heir-loom*, to be transmitted from one generation to another. Its fate is not known. It may have been destroyed or rendered worthless, in one of the fires to which reference is made in the sequel of these sketches.

committed to record.* At this time, the name of Samuel Worcester, is found with those, who had a general oversight of the public interests. He was also a prominent member of the church; and to the time of his sudden and greatly lamented death, was frequently called to offices of trust, which were the unequivocal tokens of general confidence in his ability and uprightness.

He was the first representative from Bradford, in the General Court, and took his seat as a member of this body, Jan. 1679–80. He was re-elected, and was a member, at the time of his death, the year following. At this period, it was the custom for towns to choose representatives, who were men of the highest estimation. At the time Mr. Worcester represented his town, the state of public affairs demanded the counsels of the wisest and best men, among all "that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do."

The first settlers of Bradford were obliged to have their deadly weapons, in constant readiness for use. No man could gather his harvest, or fell a tree for his winter's hearth, without feeling himself liable to be shot down by the marauding savage. "Fire-arms and ammunition" were thus an item of some prominence, in the "inventory of the estate of Samuel Worcester, of Bradford," as prepared for the Judge of Probate. And it was when he was in the full strength of his manliness, that the hearts of all throughout the

* In the Record of "Marriages, Births and Deaths," in Bradford, the first record of all is,—“Moses Wooster, son to Mr. Samuel Wooster, born 18th Jan. 1670.” In the records generally, the name is written *Wooster* or *Woster*. But among the members of the General Court, Jan., 1679–80, is enrolled—Samuel Worcester.

New England colonies were moved, "as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind," by those terrible desolations of blood and fire, in "Philip's war," when every "eleventh family was houseless, and every eleventh soldier had sunk to his grave."*

The struggle for independence, a century later, will bear no comparison with that of this period for the very existence of the colonies.† There could have been few, whose countenances did not speak the universal consternation, with a despondency bordering upon utter despair. In every part of the settlements, "the ministers of the altar" were publishing the word of the Lord:

"Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord, Alas for the day!"

All hope would have been extinguished, if there had not been so many among the people, to cry mightily unto God:

"Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins,

* The "eighty young men" who were slain Sept. 18, 1674, at Deerfield, or the place since known as "Bloody Brook," were "the flower of Essex County."

† An estimate of population in New England in 1673, was 78,416.—*Colls. Am. Stat. Asso.*, I, p. 143. The number of men capable of bearing arms may have been about 15,000. Other estimates have made these numbers a third part less. At the time, therefore, of this conspiracy of the Indian tribes for the entire extermination of the English, the heroic Sachem of Pokanoket, in view of the number and spirit of his confederates, their mode of warfare, their local situation within striking distance of so many towns or settlements, upon which different bands could move simultaneously, in the appalling fury of their blood-thirstiness,—was not without reasons for his assurance of complete success. Such a conspiracy, with such a leader, would certainly have triumphed, thirty or even twenty years earlier,—unless "the arm of the Lord" had interposed, and his angels had "fought from heaven," and "the stars in their courses fought."

for thy name's sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed: Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee: according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die: And render unto our neighbors seven-fold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord. So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever: we will shew forth thy praise unto all generations."

Never was prayer more effectual, and never was the help of God more reverently acknowledged.*

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 probable, knew little or nothing. The plan, however, had seemingly been laid, with consummate sagacity, to obtain the whole Mississippi valley, for the cradle of the future Catholic church of the North American continent.†

* 1674. "But the *armies of Prayers*, with which he did in this calamitous time, *Cælum tundere et Misericordiam extorquere!* The Lord had then many true sons of Jacob in it, who wept and made supplication; but this Israelite indeed made a bright figure among them. And the successes of the Prayers were so remarkable, * * * that when the war was over, he made a collection of examples, &c., and published an Historical Discourse concerning the Prevalency of Prayer."—"Remarkables of Dr. Increase Mather," p. 76. He is stated to have given himself to prayer without ceasing, for the death of Philip, and to have become perfectly sure of that event, in 1675.

† "Father Hennepin" reached the "Meschasipi," at the mouth of the Illinois river, in March, 1680. See p. 118, of his curious and valuable work, published in London, 1698, entitled, "A New Discovery of a vast country in America, extending above four thousand miles, between New France and New Mexico; &c. &c."

So great was the impoverishment of the people from the war, from the failure of harvests, from the ravages of pestilence, from conflagrations, from wrecks of shipping, and other calamities, that their distress moved their friends across the ocean to an extraordinary effort in their behalf. Relief was sent to them from *Ireland*, in Jan., 1677. The amount distributed in Massachusetts alone was not less than £363,—beside what was sent to other colonies; all of which, with the necessary expenses, would make the donation nearly or quite *one thousand pounds*, and fully equal, in proportion to numbers and means, to what has been termed “the magnificent charity” of the United States, during the famine of Ireland, in 1848.*

During these gloomiest years of New England’s history, the large family of Mr. Samuel Worcester, at Bradford, was “twice burnt out.” In the first instance, when the parents were away from home, their house was consumed, with every thing in it, which was of substantial value. Received kindly into the house of a neighbor, they had just begun to rise from the calamity, when another fire made them homeless.

* Nathaniel Mather, pastor of a church in Dublin, and brother of Increase Mather, the pastor of the North Church in Boston, is supposed to have been forward in procuring this donation.—*See His. and Gen. Reg.*, Vol. II.

Relief was also received from England, by the Christian Indians, whose distress was peculiarly aggravated. There were some thousands of these, living mostly in villages by themselves, and having churches and schools, which were quite flourishing. During the war, many were slaughtered by their Pagan kindred, and their villages burned to the ground. They had taken the advice of Eliot and other friends, and aimed to be strictly neutral. But they were distrusted by some of the colonists, and treated by bodies of armed men, as if auxiliaries or spies of the enemy. Outrages were committed upon them, hardly less atrocious than those perpetrated in Western Pennsylvania and on the Muskingum, at the period of the American Revolution.—*See Eliot’s Letters to Hon. Robert Boyle, Mass. His. Colls.*, Vol. III. *Heckewelder’s “Narrative of Missions of the United Brethren, &c.”*

But the afflicted man, who as a husband and father was called to sustain so heavy a burden of anxious care, was one of those, who lived, looking upward, and who "knew," that "in heaven" they "had a better, an enduring substance." And happy might he account himself, in comparison with many of his coævals, whose habitations were turned into bloody ashes, in the darkness of midnight; and light were his afflictions, when contrasted with those of brethren in the Lord, who were so inhumanly persecuted in the valleys of Piedmont, and the high-lands of Scotland.

As a man, who in filial faith recognized the hand of God, in each event of his life, he received some signal tokens of the divine favor. One experience especially was so remarkable, that it would seem never afterwards to have been long absent from his thoughts. While moving some hay from a mow in his barn, he suddenly slipped. He was rapidly gliding over the edge, when he was stopped in an instant; and was enabled by an unseen hand, as he believed, to regain a place of safety. After reaching the floor, he perceived that *a hay-fork, with the prongs upward*, was standing directly beneath that part of the mow, where he was sliding down!

. Such were the facts, as he testified them to his family, and, doubtless, to many others. Whatever may be the true interpretation, he felt himself, and taught his children to feel, that his deliverance was supernatural; and should ever be ascribed to that covenant God, whose angels are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." The example of this devout man, particularly in his filial watchfulness of the indications and inter-

positions of God's providence, left an abiding impression upon his descendants.*

When about fifty years old, if not younger, he finished his course. Early in January, 1680-1, he was at Boston, in attendance at a special General Court, which, by adjournment, was to meet Feb. 22d. Preferring to travel on foot, he reached that part of Lynn, now called Saugus, on the evening of Feb. 20th. He was unable to obtain accommodations at the public house, and walked on to the house of a friend, whose hospitality he had often enjoyed. The next morning, Feb. 21st., he was discovered upon his knees, in the middle of the road, and as in the act of fervent prayer! Mild and of brief duration must have been his final struggles,—otherwise, it hardly need be remarked,—he could not have remained in the posture, in which he seemed to be uttering for his last words, and in “perfect peace,”—“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”†

The friend, whose dwelling he had failed to reach, took his body in charge, and performed every office of affection and respect. The expenses of his burial were defrayed by those, whom he had represented in the colonial legislature.

The death of such a man, in such circumstances, would of course produce a profound sensation. To his family, the bereavement was overwhelming. He had eleven children, the youngest of whom was born scarcely more than a single week before they heard his last prayer at the family altar, and received the last

* An incident to be related in a subsequent page of this Memoir of one of them, may recal this ancestor to memory.

† Wearied and chilled, probably, he had kneeled down to pray, and while “continuing in prayer” gently “fell asleep.”

embrace of his parental love. Those, and those only, who have had kindred affliction, can understand either the anguish or the solace of that widowed mother, with her eleven fatherless children!

In the situation in which the deceased had been obliged to leave his family, nothing but an urgent sense of duty could have constrained him to make the effort, to be punctually in his place, as a member of the General Court. The subject which, more than any other, had occupied the attention of this body, just before and during his connection with it, was that so naturally suggested by the manifold and accumulated public calamities. The members were few, and their deliberations evinced a conviction of moral responsibility, which, at the present day, is not generally apparent in the multitudinous bodies, that have taken their place.

It would have been inconsistent with former usages and the prevailing spirit of the people, if the General Court had not summoned the clergy to make inquiry, and give advice, in view of the evils which had been brought upon the land. In May, 1679, a Synod, commonly called the "Reforming Synod," was convened by order of Court, to consider and answer the questions,—1st. What are the reasons that have provoked the Lord to bring his judgments upon New England? 2d. What is to be done so that these evils may be removed?

The answer to the first question drew forth expressions of alarming degeneracy; while the second question was met, as might have been expected, without any of that "fear of man," which "bringeth a snare."

In regard to the first point of inquiry, the Synod had no hesitation in specifying a neglect of baptismal

obligations ; profaneness ; desecration of the Sabbath ; want of piety in heads of families ; intemperance and lewdness,—temptations to which they could not but see in certain indelicate modes of female apparel. They referred, also, to dishonesty in traffic and unfaithfulness to promises, and the ambitious worldliness of individuals, who had removed to a distance from churches, for the sake of more valuable farms or merchandise ; forgetting, it was said, that, “when Lot left Canaan and the church for better accommodations in Sodom, *God fired him out of all.*”*

The Synod enjoined 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 Aug. 6, 1629, were published for general circulation and adoption.†

* *Magnalia*, Vol. II.

† A singular and inexcusable error has been repeated, hundreds of times, in relation to the first covenant of this First Church. In 1637, a special cove-

Much abatement must be made from the earnest language, which was employed by some good men of that period, in portraying the character of the times. The pious old people, 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 too strictly interpret.

Before 1680, there was unquestionably a very manifest difference in the manners and morals of the population, taken as a whole, and as compared with the communities of 1640; when one might spend a year in going from place to place, and "not see a drunkard, or hear an oath, or see a beggar."* There may have been some reaction of the strict enforcements of the former generation; but a prolific source of evil was the irreligious example of immigrants from Europe, and the fashionable gaiety and corruption, which had such fearful ascendancy in England, after the restoration of Charles II.; and which the "lovers of pleasure more than the lovers of God," in the colonies, were but too willing to imitate.

In doctrinal opinions, the professed faith of the clergy was unchanged. At a meeting of a Synod in May, 1680, the "confession of faith, consented to by the Congregational churches of England, which, ex-

nant was adopted, at the time when the church renewed the original covenant of 1629. *That special covenant* of 1637 has since been published, by Cotton Mather and others, as if adopted in 1629; although the very preamble refers to a previous covenant, and quotes the substance in due form! At the formation of the church, there was both a "Confession of Faith" and a "Covenant."

* Statement of Thomas Lechford, who, with the prejudices of the Church Establishment in England, resided here a few years previous to 1641.

cepting a few variations, was the same agreed to by the reverend assembly at Westminster, and afterward, by the General Assembly of Scotland, was approved, with a few variations, as the faith of New England." The Synod chose to affirm as their own the confessions of faith adopted in Europe, "that so they might not only with one heart, but with one mouth, glorify God and our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Not a minister could have been ordained in any church of the "fathers," unless he had been of "sound or orthodox sentiments." Differing on minor points, as they may have done, they preached every where the same unalterable truths of evangelical theology.†

The fact was, 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 "enemy" had sown, 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

* *Magnalia*, Vol. II. Morse and Parish's *His. N. E.*, pp. 256-8.

† It was to a few individuals among the laity, that Edward Johnson must have referred, who, as early as 1654, had published the fact, that, besides the *Antinomians*, *Familists*, *Conformitants*, and *Seekers*, "there were *Arrians*, *Arminians*, and *Quakers*." It is not unlikely, however, that, before the close of the century, some of the clergy had a strong leaning to the views of Arminius, who, it has been shrewdly remarked, "*was no Arminian!*"—*See Bib. Rep. 1st. Series, Vol. I., Arminianism.*

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 ere long 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.”

III. FRANCIS WORCESTER, son of Samuel,

lived also at Bradford. He was born in 1662. When bereaved of his father, he was not too young to have received permanent impressions from a piety, so marked and memorable. In mental powers he was less gifted; but he was fond of reading, and made good use of his means of improvement.

One of his sons, who long survived him, bequeathed

to his posterity, an affectionate tribute to his character, in some familiar verses of family chronicle. Upon the authority of filial witness, it can be said of him, that he esteemed the Scriptures a treasure of wisdom, more precious than all earthly riches. The Lord's day was peculiarly his delight; and in remembering to keep it holy, he was as exemplary as any of the most scrupulous of the Puritan fathers. "The house of God" he revered as "the very gate of heaven." At the sacramental table, he could "discern the Lord's body," as is the privilege of those, who "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

He was one who could discriminate gifts from graces, and who could not be well satisfied with sermons, in which the preacher did not give proof of personal or experimental knowledge of the "life hid with Christ in God." For several years, at least, before his death, he seems to have noticed in some preachers, what he could not but consider very great defects in their statements or apparent views, particularly in regard to the nature, means, and evidences of regeneration. These were too vague and indefinite, if not radically erroneous; and failed to meet the earnest demands of his own enlightened understanding. It is not strange, therefore, that he greatly loved and honored all such, as seemed to him, theologically and personally sound "in the faith once delivered to the saints." Pious neighbors and acquaintances were much endeared to him. The company and communion of all, whom he regarded as his kindred in Christ, he enjoyed with the liveliest emotions, and especially in the last years of his life.

As an inn-holder, he was a man, at whose house the godly always found a fellow-traveller to a better country. All who dealt with him in business, had occasion to testify to his habits of "truth and justice.—" He loved," it is said, "to see a man, manly."

Of all others, his children had reason "to call him blessed." He was "a kind and tender father," and was none the less anxious for them, in consequence of the frequent alarms from the near approach of the murderous savages. These, in 1708, slaughtered a hundred persons at Haverhill, within a very short distance of his home; beside carrying away many women and children, as captives. But such perils were of far less account with him, than the vicious and irreligious practices, which had been gaining strength in the more populous towns, and were fast spreading a baneful influence through the interior settlements.

He was "faithful in all his house;" holding fast to the covenant with Abraham. His children heard his daily prayers; received his constant instructions in the fear of the Lord; and witnessed his shining example of sincere and consistent godliness. On the Sabbath, they were required to refrain from all words, as well as deeds, which would savor in the least of irreverence, levity, or worldliness. It gave him great offence, to notice any deviation from the most hallowed observance of the sacred hours.

In his family religion and in all his christian aims, he was sustained by the sympathy and co-operation of his pious wife. The same had doubtless been true of his father and grandfather, but of whom in this respect no such direct and reliable testimony has been

obtained. His domestic relations were most happy. And rigid, as some might regard him, in his faith and his practice, he was of a cheerful temper, and very agreeable as a companion.

In his opinion, it was of vast importance, that Christians should appear to the world, as if they held their faith, with a joy which the world can neither give, nor take away. It was his aim, therefore, to “live a pleasant, even life,” as being most for the honor of Christ; avoiding, on the one hand, all melancholy and moroseness, while on the other, he set his face like a flint, against a

“Jesting, joking, laughing way.”

At the age of forty-three, he had a dangerous attack of hemorrhage, from which he never entirely recovered. He suffered repeatedly from the same cause, and was thus obliged to confine himself to his house, much of the time, for several years before his decease. He died somewhat suddenly, from a distressing fever. His house had long been set in order.—His evangelical books, his chosen friends, and above all, his Bible, and his nearness of communion with God, made his last days the brightest in his “path of peace.”—When he thought his hour had come, his children were gathered to his bed, that they might hearken to his dying counsels, and be commended with their sorrowing mother to Him, who hath said—“Leave thy fatherless children, and let thy widows trust in me.”—His strength held out a few days more. On the night of his departure, repeated prayers were offered in his room, by christian friends, who rejoiced to be with him in his triumphs over “the king of terrors.” He died, Dec. 17, 1717. And his last utterance—“*My dear Redeemer*”—was in

death the appropriate sign and seal of the life, which he had lived by faith in the Son of God.

“ The chamber where the good man meets his end,
Is privileged beyond the common walks
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven.”

The character of this humble and happy Christian affords an instructive illustration of the kind and form of piety, which many others also, at the close of the 17th and the commencement of the 18th century, were endeavoring to preserve and perpetuate, that the exalted purposes and most cherished wishes of the New England fathers might not be frustrated and forgotten. While living, they were “ready always to give an answer to every man who asked a reason of the hope, that was in” them; and when dead, they continued to speak of “Jesus and the Resurrection.”

IV. REV. FRANCIS WORCESTER, SON OF FRANCIS, of Bradford, was born, June 7, 1698. He was thus of the fourth generation, in the direct line from the Rev. William, of Salisbury, to the Rev. Samuel, of Salem. It was his desire to associate his memory with that of his venerated clerical ancestor, which, as much as any other motive, may have induced him to restore the orthography of the family name, which his father and grandfather had not been desirous or careful to preserve.

Himself being witness, he was in very early childhood a subject of deep religious convictions. This was a natural effect of the careful christian nurture, with which he had been favored. He accuses himself of having been a forward and wayward child, and “vile” withal.

“ My childhood’s sins, I do bewail ;
For early they did much preveil.”

We must interpret him theologically. His autobiographical description of his religious experience, accords in every line with what has so often been related of the "law-work."

" O sad the days and months I found,
When much despair beset me round."

Before he had any "rejoicing in hope," his convictions had much subsided. In an alarming sickness, he was again awakened. He saw himself, as never before, a sinner, who must inevitably and justly perish, if he did not find mercy of the Lord.

" God showed to me my wretched state ;
How that my sins were very great ;
God did his Son reveal to me ;
And by his Spirit drew me free."

After obtaining some relief, his exercises were of the same nature, as those which the incomparable Bunyan has so graphically portrayed. With alternations of joy and fear, light and darkness, he moved onward, until established in a more even, uniform, and generally happy frame of spirit.—At times, his "joy in God," and his views of the glory of Christ, were thrilling and transporting.

" God gave to me a steady peace ;
I on his word did sweetly feast ;
His word was sweeter then to me,
Than honey-comb can ever be.

Then did I love God's word and day,
And did in secret love to pray ;
O this blest duty ! O how sweet
In secret, Jesus there to meet.

God hath me fed with heaven's food ;
That is a sweet and blessed good :
Some tastes he hath sent down to me,
That make me long above to be."

At the age of twenty, and a short time before his father's peaceful end, he made a profession of faith in his father's God and Saviour. It was with "the answer of a good conscience toward God," and not in the manner, which had now become quite common, particularly in the western part of Massachusetts, where most of the ministers and churches accorded to the doctrine of "the venerable Stoddard," of Northampton, viz. "that unregenerate persons ought to partake of the Lord's Supper."

The doctrine assumed, that the Lord's Supper is a means of regeneration, and that it is "impossible to distinguish the regenerate from the unregenerate, so as to admit the former, and exclude the latter." Unhappily, this fallacious view of the subject was adopted by some of the best ministers; and the doctrine of Stoddard, whose godly sincerity was above suspicion, spread rapidly, although chiefly, as would be presumed, in those churches, which had followed the recommendation of the misguided Synod of 1662. So far as received, the responsibility relative to church-membership was singularly changed. Instead of requiring proof of fitness to partake of the Lord's Supper, "the church was obliged to convict the applicant of a scandalous life, or of heresy, or admit him to full communion."

It has sometimes been said, as if a reliable tradition, that Mr. Stoddard himself had had a religious experience, which would make a belief of his doctrine very plausible, if not, in his own judgment, unquestionable. He appears to have been *fully persuaded in his own mind*. But it ought to be more generally understood, that he was not the first of the New England clergy

to admit persons to the Lord's table, without evidence of piety.*

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 is 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.

The new doctrine 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 dis-

* In the "Annals of Salem," (Vol. II., 591,) it is stated, that in "1699, Dec. 30., Messrs. Higginson and Noyes [of the First Church] write to the members of the Brattle-Street Church, in Boston, who had published a declaration. They complain of this production, as *too loose in doctrine, in the ordinance of baptism, and in admission to the communion*. They desire its authors not to be promoters of schism."

Twenty years earlier, or in 1679, the Reforming Synod speak of the practice in question, as already so common, as to be justly accounted one of the reasons for the judgments of God upon the people.—On this general subject of *Stoddardeanism*, see S. E. Dwight's "Life of Pres. Edwards," Wisner's Hist. Old South Ch. in Boston," Baird's "Religion in America," New Englander, Vol. IV.

tinguished 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.

It was the hope of Mr. Stoddard and other pastors, that great additions would be made to the churches. The immediate effect of opening wide the door of access to the Lord's table, may have been such as to encourage them in their error. But it was soon demonstrated, as it has been since, in other circumstances, particularly in connection with "Liberal Christianity,"—that the more free and unrestricted the terms of church-membership, the less, and still less and less, will be the number of applications; while the number of admissions is always likely to be multiplied, and not at all diminished, by a consistent and strict adherence to the principles and practice of the original churches of New England.*

There was certainly a marked decline of spiritual religion, in the New England churches, from about 1700 to 1740. The admission of unconverted persons to church-membership, tended, indubitably, to the settlement of unconverted pastors. Such there were, it is to be feared, and no inconsiderable number. They were men of serious deportment, orthodox in profession and speculation, and carefully attentive to the ordinary services of pastoral duty. But they were

* At the time of the great earthquake, in 1727, there was such a consternation, that, in many places, the people were disposed to rush into the churches in throngs. "Very few came to me then," says Mr. Prince, of the Old South Church, Boston,—“under deep convictions of sin, or with the inquiry, ‘What shall we do to be saved;’ but rather to signify that they had such a sense of their duty to come to the Lord's table, *that they dare not stay away any longer.*”

not "ministers of the New Testament," as Barnabas was, who was "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith;" and it could not be said of their ministrations, that "much people were added *unto the Lord.*"

Great anxiety was felt by some of the godly pastors and lay brethren. Before Cotton Mather's death in 1728, the declension of vital piety was so extensive and alarming, as to warrant the opinion, that, "in forty years more, should it continue to make progress as it had done, convulsions would ensue, in which *churches would be gathered out of churches.*" The declension was signally arrested; but the experience of Massachusetts, a century later, has proved that the words of that distinguished divine were as true, as if indited by "the spirit of prophecy." In his "Prognostications of the future state of New England," he refers us to the fate of the ancient town of Amyclæ, in Italy, in which the inhabitants, after some false alarms, were forbidden to believe any report of the enemy's coming, and were in consequence easily overpowered, when the enemy *did* come; because no one gave warning, or, if warning was given, no one prepared himself for the battle. "*Corruptions will grow upon this land, and they will gain by silence. It will be so invidious to speak of them, that no one will dare do it, and the fate of Amyclæ will be ours.*" Was ever prediction more exactly fulfilled?

The works of Emlyn, as well as of Whitby and Taylor, had been imported, and their "leaven" had begun to have its legitimate operation, in eastern Massachusetts, for some years before the middle of the last century. Something more than Arminianism seems to have been suspected, in some instances;

although no one of the pastors is known to have been accused of being a Socinian, or even an Arian. There is indirect evidence also, that the examination of candidates for settlement had become less thorough and searching, than was safe for the churches.*

But as in other countries and other ages, so now in New England, it was seen, in a remarkable manner, that "WHEN THE ENEMY SHALL COME IN LIKE A FLOOD, THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD SHALL LIFT UP A STANDARD AGAINST HIM." An instrument of most formidable opposition to the doctrine and practice of Stoddard, and to all the most insidious and dangerous corruptions of the evangelical system of "the fathers," was raised up in his grand-son, JONATHAN EDWARDS; who, as the greatest theologian and metaphysician of his own age or any other, commenced his renowned career in the very place, where his much respected grand-parent had proclaimed and ably defended his lamentable errors.

In 1734, he entered into the controversy, respecting Arminianism, which had become very general in the churches of that region. A course of sermons on justification by faith, with kindred topics, such as the necessity of the Spirit's influences, was blessed of God with a marvellous accompanying of convictions and conversions. A similar awakening or revival was experienced elsewhere, both in Massachusetts and Connecticut. "The work in Northampton was confined

* "July 9, 1730. A Committee was appointed in New North Church, [late Dr. Parkman's] Boston, "to examine whoever might be a candidate for settlement, concerning his christian principles, both doctrinal and disciplinary;" and they say—"Forasmuch as several important doctrines of Christianity are vigorously opposed by *Deists, Socinians, Arians, and Arminians*, the Committee will particularly demand a most explicit confession of his faith."—*Quoted in Result of Groton Council, 1827.*

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 fearful 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 Savior 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, was extensively read, and exerted a powerful influence.

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."

The Rev. Francis Worcester was educated in the belief of the same doctrines, as Edwards preached with such effect at Northampton, and David Brainerd, at the same time, among the Pagan Indians of New Jersey. His experimental views of the Gospel were in entire harmony with theirs. He was a Calvinist of "the strictest sect;" and his also was "the reproach of Christ," in the contemptuous appellation of the **NEW LIGHTS.***

* "New Lights" was a stigma, which some clergymen of high standing did not scruple to use, in their opposition to the "Great Awakening." In Germany, those who sympathized with such men, as Spener, Francke,

It was not his privilege to prepare for the ministry, according to the usage, which from the first had required a regular course of collegiate studies.* He learned the trade of a blacksmith, and employed himself as such, until thirty-four years old. But his early discipline under the parental roof, and his continued exertions in acquiring the most useful knowledge, had nourished and expanded "the power of thought." He was thoroughly read in the Scriptures, and prompt in his references and quotations. A diligent use had been made of a good family library, for that day; and perhaps his "profiting appeared to all," quite as

Anton, Breithaupt, &c., had long been reproached as *Pietists*; while in England, the followers of Wesley, had been derided as *Methodists*, for the same reasons, as gave such currency to the appellation, "New Lights," in New England.

"Alas! in how many places, even among Protestants," says the candid and estimable Dr. Scott, "is a minister who inculcates the great doctrines of Christianity, as stated at the Reformation, accused of preaching a *new religion*, and bringing strange things to the ears of the people! Indeed, everything is *new* to the *ignorant*, as it is to a *child*, however long and extensively it has before been known: and such charges proclaim, either the *ignorance*, or the *enmity to the truth*, of those who bring them."—*Notes*, Hos. x: 11, 12.

* "It had been as unnatural," said Ed. Johnson, "for a right New England man to live without an able [i. e. a well educated and godly] ministry, as for a smith to work his iron without a fire." New England is immeasurably indebted to such a ministry, as did not shrink from the discussion of the highest or the deepest "mysteries" of divine science; but has been ready to encounter every objection of the candid or the "contentious," and vindicate the cardinal doctrines of the "Westminster Confession," upon the strictest principles and rules of evidence and logic, and with the most thorough investigation of *the facts*, according to the Baconian method.

"You Scotch are a strange people. * * What good does all your theology do you?"—"Independently altogether of religious considerations," I replied, "it has done for our people what all your societies for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and all your Penny and Saturday Magazines, will never do for yours; it has awakened their intellects, and taught them how to think. The development of the popular mind in Scotland is a result of its theology."—*Hugh Miller's "First Impressions of England and its People."*

plainly as that of many others, whose means of intellectual and moral culture were far greater. He has recorded of himself, that it was no task "to give attendance to reading;" while his habitual preference led him to

" Such books as tended to give light
Into such things as are divine."

When once asked what commentaries he most used, he answered, "the BIBLE. I make the Bible interpret itself; one part explaining another part." Throughout his life, he showed the profoundest reverence for the unadulterated and unsophisticated instructions of the Word of God.* He wielded the "sword of the Spirit," with the fearless and unsparing energy of a Boanerges.

An important means of his usefulness was derived from his domestic relations. His wife was a pattern of loveliness and godliness. A grand-daughter, who deceased in 1850, well remembered her, as "a comely woman, of great piety, and very affectionate." She fulfilled, in every part, the inspired description of "the woman that feareth the Lord."—"Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

At the time of her husband's license to preach, in 1732, they had been married twelve years, and had four children. The objections which this circumstance alone would have pressed upon their minds, in view of so great a change in their mode of life, and certainly upon the minds of their relatives and friends,

* One folio volume of a valuable commentary on the Scriptures, which he must have had from his father's library, and which bears the marks of *hard* service, is now in sight at this present writing.

could not easily have been overcome. The subject was under consideration, for several years, before he resolved to go forward.

It is much to his credit, that he was duly authorized to offer himself a candidate for settlement in the ministry. Without a diploma from Harvard or Yale, or an equivalent, he could not have obtained license to preach, unless the ecclesiastical body granting it, had been decidedly of the opinion, that his abilities and piety were sufficient to constitute an exception to the common rule. It is thought, also, that the urgent want of more preachers, who felt "the love of Christ constraining," was a leading motive in changing his occupation, when such an experiment was so extremely rare, if indeed it were not without example. Still he is not supposed to have thought lightly of his talents; nor to have been unwilling to remember, that he was the first of the family to wear the consecrated mantle of his revered "forefather," of Salisbury.

He was ordained as pastor of the Second Church, in Sandwich, Mass., in 1735; the year, it will be noted, in which the Spirit of God was so manifested at Northampton. The divine blessing attended his earnest and ardent ministrations, in public and private. In course of a few years, he was permitted to receive into the church under his care, and from a small community, upwards of a hundred, upon a profession of their faith in Christ, and as having "passed from death unto life."

His greatest success was among that class of people, it may be presumed, who thought little of classical learning, but more of the "unction," which testified the speaker's own sympathy with "the mind of the Spirit." Like others since, they may have under-

valued liberal studies and accomplishments; but as did thousands, at the same period, in America and in Europe, they welcomed to their hearts the words of salvation, though from lips "rude and unlettered."* When hungering for "the bread of life," they had stood before the accredited stewards "of the mysteries of the kingdom;" and had gone away no better satisfied, than if "stones" had been given them. If to such, an Edwards, or a Tennent ministered, it was as if an angel had appeared.

In addition to unwearied labors among his own people, at Sandwich, Rev. Francis Worcester preached in many other places, with evident tokens of the blessing of God. "I loved to preach," he said, "both night and day." During the period of the "Great Awakening," few pastors could have enjoyed more, or have given glory to God with a more fervent spirit. Equally removed in his sentiments and practice, on the one hand, from those who "offered strange fire unto the Lord," and on the other, from those who more than doubted the desirableness of the Revival, he enrolled his name among the signatures to "The Testimony and Advice of an Assembly of Pastors of Churches in New England, at a meeting in Boston, July 7, 1743,—occasioned by the late happy Revival of Religion in many parts of the land." His name was there written, without any qualification as to "the substance, scope, and end." †

* The cultivation of style, however, was not much an object of attention, among the best educated.—*Dwight's Life of Edwards*, p. 601.

† "The Great Awakening," &c., by Joseph Tracy.

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,

No inconsiderable part of that which now makes the true glory of New England, and affords the brightest promise of the world's hastening and approaching salvation, may confidently be ascribed to "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power," in that "happy Revival of Religion." Those who had the best means of judging, it has been recorded, estimated the number of true converts, as proved by their subsequent lives, at 30,000, in New England alone, when the whole population was but 300,000; beside many thousands more among the Presbyterians of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the more southern settlements. A similar operation would add to the churches in Massachusetts, within the next three years, more than 90,000 persons, young and old, and of such as would continue to sustain a christian character; and to the churches throughout the Union, more than TWO MILLIONS!* No marvel, that Edwards so rejoiced in the belief, that the millennium is 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.

which had given the enemies of God much occasion to blaspheme. And of about 175 churches in Massachusetts, at least one half were friendly to the Revival; while a large part of the rest should not be considered as in opposition.

* The heathen, in different parts of the country, shared largely in the blessings of that remarkable visitation of the Spirit. See *Notes, Wisner's Hist. Old South, &c.* pp. 111-112. "Vast numbers of Indians have, to all appearance, been called out of darkness into marvellous light."

Among other preparatives of the Revival, it is interesting, at the present time, to know, that many thousands of bibles, tracts, and evangelical books, had been distributed by a kind of *colportage*, particularly in the colonies south of New England. This work was done, chiefly, under the auspices of the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," which originated in 1698; and was formed, as Bishop Burnet observes, after the example of the Dissenters, whose missionary labors and success in America had been noticed by some pious clergymen with devout admiration.

Some difficulties having arisen in the Second Church, at Sandwich, as in other churches,—a Council, in 1745,* advised the dismissal of the pastor. To this advice, he acceded, and both the Council and the Church commended him to the churches generally, in a manner which was very grateful to his feelings.

About a year afterwards, he removed to Exeter, N. H., and subsequently to Plaistow. In 1750, he took up his residence in Hollis, which had then been incorporated but fourteen years; and had hardly ceased to be “the forest of Nissitissit,” from which in times of peril and want, wives and mothers “left their husbands and children, and rode to Andover, Woburn, and Chelmsford, to procure sustenance for their families, and returning, swam their horses over the Nashua, in the stillness and darkness of night. †

The greater part of his time he employed in preaching, as an evangelist, “wherever he thought that he was called in providence.” ‡ He was in fact a *home missionary*, in the destitute parts of New Hampshire, and in other sections of the country. His services were the same, as those which, a half a century later,

* The year of the famous expedition to Louisburg, in which all classes of the New England people took the deepest interest; and none more than the clergy and the most devout lay brethren, who regarded the issue as of the greatest moment, in respect to their Protestant institutions, which had cost so great a price, and which were now threatened with hopeless destruction, by the Jesuits and the Catholic power of France. It was the first time, as some may not have known, that any considerable number of the descendants of “the fathers,” were directly exposed to the corrupting influence of the people of the old world. The moral habits of *the French* did no good to the New England troops.

† *Centennial Address, Rev. Grant Powers.*—The first family moved into what is now called Hollis, in 1731. The whole population of the State, in 1730, was but 12,000. In 1749, it was nearly 30,000.

‡ Inscription upon the stone, which marks the place of his burial.

were performed under the direction of Missionary Associations. He labored like Paul, "at his own charges;" and like the Apostle also received contributions, believing that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and that it is righteously ordained, that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."*

He preached generally in some of the least favored of all the new settlements, and continued there, for several months at a time, and even a year. His health was too precarious, for a permanent charge. He was so constantly liable to attacks of the asthma, and other maladies, that the labors of an evangelist were all that he could attempt. And to these he may have been specially inclined, from his intimate acquaintance, and, according to his ability, his ardent co-operation with Whitefield.

He accompanied that extraordinary man, in several preaching excursions. His acquaintance with him probably commenced, as early as 1740. When taken suddenly ill, Whitefield said to him, with his accustomed pleasantry;—"Well, Worcester, you must go, and sound *your* 'ram's horn'!" His friend obeyed, and preached from Rev. 1. 7. "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him; and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so. Amen." The discourse was "terribly in earnest,"—as was character-

* He was doing for the destitute in New England the same kind of benevolent service, as that which was very extensively performed, in the Middle and Southern States, by Presbyterian pastors and evangelists, who were responsible to different Presbyteries and Synods.—The missions of the Presbyterian churches, were of immense value, in establishing the institutions of the Gospel, South and West of New England.—*Assembly's Magazine*, 1805.

At this time, the Legislature of Massachusetts aided feeble churches, by grants from the public treasury.

istic of the preacher, when warning of "the wrath to come." Its effect is reported to have been not a little increased, by the simultaneous appearance of the northern lights; which, by their extraordinary brightness, seemed to many a sure token, that the coming of the Lord "in flaming fire" was "nigh at hand, even at the door."

The date of this event has not been ascertained. It is thought, however, to have been as late as September, 1770,—a week or two previous to the death of Whitefield, at Newburyport. And it cannot but be regarded as an interesting reminiscence, which thus brings the grand-parent of the first Corresponding Secretary of the American Board of Foreign Missions, into such a connection with that distinguished herald of salvation, whose ministry was as "life to the dead," to so many thousands in the North and the South; and whose powerful influence in the cause of vital Christianity, was of incalculable effect, in preparing the way for the domestic and foreign missionary enterprises of the last and the present generation.

From the "Great Awakening," to the death of Whitefield, in 1770, and onward for more than twenty years, there was no general revival in the churches. But in many places, there were "times of refreshing;" as we are now permitted to know, every year, more definitely, from the historical sermons, centennial or semi-centennial, or otherwise *occasional*, which have become so common and are so worthy of public attention.

Thus in 1763, there was a revival of religion in the second parish in Ipswich, Mass., under the ministry of Rev. John Cleaveland, which "terminated in the hopeful conversion of more than one hundred souls."

“Sometime in the month of October, (1763,) the Rev. Francis Worcester came to preach to my people one Sabbath, and I supplied his place. He came early in the week, and preached several lectures before the Sabbath, and several after, and took his leave of us with a lecture to young people; and as their attention was roused by his other discourses, several things in this took such fast hold of their consciences, that they could not shake them off.”*

Mr. Worcester is here mentioned, as if laboring somewhere in the vicinity. It was probably in a part of Beverly, called Montserrat, where he was long remembered with much interest, for his preaching and his conversation.

In numerous places, he left a strong impression of his character,—more particularly his earnest, indefatigable devotedness to the kingdom of Christ. His conversational powers made him a pleasant companion, while his rich stores of christian experience imparted a peculiar charm to his familiar intercourse with the friends of the Savior. For common, practical concerns of daily life, he was ever ready with entertaining and instructive suggestions and anecdotes. Many of his remarks were never forgotten; but long after he was dead, were referred to as maxims, or as the reflections of a man of “sound wisdom and discretion.” †

* Hist. Dis., Jan. 1, 1815, by Rev. Robert Crowell.

† It must be more than eighty years, since he preached in Beverly. But it is only a short time ago, that an elderly gentleman quoted a saying, which, in his earlier life, had been repeated in his hearing by one who was then a living witness; and which, as originally applied, was doubtless called to mind by an occasion, such as has not yet ceased to occur. “Old Mr. Worcester used to say, that he had been about a great deal; and according to his observation of the state of people, *the woman has the hardest part of it!*”

At the time of his preaching with such marked effect, in Ipswich, he was sixty-five years old. For almost twenty years longer, he was employed in "the work of an evangelist." It has been said of him; that, "wherever he went to preach, revivals followed."

He loved to go where a good work had begun. A revival was his element. At Ipswich, the church and congregation had been so much affected, by previous means and instrumentalities, that they were in a very favorable state to hear his "rousing" discourses.*

Until quite recently, there were still living some "very aged men," who perfectly remembered his preaching, and while he was an attendant of Whitefield. One of these described him, as evidently inferior to many in learning and taste, but as surpassed by few in his spirit of piety, his zeal for the honor of Christ, and his solemn, earnest, and pungent manifestations of the truth to the conscience and the heart.† Bold as a lion, and neither terrified nor disconcerted by any man's presence, he was yet very affectionate and tender in his exhortations and appeals. He had great success in arresting the attention of the young. They were very naturally attracted and affected, by his personal appearance. In height and breadth of frame, he presented the proportions of a commanding

* As a preparation for that revival, in 1763, Mr. Cleaveland referred to an "agreement" of the church, in 1760. It was—"agreed to spend one day every quarter of the year, in a congregational fasting and praying for the outpouring of God's Spirit upon them, and upon all nations, agreeable to the concert of prayer first entered into in Scotland, some years before; and also to spend part of a day, once a fortnight, in private religious conference; which conference was afterwards held once a week, and several at these meetings appeared to be favored with a remarkable spirit of prayer for the rising generation."

† Hon. Timothy Farrar, who died at Hollis, Feb. 21, 1849, aged 101.

and majestic figure; which, with the intellectual and benignant cast of his eye and countenance generally, added much to his power of address.

An intelligent matron, of nearly ninety years of age, who in her youth sat under his preaching for a year, and often saw him at her father's house, related of him,* that "he was fond of talking of his family, his children, and his grand-children. He said, that there were to be four ministers, grand-sons of his, in one family." The prediction was verified to the letter. But those grandsons were all young, and neither could then have had a distinct purpose or prospect of any other than an agricultural or mechanical calling. The confidence, therefore, of the grand-parent, as thus related, can only be explained by his discovery of talents and tendencies in each of them, which, according to his own example, might never be permanently satisfied with such a mode of life.†

In his "60th year," and when "confined in weakness," he wrote a variety of "meditations in verse," which were published in Boston, in 1759 and 1760. They were written without much effort, and as if the afflicted, but comforted sufferer, could thus obtain a pleasant diversion of his mind, beside being useful, as he hoped, to "christian friends." Some examples in the foregoing pages, may render it quite superfluous to remark, that his metre and rhymes are at best of the order of Bunyan, or rather of "Tate and Brady;" and hence, in more recent days, have been remembered in the family circle, like some of the less fortunate

* At Hardwick, Vt., Aug. 1848.

† The witness who has just been quoted, remarked concerning him, that "he was a very large man, erect in his figure, of a noble presence, and majestic deportment. * * * He was reckoned *very set in his own way*, and hard to turn from it. *He meant to be right*, and he meant to *stick to it!*"

stanzas of the unequalled Dr. Watts. In his "Songs upon Death," there is much of the same sentiment, as in Baxter's "Dying Thoughts," and "Saint's Rest." Such works as that of Edwards on the "Affections," contain no better remedies for "soul complaints," than he has quaintly given, in his "Cordials for the dear Children of God, who mourn under the complaint *for want of faith*; the complaint of a *hard heart*; the complaint of a *stubborn will*; and the complaint *for want of love to God and Christ.*" One of his compositions in the same style, was entitled, "SABBATH PROFANITY, (the most CRYING Sin of New England;) Testified against, by way of Dialogue, Between a Dying Man and his Friend. With a Song for *Sabbath Breakers*, and a Song for *Sleepers at meeting, &c.*" In soberness and in irony, he remonstrates against the growing desecration of the Lord's-day. But it is very noticeable, that all his accusations may be comprised in one class of trespasses alone,—*worldly thoughts and discourse.*—He rebukes and warns, as if his "righteous soul" had been "vexed," like that of Lot in Sodom, in seeing or knowing so much, that was at variance with his own practice, and that of his forefathers.

In many passages, he refers to *Arminian* doctrines, as if they were becoming very prevalent, and ought to be shunned and rebuked by all, who "loved the truth and peace."—Arminianism was now very extensively regarded, as having *a secret alliance with Arianism and Socinianism.*

His "Songs" so gratefully commemorative of his forefathers, so ingenuously descriptive of himself, and so piously admonitory to his descendants, were chiefly written in that same "60th year of his age," when he felt, that he was soon to depart and be with Christ.

They breathe a spirit of fervent faith, and of joy unspeakable. It does not seem possible, that any "man of God" could have ever had a more devout and agonizing desire, for the piety and salvation of his children, and of all his posterity. But he anticipated, that some, if not many of them, would "err from the truth," or through neglect of the "great salvation," would "have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." His recorded expostulations with such, and his lamentations over them, would seem to be no less scriptural, and scarcely less admonitory and solemn, if they had fallen from the lips of one of "the holy men of God," who "of old spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Recovering his health, he "went about doing good," in the manner already described, until he was almost eighty-five years old.—Ready and waiting to depart, he died, Oct. 14, 1783; and was gathered to his burial, as one long prepared for "a crown of righteousness," "at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

One son, bearing the name of *Samuel*, was drowned in early manhood. Another son went to the military post of Oswego, was taken captive, and died at Montreal. Both of these were reputedly pious.—The eldest son, Francis, lived at Plymouth, N. H. He had an undisputed reputation for talents, was a prominent citizen, and a worthy member and officer of the church.—Noah, the youngest and only other, was to his parents, all that his name imports, in its original Hebrew significance. If they could have foreseen their own condition, and his filial piety, they would have exclaimed at his birth: "This same shall comfort us, concerning our work, and toil of our hands."

V. NOAH WORCESTER,

was born at Sandwich, Mass., Oct. 4, 1735, and was an active, enterprising youth, when his father, the Rev. Francis, removed to Hollis. He had very small advantages of education at school. But he had good powers of mind, which, in imitation of his ancestors, he well improved. The ministerial habits of his father, in communion with whom he intimately lived, are also to be remembered, as a quickening influence upon his natural capacity and disposition. And far from being the least worthy of record, is the nurture he received from one of the best of mothers.

At the time when he came to his majority, the fiercely conflicting interests of England and France had produced such a state of things, throughout the northern colonies, that, for "many long years, the father had not cultivated his field in safety, nor had the mother committed her infant charge to rest, but with the most distressing apprehensions."*

Beside the cultivation of the farm, which his father had put into his hands, upon conditions which demanded great industry, he followed the trade of a shoe-maker. Like some others in the same occupations, who have risen to eminence and renown, he had the desire and redeemed time, for extensive reading and profitable reflection. So competent was he for the discharge of public business, that he soon had occasion to devote much of his time to the affairs of the town. His punctuality was most scrupulous. He delayed nothing, for simple convenience. In many instances, it was enough for the people to know his

* Centennial Address at Hollis, 1831.

opinions or preferences, and they would give their votes, as if from his judgment there could be no reasonable appeal. And before thirty years of age, he was respected in the town, as already one of "the ancient men." There was unbounded confidence in his wisdom and integrity.

For fifty-two years, he held the office of a Justice of peace for the County of Hillsborough. He presided at many trials, and, in numerous cases of serious and complicated strife, gave judgment with the happiest effect. Such was his knowledge of the principles of government and law, that he was probably better qualified, than any man of the town, to fill the seat, with which he was honored, in the convention that formed the Constitution of the State.

In the war of Independence he took an earnest part, ready to lay down his life. When his domestic circumstances urgently demanded his presence at home, he marched in mid-winter of 1775-6, at the head of a company, for the re-inforcement of Washington, at Cambridge. His eldest son, who then had little thought of ever writing a "Solemn Review of the Custom of War," was also in the army; had been in the thickest of the fight on Bunker Hill, and was afterwards with the New Hampshire troops under Stark, at Bennington.—His second son, Jesse, though but fifteen years of age, was permitted to join the expedition to Ticonderoga, in 1776; and repeatedly afterwards was enrolled among the indomitable "continentals."

But the father's heart had no congeniality for the scenes of war. He was personally under arms, but a few months. As the head of a family, as a magistrate, and as a leading member of the church, he had

abundant, and far more grateful employment. His interest in the war was that of a strictly religious patriotism,—the same which induced many of the clergy of the first reputation for talents and piety, to attach themselves to their countrymen and brethren in arms.*

Of the frugality, with which he and others lived in those days of endurance, an effective description was given by his son Jesse, at the Hollis celebration in 1831. “I was a stout lad before I had any thing like a surtout, or a great coat, and I never owned a hat worth more than a dollar, or wore any kind of boots, until I had a family. * * * It was thought more of, for my parents to have *tea*, once a week for breakfast, [Sabbath morning] than it now is for some families to have it three times a day. Spoon victuals was the principal support.” From this statement, it will be seen, that the father was in very moderate pecuniary circumstances. But in this respect, he was but one of the many.

He had professed religion, some considerable time before his first marriage, which was in his 23d year. Walking in the fear of God; unblemished in his uprightness; philanthropic in his views and aims; dignified, affable, courteous in his manners; his memory retentive, well-stored, and ready; his utterance prompt, fluent, agreeable, and impressive,—none of his brethren in the church at Hollis, had more ability to stand as “a pillar,” and none of them all was more serviceable to their pastor, in sustaining meetings of social devotion and conference.

In the “gift” of prayer he much excelled; and that

* President Dwight, and Dr. Samuel Spring served as chaplains, before being settled as pastors.

the "grace" was in his heart, all that knew him most sincerely believed.—His clerical friends, of whom he had not a few, esteemed him "mighty in the Scriptures." *These* he was accustomed to search; and pre-eminently because they so "testify of Christ," in whose blood was his only hope of final acceptance. An extended manuscript, embodying the results "of his meditations upon the life of Joseph, considered as a type of Christ, written in a season of illness, when sixty-four years" of age, revised and commended to his children, and friends, under date July, 1799,—affords proof of a very enlightened and intimate acquaintance with the "mind of the Spirit," in the words of "the true God and eternal life." In some parts, he shows a very discriminating knowledge and sincere approval of the sentiments of Hopkinsian Calvinists.*

After a discourse by a young preacher, who had been assisted by him, while pursuing collegiate studies,—he said to some friends,"—"If that young man shall continue to preach in this manner, all the money which has been expended upon his education will be worse than thrown away." And to his face, he afterwards declared, that "Socrates or Cicero would have preached as good a sermon." "Why," said he, "for anything that you said, no one would have ever imagined, that there is any such being in the universe, as our Lord Jesus Christ."—This terrible rebuke he uttered kindly, but truly.

After the publication of his son Noah's "Bible News," in 1810, his mind was somewhat shaken for a

* Of the general state of the times, in respect to religious opinions, and the progress of Arminianism and Arianism, from the close of the revolutionary war, until after the beginning of the present century, some views are reserved for a subsequent chapter.

season, and he yielded to doubts of the strict Trinity of the Godhead. It was natural for him to accord much deference to the opinions and reasonings of a son, in whose piety he had such an entire confidence, and for whose intellect he cherished a very high respect. It was his eldest son, his first-born, and whose character for devoutness and "close walk with God," had had no brighter example in the whole family.* His son Thomas, also, united with Noah, in adopting the theories of the "Bible News;" which, with other concurring influences, made a powerful impression upon the aged parent's long established religious sentiments, concerning the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But he lived to read the able vindication of the faith of the forefathers, by his son Samuel, in 1815. And in the closing years of his life, he appeared, in his daily habits, and in the subjects and spirit of his conversation, as if his practical views of the controverted points of the "great mystery of godliness," had undergone no essential change, in consequence of the very

* When Noah had been in the ministry but a few years, he wrote thus to his father. "I wish, Dear Sir, if you should think it proper, to have you write me by Thomas, and give me some account of the state of your own mind, and your progress in holiness. I cannot say, that I am free from concern for you, lest through the multiplicity of business and the cares of this world, you lose much of the comfort that is to be enjoyed, in a close walk with God. O how important, that the professors of godliness should live in the exercise of a Godlike temper! How important for themselves, and how important with regard to sinners, who are in a Christless state. Sometimes when I am closely attending to the nature of godliness, and realize that to be godly is to be like God, in the temper of our hearts, I am led almost to scruple myself and every body else. Surely there is but little of the conduct of professors, that will pass for godliness, when Christ shall sit as a refiner, and separate the gold from the dross. It is a great thing to live for eternity.—

From your unworthy son,

NOAH WORCESTER."

plausible and sincere, but very deceptive and dangerous speculations in regard to the Sonship of Christ, to which the earnest attention of his declining age had previously been drawn.—At no time was his mind clouded or disturbed, concerning his early and decided convictions of the truth and immeasurable importance of the other evangelical doctrines.

No characteristic of his piety was more prominent, than his holy remembrance of the Sabbath,—in which he but followed in the steps of those who had gone before;—unless it was his constant recognition of providence, for which also a succession of examples had been given him, by his progenitors. He truly “acknowledged God in all his ways,” and it was once remarked by him to a grandson, as the result of long observation,—that he “had never known any one to make great attainments in spiritual life, who was not accustomed very specially to *mark the providence of God towards himself.*”

By two marriages, he was the father of 16 children; ten of whom lived to have families. The sons who gave such celebrity to their name were all children by his first marriage. He was very strict, and very successful, as a parent, who, conscientiously and in love, “*commanded* his household,” that they should “keep the way of the Lord;” until severe visitations of hypochondria, combining with other causes, or circumstances, occasioned an unfavorable relaxation of the firmness and perseverance of his earlier management. His children were very dear to him, and his heart was often burdened to agony, that every one of them, and all that should be born of them, might fear the Lord their God, and work the righteousness of faith. In his family prayers, which abounded in scriptural

allusions, and were often singularly original and felicitous, never formal, monotonous, or in phraseology stereotyped, there was one petition, which, in some mode, would almost invariably be heard: "*that covenant blessings might descend upon his posterity, down to the end of time.*"

"In the last years of his life,"—according to a brief, and very just obituary notice of his character,*—"he was eminent for equanimity and cheerfulness of temper, and for patience under the trials he was called to endure. He retained his mental faculties in a remarkable manner, and possessing an uncommonly retentive memory, he had a fresh recollection of the events of his early life, and was a very cheerful and pleasing companion. He had long contemplated his dissolution, not only with composure but with the animating hopes of the Christian. Several of his last years were doubtless among the happiest of his life."

An extract from a letter of Mrs. D. W. Loomis, a grand-daughter, written in answer to some inquiries, and not with an expectation of its being published, is perhaps the more valuable.

"*Hardwick, Vt., Jan. 15, 1848.*

My dear Cousin:—

* * * Of our venerated grandfather Noah, I retain the most vivid and pleasant recollections; having always lived in the same house with him, from my birth till his death, when I was twenty-one. My earliest recollections of him are happy,—as a being of superior goodness, to whom I was always accustomed to flee for refuge and protection, in any apprehended danger,—as in a thunder-storm; confidently believing that he was *so good*, nothing could hurt me, if I were near him. It was his general practice, I remember, to

* By J. E. Worcester, L. L. D.

sit an hour, from about seven to eight o'clock in the long evenings, in *our* family; and when we heard his footstep and his cane in the passage, my father always rose from his great arm-chair, which he occupied in the corner, and reverently set it out for his father,—and we were all expected to be quiet and attentive. His conversation was interesting and instructive, abounding in anecdotes of the time when he was young,—of the scenes of the revolutionary war,—of individual characters, and of general history. I well remember questions which my eldest brother Jesse proposed to him on this latter subject,—such as, ‘whether he supposed Cyrus was a *good* man?’ &c. I thought in those days, that he knew *almost everything*, and I *now* think, that his knowledge of general history must have been somewhat extensive, as I remember he was a great reader. I remember, too, many discussions on theological subjects, which he used to have with gentlemen, members of the church and others, who were visiting at his house, in which I thought that he, of course, was always right. Above all, I remember him as a *man of prayer*. While he lived, our family were always present, in my father’s absence, and always remembered in his family devotions; and these were *never intermitted*, either in health or in sickness. He had two seasons of severe sickness, from which he was not expected to recover, before his final one; and in all these, while he was able to be lifted from his bed, and placed in his great arm-chair, he worshipped like Jacob, ‘leaning on the top of his staff.’ When unable to do this, he was bolstered up in bed, and supported on pillows, he ‘bowed himself on the bed’s head,’ and commended himself, his family, and all his posterity, to his covenant-keeping God. This was the morning before his death, and I shall never forget that prayer. His grand-children, who were present, were one by one, called to his bedside, and exhorted and admonished. *Me*, I remember, he exhorted, not too confidently to trust to a hope I had just begun to indulge. ‘If your hope is a good one,’ said he, ‘you will find you have just *begun* a warfare, not *ended* it.’ I think

he said, 'I shall never be any better, but I feel no anxiety for the result. My fathers' God is the God, who has led me all my life long,—even to hoar hairs has he carried me, and I am ready to go whenever he calls me.' I watched with him, with another woman, the following night, and he retained full possession of his powers, till the last; and departed just as the day began to dawn.

His habit of secret prayer was very affecting to me in my youth. I observed, that he always went directly from his family devotion in the evening, to the barn. I long wondered why. The gate by which he entered, opened with a creaking sound, and I constantly heard it, and knew it was grand-father; and often marvelled why he went there, especially in the cold winter nights. Uncle J., it seems, noticed and wondered too; and at last to gratify his curiosity, secreted himself near his place of retirement, and heard *himself prayed for*, with an earnestness and importunity which affected him deeply for a time. This he told himself, with a tearful eye, and quivering lip.

As the natural result of this habit of constant communion with God, his spirit grew more mellow and ripe for heaven. This was noticed and remarked on by many. He was constitutionally subject to nervous depression, or hypochondria, which used to produce irritation and peevishness, and impatience of contradiction. But in his latter years, he was always cheerful and serene. Nothing discomposed him, though he had much to try him.

I remember to have heard brother Joseph once speak to him, of the great change in his spirit, in bearing provocation. 'This never grew in *my* nature's garden,' he replied.

Mr. Gould, one of his brethren in the church, spoke of this change after his death, and remarked, that, 'like the sun, he grew larger at his setting.'" * * * *

With good reason, has the question been asked, "Is there any fact more prominent than all others in the

biographies of learned and pious men, than this—that they were blessed with intelligent and virtuous parents, and especially mothers ? ”

“ My father,” says Mrs. L., “ I knew, always felt that he, and all his own brothers and sisters, were quite as much indebted to their *mother*, as to their father, for what was ‘ pure and lovely and of good report ’ in their characters. He took great pains to impress on his children a deep sense of her moral worth.” Mrs. Sarah W. Fox, who outlived all those brothers, “ well remembered her pious counsels, although but eight years old, when she died ; and that as she grew older, many people had said to her, that no woman in Hollis had ever been so deeply and generally lamented.”

Mr. Abraham Taylor, her father, was one of the first four settlers of Hollis. He was a man of great energy and public spirit. As a professing Christian, he permitted none to be in advance of him, in endeavors to promote every good word and work.—His efficiency in erecting a house of God, and in securing the regular administration of the ordinances of the Gospel, gave him a high distinction among the benefactors of the community, in the midst of which he found an early grave. His widow long survived him, “ a widow indeed,”—universally beloved.

With “ a good understanding and a beautiful countenance,” Lydia, their favored daughter, united the highest grace of the female character,—the loveliness of devoted love to Christ. It is but a simple, unvarnished record of the testimony of many witnesses, when it is said of her, in a word, that she was everything to her husband and children, which could be desired in a wife and mother. A model of maternal fidelity, “ her children called her blessed ; ” and through

them, the blessing of many ready to perish, has been hers also.

Her interest for her children was one of the most prominent features of her Christian character. She was assiduous in the use of all her means, to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Much of that instruction, which is now given in primary schools, was imparted to them by herself, amidst her many labors and cares. And on the Sabbath afternoon, particularly, it was her practice to gather all her children around her, that she might teach them the Assembly's Catechism, and give them other lessons of heavenly counsel.*

She died suddenly, July 6, 1772. From a casualty which had befallen her, she had a strong persuasion, that her anticipated confinement would be, as it proved, the period of her days.—Night after night, she rose from her pillow, and with folded arms walked the floor of her chamber, or fell upon her knees, as if in an agony, which could find no relief, but in "the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous." Those who knew most intimately the burdened longings of her spirit, were often reminded after her death, of a prayer which she so earnestly repeated: "O that one of my sons may be a minister of the Gospel!"

It is not supposed, that he who had the name of Hannah's child of answered prayer, had been selected or designated, as her special offering for the sacred office.

* "I believe that if Christianity should be compelled to flee from the mansions of the great, the academies of the philosophers, the halls of legislators, or the throng of busy men, we should find her last and purest retreat with woman at the fireside; her last altar would be the female heart; her last audience would be the children gathered around the knees of a mother; her last sacrifice, the secret prayer, escaping in silence, from her lips, and heard, perhaps, only at the throne of God."—*J. S. Buckminster.*

She had already heard the voice of her eldest son, then in his fourteenth year, leading in the devotions of the family. And her thoughts would very naturally have dwelt upon her first-born, who gave so much promise of future excellence. But her prayer was heard, far beyond all that she asked or thought. And the little one, who, in those hours when eternity was so near, would be peculiarly an object of her maternal solicitude, was destined by her covenant God, to fulfill the largest desire of her heart.

It is very questionable, if there ever was a family, in which the salutary influence of a departed mother was more pervading and permanent. Those who were of age to partake of her instructions and be eye-witnesses of her worth; and those who were too young to know of her, except as they were informed, and as they felt her blessing, as "the dew of Hermon," or "the small rain upon the tender herb,"—were all alike accustomed, after they became heads of families, to speak of her to their children, as if that mother's loveliness and godliness were embalmed in their bosoms, with an undying endearment and gratitude.

Many were the changes, both joyous and grievous, which passed over her husband, before he finished his pilgrimage. It was his delight to see his children and grand-children, and to hear of their welfare. Four of his sons and one son-in-law, were in the ministry. He had carefully noted in the leaves of his Family Bible, the dates of their ordination. Before he died, Aug. 13, 1817, having nearly completed his eighty-second year,—he had noted also the natal day of seventy-seven grand-children.*

* Eighteen grand-children were born after his decease; and of the ninety-five in all, ninety-four were born to six sons and two daughters.

In the record of his Family Bible, he says: "Sept. 1798. I had eighteen children of my own and by marriage, at my table!" As they were then known and located, they were the Rev. Noah Worcester and wife, of Thornton, N. H.; Mr. Jesse Worcester and wife, of Hollis; Mr. John Fox and wife, of Hebron; Mr. Leonard Worcester and wife, of Worcester, Mass.; Rev. Thomas Worcester and wife, of Salisbury, N. H.; Rev. Samuel Worcester and wife, of Fitchburg, Mass.; Mr. David Smith and wife, of Hollis; and Ebenezer, Hannah, David, and James Worcester, who were all in their minority. It was a joyous meeting and a rare spectacle. There were several attempts at such a family meeting, during the nineteen years following; but the venerated sire never again had the happiness of seeing *all* his children "at his table, at one time." Ten years later, they were all living, but one; and two of them had left their secular calling for the ministry. They were now, as a family, far more known.

One part of their exercises and recreations, at the family gatherings, was that of sacred music. They were nearly all excellent singers, and some of them were players on instruments. And such a choir as they made, it would be worth a long journey to see and to hear. A favorite hymn was that beginning,— "All hail the power of Jesus' name;"—which, of course, they sung in the good old tune of "Coronation." While promenading the floor of a large room, in single file, those brothers sustaining their different parts, and accompanied by a few younger voices of the surrounding group, would swell the choral—"CROWN HIM LORD OF ALL,"—with a burst of melody, which reverberates still in thrilling remembrance.

Only one of the children of the grateful sire now remains among the living;* and two only of his children by marriage,† who had the pleasure of participating in those animated scenes.

Of his descendants, seventeen have regularly graduated at college;‡ nearly half of whom entered the ministry. Six others have been in the sacred office. Among those who died early, were some of the most gifted and promising. The survivors are many. They are represented in all the professions, and in the walks of general literature, as well as in agriculture, the useful arts, and mercantile pursuits,—in almost every part of the land, from Maine to Arkansas.

Much more might have been said of the trials of the last of their ancestors, in common,—Noah Worcester, of Hollis. There were times when the words of Eliphaz, if addressed to him, would have seemed not to be “fitly spoken.” But would they not have been most true?—

“Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole. * * In war he shall redeem thee from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. * * * Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, [thy posterity numerous,] and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.”

* Mrs. Hannah Ireland, of Dunbarton, N. H.

† The widows of the Rev. Thomas, and the Rev. Samuel Worcester.

‡ In the Connecticut family of “Wooster,” there were five graduates of Yale College, from 1738 to 1790. But the first name of “Worcester,” upon a College Catalogue, is that of Samuel, at Dartmouth, 1795.

Such was the New England ancestry of the Rev. Samuel Worcester, D. D. Such were the fathers and the mothers, whom, from his infancy, he was taught to honor, and, with a holy zeal by the grace of God, to emulate. One and the same character, essentially, has appeared, from the first to the last in the five generations. In different degrees, and not unmingled with evil, nor unmarred by blemishes, which were personally lamented, there may be ascribed to each an enlightened belief in God and his Word; a confiding recognition of his Providence, in all things; a fervent spirit and a constant habit of devotion; an undeviating reverence for the Sabbath and every institution of the Gospel; an irreproachable veracity and honesty; an erect manliness and an undaunted moral courage; with an inflexible adherence to convictions of duty, and a benevolent forwardness to multiply and extend, in every appropriate and practicable manner, the "glory and virtue" "of the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

From facts that have been brought to light, as incidental results of a course of inquiry relative to one line only, it is quite certain, that other lines from the same forefather, at Salisbury, would furnish examples of similar godliness, in successive generations. And extraordinary as at the present day it may seem, it is believed to be strictly true, that, when the subject of the Memoir before us, was in the tender years of his childhood, he could not, in the whole circle of his own parental relationship, have put his eye upon a single individual, who had come to mature manhood, without a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, as the atoning and Almighty Savior of the world!

But in all this, and in more also, which is yet to be

presented in a nearer view of the influences of ancestry and of family, there were others of his generation—the sixth from the Pilgrims of Plymouth and the Puritans of New England,—who were no less favored by traditionary and living examples of “the excellency of the knowledge of Christ,” and of “the mercy of the Lord upon them that fear him.” There are other families, and the number cannot be small, from whose genealogies a corresponding witness could be obtained, in illustration and confirmation of the promises of God “to such as keep his covenant.”

Would that all had been such! And would that none of “the children’s children” *of such*, were now giving occasion to be reminded, and to be admonished never to forget, that, from the beneficent ordinance of Him, to whom all the glory belongs, 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 Christian; 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!

CHAPTER II.

Personal appearance. Dangerous sickness in infancy. Early indications of disposition and future character. General view of his intellectual powers and tendencies. Family education. The elder brothers and sisters. Fraternal and other reminiscences. Teaches school. Revival of religion, 1786. Hopeful conversion. Happy impressions from the triumphant death of a sister.

“ We delight to find in the early lives of eminent men some glimpses of the future, some indications of their after greatness. * * We see every day how anxiously men look for individual traits in the childhood of great men.”
—*Neander*.

THE results of the most fortunate training depend greatly upon original endowments. There are quarries of marble, upon which the sculptor would not look, for a moment. He who ordained the heavens to declare his glory, has established such a connection of affinities or correspondencies between the material and the immaterial of our complex organization, that our judgments of intellect and character are involuntarily affected, by the countenance and the frame of the external man. And is there not an important influence upon an individual himself, from advantages or disadvantages of person?

If a youth has grown faster than the average of his coevals, more is always expected of him. In general, he is constrained to attempt the more. And whoever, at his entrance into the arena of public life, has an acknowledged superiority of physical structure, can hardly be unconscious of a reflex operation upon his feelings and efforts, his motives and his manners.

In all which, at a glance, instinctively inspires respect, or which, upon more close observation, is suited

to conciliate warm esteem, Dr. Worcester, from his youth upward, was eminently favored. It was his privilege to inherit from his ancestry "a bodily presence," which was "strong" and commanding,—never "weak," even when "compassed with infirmity;" and which, having contributed its full measure in the formation of his character, was afterwards inseparably associated in the minds of thousands, with that power of influence, which was always the most indisputable, when most resisted or assailed.

In features and expression of countenance, Dr. Worcester very strikingly resembled his honored mother. At the age of twenty, he was recognized as her son, by a friend, who greatly revered her memory; who had never before seen him, unless when he was an infant; and who, at the time and in the place, had not the smallest reason to suspect his parentage, except the maternal likeness.

When thus agreeably recognized, he had reached the full stature of his father, which, like that of his grandfather, was six feet. He was then somewhat slender, but firm, erect, and athletic. He was never corpulent; although at one time he feared that he might be. When in his full manhood, his finely-turned head, his broad chest, stately movement, fair complexion, benignant smile, and thoughtful, earnest brow, made him an object of marked attention to strangers.

He had been settled at Fitchburg, but five years, and was not yet thirty-two years old, when he preached as a candidate, at the Tabernacle, in Salem. It has often been pleasantly told of him, that, while walking with a friend, at a regimental parade, his military bearing attracted the eyes of many, and he was really taken for "one of the old continental officers." For

about six years, he had worn a tri-cornered hat, with his hair in a lengthened cue behind;* which, with small-clothes, shoes with buckles, and, perhaps, gaiters, in the style of the old provincial clergy, made the difference of at least a score of years, in aid of the characteristic dignity of his person.

The miniature accompanying this volume, is from an admirable portrait, which was taken of him, when he was about forty-seven years old.† It is not easy for most persons, to conceive of the original as so young a man. Like others of his family, he had a maturity of growth which is uncommon, and what may be termed a precocity of venerableness. If he had died at forty, instead of fifty, his endeared associate, Mr. Evarts, might still have spoken as he did, of his "revered form."

When very young, however, it was quite improbable, that he would ever attain to the stature and goodly proportions of his ancestors. About a year previous to the death of his mother, and when he was but six or eight months old, he was so dangerously ill, that, for more than two weeks, there was no hope for his life.

The father was early conscious of a very strong affection for this son. He has been heard to say, that, if he had any more of interest in Samuel than in either of his other children, which, perhaps, was true, there was one special reason, "He felt, that he had received *him* a second time from the hand of God."

It was several years before the son became healthy.

* He afterwards wore his hair in rolls, or tied up in papers, neatly prepared, until 1811, while on a journey to attend a meeting of the General Assembly, at Philadelphia. His appearance without the "long hair" which he had worn, in opposition to Paul's views of decorum, occasioned some stir; as some of the people thought it a sign that *he had become a Presbyterian.*

† By S. F. Morse, Esq., who is now so celebrated by the magnetic telegraph.

He needed and received much kind attention from his new mother. But her cares were many, and there was occasion for the aid of his eldest sister, who, with her mother's name, partook largely of her spirit. Ever watchful and ready to promote the happiness of all in the family, she greatly loved the brother, who so reminded her of the departed, and whose feebleness and amiableness enlisted her most affectionate sympathies. She taught him, as a mother, his earliest lessons; sung to him the soothing and cheering songs of the "pure in heart;" counselled him, and prayed for him, as if her joy on earth could never be consummated, until she had evidence that he was truly a child of God.

Her interest in his improvement and happiness was of incalculable value, when his disposition was so liable to suffer from the effects of bodily infirmity. To her he was indebted, as he often testified, for his first religious impressions. And without question, the more amiable traits of his earlier and riper years, were much to be attributed to her gentleness and watchfulness; not least of all to those constant melodies of her sweet voice and spirit.

To this estimable sister, he became exceedingly attached. "When I was a little boy," he is remembered to have said,—“I have laid for hours, and cried, when I heard her groan in the night, with a severe tooth-ache; and I have covered up my head with the bed-clothes, for I knew she would feel so much worse, if she were to hear me.”

Such was the amiableness of his childhood, and the sympathetic tenderness of his sensibility. He made friends of all, by the mildness of his temper, his thoughtful activity, and his varied exertions to excel. When at play on the floor, he exhibited the germ of

those habits of deliberation, and forecast, of patience in application, and of fortitude under discouragements, which so broadly marked the character of his public life. "If he was amusing himself with toys," it has been related, "or anything else which commonly occupies the attention of children, and could not immediately suit them to his taste, he would not become passionate, and throw them away, as most children do; but sit down, and patiently work upon them, until he made them please his mind."

From a child he was fond of a book; as much, perhaps, as any of the family. He had a superior memory, and acquired knowledge with ease. His apprehensions were quick, but considerate; and the bias of his mind that of deep reflection and logical argument. As he grew in years, his range of reading was not extended or miscellaneous enough, to expose him to any great temptations of rapidity and superficialness. In original imaginative talent, he was by no means wanting; and his poetic vein enabled him, during his academic and collegiate studies, to produce very tolerable lyrics, and some quite successful dramatic imitations.

Naturally, he was not at all deficient in animal spirits, nor disinclined to merriment. He laughed heartily at the ludicrous. And with a dry humor and a ready wit, he was not slow, in his boyhood, nor at times in his manhood, to make others laugh no less heartily. If he could play hard, he could labor and study the harder.—And no better proof could be given of his kindness of disposition, than his generous treatment of his associates, and his cautious indulgence of a power of satire and sarcasm, which he was seen to possess, at a very early period of his intellectual development.

He had a delicate ear for music, vocal and instrumental. It was a delight to him to sing, and he early became a distinguished proficient in the art. His brother Noah had learned to play the fife, so that he was "fife-major" at Bennington. He himself learned also, and when but a youth performed to great acceptance, in the military companies of his native town. There are those living who saw him frequently, when he appeared, as a musician of the citizen soldiery. After he had been settled in Salem, some years, a fife was once put into his hands, for a trial of his powers. It was, perhaps, while he was teaching a singing-school. He could still make good music, but pleasantly apologized for doing no better, by saying that his "fingers were not as nimble as formerly."

Thomas, the next older to Samuel, always claimed the place of seniority. But they grew up side by side, each profiting the other, by their congenialities and their diversities. Thomas partook largely of the fluency and fire of his paternal grand-father; was nervously predisposed, and a little too impatient in difficulties; was prompt, industrious, and successful as a self-taught scholar; and was very graceful in manner, affable, and companionable. He was naturally eloquent, and in some respects surpassed each of his brothers, as a popular speaker, while less profound or metaphysical than either of them. His voice was like a clarion.

Leonard lived with a maternal uncle, four years, after his mother's death; and in his eighteenth year became an apprentice of Isaiah Thomas, at Worcester. Though perhaps not so active or mature in his boyhood, as some of the others, he had a gifted mind, which, during his apprenticeship, both concealed itself

and revealed itself, after the example of Franklin, in the types of the printing office. He was a most dutiful son, a brother beloved, and his example in youth was such, as nourished no thorns for the pillow of his hoary head.

Noah and Jesse, the two eldest of the five brothers, were quick to learn, forward, emulous, and irreproachable. In the father's and grand-father's absence, Noah led in family prayer, when but thirteen years old.—The other sons were called upon in like manner, in their youth, to maintain the family religion. They were all taught to feel, that as a matter of course, they *must* fear God, and devoutly honor his Name. And long before they had become members of any church, by a profession of faith, and before they indulged any hope of themselves as inwardly renewed by the grace of God, they did not decline, when requested to lead the family in prayer, and to give thanks “in the breaking” of their “daily bread.” Such was the custom in families, which perpetuated the covenant godliness of the fathers of New England.

In a very reserved and brief auto-biographical sketch of his life, for the private eye of his children and grandchildren, Leonard remarks :—

“Soon after my grand-father's death, when I was in my seventeenth year, my father, having occasion to be from home some days, and being unwilling that family worship should be intermitted, enjoined it upon me, as the oldest male member of the family at home, to lead in family worship, during his absence; to which I consented, and continued to do so, whenever he was absent, so long as I remained in the family. It was, however, at that time, at least it was at Hollis, no uncommon thing for family worship, to be regularly maintained by those, who did not make a public profession of religion.”

A similar testimony might have been given by Thomas and Samuel ; each having been called in like mannèr to the same service.

Noah said of himself, when speaking of parents and grand-parents, in respect to religious instruction:—“ All united to make early and deep impression on my mind in favor of religion, and against vice ; and in those efforts they were so far successful, that my religious impressions were of the earliest date of anything I can remember, excepting a burn which I received, when I was about two years old.” So conscientious was he, that he was exceedingly distressed, at five years old, in feeling “ that he had been guilty of falsehood, in asserting as a fact what had been told him, without his knowing it to be true ;” and experienced an indescribable “ relief in hearing the difference between an unintentional departure from truth, and a design to deceive, explained to him.”* The same conscientiousness was characteristic of those younger.

The education of the brothers, as of the sisters, was almost wholly at their own home. In the winter of 1776–7, before his second enlistment in the army, Noah boarded in the family of his uncle Francis, at Plymouth, N. H., and tried the experiment of a school-teacher.

“ In course of that winter,” he said, “ I probably acquired more useful knowledge, than I had ever before done in any two winters by going to school. * * *

* He did not make a profession of religion, until twenty-four years of age. He united with the Church in Thornton, in 1782,—and in 1786, was ordained the pastor of the Church.

Jesse did not make a profession, until twenty years afterwards. In a revival in Hollis, in 1802, he joined the Church. His wife also joined at the same time. On the same day, they presented *twelve* children, six sons and six daughters,—for baptism !

About this time I procured a dictionary, which was the first I ever had the privilege of perusing, though I was then in my eighteenth year."

"I have no recollection," said Jesse, "of having been taught to read by any female, unless it was my mother or grand-mother. I never heard a lesson given in English Grammar or geography, when I came into a master's school; and in respect to books, if we except the *Bible*,—the spelling-book, the psalter, and the primer were more than scholars generally possessed."*

Limited as were their means of literary culture, they made progress which cannot but be considered remarkable, as it was laudable. To be manly beyond what was expected of their age; to attempt much, and not think it marvellous to do more; to increase constantly in knowledge, and make the most of their opportunities, was the progressive and the unquenchable spirit of their youth. It would have required a long day for any teacher of arithmetic, to propose a question, which they could not have answered, as they mused in concert upon their pillow, by night. With Noah's tongue for a pencil, and Jesse's memory for the slate, a most intricate problem was thus solved, to the astonishment of a teacher, who had found it too hard for himself.

The pen was in daily use before them. The father had much writing to do, in his business as a magistrate; and the grandfather, when not abroad in his tours of preaching, was fond of his study-table. Very early, as a natural consequence, the younger members of the family, both male and female, exercised

* The "primer" was the old New England primer, containing the lines of John Rogers, with sundry wholesome counsels, as the warning to youth; in addition to the Westminster Catechism, in the memory and belief of all of which, these sons of Noah Worcester were carefully educated.

their powers of imitation, in copying and composing. They were all *writers*.

It was their advantage, also, to live remote from those scenes of gaiety and dissipation, which have proved so fatal to a multitude of youth. They were but little exposed to the "evil communications," which so often in the city "corrupt good manners." Free from every stain of vice, and always affected by a deep sense of accountableness, they were ever ready to receive instruction, and to search for knowledge, as for hid treasure.

When their grandfather Francis was at home, he had always something to excite the reflective and emotional powers of those youth, or lads, for whom he had predicted what so truly was fulfilled. Fresh and stirring intelligence from divers sources, in that eventful age of the Revolution; new ideas and old, theological, historical, political—mingled and sifted, approved or rejected,—would not often allow the members of that family circle, to pass an hour of listless inactivity. On some evening, by the glaring light, perhaps, of a pine-knot fire, might have been witnessed a scene for a painter. There, for example, was majestic, portly, dignified, and somewhat self-complacent old age, filling the great arm-chair, with an acknowledged title to arbitrate; middle age, erect, intelligent, with "a large roundabout sense," eager enough, if not more, to grapple with the logic or metaphysics of any subject, and disposed to demand a reason for everything, not intuitively true; robust youth, just from the army, in full buoyancy of spirits, reverencing old-age, and honoring middle-age, but not backward to ask questions, which might not so easily be answered; and bright-faced childhood, with blue gazing eye,

hearkening ear, and perchance the lips not shut, nor always silent;—to say nothing of other members and characteristics of a group, in the midst of which *education* was in progress, that was ultimately to move the thoughts, and affect the destinies of many thousands, in both hemispheres.

Such, in brief, was the general order of that family, that those men who became distinguished far beyond the most of their contemporaries,—thousands of whom had incomparably greater means of mental cultivation,—were constantly reminded, that it is the duty of every one, to become as conspicuous for influence and usefulness, as his talents and privileges will allow. And while they were taught to labor with the hands, most diligently and vigorously, it never entered their hearts to conceive, that it was the chief concern of upright, honest farmers and cordwainers, to plant Indian corn in spring, and harvest it in autumn;—to cut hay in summer, and fell trees in winter;—and withal to make good shoes in a rainy day, or in the “time of snow.”—As husbandmen, they were not of those “whose talk is wholly about cattle;” but of such as had “understanding of the times.”

A legitimate effect of their discipline would be, to make them clear thinkers, and able reasoners. Such they were indisputably. What they knew, they knew for themselves, and for others. By the tongue, and with the pen, they could communicate their ideas, with an intelligibleness, which was transparent, and a point and energy, which it was difficult to withstand. With little or no other instruction than that of their home, except during the few weeks in the winter season, and with scarcely any school-book in addition to the Bible,—they were able, before the end of their

minority, to write essays or addresses, which, for good sense, force of reasoning, and propriety of language, chiefly drawn from the Saxon etymologies,—would not materially suffer by comparison, with the more elegant compositions of the best scholars at our colleges.

So far were they all self-made men, that, like others of the same order, who have been celebrated, they were not unconscious of their abilities. But accustomed as they were to a high self-respect, their exemplary *submission* to parental authority, and deference to the aged, rendered them most careful of the proprieties of good manners, and most courteous in all their deportment. They were all keenly sensitive, when they encountered contradiction, or any kind of opposition. Still, it is not often, that with as much constitutional excitability, there is seen as much self-control, or self-mastery; nor as much of true politeness, in the sense of Dr. Witherspoon,—“*real kindness kindly expressed.*”

In no one of them was the ascendancy over their passions and feelings more complete, than in the youngest. If he was ever angry, he was in general so angry, as not to speak a word. When his feelings were wounded, a flush would instantaneously pass over his face; and he would wisely consider whether or not to break silence. From his childhood onward to the end of his days, his quick perception of a very small degree of offence against good taste, or good manners, would display itself in a delicate scarlet tinge of countenance; but which had not *heat* enough, in most cases, to reveal its presence to himself.

The tendencies of such a discipline, as has been described, were not in every respect auspicious or safe.

From the habit of scrutinizing all points, and of reasoning upon all questions, it should not be accounted marvellous, if, before the end, some should unconsciously "lean to their own understanding." Thus the eldest of them, who in subsequent life arrested so much attention by his speculations upon the mysteries of the Godhead, wrote of himself, that, "from his childhood he had been much in the habit of reflection and inquiry." "Probably I was too much inclined," he adds, "to argument and disputation, on various subjects. I think I was not more than twelve years old, when this propensity was mentioned to me as one of my faults. Though the propensity was, doubtless, in some instances imprudently indulged, it was probably a means of my advancement in knowledge." There are those who have thought, that, if his mind had been subjected to a more enlarged discipline, before he entered the ministry, he would probably have continued as steadfast in his attachment to the mode of his early faith, as did the subject of this memoir.

These free references have been made to the older brothers of Dr. Worcester, because, previous to the age of twenty, their advantages and disadvantages of training were substantially the same. He was very much like them in native endowments, constitutional and moral dispositions. Inferior to neither of them, in native powers, he was greatly profited by their encouraging example. And when at last he resolved, that he would, if possible, have the advantages of a course of collegiate study, he found the brothers all ready to aid him, so far as their limited means would allow.

No one of them could have written his early biography so well as Thomas, who survived him ten years.

It was afterwards thought desirable to obtain in a definite and permanent form, some of the personal recollections, which the remaining brothers might have, concerning the childhood and youth of him, who was the first to be gathered to his fathers,—and of whom some memorial might be attempted at a future day. These were providentially secured.

“*Hollis, April 20, 1832.*”

My dear Kinsman,—

* * * * I well remember the day of his birth : and that when about six or eight months old, he had a long and very dangerous sickness, so that for a number of weeks there appeared very little prospect of his recovery. One Sabbath his eyes were closed for dead. For a long time, perhaps two or three years, he continued feeble. After this he became healthy, and as robust generally as any one of the family ; until after he entered college, and injured his health by too close application to study.

At the commencement of the revolutionary war, brother Noah, being in his seventeenth year, enlisted, and was gone a soldier until February. I was fourteen, the 30th of April, 1775. Brother Thomas was in his seventh, and brother Samuel in his fifth year. About the first of December, my father went to Cambridge, commander of a company, for two months. At the time, my mother had her second William, who was about two months old. He was soon taken sick, and died Jan. 17. The maid who lived in the family, had the fever ; and my grandfather, who was very much afflicted with the asthma and other complaints, so that we were obliged to keep three fires constantly by day, and much of the time two by night. My brother Leonard was at this time living from home, at his uncle Taylor’s, in Ashby. We were so destitute of fuel, that I well remember to have had the oxen yoked, to get up some to last over night, when the company marched from the door.—Thus I was

left with my two brothers, the one of seven, and the other of five years old. I gave for their part to clean the barn, and to cut and carry in the small wood for the fires; and they performed their part wonderfully.

The next July, [1776,] I went a soldier to Ticonderoga, at the age of fifteen, and became so interested and engaged in the cause of my country, that my memory serves me but poorly respecting what I now wish to call to mind, for several years, during which I was a soldier a number of times.

In the autumn of 1782, I returned to Hollis from Thornton, where I had been *laboring*. Your father came in company with me. I travelled from Plymouth to Hollis, eighty miles, in two days. Your father came on six miles, the afternoon before. I set out the next morning. In perhaps twenty-five miles, I overtook him, and proceeded on to Concord; so that *he* travelled about thirty-six miles that day! The next day, he became some lame. Left him in Bedford, and sent a lad and horse, the next morning, to meet him. This was before he was twelve years old.

Perhaps his natural disposition and temper when young, was more mild and amiable than that of any other of the family. He was also very active, diligent, and laborious. My father pretty early made up his mind, to settle him at home; and perhaps he seldom if ever met with a greater disappointment, than when he found he must give up that idea.

He commenced school-keeping, at seventeen. He taught the first winter, at Lyndeboro'; and gave good satisfaction; and never failed of so doing in a school ever after, to my knowledge.—He was, I think, in his twenty-first year, when he began to prepare for college. A part of the time, he was at New Ipswich, and had Mr. Hubbard, [afterwards Prof. Hubbard, of Dartmouth College,] for his instructor. I believe also that a part of the time, he was with Dr. Wood, of Boscawen.

He must have been very industrious and frugal, to have succeeded as well as he did, with the means he had. My father's circumstances were so straitened,

that the sum of \$88 80,* was all that he possessed to do for each of his children; and if in any case he helped one more, the one so favored was to refund the same. As executor of my father's will, a note came into my hands, signed by Samuel Worcester, on which were many endorsements, and some balance still due. From all circumstances which have come to my knowledge, I believe it was my father's aim, to be as particular with him, as with his other children.

After my return to Hollis, in 1795, having been absent ten years, I was conversing with a man, who had worked in my father's shop, and labored on the farm abundantly with my younger brothers. Referring to their dispositions, he spoke in high terms of Samuel. 'He seldom or never saw him angry, or in a fret, let what would happen. If they ever got into a difficulty with a team, or in any other way, he was sure to be mild and good natured, and have some humorous turn, appearing always disposed to make the best of it.' And from my own observation, I believe this a fair representation of his character in his youthful days. He was very pleasant, and somewhat humorous, and well calculated to gain the good will of his associates. While he followed laboring on the farm, very few of his years were able to do more.

* * * *

Yours, with much esteem,

JESSE WORCESTER."

The foregoing was enclosed in a letter to the eldest brother.

"Brighton, April 25, 1832.

My dear Nephew,—

* * * * I well recollect the dangerous sickness of your father, in his infancy, which my brother Jesse has mentioned. Among other maladies, he had alarming fits; to which I recollect the doctor applied the name

of "black fits." I think it was not less than twenty days, that his death was daily expected. His recovery seemed to astonish those, who had witnessed his condition, like a species of resurrection from the dead.

In supposing that your father had a better natural temper than any of the other children, I think Jesse is correct. All the Worcesters, however, that I have known, possessed passions which were easily excited. It was so with your father; but less so than with many others; or the difference was occasioned by his acquiring early better self-government, than others possessed.

Brother J. has mentioned, that your father lived for a time with me, at Thornton, and returned to Hollis, prior to the close of his twelfth year. I think it was about fifteen months, that he resided in my family. I had more opportunity to know him then, than in any other year of his life. He was then amiable and intelligent; and though he was fond of amusement, he was good to labor, and apt for learning. I then taught a school in the winter season. He attended the school, and was one of my best scholars, and probably the very best of his age.

After I was settled in the ministry, my brothers Thomas and Samuel came together to Thornton, to visit me. I think it was the winter, after Samuel was seventeen years of age. There was at that time unusual attention to religion in Thornton. It had recently been so at Hollis. The brothers appeared to be prepared to rejoice in what was going on in Thornton. If I mistake not, Thomas had then recently joined the Church in Hollis. Samuel was not without hope, that he had experienced something of spiritual life; but his fears were so great, that he neglected to make a public profession of religion, and it was protracted to the time of his joining the Church at Salisbury.

Unless your father has left some information in writing, I doubt whether any one can inform you respecting his particular views or hopes, in seeking a college education. At that period of his life, I thought

him to be of a reserved turn, as to communicating to others his feelings, his hopes, his purposes, or his prospects. My father, and brother Jesse, thought of him as I did, in this particular.

In his junior year at college, he visited me, and I think he then gave me to understand, that he had not resolved on what profession he should adopt; and that he thought it best, in general, for students not to decide that question, until they have nearly completed their studies. * * * * Your affectionate Uncle,
N. WORCESTER."

To these letters may be added some reminiscences of the Rev. Stephen Farley, chiefly communicated under date,

“*Hampton Falls, Feb. 5, 1839.*”

Dear Sir,—

* * * * Shall I give you a sketch of what was called up from the misty deep of reminiscence?—There was before me the old, unpainted, unclapboarded school-house, in Hollis, which disappeared forty-five years ago, and gave place to the new one, now in its turn grown old. In its interior, on the right, were four benches for the young misses; on the left, five, for young masters; the fifth, projecting forward, and much broader than the others, occupied by the large masters. *There* sat your father, clad in gray home-made broad-cloth,—generally using his pen. A number of Bibles were lying on the bench, which were nearly the only books then used in school, both for reading and spelling. The first class read in the historical books of the Old Testament, and the other in the New. There were but two classes in the school. The words put out to be spelled, were selected at random from all parts of the Bible.

This I think was in 1787, or 1788. Your father was then seventeen years old; ten years in advance of my own age. He, however, soon left the school, but your mother continued in it, eight or ten years after, and as long as I did myself.

And I remember your father, not only when in school, but also when, on the cold winter mornings, with axe under arm, in order to secure his fingers from the frost, he hastened to the wood-lot, for the purpose of felling trees, which, during the course of the day, were brought home by the teams.

About the time he left school, your father and mine, I remember, were employed in repairing a long line of undivided fence, on 'Mount Ratmatat,' so called; and your uncle Thomas, coming to them, said,—'Why, you have not gone ahead far!' To which your father replied,—'*Ah!—we have had something to do:*' meaning that the fence which they had gone over, needed to have much done to it.

At another time, near this period, your father and mine were ploughing, in my father's ground, having united their teams, for the purpose of turning over a plat of sward-land; and intending to finish the piece, some one who came along, remarked, 'You will hardly finish it, this afternoon.' Your father promptly replied: '*There will be a moon up, after the sun has gone down!*'

I mention these little incidents, in proof that your father in his youth, notwithstanding his remarkable characteristic sedateness and sobriety, was ready, as occasion offered, to make spirited and sprightly observations. But the most interesting reminiscence of him, belonging to this period, is that of his figure, yet distinctly retained in my mind, as he once sat in the family gallery pew, on the Sabbath, in the old meeting-house, with his face fixed, bending forward, his eyes intent upon the minister, eagerly drinking in every sentiment, that, by the closest attention, could be gathered from the feeble and fragmentary sentences of our good old minister.

Mr. Emerson *had been* a Whitefieldian Boanerges. But he was now fairly, and rather prematurely, superannuated. The fires, which once kindled and burned so vividly, were now, (except a few occasional coruscations which told what he once was,) asleep in the ashes of decrepitude and second childhood. With the

decay of an efficient ministry, religion itself, *except in its habits and customs*, had also decayed. There was no manifest and lively piety among the young people. They all attended meeting. They did it from *habit*. But none of them made profession of religion, except your uncle Thomas. And your father was near doing it, at the same time. He did not, however, join the Church, until the winter of 1793 or 1794, and then at Salisbury, the Church of which your uncle T. was pastor. It was not, therefore, because religion was fashionable, or because he had companions to encourage him in it, that your father was one of the few, who 'feared the Lord from their youth.'

I remember, that he played the fife, on military days; and especially on one very memorable and saddening occasion. It was the funeral of Lieut. Ralph Emerson, who was instantly killed on the parade, by the accidental discharge of a cannon, in Oct. 1790. He was buried 'under arms,' with military honors; S. Worcester leading the music of the fife, and A. Lovejoy, that of the drum. The music was often spoken of afterwards, as being very expressively mournful, and in perfect keeping with the awful solemnity of the scene.

I remember a little incident in respect to that unfortunate cannon, some two years afterwards. I saw your father, then a student, *try his strength, at lifting the heavy end of it*. Not seeming to be much in earnest, at the first attempt, keeping his cane in his hand, the cannon did not rise. But, putting his cane under his left arm, he made a serious effort, and succeeded in it.—I mention this, also, as indicative, that, notwithstanding his habitual gravity, which some thought became an infirmity to him, *he did not feel, or affect a dignity*, which kept him aloof from youthful pleasantries and emulations.

He must, I think, have kept school, in the winters of 1788, and 1789; but I remember nothing. In 1790, he kept the school at the North Corner. He boarded at home, and consequently must have walked, night and morning, the distance of two miles. I remember meeting him, as we, each, were coming and going to

school; he to teach and I to learn.—Mr. Adams kept the Centre school. He introduced dialogue-speaking, for the first time, into Hollis. Your father took a part in this thing, and figured well in Beverly and Myrtle, and Gen. Walsingham. An exhibition at the close of the school went off so well, that the larger scholars proceeded on in the same line, got up an exhibition among themselves, on a much larger scale, and with perfect success. In this, the master-spirit, both as to management and action, was S. Worcester.”

He had, at this period, and for a long time afterwards, a very strong interest in the drama. Whatever served to give him a knowledge of human character, whether in the inventions of fiction or the narratives of fact, commanded his very best powers of attention and reflection. In his youth, he read much of history, and became eminent for his knowledge of men and events of former days. As a student of modern history, he greatly excelled, throughout his public life.

It will have been noticed, that he first taught school, at seventeen years of age. His qualifications were put to a trying test; particularly his power in discipline. He was accustomed to open his school with prayer. One of the oldest scholars treated the exercise with great irreverence. The youthful teacher was grieved, but not disconcerted. He immediately addressed the young man, and the school, in such a mode of appeal, as was most unexpected and decisive. An eye-witness is said to have been at once struck with the thought, that he was destined to become no ordinary man.

When he first taught in his native town, a scholar, who had been for some years in the same school with himself, but had been notorious for idleness and mischief, and was hardly able to read, very early seized

an opportunity to show his contempt. He was older than his teacher. Yielding to a request to remain after the rest were dismissed, but with no very favorable feelings or honorable purposes, he was most kindly exhorted to consider his neglect of study, his insubordination, the importance of improving his present means of instruction, and of recovering the lost respect of his associates. The tears flowed freely, and as a result he made as good proficiency, and was as exemplary, as any one belonging to the school. Dr. Worcester related the anecdote to a friend, some years afterwards, as if the remembrance of it was peculiarly grateful to his feelings.

Although he prayed in his school, and had been accustomed to pray at the domestic altar, in the absence and in the presence of his father, it was not because he professed, or thought himself to be, a Christian. He joined a society of young men in the town, which was designed to promote intellectual and moral improvement. The meetings were held on Sabbath evenings; and as the rule was, he in his turn conducted the devotional service. This he did, as did others, who were not members of the Church, nor reputedly pious.

The "unusual attention to religion" of which mention has been made, occurred in 1786, the year previous to his first experiment in teaching. The Church in his native town, being much quickened, he and his brother Thomas were both deeply affected. Leonard also, at Worcester, was at the same time earnestly seeking the Lord. It was a period of "*awakening*" in a large number of the Churches, which was doubtless connected with the increase of earnest prayer among the people of God, in those years of political

and financial embarrassment, and general distress, between the Peace of 1783, and the adoption of the Federal Constitution, in 1788.

Under date of Lord's day, May 28, 1786, Miss Lydia Worcester wrote in her Diary:—

“I was still confined from public worship by weakness, but enjoyed some freedom in reading, and in meditating upon divine things. Was much rejoiced to hear of *the wonderful revival of religion in many places.** I longed and prayed, that the heavenly shower might reach this sinful town, and seemed to have more hopes that it would. The Lord grant, that it may spread throughout the land, and that all the people may praise the name of the Lord.”

There were hundreds of revivals, and in some Churches a succession, at short intervals. But partly because there was no such wonderful operation as in the GREAT AWAKENING, and partly, if not chiefly, because there were no magazines or other publications, to diffuse religious intelligence,—the records or memorials of numerous and delightful visitations of the Spirit, were private rather than public, and known only to a very limited extent.

The New York Theological Magazine began, July, 1795. It was devoted chiefly to doctrinal discussions, but contained some religious and missionary intelligence. But it was not until *the last year of the century*, that any American periodical existed, which was designed especially to convey such intelligence. *The New York Missionary Magazine and Repository of Religious Intelligence*, began Jan. 1, 1800. In the “Introduction,” it is said,—“Many serious persons have

* This statement will surprise those who have so often heard, that there were few or no revivals, from the period of 1740-3, until about 1797.

lately expressed a regret, that no publication, devoted to the conveyance of religious intelligence, existed in the United States. While the presses throughout the Union are teeming with literary and political journals, they have lamented that no convenient medium is found, for conveying to the public information relative to the state of the Church, and the prosperity or decline of that kingdom, whose interests they esteem more important than those of any temporal sovereignty. This deficiency is the more to be regretted, as, from the scattered state of our American churches, over an immense territory, communication between them is rendered difficult, if not next to impracticable, by any ordinary means. *Hence it is, that the state of religion in one part of our country is rarely known to those residing in another. The most illustrious triumphs of grace are heard of only in a small circle: and some of the most interesting articles of information, respecting the displays of Divine power in the conversion of sinners, and the promulgation of evangelical truth among the heathen in our own land, have been altogether unknown among ourselves, until they reached us through the medium of foreign publications.*—What an amazing contrast to our present means of receiving and diffusing intelligence!

The pious sister, whose Diary has just been quoted, soon had the delight of recording the different stages of an interesting work of God in the Church at Hollis, and in which her father's family very specially participated. Sept. 25, 1786, she wrote to her brother Leonard:—

* * * * “I have the happiness, dear brother, to inform you, that through the free, unmerited mercy of an all-gracious God, we have a prospect of a happy

reformation in this place. It began to increase soon after you was here. At first, it was but small; but it has been gradually increasing, until I believe there are in this town more than a hundred people, chiefly young persons, under the convicting influence of the Holy Spirit. We have often two or three lectures in a week, and have had seven or eight different ministers to preach here, this summer. People in general seem to be very attentive to the preached word, and God seems wonderfully to assist and strengthen our reverend pastor, in the abundant labors to which he is called. Methinks you are anxious to know whether any of your dear friends have been convinced of their lost estate, in this day of grace and mercy. Blessed be God, I have the satisfaction to inform you, that *our dear brothers Thomas and Samuel have both met with a saving change.* Thomas was several months in great darkness, but has seemed to be very comfortable, for some days past, and hopes that God has set his soul at liberty. Samuel is yet in darkness in respect to his state; but I can't but hope he has really a principle of grace implanted in him. Although he has not yet the evidence of it to himself, he appears to be very humble and submissive, and greatly afraid of deceiving himself. And now, dear brother, are you not ready to say, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!'"

* * * *

In answer to this letter, that dear brother responded, "rejoicing in hope," that he had recently passed out of great darkness into the "light of life."*

October 25th, the sister again wrote him, and in such terms of satisfaction and gratitude, as the occasion would naturally lead her to use.

* He joined the First Church, in Worcester, in the autumn of 1786. He was in his twentieth year; was the youngest member, and by ten years the youngest *male* member. In a very few years, he was made one of the *deacons* of the Church.

“The reformation seems,” she says, “to increase gradually. There are but few yet brought into the light. Several are almost in despair,—a distressing state to be in, as all know, who have had the experience of it. Thomas, I expect, will make a profession next Lord’s day. Samuel still remains doubtful in his mind, having at times great fears in regard to his state. God grant, we may none of us deceive ourselves with a false hope; but that we may all be built upon the Rock Christ, that sure foundation which will never fail!”*

Thirty-five years after these interesting events, Rev. Thomas Worcester thus answered some inquiries of Rev. E. Cornelius:—

“*Salisbury, N. H., July 13, 1821.*”

Reverend and dear Sir,—

My brother of Peacham has informed me, that you desired that I would send you some information in respect to the religious experience of my dear deceased brother Samuel; and the time when he united with the Church in this place. In the year 1786, when my beloved brother was in the sixteenth year of his age, there was some revival of religion in Hollis, the place of our nativity, in which, as we have ever since hoped, my brother with myself had a saving share. As to the awakening, conviction, and conversion of my brother, I remember nothing extraordinary. . It was apparently, if I may so say, by ‘a still small voice,’ that he was led to see, that he was entirely without the love of God in him; to feel his dependence upon the free grace of God, for regeneration, pardon, and eternal life; and brought to receive Christ Jesus the Lord as his chosen and beloved Savior. He had been, I think, under serious and gradually increasing religious impressions,

* From her Diary, it also appears, that at the close of the “lectures,” it was common for all to remain, who desired special and personal instruction. She mentions, Sept. 9th, that, “after meeting, above fifty persons met together, under concern for their precious souls.”

as much as five or six months, before he dared to hope, that a saving work was wrought in him. As near as I can remember, the first time that he expressed to me or to any one, any hope that he had passed from death unto life, was a little after I had united with the Church in Hollis, which was on the 12th of November, 1786, when my brother had entered a few days into his seventeenth year. He had, however, so much fear attending his hope, that he was prevented from making a public profession of religion, for several years."

When the writer of the foregoing united himself with the Church, at Hollis, in imitation of his godly fore-fathers, it would have added greatly to his interest in the solemn transaction, if his younger brother could have been associated with him. But none could have given praise with a purer or more fervent melody of heart, than the devout sister who had so loved them both. Hundreds of times had they heard, and often had accompanied with their own voices, her favorite strain:—

“ There’s nothing round this spacious earth,
That suits my large desire ;
To boundless joy and solid mirth,
My nobler thoughts aspire.

* * * * *

Had I the pinions of a dove,
I’d climb the heavenly road ;
There sits my Savior dressed in love,
And there my smiling God.”

These, with the other stanzas of the hymn, (Watts, Hy. 10. B. II.) were sung at her request by a large circle around her dying bed, in January, 1789. And her own voice, clear and powerful almost as ever, sounded forth every line, as if the triumphant requiem of her departing spirit.

The brother, who had loved her in return with an

affection, which is seldom exceeded, was now in his nineteenth year. It was with emotions unwonted and unutterable, that he listened to her farewell charge, and witnessed the blessedness of such a dying Christian. For a long time afterwards, he often spoke of the death of his beloved sister Lydia; and as if he had never until then had any conception of the unspeakable value of an interest in Christ. All his views of the attractions of the cross, and "the beauty" to be "admired" in the Savior of sinners, were illuminated as by a transfiguration.

CHAPTER III.

Desire of professional life. Resistance by his father. A student at New Ipswich Academy. Oration before the Demosthenian Society, 11th of October, 1791. Enters Dartmouth College. Feelings towards the Faculty. Surrounding influences. Joins the Church of Salisbury, N. H. General spirit of character. A martial element. Pecuniary pressure. High standard of scholarship. Tokens of esteem and respect. Correspondence. Fourth of July Oration, 1795. Choice of profession. Valedictory, at Hanover.

"Every one shall consider it the *main end* of his life and studies, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life."—*The first law in the college code of Harvard, respecting the students, in 1642.*

"EXCELSIOR."

Dr. Worcester's four elder brothers were so settled in life, or had so decided upon their calling, before 1790, that the father naturally looked to him as the son, who should be his partner and successor at the homestead. He was well aware of his father's plans. His brother Noah had yielded to the solicitations of the people of Thornton, and, having obtained license

to preach, was ably sustaining himself as their pastor. His brother Thomas was encouraged to follow his example, in entering the ministry. So intimate were his relations to the latter, that it would have been very strange, if he had not inquired of himself, whether he too must not go forward in the same direction, unless the great demand for jurists and attorneys had led his thoughts to the bar, rather than the pulpit.

The duty of preparing himself for a profession was not a new subject, when his attention was called to it, by the late Prof. Adams, of Dartmouth College, who was then a student, and boarded in his father's family, while teaching school, in Hollis. This gentleman had discovered his superior talents. Beside other considerations, a powerful motive was addressed to him from the encouragements, which, under the new Constitution, were afforded by the prospects of the country, to all young men of good abilities and character, who might be disposed to look for eminence at the bar, or distinguished usefulness in the ministry. His teacher's arguments and his own inclinations were alike irresistible; and the purpose was formed, to leave the pursuits of husbandry for some one of the professions, if life and health should be spared. Much as he had excelled, in labors upon the farm, it is very true, as he said of himself, some years afterwards:—" *I never was made for a farmer.*"—When he had become the pastor of a country parish, his domestic habits indicated not the least relish for agricultural toils or recreations.

When the father became apprized of his son's determinations, he could not speak peaceably upon the subject. All his favorite plans were to be crushed,—if those determinations should be carried into effect. His son was so athletic, and so faithful, that the *pecu-*

niary loss of his services was of no small account in the estimation of the parent, who had many anxious cares in his straitened circumstances, and who was not seldom assailed by the legion of hypochondria.—“Why,” said he, “*Samuel* is worth more to me, than *any two men, that I could hire!*” The statement no one could have controverted, who knew of the son, that he could accomplish a good day’s work at mowing, before breakfast.

But the father had a still greater loss in anticipation, in being deprived of his son’s dutiful attentions and agreeable society. This undoubtedly was the reason of all others, for his resistance of his son’s wishes. So morbid were his feelings, that he could not patiently endure the sight of a book in the son’s hands, when resting an hour at noon, from the labors of the field; and the son was obliged to indulge his ardent desire of intellectual progress, by stealing away to a neighboring shop, where he privately kept some of his books. And when at last, it was known to be a fixed point with him, to leave the farm, at the age of twenty-one, he could not earlier,—the father’s morbid excitement could only be allayed, by a pledge of his son Jesse, to make arrangements for a disposal of his farm in Bedford, and ere long assume the filial cares and responsibilities, which had been designed for his brother Samuel. How little was then imagined of the future!

The legal rights of the father were strictly respected. The son gave his note of hand, in consideration of his absence of six months before his minority expired. To reconcile his father still more to the disappointment, he came home in the season of haying and harvest. With his own hands, he is said to have cut forty tons of hay,—in that summer of 1791!

When he left home to become a member of New Ipswich Academy, he was hardly able to appear in decent apparel. For the payment of his board, and for other expenses, he was obliged to trust in the favor of Providence, towards his purposes and efforts. He had determined upon a profession, but not as yet upon a collegiate course. It was happy for him, that he was led to the dwelling of Deacon Isaac Appleton.*

Writing to this gentleman, from Dartmouth College, April 26th, 1795, he says:—

“Believe me, Sir, I have not forgotten yourself or your family. I still cherish a grateful remembrance of the kindness I have experienced at your hands and at your house. I especially remember the sollicitude you manifested for my success in the pursuit of learning, and the interest you appeared to take in whatever concerned my welfare and my usefulness in life. It was under your hospitable roof, that I made my first essays in my literary career. It was then that I first came to a determination of prosecuting a classical education.—I shall never forget the place; it is dear as that of my nativity. I had almost said, it is *the birth-place of my mind.*”

Deacon Appleton soon became very fond of him, and used to have much conversation with him on various subjects,—among others, the peculiar points in the theological speculations of Hopkins. It is remembered by those who heard them converse, that they appeared to think alike in theology, and to concur, in general, in the views of the Newport divine. Mr. Appleton had three sons, who had obtained, or were expecting a liberal education. And he was intensely

* Father of Samuel and Nathan Appleton, of Boston, so well known for their success in business and their munificence. He died at N. Ipswich, Feb. 26, 1806, aged 74.

desirous, that his young friend should also fit himself for college. He therefore reasoned with him, in regard to all the difficulties, which he might have to overcome, and encouraged him to expect ultimate and entire success. Ever afterwards he watched his progress, and to the close of life admired his intellectual and religious character.—The same opinions and feelings respecting his industrious pupil, were cherished by his accomplished teacher, John Hubbard, under whose “able instruction New Ipswich Academy soon rose to distinction, and became the favorite of the public.”*

“His first recitation in Latin Grammar is said to have astonished his preceptor; exceeding as four to one the prescribed task.” He soon outstripped those, who had commenced several months, and even years, before him. The ingenuous witness of a classmate at the academy, and afterwards at college,—intended only for the eye of friends, and which has very unexpectedly been communicated,—is a vivid and very agreeable sketch of him as a student, at the beginning of his course:—

“Oct. 7, 1791. Ever since [I left the class in which I first studied,] I have had company, a young man by the name of Samuel Worcester, son of Esq. W., of Hollis. Though, to use your own language, I have shaped my course for the port of fame and spread my sails open to the strongest gales of ambition, I made haste as fast as possible; yet it is not in my power to leave him. He is about of my standing in Latin, but has greatly the advantage of me in the cultivation of his memory, and was much better read in English than myself. We have read six books in Virgil, and seven

* Rev. Dr. Parish's Eulogy, 1810.—*Quar. Reg. Am. Ed.* vol. IV, p. 327.

in Cicero's Orations. He had not much the superiority over me in Latin. We began our Greek, about the first of September. This was entirely new to me. He had the advantage of being able to read it. He has improved upon this advantage, and fairly outdone me. I am scarce able to get my recitations with him. * * *

You ask me if I have formed any agreeable acquaintances with the scholars, and find their company improving. * * * Mr. Worcester, whom I have mentioned, commands as much of my love and esteem, as any one; perhaps because I have a better acquaintance with him. He is a person, I believe, possessed of every manly talent, and capable of the sincerest friendship; and though like myself he is not so ready an accountant as some, in the small change of Chesterfield, yet in my sense of the word, he is a gentleman, because he regulates his life by the principles of virtue and honor. He possesses a fine disposition and natural good abilities, and is already well informed by reading and observation." *

Some extracts from a manuscript oration, delivered before the Demosthenian Society, Oct. 11th 1791,—which was just at the close of his twenty-first year, and when he had enjoyed but a few months of academic instruction,—will indicate the proficiency which he had made, while an agricultural youth. They reveal

* To S. H., a friend in Wrentham, Mass. The writer was afterwards known as David Everett, Esq. He married a daughter of Deacon Appleton. He was a fine scholar in the languages; studied law; distinguished himself as an editor, in Boston; died in Marietta, Ohio, Dec. 21, 1813. It was he, and not the distinguished Edward Everett, who was the author of the declamation, so familiar to all school-boys:

" You'd scarce expect one of my age
To speak in public on the stage," &c.

This was spoken the first time by E. H. Farrar, when seven years old, and for whom it was expressly written. As now printed, "*Massachusetts*" has been substituted for "New Hampshire," and "any sister State" for "*Federal State*."

also his sentiments and aspirations, in the prospect which was then presented to his view. He was one of the founders of the Society.

“The rise and fall of States and Empires, wars and tragic scenes, together with the progress and happy effects of literature, all which are but circumstances relating to men, have, for many ages, furnished matter for the stage among most nations. If these are subjects of sufficient importance to command our attention; if by these we are not only amused, but even benefited and improved; of what vast consequence, then, must man’s self be considered? How interested must we feel when that is our theme? Indeed, if we but cast our eyes around upon creation, and observe the amazing disparity between man and every object which strikes our senses, to what a sublime height in the scale of being must he arise in our view! We see the brutal tribes subjected to servitude, without the prospect of emancipation. We see them enveloped in ignorance, and destitute of means and abilities for improvement. Being, in a manner, devoid of faculties for contemplation and reflection, we see them confined to present circumstances for happiness. In fine, we see their passions servile, their pursuits insipid, their existence momentary, and their happiness to consist in the privation of misery. Far otherwise is man. This noble being we find every way calculated for dignity and happiness. Even at first view, he surpasses the brute creation in form erect and graceful mien. But how infinitely farther does he transcend it, in mental powers and intrinsic excellence! We find implanted in his breast those social feelings, which form the heart for friendship—friendship, from which delicious fount we quaff pleasures the most refined. We find him endowed with faculties for contemplation, a never failing source of intellectual happiness. Fraught with ideas of greatness, he spurns subjection and greatly owns no lord on earth. Not confined to earthly toys, he aspires to glory, honor, and immortality.”

He next describes the powers of the human mind, and illustrates the "subserviency of all Nature to the purposes of man." In this part of the "oration," he draws some florid pictures, like that of "vernal May clothing the mazy landscape with her verdant carpet, and adorning the wide champaign with that roseate pageantry, whose ambrosial fragrance diffused through the air, exhilarates every sense."

After a strain of just and indignant comment upon the apparent views of life, among various classes of "earth-born souls, who aim at nothing higher in the scale of being, than barely to exist, exempt from pain," he proceeds :

"Is it for these all nature keeps in motion? Are these the beings we deem the most dignified and happy of created existence? Shall we call these *men*? Debasing thought! No: let us rather denominate them the refuse of being and dregs of human nature; who, though they may share the common bounties of nature, can by no means lay claim to a participation in the dignity nor even the refined happiness of man. But it is he who feels the dignity of human nature and the importance of his existence—who, far from confining his ideas of happiness to the narrow sphere of his own enjoyments, comprises in his extensive wish the happiness of all sensitive existence, and consequently deems it his highest felicity to administer the balm of consolation to the dejected, to wipe the falling tear from the eye of the disconsolate, to extend the hand of charity to the indigent. In a word, to contribute as much as in him lies to the happiness of all, and to commiserate the distresses he cannot relieve. He who to every virtue joins his ardent endeavors to excel, in whatever is truly great. This is he whom we celebrate as the glory of this lower creation and noblest work of Deity. At the representation of such a character, whose bosom glows not with the most sublime ideas? Conscious of his high preroga-

tive, who would not glory in the appellation of man, and who is not animated to the most spirited exertion to maintain his dignity? And we, my friends, for such I esteem my fellow-students, especially of the Demosthenian Society, what an animating prospect have we before us? *We see what we may be; but upon our exertion depends what we shall be.* By this we are to determine whether to be brutes or men; whether to grovel as insects, or soar as Angels; whether our names shall be buried in oblivion, or rise to immortal fame. And since this is the time in which we are to lay the foundation of our characters, have we not the most cogent incentives to assiduity in our studies and regularity in our conduct? Have we not the voice of our country, of reason, and of interest, to stimulate, and fame, with her laurel wreath, in connection with most consummate intellectual happiness, to allure us? Whose mind is so servile, as not to behold with admiration the achievements of a Franklin and a Washington, who, by their noble efforts have ensured a two-fold immortality? But are we to esteem them as objects of admiration only? Shall we look upon them, as an order of beings diverse from man? Ought we not rather to view them, as characters for imitation, and resolve to reach the goal, to which they have arrived? Yes; as men we esteem them, and as men we may emulate them. Their titles and posts of honor, which are at best but appendages of greatness, are, perhaps, what we are not to expect; but to rival them in the essential is our prerogative. True greatness is not confined to local preferments; but he who conducts with propriety in the station which he sustains, is truly a great and respectable character. To confirm this, witness the honorable gentlemen we are happy to acknowledge, as the Trustees of this flourishing Seminary and guardians of this Society, and for whose favor we now return our warmest thanks. Witness our worthy Instructor, at the mention of whose name every student feels in his breast a thrill of pleasure and the glow of gratitude. To these we deem it no compliment to ascribe the appellation of MAN, in its strictest sense.

We are at present to consider ourselves as students, and as such let us strive to excel. Let us, by the most intense application, endeavor to investigate the mazes of science, to dissipate the clouds of ignorance from our minds, and to eradicate error and superstition from the human breast. Let Benevolence and Emulation influence, and let Reason and Virtue regulate our conduct; that we may procure respectability as a Society, honor and esteem as individuals, and as Immortals, Glory and eternal Felicity."

This "oration" is the first of the author's compositions, which he took pains to preserve. During the winter following, he taught school. After this, he studied a short time at Boscawen, under the guidance of the late Rev. Dr. Wood, and entered Dartmouth College, in the Summer Term of 1792; thus joining the Class, which entered four months only after he began to prepare. "*He flung a Greek Testament through the College, and in he went,*"—said a college contemporary, in reference to his rapidity of progress.

For this progress, however, he paid a great price. He impaired his health to such a degree, that entire recovery seemed never to be practicable. In the summer of 1815, he was visited by a student of Phillips Academy, Andover,—in whom, as a relative, and in much poverty an aspirant for education, he took a kind interest, as he did in all promising young men. "He referred to his own broken health, and said, that he laid the foundation of all his subsequent infirmities in the first year of his academical studies; and added with emphasis, I now charge you not to do it."

With such evidences of a mind capable of improvement, it is not strange, that he should have received much applause, and very flattering encouragements. Still, such was his indigence, and such the inevitable

pecuniary embarrassments to be encountered, that his determination to go forward was no doubtful presage of his future eminence.

On his way to college, he visited his sister, Mrs. Sarah W. Fox. She then resided in Hebron, N. H. While conversing with her, he said: "O sister, you do not know what trials I have had, in getting away from home, for my education." His heart was full. "And what," she inquired,—“will you do with your education, when you have got it?”—“I think I shall be a lawyer.” “I hope,” she replied, “that you will do something better with your education than *that!*”

It was not until the last weeks of his course at Hanover, that he decided to devote himself to the ministry of the Gospel. His reasonings upon the profession of law, as a means of usefulness to men of high moral and religious character, were very similar to those of his estimable friend Jeremiah Evarts, Esq.* He felt, that *pious* lawyers were greatly needed; and that some who were eminently qualified for the pulpit, might render as efficient service to the interests of the church, if they should consecrate their talents to an honest, magnanimous, and christian exposition and application of the principles of jurisprudence. The image of the counsellor and the judge, which he and Evarts had conceived as the model of their aspirations, has had a most perfect embodiment of universally admired reality, in the late Hon. Samuel Hubbard.

A benevolent regard for the welfare of his fellow men mingled with all his aims and hopes. But as yet he had not the faintest glimpse of the exalted work of philanthropy, for which he was now preparing,

* Life of Evarts, pp. 37—43.

according to the unseen purposes of the "Father of lights," who hath given to the Son of his love, the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

It was quite an event in the family history, when Dr. Worcester was numbered among the students of Dartmouth College. He was the first of the known descendants of the venerable minister of Salisbury, to avail himself of the advantages of a liberal education. The year before he entered, however, his eldest brother received the honorary degree of A. M. from Dartmouth, and subsequently his brothers Thomas and Leonard, were noticed in a similar manner,—the latter by the University of Vermont.

It is remembered by a college contemporary, that he attracted some special attention, by the reddish color of his home-made coat; which also was not cut in the newest fashion, or from the largest pattern. There were those who derived no little amusement from his inelegant costume; but soon joined with others, in the warmest expressions of respect and esteem.

When he entered college, the students were much disposed to speak evil of the Faculty. It seemed to him very singular, that members of the Junior and Senior classes should visit Sophomores and Freshmen, and labor to instill into their minds prejudices of hatred and contempt, for some of the permanent officers. They, however, had poor success with him. He had been too carefully trained to subordination, and had too much of readiness to appreciate substantial merit and good intentions. It was not in him, as is far too frequent with undergraduates, to lay aside

all the maxims and rules of good breeding and common-sense, for the sake of opposing or embarrassing the regulations of the institution, which they have promised to obey. He resolved to think as highly as he honestly could, of his instructors and governors, and to be controlled in his opinions, by no traditional gossip of the disaffected and disorganizing. "I found when I came to recite to the different officers, that those who were the most able and most faithful in their departments, were the most unpopular; and that, really, those were the most worthy of respect, of whom I had heard the most evil." *

As the College was established in the latter part of 1770, he may have had a pleasant thought of the coincidence between his own age and that of his Alma Mater. And whether or not it was then apparent to himself, he had reason to mark the guiding hand which led him to Dartmouth.

The College had acquired a very respectable standing, as a literary institution. But it was its religious history, which had secured for it an especial favor. It could not boast of an antiquity or of resources, like those of Harvard, or Yale; but its origin and purpose were as evangelical and philanthropic, and the circumstances of its establishment as memorable, as those of any institution of our country. †

* Remarks made to his son, when about to join the Freshman Class, at Harvard College, in 1818.

† "The remote cause of its organization," it has been intelligently said, "lies back in the great revival of religion, which pervaded nearly the whole of New England in the year 1710 and following: the spirit and principles of a truly primitive and apostolic religion were awakened and called forth from the grave, in which they had slept for nearly half a century, in an expansion of views, a warmth of soul, a self-denial, a boldness and enterprise for the glory of God, and the enlargement of Zion, both in the bosoms of individuals and churches, such as had not been witnessed since the days of Eliot and the Mayhews."—*Quar. Reg. A. E. Soc.* vol. ix. p. 177.

With a zeal like that of Brainerd, Rev. Eleazer Wheelock, of Lebanon, Conn., extended his labors to the instruction of Indian youth. His school, opened in 1748, grew into much notoriety. But the measures which he took to increase its efficiency and usefulness, led to his removal with his scholars to Hanover, where he located the "Moor School," and superintended also the establishment of the College. The journey through such a wilderness as was then encountered, and the toils and privations which were endured by that worthy man, entitle him to a very honorable place, among the true sons and noblest benefactors of New England.

He left his parish in Lebanon, in the spring of 1769, and in the midst of a revival. It was with a genuine revival spirit in his bosom, that he erected his log cabin, for a president's house, and the rude buildings for the accommodation of the students. God was with him, and with *them* also.—The doors of the college were hardly opened, before the whole place was visited with delightful influences of the "Spirit of promise." In 1775, another season of revival was enjoyed, both in the college and the village,—which greatly animated his heart.

Again in 1781–2, two years after his decease, "a revival occurred, of uncommon purity, extent, and power, under the ministry of Prof. Ripley, who inherited the spirit, and followed up the labors of President Wheelock." "Under the labors of Prof. Smith," "the year 1788 was signalized by another season of deep and pervading religious interest in the college." "From that period till the year 1805, neither the records of the church, nor the recollection of individuals, furnish information of any special religious influence."

Of the classmates of Dr. Worcester, no one has been more known or respected, than the writer of the following :—

“ North Brookfield, Nov. 15, 1848.

Rev. and dear Sir,—

* * * Religion was a subject very much neglected in college, while I was a member,—no signs of a revival at any time,—no apparent seriousness amongst the great mass of college students; I did not hear the question asked by any one,—‘What must I do to be saved?’ Five or six years before I entered college, there was much attention and many converts, as I was informed, amongst the students and in the village. But *now* very little was said upon the subject of religion, in any way whatever. Occasionally in conversation religious opinions would be advanced by individuals; but not so generally as to give a theological character to the college, so far as formed by the students. So far, however, as the more serious and respectable part of my class, and those three classes immediately before me, were concerned, they were orthodox. This too was the reputed character of the college, derived from the earlier and the then present officers of the institution. But I never heard them say anything on Christian doctrine, not even Prof. Smith, who was our constant preacher, from which I could readily learn their distinguishing theological opinions. Doctrinal discourses we rarely or never heard, unless from Dr. Burton, or some stranger. According to my recollection, the whole moral and religious atmosphere was unfavorable to growth in grace, and religious impressions on the unrenewed heart.

There might have been six in my class, who were hopefully pious, not more than four, including your father, that had professed religion,—and not more than twenty in all the four classes, when I was freshman,—twenty out of one hundred and fifty.

Your father was more advanced in years than most of his class, and more mature in intellect, and better

acquainted with theology than any other member. His example, so far as I know, was worthy of imitation, and did honor to himself as a man, and to the cause of Christ, as a Christian. He was uniformly and very much respected to the close of his college life. He took no part in the follies of young students, and never descended to any thing unmanly or improper, while he was kind and complaisant, and took part in the pleasantries of others.

I believe that he was absent every winter, teaching school, which laid him under some disadvantage in respect to his progress in some branches of study. He was a *general* scholar, excelling in no particular branch, except in history and English composition. As a writer, he far excelled any in his class. His oration on the fourth of July, 1794, or 1795, will evidently show, that, at that day, he was no mean man. He wielded a pen of no ordinary power, for an undergraduate. If you have not that oration, I wish I could tell you where you can find it.

Some of his class complained that he did not associate with his *classmates*, as others did, and imputed it to something wrong in his feelings. Without the need of any such imputation, I can account for his course, by believing him when at college a closer student than most; and that his most intimate acquaintances, before he entered college, were members of the forward classes; and it was perfectly natural for him, to cherish and strengthen those former friendships, which were stronger and dearer than any he could form in his class, where most had been strangers.

Your father had no small share of facetiousness, but never indulged it to the wounding of others' feelings, or the sacrifice of Christian character, courtesy, or propriety of conduct. His intercourse with his friends was always pleasant and edifying. When at a certain time we were dining at a friend's house, with other company, before the pie-plant was in much use, the gentleman of the house inquired of a young man at the table, whether he would take some rhubarb? 'Rhubarb, Sir!' hesitating whether to accept it. Your

father very pleasantly said to his young friend, 'Don't be afraid of it, my brother, I think it will do you no harm.'

After all I have put upon this sheet, I may not have communicated any thing to answer in any good measure, your expectations.

Yours, with much affection and respect,

THOMAS SNELL.

While there was no revival, at Hanover, when Dr. Worcester was in college, the students were mostly from families or social connections, which were favorable to right views of Christian doctrine and practice. The danger from skeptical speculations or from "a dead orthodoxy" was very much less, than in either of the older New England colleges. And although there was no remarkable season of religious awakening, for seventeen years, after 1788, the classes of Dartmouth furnished a very large proportion of the most evangelical and most useful of the ministers of New England.

With his room-mate,—since honorably known as Luther Jewett, M. D., who is still living at St. Johnsbury, Vt.,—Dr. Worcester was accustomed to unite in morning and evening prayer, from the time he entered college. In the autumn previous, his brother Thomas had been settled at Salisbury, N. H. ;* and a revival

* Thomas, when nearly twenty-one years old, had gone to work upon the farm of Noah, at Thornton, in the fall of 1789. It was the desire of the latter to be wholly engaged in the ministry. But it soon appeared, that the ministry had more attractions for this brother also; and with a preparation quite imperfect, he was introduced to the pulpit. Considerable objection was made by the Ordaining Council, on the ground, that he had not been liberally educated.—Much time had been consumed. "Mr. Moderator," said the father of Daniel Webster,—“we chose this young man, Sir, to be our minister. We were *satisfied* with him. We felt *competent to choose for ourselves*. We invited this Council, Sir, to ordain him. But if you don't see fit to do it, we shall call a Council that *will!*” This speech, with a *lisp* in the utterance, but with a determined emphasis, was as effective as any speech, ever delivered by the son.

commenced in that place, very near the time of his going to Hanover. With this brother, he kept up a constant correspondence, and received from him valuable aid, in things temporal and spiritual.

He went to board in his family, in the winter of 1792-3, while he taught a school.

“In view of the fruits of the revival,” the summer and autumn preceding,—said his brother,—“his heart was warmed, and he obtained such additional evidence of his vital union to Christ, and such a deep sense of the great importance of the duty of making a profession of religion, that he could no longer refrain from owning Christ before men. Accordingly, at a meeting of a number of the members of this Church, at my house, he offered himself for examination, in respect to the reason of the hope which was in him. And having fully satisfied the brethren, that he was a fit subject to partake of the children’s bread, he, with a considerable number of others, joined with this Church in solemn covenant, on the 18th day of February, 1793. And to the great satisfaction of all the serious people, his relation to this Church continued, until the time of his ordination at Fitchburg.” *

When he offered himself for admission to the Church, he is said to have stated, that he now regarded it his duty and privilege to own God by a profession of faith in Christ. He had not before felt that he could take upon himself the vows of a covenant; and still considered himself unworthy of a place among the professed people of God. But if they could consistently receive him, he should endeavor, through the

* Letter to Rev. E. Cornelius, July 13, 1821.

Seventeen others united with the Church, on that day. An eye-witness, has recently described the scene, as having been peculiarly impressive, from the appearance of the pastor’s brother, upon whom many eyes were fixed with the deepest interest.

aid of divine grace, to live in some measure according to the obligations, which he then proposed to recognize.

“Our hearts were knit together,” said the brother, who joyfully welcomed him to the table of the Lord. “His countenance beamed with a heavenly expression. A beautiful temper was habitually manifested; and he daily unfolded more and more of meekness and loveliness.”

One of the earliest evidences of a greater degree of decision of religious character, was the apparent pleasure which he took, in visiting serious and devout people, and in conversing with them upon personal piety. When his brother found him thus interested, the circumstance was very gratefully marked. But so habituated had he been to a reserved manner, concerning his own religious feelings, that it evidently required a great effort to open his heart, except to a very few, and perhaps also to these. He had sustained a serious loss, as have many others, from not taking more frequent counsel of the kindred in Christ, in the fullest interchange of the sentiments and emotions of a pure and endearing fellowship.

He spent much of his time in vacations, at Salisbury. He loved to be in the society of his brother; and had great enjoyment of the scenery. From the window of the chamber, which he commonly occupied, he had one of the finest views of Kearsarge, the noble summits of which are but a few miles distant; while towards every point of the horizon, the eye may be regaled with objects of beauty and grandeur, in the variegated landscape.

In some one of his visits at Salisbury, an incident

occurred, which gives an example of what his brother called "a beautiful temper."—There was a military organization of a large part of the students, while he was at college. He took a lively interest in this, as did many others, who, in the disturbed state of Europe and of the foreign relations of our young republic, would not have been surprised, if the opposition to Washington's conservative policy had precipitated the nation, into all the hazards and horrors of a desperate appeal to arms. For the benefit of his health, and for improvement in the discipline of the corps, he occasionally went into a hall, and *exercised*. This gave offence to some members of the Church, who reproached him rather sharply. It is not unlikely, that they accused him of ambition and self-consequence; not understanding his real feelings, or appreciating his true motives. When he heard of what had been said, he did not treat the complaint, as if the effect of narrow prejudice, or an ignorant scrupulosity. It was not in his heart to say, "Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?" But he meekly observed,— "If it is offensive to any one, I will do so no more." The complainants were afterwards much ashamed; while others were no less gratified with the increasing evidences, that he "loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

In the military corps, to which allusion has just been made, he held one of the highest offices; and as was characteristic of him, he excelled in the station. In common with mankind at large, and as the son of a revolutionary patriot and soldier, he was quite enough susceptible of the "magic poetry of war." Even in his valedictory oration, he took a view of war, historically, which was much in accordance with the sympathies of the age. Until the millennial period shall come,

wars, as he then contended, may be permitted, as judgments upon guilty nations, and as powerful, if not indispensable remedies for corrupt and diseased states of society. The internal evidence is quite conclusive, that he did not at all design to vindicate or eulogize the *spirit of war*, which was then so predominant and universal;—but rather to entertain the assembly with some novel and original views, from extended historical surveys; by which the philanthropist and the Christian might measurably assuage their griefs, while contemplating the atrocities and miseries, which follow in the train of this direst “scourge of God.”*

When near the close of the second war with Great Britain, Dr. Noah Worcester published anonymously his “Solemn Review of the Custom of War,”—a pamphlet which has since been translated into all the great languages of Europe,—there was no small difficulty in finding a publisher.† But the writer had few acquaintances or friends, who then sympathized more cordially with him, in his pacific principles, than the brother, whom less than twenty years before, he heard pronounce the oration, on the “Advantages of War.” Yet, it may as well be added in this connection, that brother was intensely interested in the war of England and the allies against Napoleon, which he believed to be most righteous and unavoidable.—“If there must be fighting,” he once said, after the news of a great battle in Spain, “I should like to have Wellington

* And it should not be forgotten, that, from the earliest times of New England, the troops raised for defence or for conquest, had never been allowed such indulgences of immorality and impiety, as were so flagrantly characteristic of European armies. Some of the most devout men were in the ranks of the soldiery, while some of the best ministers officiated as chaplains.

† Published by Hilliard & Metcalf, Cambridge,—the week in which the treaty of Ghent was signed.

meet *Napoleon*, each with about a hundred thousand men; that we might see which would have the mastery." His feelings may be inferred, after the intelligence of the battle of Waterloo.

These references to the martial element in Dr. Worcester, are all but essential to a right apprehension of the constitutional ingredients of his character. United with no common degrees of amiableness and benevolence, there was a natural boldness, a decision of purpose, a spontaneous majesty of feeling, as if he had been born to exert a commanding influence over the minds of his fellow men. While in college, and in his subsequent career, those who were much older than himself, always treated him, as if he had every claim to the prerogatives of seniority. Yet he ever gained the love of children; and those who knew little or nothing more of him, than from seeing him walk in the streets of Salem, retained a pleasing remembrance of the "the mild dignity" of his person and manner.

He suffered greatly from his unwearied diligence, and the too sudden transition from an active to a sedentary life. His studies were much interrupted also, and embarrassed, by the necessity of teaching school to defray his expenses. His father could aid him but little. His brother at Salisbury was deeply sensible from his own experience, of the desirableness of a collegiate education; and was so situated, that he could do more, than any of the brothers, in lightening the burdens, which often weighed heavily upon his spirits. He faltered not, but pressed onward in hope. In their poverty, it should encourage young men of talent and high aims to know, that, without any relief from charitable associations, he, like others, before and since, was able to surmount all obstacles.

While "a general scholar," as remarked by Dr. Snell, he was thorough in whatever he studied. He was no pretender of scholarship,—no fopling of belles-lettres. What he appeared to know, he knew more abundantly than he appeared; as could easily be demonstrated, if any were disposed to urge him to a defence of a sentiment or doctrine, which he had propounded as his own.

Having before him a conception of scholarship, somewhat according to the Roman orator's idea of the *aliquid immensum, infinitumque*, he was incessant in his intellectual toils. And at every step of his ascending progress, he acquired fresh ardor for new exertion, while his "Excelsior" was farther and farther above him.

When speaking to a youth, who was just entering college, and in whose welfare he had a father's own interest, he freely remarked,—“When I joined my class at Dartmouth, it was my determination to take as high a standing, as I could, consistently with the preservation of my health.” It was one of his avowed sentiments, at a later period, and it undoubtedly was deeply seated among his early practical principles, that, while men should never act, as if to gain honors were the object of desire and effort, yet no one should shrink from honors, which are justly his due. And as he considered it a sacred obligation, to make the most of his talents and opportunities, he did with his might, whatever he undertook.

He was one day recreating himself at his favorite game of ball. His activity and dexterity were so conspicuous, that, a gentleman, who was a stranger in the place, eagerly inquired of an elderly man among the spectators, “Who is that?” “That's *Worcester*. And just as you see him now, you may see him in every-

thing. *He is always at the head*; let him be where he will."

His regular class performances, as well as his more elaborate special efforts, were less remarkable for sprightliness of fancy, brilliancy of imagination, or ease and grace in the structure of sentences, than for sound thought, severe logic, and sterling sense. His forensic discussions of "hard questions," in metaphysics, politics, and theology, were certainly well adapted to make a strong impression of his intellect and his industry. It is very likely, that, in immediate connection with some of these, it was said of him at college, by some enthusiastic admirer of his powers,—“an empire might rest upon the shoulders of *Worcester*, without tottering!”

It is questionable, whether any under-graduate was ever more respected, by fellow-students and officers. His class once assembled for recitation; but no officer was in the chair. It was voted to proceed as usual;—a member of the class presiding. The incumbent of the chair was adroitly displaced by some, who were lovers of merriment, and was laid awkwardly upon the floor, amidst shouts of the ridiculous. Another and another shared a similar destiny. “I move,” said one, “that *Worcester* take the chair.” The vote being declared, he walked to the chair and took his seat. The recitation proceeded in due order, as at other times.

It was in his senior year, or July 4, 1795, that he delivered the oration, to which a reference has been made by his classmate, Dr. Snell. It has been described, as “an uncommon specimen of just thought and splendid diction, in the Johnsonian style.”*

* It was printed by request, under the title of—“An Oration Delivered, at the College Chapel, on the Anniversary of American Independence, July Fourth, 1795. By Samuel Worcester, Member of the Senior Class, in Dartmouth University,” &c.

How far this remark was correct, or what might otherwise be said, may now be seen in the oration itself, which is here inserted, without abridgment or alteration. It should be borne in mind, that it was delivered, when the author had been only four years and two months, from the labors of the farm; and that he had previously enjoyed no other literary advantages, than those which have been described. As compared with his oration, at New Ipswich Academy, Oct. 11th, 1791, it shows the progress of his mind, in various aspects; while it is not without value, as a popular expression of patriotic sentiment and feeling, nineteen years after the Declaration of Independence.

“The universe consists of a vast gradation of beings. From the lowest instinct to the highest created intelligence are intermediate orders, in a regularly graduated succession; each order constituting a distinct link in the great chain, and altogether composing one stupendous, systematic whole. At the head of this gradation, on earth, is man. Raised by the fiat of Omnipotence to pre-eminence in this lower creation, he is invested with a dominion over all the tribes of animated nature. Earth, air, and sea, with all throughout this wide domain, lay their homage at his feet, and move in subserviency to his purposes. The whole race, however, occupies but a single grade in the general scale; and they drop from the all-creative Hand into a state of perfect equality. Every individual, upon whom the God of nature has impressed the stamp of humanity, is entitled to all the rights and prerogatives of man. All, therefore, being naturally in a state of equal freedom and independence, ought to regard each other, as brethren, and fellow-sovereigns of the world.

Yet such has been the prevalence of ambition, such the lust of domination, that man has, time immemorial, invaded the rights of man, assumed prerogatives,

in defiance of the laws of nature, and arrogated a sovereignty over his fellows; a sovereignty, which belongs only to the Supreme Governor of the universe. Hence originated imaginary gradations among men,—hence the distinctions, lords and vassals, masters and slaves; hence the doctrine of servile submission of the many to the few.

This assumption of power, this violent invasion of imprescriptible rights, laid, at an early period, a foundation for all the revolutions, which, during the progress of humanity, have deranged the features of the social and political world. Nature has made provision against the violation of her laws, and the confusion of her system, by inspiring her whole offspring with invincible abhorrence of degradation from the rank, in which she has placed them. Usurpers, therefore, have, in all ages, met with opposition; an opposition founded on the eternal principles of right, and the feelings of the human heart. Ever since the standard of tyranny was erected on the plains of Shinar, the contest between right and prerogative has been agitated, with unremitting violence and devastation. This contest has involved the most tragical scenes, which have ever been exhibited on the theatre of nations. By this, the garden of nature has been converted into a field of blood!

To support their usurpation, and advance the cause of arbitrary sway, the despots of the world have exhausted all the resources of artifice, as well as force. Too well have they known, that science and the religion, which is delineated in the volumes of nature and revelation, ever range themselves under the banners of liberty; and that ignorance and superstition furnish the ground, upon which the foundations of tyranny are consolidated. Hence they have employed every possible means to darken and terrify the world. The mysteries of paganism, the doctrines of the Koran, and the thunders of the conclave, have been plied, as engines of despotism, till mankind was reduced to a state of meanness and servility, infinitely below the dignity of the human character, and the way prepared

for the establishment of the tyrannical system, in a great part of the globe.

The grand contest between right and prerogative commenced in the regions of the east. Asia, first in everything, was first to embrace the shackles of slavery. For ages, convulsed and distracted by perpetual struggles, she at length gave over the controversy, and bowed to the enormous weight of consolidated empire. Africa was next prostrated at the foot of ambition, and forced to resign her rights and liberties into the hands of petty tyrants and usurpers. The fate of Europe was stamped at the passage of the Rubicon. Here we may fix a memorable epoch in the history of despotism. It is easy to see, that all the revolutions, which took place, and all the scenes, which were acted upon the European theatre, subsequent to the extinction of Roman liberty, compose one connected series of events, which paved the way for the consolidation of a refined tyrannical system, in that quarter of the globe. This was a system, which, by cementing a coalition of despots, and artfully balancing their respective powers, embraced all the advantages, and rejected all the disadvantages, of the unwieldy empires of Asia, and the petty regencies of Africa. This system was consummated in the last century, and continued unimpaired, till a late period in the present.

Thus was tyranny established in three quarters of the globe. Asia, Africa, and Europe, sunk under the weight of oppression, and exhibited a dreary devastation of humanity. The Genius of Liberty, exiled from the eastern continent, sought an asylum in the wilds of the new world. Even here, however, the celestial fugitive found but a narrow residence; for already had the Colossus of tyranny bestrid the Atlantic, and secured a footing near the western sun. The Anglo-Americans alone, of the civilized world, retained the spirit and sentiments of a free people, and they alone promised adherence to the standard of liberty.

Britain, at this time, held an eminent rank among the nations of the earth,—Britain, the land of our fathers' sepulchres, the birth-place of freemen,—the

pretended friend and advocate of liberty ; but the veriest champion of the cause of tyranny. Raised by a long series of prosperity to the empire of the main, she affected to waft the terror of her arms to the remotest realms, and awe the world to submission. Flushed with recent conquest, and plumed with laurels, won by her prowess from the combined powers of France and Spain, she assumed the nod of universal decision, and grasped at the power *paramount* on both sides the Atlantic. As from this giddy pinnacle of false glory she looked round on the world, she cast an indignant eye on a people, who presumed to set bounds to her ambition, and hold in check the tide of oppression. Her American colonies, though steady in their allegiance to the parent state, had never relinquished the rights of man, nor bowed the knee to the Baal of tyranny. Notwithstanding, therefore, their loyalty, and their zeal for the glory of her empire, she regarded her sentiments, as dangerous to her boasted prerogative ; and the spirited language of freemen gave her more disturbance, than could the whole artillery of Europe united against her. She anxiously eyed the sacred flame, which they kept burning upon the altar of freedom, and foresaw, that, unless speedily extinguished, it would consume the pillars of her own grandeur, and even the fabric of despotism. Britain, in fine, regarded her colonies, as the sole guardians of the celestial standard, as the forlorn *corps de reserve* of the cause of liberty and equal rights, and presumed, that to bring them to her feet would at once place her own glory beyond the region of danger, terminate, forever, the contest between right and prerogative, and establish the tyrannical system upon a basis never more to be shaken. For this purpose, she roused and summoned her whole might. To this point she directed all the politics of her cabinet, all the resources of her finances, and the whole force of her armament. Well collected and prepared, she raised her arm to deal the tremendous stroke, which was, at once, to decide the fate of the world.

This was a crisis. The colonists were struck with

consternation,—the Genius of Liberty lifted herself from the earth, on the point to revisit her native skies,—Europe beheld with amazement,—the eyes of the universe were fixed on the scene,—and nature was anxious for the event!—*Let them be sovereign states*, said a voice from Heaven!—*Let them be sovereign states*, re-echoed the Colonial Congress!—The voice reverberated through the world, and nature felt relief. The celestial genius re-alighted upon the earth, and re-animated freemen rallied, in crowds, around her standard. Under her banners, and the auspices of Heaven, they arrested the blow—they triumphed, they confirmed their independence. Thus the pride of Britain was humbled—thus the efforts of tyranny were baffled—thus the towering hopes of despots were blasted—thus the rights of nature were vindicated!

This, my fellow citizens, is the anniversary of that eventful day, which declared the Independence and sovereignty of United Columbia—this is the day which arrested despotism, and made a decisive stand for the liberties of man—this is the day, which opened to the intelligent universe a new and glorious succession of events—this is the natal day of the regenerated world! The transactions of the 4TH OF JULY, 1776, are registered in the archives of Heaven, and their influence, in the affairs of nations, will be felt through the revolution of ages. The voice which this day proclaimed these States independent, shook the political world to the centre—the shackles were loosened from the human mind—the bulwarks of despotism were levelled with the ground—thrones tottered on their bases—and the Dagon of tyranny fell, prostrate, before the altar of Liberty.

Americans! the declaration of Independence was the salvation of our country. It was this, which blew into a flame the almost smothered embers of freedom, and roused, from the vale of despondence, the genius of Columbia. It was this, which wrested us from the grasp of tyranny, from the iron hand of oppression, and promoted us to an eminent rank among the nations of the earth. This is the first link in a grand chain of

events, which issued in the establishment of a constitution, which combines the wisdom of ages, which secures to us the rights, the privileges, and the blessings of a free people; and, under which, this federal republic is rapidly ascending the heights of political importance and national glory.

Can any thing be wanting to awaken our sensibility to the blessings we enjoy, as the fruits of our freedom and Independence? Cast an eye over the world; look at Asia, at Africa, at a great part of Europe, and America. What a prospect rises to our view! A scene of oppression—a waste of humanity—a ravage of nature—a world of slaves. Ye ministers of benevolence, draw the veil. But turn, my fellow citizens, to a brighter scene—turn home! Survey these favorite States—this pleasant land of liberty—this fairest district of creation. See here a race of men, a community of freemen, a band of brothers, united upon the principles of equality, by the bonds of nature, of society, and of benevolence. Here is happiness—here is dignity, here is sublimity of character! Here benignant Nature smiles on her work, and rejoices in the advancement of her offspring. Here the day is active, and the night secure; while, borne o'er the turrets of this western world, on the shadowy fleecings of the sky, Peace beams a diffusive radiance on the scene, and sheds her kindly influence into every soul. Here the forest becomes a luxuriant field, the desert assumes the blooming aspect of Eden, and the crude materials of nature are wrought into articles of use, convenience, and elegance; while Commerce, from every distant shore, rolls to our ports her golden tides, which flow in ample streams throughout the land. See here the bright fields of Science, trodden by the frequent foot of Genius, and the flowery heights of Parnassus, thronged by the votaries of the Muses; while even the peasant lights his flambeau at the hallowed shrine of Philosophy, and the meanest religionist burns incense, upon his own altar, to the God of nature.

The transactions of this day are not, however, confined, in their happy effects, to our nation, nor to our

age. United Columbia is but a miniature of what the world shall shortly be. Already have the beams of philosophy irradiated the political horizon of the eastern world; there the public mind begins to emerge from the gloom in which it has long been enveloped, and to expatiate in regions more bright and more congenial to its nature. A spark, wafted from this land of freedom, has enkindled the flame beyond the Atlantic. Liberty has again erected her standard on the shores of Europe, and, from the brow of the rampart, demands a re-establishment, in that quarter of the globe. The potent voice, like that, which ran through the regions of primæval chaos, has, from the confused elements of human nature, called forth myriads of embattled freemen to assert her cause. These, with the impetuosity of a torrent, rush upon the empire of despotism and sweep thrones, dignities, and distinctions, into one general ruin. In vain does the world rise in arms against them. Where is the monarchy of France, where the despotic race of the Capets? Where is the aristocracy of Holland? Where the tyranny of the house of Orange? Where are the impregnable fortresses of Flanders? Where the ancient boundaries of Spain and of the German empire? Nay, where is the threatening front and the boasted arm of tyrannical coalition? And still the tocsin sounds—still the flame rages—still liberty is mounted in the car of victory. And thus shall it be, till tyranny has measured back the course, by which it advanced over the globe, and till the tree of liberty be planted in the place of every throne in the universe. The subversion of the Gallic monarchy, the abolition of Belgic aristocracy, and the general convulsion of Europe, are but a prelude to the final catastrophe of the tyrannical system. Scene opens after scene, in great and rapid succession. The grand consummation is at hand—the conflagration of the political world; that conflagration, which this day enkindled, and from its ashes is arising a new and more glorious fabric—a fabric founded on the eternal principles of virtue and of reason.

Hail the auspicious day! Well may it be celebrated

as the festival of man, as the jubilee of nations. So long as virtue shall warm the patriot, so long as benevolence shall enliven the universe, so long may the FOURTH OF JULY be solemnized, as a sacred anniversary, throughout the world. This day let creation assume her brightest glories. May those morning stars, which sang the birth of time, with sweetest music, usher in the dawn: may the slowly advancing Sun, as he traverses the concave of heaven, diffuse his mildest influence, and light all nature into smiles, while every land breaks forth in songs of joy!

It is for us, Americans! it is for us, as the eldest brothers of freemen, to lead, in the solemnities of this day. Proclaim it, then, sacred to virtue, to patriotism, and to the rights of nature! Display the ensigns of freedom, rear the triumphal arch, blaze upon the regions of despotism, in all the majesty of a free people! Throw wide the portals of Liberty, through her sacred temple,—renew the solemn vows at her altar, and swear eternal fidelity to the laws of nature, and the rights of man! Rehearse the history of American Independence. Hail the rising Republics of Europe, and announce to the world the prevalence of reason, the triumphs of freedom, and the downfall of tyranny! Brilliancy and exultation become the day! But, while each soul dilates with joy—while every bosom glows with the patriotic flame, and every tongue pronounces a *health and fraternity* to the world, let grateful anthems, to the God of reason, fill earth with harmony, till seraphs catch the rapturous song! Nor let us, on this joyous occasion, forget that our Independence was sealed by the blood of thousands of our fathers and our brethren. Sacred be the memory of WARREN, of MONTGOMERY, and of all, who bled in their country's cause—this day will we celebrate their virtues and recount their achievements—this day will we rear monuments to eternize their fame and enshrine their ashes in our inmost bosoms. And the still surviving patriots, who, either in the cabinet or in the field, asserted and maintained the rights of man and the Independence of these States, shall this day be honored, as the sa-

viours and defenders of their country, and as the ornaments of human nature. Especially, let the man, who in war was our shield, and in peace becomes our guardian and glory, this day, renewedly receive the united acknowledgments of his grateful country. It was virtue like his, my fellow citizens, which ensured success, in the arduous struggle for Liberty and Independence; and such virtue alone can perpetuate the blessings of our Federal Union, and support that constitution, which is the Palladium of our political existence. Let us, then, rouse into activity all that is great, all that is noble, all that is patriotic in man. Let virtue be the stability of our Republic, and patriotism the bond of our political union. Let us prize, as invaluable, the privileges of a free people, and hold, as inviolable, the principles of a free government. While we maintain that vigilance and that spirit of free investigation, which have ever been the guardians of American Liberty, let us, at the same time, cultivate a reverence for the laws and the constituted authorities; and detested be the wretch, who would heap unreasonable odium upon the public functionaries, invidiously destroy the influence of merit, or wantonly hurl the fire-brand of discord into the bosom of his country. While we enter, warmly, into the cause of humanity, and rejoice in the success of our brethren in arms, for the rights of nature, let us be just and benevolent to all nations, and remember, that even the savages of the wilderness are members, with us, of the great family of man. And, while, with open arms, our Federal Republic invites, to her bosom, the distressed of all nations, and promises an asylum from the sword, persecution, and oppression;—shall an unransomed American groan under the bloody scourge of a barbarous Algerine, or an unfortunate African drag the chains of slavery, in the very sanctuary of freedom? Nature remonstrates, and Nature will vindicate her rights.

Americans! we are elevated upon the high places of liberty—a monument to all nations, of the natural rights of man, and the attainable sublimity of the human character; and, forbid it, Heaven! it should ever

be said of these Confederate States, they *once* were independent, they *once* were virtuous, they *once* were free. Forever may we support the majesty of a free people; forever may despots tremble at the American name! May we escape the disasters, which have befallen the Republics of ancient and modern times, and transmit, inviolate, to remotest posterity, our birthright among regenerated nations. And while, aloof from the din of battle, and the ravage of war, we survey the awful conflict between republicans and despots; while we see kings hurled from their thrones, kingdoms torn up by the roots, and empires swept from the stage; may we rejoice in the rapid progress of reason, and the consequent emancipation of man, and gratefully anticipate the day, when war and tyranny, with all their horrors, shall cease from the earth, and when uninterrupted peace, benevolence, and happiness, shall prevail, under the glorious reign of IMMANUEL, throughout the *Universal Republic* of the CONFEDERATED WORLD!

An oration also before the Society of "Social Friends," was of high order. It was a masterly effort of sound reasoning and dignified discussion.

It was Dr. Worcester's aim at college, to cultivate *all* his powers, so that, as far as practicable, he might enter upon professional studies, with a mind well balanced and well furnished. He studied history; read general literature; wrote sonnets, odes, and other metrical compositions; cherished and improved his taste for music; corresponded not only with relatives, but with others, who, from his respect, his particular friendship, or his more tender sentiments, received from him, occasionally at least, something more intellectual and literary, than the ordinary epistles of a college student. In the few examples which remain, it is apparent, that he sought to be familiar as well as

dignified, and no less playful, than sober and philosophical.

But in efforts to acquire an easy and unlabored elegance of style, his success was incomplete; although his proficiency has not often been exceeded. He had to contend with difficulties, which others have known, who like himself had not breathed a literary atmosphere, from their childhood. His manner of writing accorded well with the manly and majestic movements of his intellect; but could not be taken as a model of naturalness and unafflicted gracefulness. In using his pen at college, and, in general, afterwards, he wrote, as if mindful of his standard of high scholarship, and fully sensible of the weight of a reputation, which, at all times, he conceived it to be his duty to sustain, and which, for the noblest ends of life, he desired to increase. Rhetorically examined, he appeared to the best advantage, when obliged to write within a limited time, for an important occasion. When excited or pressed, as in controversy, or when pouring out his very heart in appeals for the benighted and the perishing, the candor of the most refined and rigid criticism, had nothing to say, but in unqualified praise.

From the time of his joining the church at Salisbury, to his decision to enter the ministry, little can now be learned of his religious exercises. He was probably too zealous as a scholar, to be eminent as a Christian. But his principles were established. His influence was ever open and decided, in favor of that mode of faith, which Dartmouth College was founded to promote, and which his ancestors had so worthily upheld. And this alone was an evidence of his vital soundness in evangelical views and purposes; for he

took his religious position before the world, at a time when many eminent men in the pulpit, and in all places of influence, were very far from being cordial friends of the theology of "the fathers;" and when a large number of aspiring youth in all the institutions of learning, were much too wise in their "own conceit," and not a little contaminated and bewildered by the atheistical folly and madness of the French republic of 1789.

He could not but feel the claims of the christian ministry. And it is believed by those competent to judge, that long before he graduated, the bias of his will was secretly gathering the power, which at last was decisive. His brother Noah's success at Thornton, and his brother Thomas's peculiarly happy relations to the people of his charge, at Salisbury, would naturally unite with ancestral recollections, in urging a consecration to the work of a good minister of Jesus Christ.

Dec. 18, 1794, he wrote a playful epistle to his absent room-mate, which he closed with this abrupt transition:

"Friend Jewett, about eight months will launch us into the wide world; a new scene will then open before us. What ——? I forbear. Your imagination will supply thought."

In another part of the letter to Dea. Isaac Appleton, April 26, 1795, he says:

"Since I entered college, I have met with many perplexities, embarrassments, and discouragements, which at times have almost overpowered my resolution. I have been obliged to fight up against the perversities of fortune, and for awhile even against the parental inclination. But encouraged by the patrons

of science and of virtue, among whom I must do myself the justice to make honorable mention of your name, I have made head thus far; nor do I regret that I entered upon this career. My father is reconciled; and my circumstances, though somewhat embarrassed, are not the worst. I believe I shall get through college—but what then? This is an important question, which I cannot at present answer decidedly. I wish, however, that my friends, and the friends of mankind, may realize their most sanguine expectations respecting my future usefulness.”

Less than two weeks afterwards, he wrote to his brother Leonard, at Worcester :

“*Dartmouth College, May 7, 1795.*”

Dear Brother,—

I hope that in some future time, I shall be in a situation more favorable than this to a regular correspondence with my friends. A word from a friend is always a cordial to my heart—but month after month passes by, without handing me a single letter—nay, sometimes without so much as whispering that my friends are alive. And it is very seldom, that I have opportunity of transmitting a line to any place but Salisbury. Almost every place, however, has its conveniences and its inconveniences, and every situation in life its advantages and disadvantages, things agreeable and disagreeable. Time has almost rolled me out of college. I must soon step forth into the world, and by divine permission, commence an actor on the public stage. What part I am to perform, and where the scene of my action is to be laid, is yet uncertain. I sometimes indulge anxiety—but on the whole I wish not to penetrate into the secrets of futurity, or to draw aside the veil, with which Providence kindly conceals from my view its purposes respecting the scenes which await me in life. Hitherto I have been in a good measure prosperous in my pursuits—my literary career has been marked with circumstances, which I contemplate with complacency—and at present I have no

reason to complain that Providence is unkind—or that, with respect to my own merit, the world is unjust. I can, therefore, most cheerfully trust myself in their hands; and am confident, that so long as I live for my friends, for my fellow-men, and for my God, my business will be delightful, my situation favorable, and my reward bountiful.

I am not fully determined, whether to enter upon a professional study immediately after leaving college, or to go into some productive business for a while, in order to clear off my pecuniary arrearages. The latter appears to me at present the more eligible course, provided I could find an employment sufficiently gainful. School-keeping is the most common business for those in my circumstances; but school-keeping holds out but small encouragement, excepting rare instances. Be so kind as to favor me with your advice in this matter, and communicate whatever you think may be for my advantage.

I have not yet been able to learn particulars respecting your controversy with Messrs. *Bancroft, Tucker,* and *Thomas*—I wish for more in detail. * * * *

I intend a visit to brother Noah and sister Fox, in about four weeks—expect not to be at Hollis, till after examination, which may be about the middle of July. Shall find it necessary to be pretty industrious, as I have laid out considerable reading, and have moreover three orations to write before Commencement.

We have had some disturbances in College this term. Two have been expelled—one suspended for six months—one publicly admonished—one has made a public confession, and several others have confessed more privately—all members of the Junior class. The affair is complicated—I cannot therefore in this give you a just statement. The friends of order rejoice, that government has assumed energy and decision—the high and *spunky* are altogether crest-fallen, the storm has subsided, and the prospect is favorable.

With most affectionate regard for my sister and yourself, I am your brother,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.
Mr. LEONARD WORCESTER."

The question of his future course was now evidently the great subject of his private meditations. A letter to his brother Jesse passes, by a very sudden transition, from sundry matters of pleasantry, to the theme upon which he had so recently written with such solicitude, to his brother Leonard, and to his much esteemed "patron" at New Ipswich.

" *Dartmouth College, May 25, 1795.*

My dear Brother,—

I have been wishing for an opportunity to send you a letter, but none before this has offered. You have doubtless been *curious*, if not *anxious*, to learn the history of my journey, and of the circumstances relative to it. Were I to adopt the language of romance, and dwell upon every incident with the enthusiasm of a novelist, I might no doubt swell my adventure into as great importance, as any in the whole life of Don Quixotte. But I prefer the simple style of narration. My horse, you know, was very lame, the ways extremely bad, and my spirits at ebb-tide mark. The first night I lodged at McGaa's, the next at Concord, the next at Salisbury, the next at Grafton, and the next at Dartmouth. The first night, was very gloomy; the second, found friends and took courage; the third, was in pretty good spirits; the fourth, dull, dull, dull; the fifth, was all life, was all soul! As I journeyed, I was sometimes mounted, and sometimes in the mud—some of the time lively and some of the time dull—sometimes petulant and sometimes pitiful. My horse hobbled along at a miserable rate, but quite as well as expected. All the world gazed out at the window as I passed *by*, and said, 'La!—see that *fellow* upon a lame horse!' This last circumstance, you will easily believe, administered neither *oil nor wine to my wounded pride*. However, although it was not a *cordial*, it may possibly have produced some good effect as a *medicine*.

I rode on to the plain with a slow, limping, and

melancholy pace ; but no sooner had I alighted, than I was surrounded with friends and class-mates, who gave my hand such a *cordial shake*, and poured into my bosom such warm effusions of friendly joy, that I in an instant forgot all my disappointments, fatigues, and glooms. I pretty soon paid my respects to the President, and found him all complacency. I next went home with my horse, accompanied with several of my friends, some of whom were witnesses to my contract, and without much difficulty got clear of any pecuniary compensation to the owner. On the whole, I am rather glad than sorry, that I came on no sooner ; for I believe that I improved my time to as good advantage at home, as I could have done here, in the *then state* of the college ; and besides it saved me some expense. Living is dearer here now than it has been, since I have been in college ;—provisions are not so plentiful as usual, and the General Court, you know, must *live*.

I am soon, my dear brother, to be thrown out into the wide world, and what shall I then do ? This is a question which occurs to me every day ; and it is most certainly a question of vast importance. On its decision depend my usefulness, my reputation, and my happiness in life. But I am at present in a great and interesting quandary. I have no great desire, however, to penetrate the arcana of futurity, or to draw aside the veil with which Providence kindly conceals its designs from the eye of forestalling curiosity. Sure I am, that if I live for my friends, for my country, and for my God, I shall not fail of being both useful and happy, into whatever line or profession my life may be drawn.

We have had a pretty turbulent season of it at college this term. Upon this I have detailed some particulars in my letter to our honored father.

I shall probably be at Hollis, about the middle of July. I shall find it necessary to be very industrious this summer, for besides a large lot of reading, which I wish to traverse, and my usual college exercises, I have three orations to prepare before Commencement—

one for 4th of July, one for the anniversary exhibition of the Social Friends, and the Valedictory oration for my class. My health is still a check upon my ambition.—I have bespoken lodgings for you at Commencement. Come and occupy them.

My tenderest regards to yourself, to my sister, and to your whole family.

SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

His state of mind within a month of Commencement can be given in his own words.

“*Hollis, July 20, 1795.*

My dear brother,—

The bearer of this is waiting. The proposals stated in yours of May, demand my grateful acknowledgments and deliberate consideration. My present determination is not to *hurry* into any profession. Should a favorable birth in the line of school-keeping offer itself, I hold myself in readiness to embrace it; if not, I propose to enter immediately after Commencement upon professional studies, most probably in the line of Divinity. Parson Austin is a gentleman, high in my estimation. I think I could study with him, with great satisfaction and to good advantage: in my present views, no place would suit me better than Worcester, for my residence during the term of my pupilage. If therefore all things may be made convenient, I shall most gladly close with your offer. Our friends, so far as I know, are well.

My most affectionate regards to yourself and my sister.

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

Mr. LEONARD WORCESTER.”

At Commencement, he received from a Counsellor in Maine, a very eligible offer of a place, as a student at law; which, however, he was now prepared to decline. His brothers were present when he graduated, and rejoiced with him in the honors, which were

showered upon him, at the completion of his studies at Hanover. His Valedictory Oration exhibited the same power, as had been so much admired in his previous performances. But amidst all the scenes of his brilliant success, he might now, in the prospects of the future, have received the classical benediction :

I, decus, i, nostrum, melioribus utere fatis.

As a Christian, however, he had many solitudes. Already he had begun to feel, in no ordinary degree, as is believed, the constraining influence of a sentiment, which may here be recorded from his paternal instructions : “ Every honor received from man, is to be remembered, as increasing the recipient’s obligations to God.”

CHAPTER IV.

Studies for the ministry. State of the times. Residence at Worcester. Correspondence. Palemon to Alexis. Teaches at Hollis. Preceptor of the Academy at New Ipswich. Licensed to preach. First Sermons. His manner in the pulpit. Prejudices in his native town. Oration, Fourth of July, 1796. Leaves New Ipswich. Correspondence. Settlement at Fitchburg, Mass.

This is a true saying. If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

In a few weeks after leaving college, Dr. Worcester placed himself under the guidance of Rev. Samuel Austin, pastor of the First Church, in Worcester. He had now completed nearly one half of his life.

Pious young men in the colleges, or preparing for the ministry, were far from being numerous. But his

Alma Mater, in twenty-five years, had sent forth more than one hundred and seventy, who became settled pastors, the most of whom were evangelical. "Edwards on the Will" was a classic at Dartmouth, during his college course; and had its influence in forming the sentiments and character of the students. But his own theological opinions were mainly settled and systematized, before he entered college. And it is not known or supposed, that he had the slightest hesitation, in deciding upon "the form of sound words," which, in all essential points, it was his duty to qualify himself to vindicate and promote.

But it was an epoch of great political and religious commotion, throughout Christendom. In the American republic, "federalism" and "democracy" were arrayed in determined conflict. Washington, in all his glory of virtue, could hardly hold the helm of state. And such was the aspect of affairs in Europe, from the sanguinary and most appalling developments of atheism and ungodliness in Paris and all France, that *politics* engrossed a large share of the attention of the American clergy. Most of these were staunch federalists. The sermons, orations, and essays of Rev. Noah Worcester, and his younger brothers, were among the most prominent of the day, and were all in fervid harmony with the sentiments of Fisher Ames, in his celebrated Speech on the British Treaty, April 26, 1796. The political creed of the father and sons, as represented by Hamilton and Washington, had now given to each of them a most decided political character, which continued through all the subsequent events of their history.

A considerable portion of the New England clergy were sound or orthodox divines. Nearly all of them

had been liberally educated. Bellamy, Smalley, West, Edwards the younger, with many others, beside Hopkins,* and the young "sage of Franklin," were more than enough to prevent all the churches from relapsing into "a doctrinal lethargy." And though the interests of vital religion had sadly languished or otherwise suffered, during the war which annihilated the French power in North America, and the subsequent struggle of the Colonies for independence; yet the majority of the churches were blessed of God with pastors, who honestly professed to be Calvinistic. A highly respectable number were willing to be known as *Hopkinsians*. Others preferred to be called, as they really were, "moderate" Calvinists; having no favor for *Arminians*, who were not few, as commonly believed and reported. These last would have been disowned by the old professor of divinity at Leyden, whose system, however, the patriarchal and learned Robinson pronounced—"that grand *choak-weed of true Christianity*." They were not like the Wesleyans, who recognized the supernatural work of the Spirit in renewing the heart, and who were in ecstasies in seasons of revival. They made light of experimental godliness, as if enthusiasm or delusion. They were too well satisfied with the appearance of good morals, and reverent attendance upon public worship. If they could preserve peace in their parishes, though it were like the stillness of the rivers of mid-winter, they conceived, as it would seem, that they had attained a most important end of their ministry, and might die in hope of the recompense of good and faithful servants.

* The first edition of Hopkins' System of Divinity was published at Boston, in 1793. The remark needs qualification, but not without reason has it been said, that "Hopkinsianism in Massachusetts saved the church."

It cannot now be a question, that some of these, the really as well as reputedly Arminian portion of the clergy, were Arians, Socinians, or Unitarians. They spoke of Jesus, as the Son of God, and called him divine; but thought it would be "robbery," if he should be accounted "equal with God." A part of the class of ministers, usually styled Arminian, repelled the name, and would never have assented to the views of Faustus Socinus; while others needed only a change of circumstances, to bring them into open fellowship with Humanitarians, even of the lowest degree. There were strenuous efforts to persuade the community, that *the doctrines* of the Bible are but of speculative importance, and that almost any differences of belief are entirely consistent with real and acceptable piety. In short, a liberality was advocated and demanded, which would be enough to "*liberalize* away all true religion."

"The fathers" and their immediate offspring were perfectly well acquainted with the opinions of Arius and Socinus; and sometimes spoke, as if they had fears of their introduction into New England. It has been said, that "there was no *infidel* known in the country, for one hundred and fifty years." The same was true of the advocates of what is now known as Unitarianism. Dr. Freeman, of King's Chapel, Boston, was the first to avow himself a Unitarian; and he was settled in 1785.*

* Dr. Morse was settled at Charlestown in 1789. In the Introduction of his "Appeal," &c, he says: "During the last half of the year, I was *insidiously* sounded, as to my sentiments concerning the doctrine of the TRINITY; and subsequently gave serious offence to some of my brethren in the ministry, by preaching a course of sermons on the subject, at the Thursday lecture." In 1790, extracts from Emlyn's Inquiry, a thoroughly Unitarian work, were republished in Boston. The work first appeared in the Colonies, in an American edition, in 1756; at whose special desire is not known.

In the opinion of Dr. Morse, the all-engrossing subjects connected with the French Revolution, delayed, for some years, the disclosure of the Unitarianism of Boston and other parts of Massachusetts. The very fact, however, that this was not openly and honestly avowed, until long after its existence, is of itself a witness of the predominant bias of the community, in support of Trinitarian and Calvinistic sentiments. To some extent at least, as it has been truly affirmed, the "tares were sown, while men slept."* But there were watchmen, whose trumpet gave no uncertain sound. And the impression was so fixed, that Socinianism or Arianism was disguised under the most popular teachings of Arminian pulpits, that Calvinists, both of the clergy and laity, did not hesitate to speak, as if the fact were indisputable.

In the latter part of 1794, Leonard Worcester, in whose family his brother Samuel lived, while studying with Dr. Austin, adventured, as a humble layman, to address a series of letters to Dr. Bancroft, of the new Society, on the subject of his misrepresentations of Calvinism. In one part of the pamphlet, which was printed early in 1795, he says :

"The two schemes of religious sentiments, which appear the most extensively to divide the protestant part of the christian church, are Socinianism or Arianism, and Calvinism. The former of those schemes has, very extensively, if not very generally, taken the place of Arminianism : and is, perhaps, rapidly paving the way to be succeeded by the spread of Infidelity.

* Just as Unitarianism arose in the Presbyterian churches of Ireland, England, France, Switzerland, and Holland. It secured its ground, before it was avowed ; and thus neither Congregational discipline, nor any other, could be available to keep it out. But it may be added, if it had not been for Congregationalism, the churches in Massachusetts would have been in a far worse condition, to meet the crisis which was fast coming.

This is rendered at least probable, by the consideration, that avowed Deists find no difficulty in *applauding* the public discourses of Socinian and Arian preachers. The sentiments of Socinians or Arians, and those of Calvinists, are so directly opposed to each other, that if both, or either, of the parties, preserve consistency, no room can be found for scriptural christian communion. For, nothing can be more plain, than that, of two *opposite* schemes of sentiments, one or the other must be *essentially* wrong."

There are not many among us, who seem to be aware, that such charges were brought against Arminians, so long before the new order of things at Harvard College and the crisis of 1815,—when concealment of Unitarianism was no longer practicable. On the other hand, the defection of the churches from the spiritual standard of "the fathers," has been thought to have been far greater and more extensive, than a more full investigation of the history of those times will allow us to believe. We may easily draw a dark picture, from the lax style of preaching in some of the most popular pulpits; the discontinuance of prayer-meetings, conferences, and other means of conversion and personal religious culture, in many places; the comparatively small number of young members of churches; the abounding prevalence of vain and vicious amusements, with a rapid increase of habits of intemperance; and the exultation of the enemies of the truth, in the assured hope of the speedy triumph of infidelity, over the hallowed faith of Protestant as well as Catholic Christendom. There were examples of the godly, who felt like Elijah, when he fled from Jezebel, or like Lot in Sodom.

But amidst the clouds of that day, which has sometimes been described as if it were very dark twilight,

at the brightest, the sun frequently shone out, in enlivening resplendence. "They that feared the Lord, spake often to one another." They searched the Scriptures, and found prophecies and promises of joy and gladness, which were utterly incompatible with the idea, that Christianity was about to become an obsolete system. Strengthened in their persuasion, that "the foundations of the righteous" were not "destroyed," although "all the foundations of the earth" might seem to be "out of course,"—they united in a concert of supplication, on both sides the Atlantic, for the outpouring of the Spirit, the discomfiture of the foes of the Church, and the enlargement of Zion over all the earth, even to "the uttermost parts of the sea." The divine blessing followed this redoubled fervor of prayer and zeal for the glory of the Prince of Life.

There was a cheering earnest of the multiplied and powerful revivals, which were soon enjoyed. And while the religious wants of the new settlements, which in an unexampled manner were now extending into the wilderness, awakened the anxious sympathies of those, who feared that a godless race would there be nurtured,—a mighty impulse was given to the missionary spirit of the evangelical clergy and laity. Plans for new associations, like the missionary societies of Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts, were soon in agitation; and in these were to be trained the men, who should form and establish the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

Christians in New England and the other States found themselves drawn into closer union and communion with their kindred across the waters. Through the pages of the London Evangelical Magazine, the

enlightened missionary zeal of Dr. Haweis and his associates, enkindled or nourished congenial fires in different parts of our land. It was by that publication, in an eminent degree, that the way was opened for the London Missionary Society, which was organized in the very month, when Dr. Worcester commenced his studies for the ministry.—After he had come into public life, he was led to consider the day of its institution—the *twenty-first day of September, seventeen hundred and ninety-five*,—as one of the most memorable in the modern history of the Church.*

It will readily be seen from this review of the state of the times—upon which an instructive volume might be written,—that there were many circumstances peculiarly adapted to stimulate such a mind, as Dr. Worcester's. He could hardly have been better situated, than while under the theological and pastoral instructions of Dr. Austin. With good reason he had conceived a very high respect for his teacher. His first impressions were fully realized; and both the student and instructor were mutually satisfied. In truth, however, the distance between them was very rapidly diminished.

Dr. Austin had studied with Dr. Jonathan Edwards, when settled at New Haven; whose house was inferior to none, as a school of divinity, in the times when Theological Seminaries were unknown in the land. Dr. Edwards had a series of questions for his students, embracing the great topics of Christian Theology, and prepared in the happiest manner of his

* The English Baptist Missionary Society was formed in 1792, or the year when he entered college; having been preceded by the eloquent and irresistible exhortation of Carey: "EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD; ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS FOR GOD."

remarkably logical intellect.* From the subjects of a series of dissertations, which Dr. Worcester wrote, it may be presumed, that Dr. Austin furnished him with a copy of those questions;† while it is very certain, that he was brought into very close connection and communion with the mighty minds of the Edwardses, father and son. In the brief period of four months, which was all the time that he spent at Worcester, the outlines of his ministerial character were strongly and permanently defined and fixed. And in much less than a single year, the sermons which he wrote, were those of “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.”

It was no small advantage, in many respects, that, while at Worcester, he could board with his excellent brother Leonard. This brother's standard of piety was of the purest cast; and as an editor of a weekly paper, he was conversant with all the stirring events of the day. The younger brother received from him the kindest fraternal offices; but, as was characteristic of the family, he chose to work his own way into his profession, with as little dependence as possible, upon gratuitous assistance. He accordingly took a school in Hollis, for the winter of 1795-6; intending to return to Worcester the ensuing spring. It was otherwise ordered, for his discipline.

The friendships, which he had formed in college, were cherished with an uncommon faithfulness. With his room-mate particularly, he maintained a very affectionate and profitable correspondence. And that

* In *reasoning*, it is well understood, that the younger Edwards was even superior to “the prince of divines,”—as Chalmers styled the father.

† This is known to have been done by another eminent pupil of the same teacher,—Rev. Asahel Hooker, of Farmington, Conn., who had the privilege of instructing such men as Drs. Woodbridge, Tyler, and Humphrey.

higher benefits might be secured, than those merely of social and fraternal intercourse, he sought to induce two others to join him and his friend Jewett, in a novel experiment of epistolary writing; of which no better idea can be given, than that it appears to have been intended to answer the same general purpose for themselves privately, as is now so extensively accomplished for the public, by the "correspondence" of the leading newspapers of our day.—These four classmates wrote to each other, under fictitious signatures. A few of the Numbers of "Palemon" will show what was attempted by the projector of the experiment. But he never had the time at command, to realize his own conception of the expected advantage.—It may be pleasant, also, to compare "Palemon to Alexis," with "S. Worcester to Luther Jewett," in the unreserved freedom of his ordinary style of letter-writing.

To Mr. Luther Jewett.

"Worcester, Nov. 3, 1795.

My Friend,—

I know your candor and friendship have engaged you to cast about for every possible apology, and am conscious to myself of not having acted an unfriendly part; yet I cannot but feel sensible regret, that I have been obliged so long to delay an answer to your favor of the 27th September.

* * * * *

You expressed some concern, in the cover to your above-mentioned letter, lest it should appear, that some imprudences had escaped your pen; but be sure, I found nothing but the grateful language of an ingenuous heart. Your remarks were friendly, judicious, and important. The present is a day of inquiry, of controversy, and of licentious speculation; the christian world is divided and subdivided into sects and

denominations almost innumerable ; yet numerous as they are, there is scarce a scheme of sentiments extant, which is not advocated by champions who wield the pen of controversy with dexterity and effect. What confidence then can we repose in the opinion of “great men ;”—whom shall we set up as the standard ;—whom shall we call father ?—“To the law and to the testimony”—here and here only can we find authorities, on which we may repose securely.

You know, my friend, the outlines of my scheme of theological sentiments. I have not yet seen occasion to alter essentially. I shall doubtless be called a Hopkinsian ; yet certainly I know no man, with whom I fully accord in opinion. You wish me to “adopt Hopkinsian arguments, but Arminian manners.” I trust, I am not altogether an idle observer of the different manners, exhibited by gentlemen of the cloth, of different persuasions ; neither am I insensible of the influence of manners, especially with the great body of the common people. I cannot say, that I am altogether well pleased with the manners of the Hopkinsian clergy ; but you will excuse it, if I differ so much from you, as to think them at least as unexceptionable as those of the Arminians. A rigid austerity of manners has something in it forbidding and disgusting ; and is, I think, by no means well calculated to recommend the mild doctrines and tender sentiments of our divine Master. But that levity of manners, which but too evidently characterizes the Arminian clergy, appears to me directly calculated to destroy every sentiment of respect for religion in its ministers. I am fully persuaded, that genuine urbanity is essential to the perfection of the clerical character. A clergyman ought to be a gentleman. Do we find no gentlemen among the Hopkinsians ? Must we look to the Arminians for a model ? I think not. If the Hopkinsians, as a body, are too austere ; are not the Arminians too loose ?

“ I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose *doctrine and whose life*
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof,
That he is honest in the sacred cause.”

I find that I have not afforded myself room nor time, to write half so much as I wish; but hope to write again soon.

Yours, most cordially,

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

"Nov. 4, 1795.

Friend Luther,—

Yours of the 1st instant has this moment come to hand. I am glad to meet with you in so pleasant a mood. Your raillery has a good effect upon my spirits, and produces a very pleasing agitation in that *compages of attractive centres*, my brain. But by the by, I suspect you have not adopted the Priestleian scheme; otherwise you could not have supposed, that either you or myself must be so great a heterocl—, I dont know whether it is *y* or *ite*, in nature, as is suggested in your letter.—But to the point;—you may be sure that I will "bring my thoughts to mortal concerns," whenever I can by so doing oblige a friend; and therefore without any metaphysical subtleties, or abstract speculations, I answer, it is clearly and sincerely my opinion, not barely my opinion either, but it is a provable, (I dont know as there is such a word in the Dictionary, but there ought to be,) certainty, that it has been the uniform practice of myself, and of all good and orthodox pedagogues, within the circle of my acquaintance, to reckon five and a half days to one week, four weeks to one month, and three months to one quarter, school-time. And I most earnestly recommend it to you, as you regard the character of a good and accepted brother of the honorable *fraternity* (I know this is to you an opprobrious term, but I dont think of any better) of pedagogues, to contend zealously for their rights, and not to depart from the *good old way*.

Yours, affectionately,

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

Write every week and I——

Mr. Luther Jewett. You will excuse the supernumerary t.

Mr. Luther Jewett.

“Worcester, Dec. 5, 1795.

My Friend,—

I am almost dead. I have been attending the long expected trial of the cause of the Rev. Mr. C——, versus his cidevant parish in Sutton, till I am tired out and out. You have doubtless heard something of the merits of the cause, and most probably have made up something of a judgment upon it: but I presume the half has not been told you. I assure you it was the most complicated and perplexing affair, I ever attended to. I was, however, not at a loss in my mind, how I should have given the verdict; but the jury have determined it against me. Perhaps they are right; but I think they are wrong. I am fully of opinion, however, that Mr. C. ought not to have appealed to Cæsar. A clergyman figures but poorly in a Court of Justice. But I wave the matter.

Yours of the 28th ult., I received very gratefully. Everett, you say, soars and grasps. So let him do. Let those be great who will; perhaps, however, he may sometimes stoop to converse with such pigmy mortals as you and me. Be this as it may, it need make no derangement in our general plan; we can do something, if nobody else should join us. Your queries, I answer in the affirmative. Your letter is to the point; not so very stiff either. We must be careful to have room for improvement, lest we should grow discouraged. I intend to write once before I leave this place; but as I am about winding up my time here for this season, I can promise nothing certain. You are going to Boston; that will be a good post of observation, for “Boston folks are full of notions.” Whatever may be the case with posterity, for pingemus in aeternum, I expect to be a gainer by this business. For I shall not only have the amusement and improvement, which your letters will afford; but I shall feel myself obliged to do something for the amusement and improvement of others. And what

we are obliged to do, we can do. You will leave Lancaster, about the time that I shall be on my way to Hollis. Perhaps I shall see you, and perhaps not. Let me know precisely what time you will change your place of residence; perhaps it may have some influence in governing my movements; for I wish to see you, if possible.

Chauncy has almost turned your brain. Read Dr. Edwards, and he will bring you to a proper bearing. Chauncy was certainly an ingenious writer; I confess he perplexed me. But his works beam darkness rather than light; his system cannot stand. If it can, I am safe; if it cannot, how wofully must some be disappointed.

Yours, unfeignedly,
SAMUEL WORCESTER."

No. 1.

"Worcester, Dec. 24, 1795.

My dear Alexis,—

My business and character are such as, you very well know, will not introduce me into company of all kinds; and of course it is not to be expected that I should be initiated into all the mysteries of custom and fashion. To this, indeed, I advance no pretensions. Yet I hold it as certain, that every one, who means to make head in the world, and to render himself eminently useful in any public station, ought to be an attentive observer of men and manners. During my short residence in this place, I have considered myself rather as a spectator, than as an actor in the scenes of the village. From what I have seen and otherwise learned, I believe Worcester to be in as flourishing a state, as any town or village within my knowledge. The people are generally industrious and economical. An idle person is seldom to be found, and sure to be regarded as infamous and contemptible. Of course, scenes of riot, frolic, and dissipation are here very rare. Gentlemen of the first families are men of business in some laudable and productive occupation; and ladies

of the first quality are not ashamed of industry. Those of any reputation among the lower classes, will emulate the example of their superiors. Every thing incompatible with business is therefore disreputable, and the pernicious effects of idleness are scarcely discernible.

No place is wholly exempt from animosity and collision, and in this, two causes have especially operated to promote them; the splendor of the *street*, and the existence of two parishes of very different religious persuasions. So long as shadows are of more account than substances, and reality is less regarded than show, none will be willing that others should *appear* better than themselves. No wonder, then, that those without the street should look upon those within, with some degree of envious obliquity; and no wonder that the town Grammar School, which might have added something to the street, was hauled into an obscure corner, about two miles from the centre of business and population. And no one, almost, knows so little of religious controversy as to be ignorant of its unhappy effects in neighborhood and society. It is especially to be expected, that animosity will rise high, where the ground of dissension is of a nature so serious as it is here. Mr. Austin, the pastor of the First Church in this place, is what they call an Hopkinsian, among Calvinists. His church is built upon a thoroughly Calvinistic creed; and the most of his Society are very friendly to the Hopkinsian sentiments. Mr. Bancroft of the other church, is an Arian, Socinian, or *Deist*. The first formation of his church was singular. When it was determined to erect a new parish, and to settle Mr. Bancroft in the ministry, there was no church found in the Society. What then was to be done? How could a minister be regularly settled without a church? He could not: a church must be formed. A meeting was appointed for the purpose; a sermon was preached by Mr. Bancroft on the occasion; at the close of the exercise, a paper adapted to the design was produced; and such as were disposed to subscribe, became church members, *sans ceremonie!*

Some of all descriptions subscribed; and a church was formed, upon a creed, in which the only article of faith is the authenticity of the Scriptures. This proceeding was thought by the old standing church to be irregular; consequently the newly formed ecclesiastical society was not received into christian fellowship, as a sister church: nor is it to this day acknowledged as a member of the body of Christ, by Mr. Austin and his society. The controversy is, therefore, serious, and has been agitated with considerable warmth. Yet all this notwithstanding, there is as much harmony, friendship, and good neighborhood here, as in any place I ever resided in; and the people are, generally speaking, peaceable, courteous, and obliging. Something more particularly in point, on manners and customs, I will give you in my next.

Yours, most cordially,
PALEMON."

No. 2.

"*Hollis, Jan. 16, 1796.*

My dear Alexis,—

In my last I made some general observations on the town of Worcester, in which I wrote. I shall in this lay the scene in the same place.

Visiting in Worcester, as in many other places, is attended with considerable formality and punctilious ceremony. When a visit is in contemplation, billets are sent, either from the visitants to the *visitees*, filled with compliments, and communicating their intention of calling, if agreeable; or from the latter to the former, requesting the privilege of waiting upon them. Their visits are commonly in the afternoon, beginning at sun about two hours high, and ending at evening fall. Sometimes the ladies are accompanied by gentlemen to the house, but more commonly are not. Yet when they are not, gentlemen often call in soon enough to take tea, and gallant them home. And when this fails, which indeed is not unfrequently, the gentlemen at the

house where the visit is made, are under indispensable obligations to see the ladies safely *within the doors* of their respective houses. These visits, if I may judge of the whole from a few which I have attended, are not altogether dull and insipid; but are enlivened by conversation in which is mingled a good degree of sprightliness of thought, pleasantry, and good nature. The common topics, however, are, perhaps, rather trivial and uninteresting; not much calculated either to mend the heart, or to improve the understanding. Tea is generally brought forward about sunset, or perhaps a little before, and the company are served by a waiter, who is commonly a lad, either *black* or white, about 8, 10, or 12 years old. Green teas have almost wholly superseded the use of Bohea; and two cups at a time supplies.

Besides these set, ceremonious visits, however, there are others more neighborly, more friendly, and, if I mistake not, more contributive to happiness and improvement.

Dancing can hardly be considered as one of the principal diversions among the first company; but by the lower sort it is practised abundantly. Gentlemen and ladies frequently collect in small circles, and spend an evening mostly in conversation. Sometimes conversation, however, gives place to other amusements, among the principal of which, are games at cards, chess, and dice.

Gentlemen are not wanting in their attentions to the ladies; nor are the ladies backward in receiving them. But when walking together, especially in the day time, a gentleman seldom offers his arm to a lady.

Yours, most cordially,
PALEMON."

To Mr. Luther Jewett.

"Hollis, Feb. 1st, 1796.

My dear Friend,—

Though I wrote soon after my arrival here, I found no safe conveyance for a letter to you, and till now

have not ventured to *launch* one for Boston, lest it should be cast away. Yours, of 30th December, I have received, and was glad to find that the din of Boston had not turned your brains, nor a residence in the Town exalted you above the region of friendship. My health is better than when I wrote you last. My business is arduous, but, had I benevolence enough, it would be pleasing. It is certainly much better, in a school, to act the friendly guardian, than the jealous tyrant; to establish an authority in the affections of the pupil, than in the fears. If I mistake not, my scholars obey from love, and this obedience is so prompt and cheerful, that it keeps my bosom in almost a continual thrill of affectionate pleasure.

I enclose you a letter, which I wrote at Worcester, the contents of it I have almost forgotten. I fear you will think it hardly within the limits of our design; but I will endeavor to be more pertinent in future. I have another by me, but for certain reasons I think it expedient to reserve it for another conveyance. Thank you for the perusal of your letter from our good friend Noyes. He is a good Society man, as we both know; and I think it likely it would be well to initiate him as a member with us, in *toto privilegio*. As for Everett, I hope he will not destroy himself, by venturing too high in an aerial balloon. He certainly has talents for usefulness, and I wish he may not reserve them for such occasions, as he will never find. It is best to improve the present, and not embark all for futurity.

I believe you will be surprised, when I tell you, that I expect to succeed Mr. Hubbard in the preceptorship of New Ipswich Academy, unless, indeed I should finally prefer a situation in that of Hallowell. Tell me, Luther, how shall I figure after Mr. H.? The enclosed letter to Hallowell, I commit to your care. Be so obliging, as to give it a conveyance by the earliest mail, and set down the postage to my account. And moreover I expect an answer through the medium of the Post Office, as soon as a return can be made. How soon that may be, you will be able to ascertain. Will you give yourself the trouble to call at

the Office, and if any letter should arrive, forward it as soon as possible. I am sensible, I lay a pretty heavy tax upon friendship, but if I am not wrong in the invoice, it will not straiten you extremely.

Write as often as you can send, and I will endeavor to do the same.

Yours, in sincerity.

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

No. 3.

“ *Hollis, Feb. 25th, 1796.* ”

My Friend,—

Mr. Smith, junior pastor of the Church in this place, is what they call a Hopkinsian. He is high in the esteem and affections of a large part of his parishioners; but has many violent opposers, on account of his sentiments. Some, I believe, oppose his sentiments understandingly; but the more part raise a hue and cry against Hopkinsianism, while they know nothing of the first principles of the system. The points of doctrine, which, when insisted on, create the greatest uneasiness, are those of impartial or disinterested benevolence, personal election, total moral depravity, universal preordination, and efficient divine influence in the production of human volition. Upon these points of doctrine, Mr. Smith, as well as many others of his brethren in persuasion, treat frequently and elaborately. Perhaps they are dwelt upon too much; certain it is, they occasion warm controversies or loud murmurings in this quarter of the country, whenever they are preached.

Most of the clergymen in this vicinity are what may be called modern or moderate Calvinists. They declaim loudly against Hopkinsianism and its advocates; nor, indeed, are Hopkinsians wanting in retort and pointed animadversion. And, what is truly ridiculous, each party endeavors to fasten upon the other, the opprobrious charge of Arminianism. It is, perhaps, difficult to ascertain the scheme of sentiments which

the modern Calvinists would wish to maintain. Hostility on their part seems to be rather offensive than defensive. They do not so much contend for any tenets of their own, as *against* those of their antagonists. They profess, indeed, to be Calvinists, yet they violently oppose the doctrines enumerated above. If there be any sentiment for which they contend, it is this,—that all kinds of sentiment are equally compatible with the christian character. They talk much of catholicism, for which they profess to be great sticklers; and labor by all means to fix upon the Hopkinsians the imputation of illiberality and bigotry.

Yours, in friendship,

PALEMON."

No. 4.

" *Hollis, March 17th, 1796.*

My dear friend,—

I have been for several weeks in this place, employed in the business of school-keeping. My wages are at the rate of nineteen dollars a month, inclusive of my board, which is reckoned at about seven shillings and six pence per week. Small encouragement indeed; yet I am considered as a high priced master. Many, if not most, of the school districts in this and the neighboring towns are furnished with masters, at not more than fourteen or fifteen dollars a month. Notwithstanding the smallness of their stipends, however, school-masters are, *ex officio*, regarded with considerable attention and respect; and their business is considered reputable. But if I mistake not, the reputation of their business, and the respect annexed to their office, are much on the decline. Perhaps the principal reason of this may be the countenance and encouragement, which are given to illiterate upstart pedagogues. The branches attended to in my school are Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Arithmetic, and Geography. The books most in use are, Webster's American Spelling Book, Bingham's Young Lady's Accidence, Pike's Arithmetic, abridged, Morse's American

Geography, and Guthrie's Geographical Grammar. These, excepting the last or two last, (for Geography has not generally obtained as a common school study) are books much in vogue; not in this town only, but in the vicinity, and, I believe, throughout this State.

The Bible, also, is yet retained as a school book. Besides instructing in the several branches abovementioned, it is expected, that the school-master will be attentive to the morals and manners of his pupils. Catechising in the first principles of the Christian religion, is in these parts considered an indispensable school exercise. The Assembly's Shorter Catechism is, therefore, taught in the school, weekly, on Saturdays. And it is a common practice for Masters to open their schools in the morning, and close them at evening with prayer. This practice, however, seems to be growing into disuse.

The education of youth is a business highly interesting and important. Let us, my friend, encourage and promote it, to the best of our influence.

PALEMON."

In his school at Hollis, he had some classes upon which he bestowed unusual attention. He taught, as if the employment was his delight; and not as if his leading object was to gain his monthly stipend. In sacred music, also, he gave evening lessons. And accounting his ministerial studies among his avocations, he was employed too assiduously for the safety of his health.

Accepting the charge of New Ipswich Academy, early in the spring of 1796, he entered upon the duties with his accustomed elevation of purpose and plan. He now found himself surrounded by many congenial acquaintances and friends, who rendered him every attention of respect and esteem. Visiting was very common, and he was obliged to give more of his time

to sociability, than he could well afford, when expecting so soon to apply for license to preach; yet, if he had not been constrained to take the relaxation, which was so kindly forced upon him, he would hardly have endured as well as he did, the severe study to which he subjected himself.—His industry and exertions were quite too much for a constitution, which had been so violently shattered, during his college course. There were times when he was completely prostrated. A nervous head-ache, so distressing and bewildering, as even to affect the exercise of his reason, occasionally compelled him to suspend all labor; and made him the object of very special attention from one, who now above all others had an interest in his health and happiness, and who at his desire had come to New Ipswich, to enjoy the advantages of the Academy.

In succeeding a Preceptor, so popular as his predecessor had been, he had no unaffected misgivings. But no one better than himself could have sat for the portrait:

“ His eye was meek and gentle; and a smile
 Played on his lips, and in his speech was heard
 Paternal sweetness, dignity and love.
 The occupation dearest to his heart
 Was to encourage goodness. Learning grew
 Beneath his care.”*

He was beloved by all his pupils, and gave no occasion for any other remarks, than those of cordial esteem. Beside the regular instructions of school-hours, he invited all his pupils to visit him, at his private room, where he used to answer their various questions, in the most familiar manner,—encouraging the very youngest to make any kind of inquiries which might

* Applied to Prof. Hubbard, of Dartmouth College,—the first Preceptor of New Ipswich Academy.

occur to them. He was greatly interested in explaining "the globes," and illustrating every study, so that each of his scholars might have definite and practical views of geography, grammar, &c. He is remembered by those, who yet survive, with feelings of love and veneration, which no changes can ever remove.

It has been suggested by one of them,* that the influence of his accomplished predecessor and also of the pastor of the church, Rev. S. Farrar, was probably very advantageous to him, in the formation of his public character.

Writing to his friend Jewett, April 26th, he says: "My school as yet is small, but my prospects are not altogether discouraging. Perhaps I may be in *orders* soon; but how soon I cannot tell."

He was "in orders," so as to preach in the summer. At the very outset of his ministerial work, he was careful to adopt the dignified manners, which, as he felt, well became his office. His brother Thomas had preceded him, in the use of "the bands," and some other badges, by which the clergymen of that day sought to increase the influence of their calling. He followed the example, which he had had at Salisbury and in other places. And thus, perhaps, he innocently gave occasion for some remarks, as if he thought rather too highly of his own personal consequence.

His first sermon was from the words: "Rejoice evermore." 1 Thes. v. 16.—It was preached at New Ipswich, according to his own memorandum,—“Sunday, July 24, 1796.”—There is a rich vein of scriptural sentiment, running through the whole; and which may, doubtless, be considered as reflecting the image

* Hon. T. Farrar, whose uncle, the Rev. Mr. Farrar, was thoroughly evangelical in his sentiments, according to the standard of Edwards.

of his own prevailing cheerfulness of spirit. He was never a gloomy Christian or a desponding preacher.

“In the prosecution of our subject,” he says, “we shall

I. Endeavor to show, that it is a duty particularly enjoined upon the people of God to be joyful.

II. Offer some reasons why Christians should rejoice evermore. And

III. *Shut up* the subject with some practical inferences and reflections.”*

The second sermon was from Ezekiel xviii. 31.—“Why will ye die?” Written as it was, in less than ten months after he graduated, it would be pronounced by the critical a very successful production. But a more elaborate, more *intellectual* effort was made in his third discourse, according to his mark, and which required both parts of the day, for its delivery. It was on the favorite subject of Hopkinsians,—“disinterested benevolence.” The three subjects of his first sermons were, by an undesigned coincidence no doubt, a very characteristic expression of the feelings of his heart. The sentiments, to which he gave an earnest utterance, were those which he cherished to the latest hour of his life.

“I heard him the first Sabbath, at Brookline,” says an impartial witness. “It was, I believe, the second time he ascended the pulpit. His sermon was an

* The reader may not have needed the *italics* in the third division, to catch his eye, and fasten it upon the phrase, which was probably used in this sermon only. It was, perhaps, borrowed from the passage—“*shut up unto the faith,*” &c., and may have been thought to have the merit of originality. To such errors of taste, the greatest minds are most liable. In a young man, they are often among the brightest signs of promise. They are the experiments of a laudable emulation, which most effectually lead to purer forms of literary excellence. It is not the wisest criticism, which is prompt to make a man “an offender for a word.”

illustration of the text,—‘Love is the fulfilling of the law.’ The whole performance was in the style and manner of a solid divine; not captivating to the common mass, but a feast to those who had understanding to appreciate what was set before them.—Some thought his *manner* in the pulpit was *affected*; others said, ‘It is his natural way,’ to which it was once replied, ‘Then I would not have a natural way.’ This impression, however, wore off, as people became accustomed to him.”

The peculiarity of his manner has been thus described. “It commenced by lifting up the eyes and chin, including a slight throwing back of the head; accompanying this a small smack of the lips; then a straightening of the arms, throwing open of the right hand, sometimes, also, of the left, with an inward and backward motion of the fingers. Sometimes a part of this, but not the whole. He was probably unconscious of it himself. His people at Salem made no account of it; but there were those in his native town to whom it was exceedingly offensive.”

This description, although very true as a part of the likeness, yet more resembles a portrait, in which are seen in bold relief all the less agreeable features of the original, but none of the *expression* of the marked countenance. It should be understood, as applicable to Dr. Worcester, less and less, after he became familiar with the pulpit. “His people at Salem made no account of ” the peculiarity described; and for the very sufficient reason, that little or nothing of it was observed, in comparison with qualities, which always gained their attention, and repaid their profoundest silence.

His voice was not powerful, or orotund, but mild

and pleasant; and his tones were those of benevolent, affectionate, fervent sincerity. When he commenced his public life, he undoubtedly was emulous of distinction in each branch of rhetorical culture. There was an evident effort in his speaking, which was a serious fault. In Dr. Austin, he had a good example of manly and effective oratory; but his own natural gifts were in this respect much inferior to those of his eloquent teacher. It is doubtful, if he ever had any very particular aid, of the right kind, in direct elocutionary discipline. And so long had he been inured to hard agricultural toils, that it was much more difficult to acquire an easy and graceful command of his person, for the happiest effect of public speaking.

In conversation and in extemporaneous efforts, generally, he had more or less of hesitancy, which was *not* "natural;" but, as is believed, was rather the consequence of an early purpose to choose out the best of "acceptable words," and of his nice discrimination of the less obvious differences of significance. If he had not been so studious of accuracy and elegance, he might have been more fluent; as was abundantly manifest in his more familiar conversational moods, and his more excited and ardent exertions, as an ecclesiastical counsellor or debater. If there be any charm in the "negligent grandeur of genius," not the least of it was ever seen in him.

He was modest, but not diffident, or self-distrustful. Fully aware as he was of material deficiencies in the attractions of oratory, he was yet collected and unembarrassed. Of action he was very sparing. And whatever he may have had of stiffness or awkwardness at the beginning, the time came, when the wave of his hand, or the elevation of a finger, spoke with an unutterable expressiveness.

One excellence he had in no common degree; that of distinctness. With a very moderate volume of sound, he could be perfectly heard by a very large assembly. And combined with distinctness, was a mode of pronunciation, which was rigidly conformed to the standard of reputable and refined usage.

His frequent debility may have had some effect upon his manner in the pulpit and elsewhere. To the end of his life, perhaps, a stranger would almost always feel, that, for some cause, occasional or constant, it was not so easy for him to speak, as for many others. And his talents as a writer and reasoner, so much eclipsed all his claims as an orator, that, absorbed in the subject of his discourse, the candid hearer soon forgot that there was anything else before him or around him, than the subject and the discourse.

That "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and in his own house," there is the highest authority for believing, as a general law of personal reputation. And it is true, as would be inferred from the testimony above cited, that Dr. Worcester never was so popular at Hollis, as in other places. In fact, he was not as acceptable in the pulpit of his native town, as either of his brothers. He was longer at home, and while at home, he was more prominent in his attainments and aspirations, and thus more an object of that kind of notice, which so naturally excites the feelings of jealousy and envy. He was accused of a degree of self-esteem, which had no place in his consciousness. There were a few very amiable and pious persons, who deceived themselves respecting his real character, and for a time were accustomed to speak of him in terms, which they after-

wards found occasion to lament. There were those, however, whose prejudices were not softened, but rather hardened by the course, which, some ten or twelve years after he began to preach, he felt obliged to pursue, in reference to certain vexed cases in the Church at Hollis, upon which his judgment did not at all harmonize with theirs, or at least, with their feelings. And it was necessary that he should die even, before he could receive from some the justice and the honor, which were his due.

He preached in the place of his "own home," very soon after he "ascended the pulpit." One who became a devoted friend, and was most grateful to recognize him as her pastor, at Salem, was then residing in Hollis.

"When I saw him walking over the common, towards the meeting-house, in company with Mr. Smith, I suspected that he was going to preach. I knew not what to do; I felt so badly. If it had not been for the appearance, I should have left the house, before he came in. But I thought it best to stay.—The spirituality of his prayer almost entirely removed my prejudices against him. But his sermon, from the text—'So Naaman went away in a rage,'—*completely melted me down*. I never afterwards had any doubts of his humility."*

The effect was like that, which prompted a kindred spirit, at a later day, to testify of him:—"No minister would ever lead me like him, to humble myself before God!"

At New Ipswich, he was at this time as much esteemed and applauded, as his warmest self-love could

* The devout woman, who, in 1834, related this reminiscence with a moistened eye, had become his sister-in-law, in 1820, by being married to his brother Leonard.

have desired. The people had the highest confidence in him as a Christian, and delighted to do honor to his abilities and worth. He is there remembered by the aged, as if an early acquaintance with him was among the happiest of recollections.

His intercourse with his pupils and with all others, was so instructive and entertaining, that his company was much valued. He was usually in a cheerful and happy frame of spirit, and disposed to avail himself of the opportunities, which his situation amply afforded him, for cultivating the social affections. Some of his letters at this period, and his more elaborate compositions, have a mellowness and tenderness—an unction of persuasive sentiment,—which may have been somewhat promoted by his debilitated state of health; while receiving, on every hand, the most grateful and animating tokens of respect and love. Witness, for example, a letter to his brother, who took the place at Hollis, which had been intended for himself, and who was subject to depression and melancholy.

“ *New Ipswich.* ”

My dear Brother,—

I wrote you a letter three or four weeks ago; but as Mr. Farrar failed of attending the Association, I was disappointed in the expected conveyance. I was eager to avail myself of the earliest opportunity to bring you under an obligation, or at least to give you provocation, to write to me. For, from your verbal, but more especially, from your *practical*, confessions, I am much inclined to think, that you have contracted too great an aversion to writing letters, and are too backward in supporting a correspondence with your brothers. I do not impute it to the want of friendly and fraternal affection. No: by no means. I do believe, and *I love to believe*, that you are richly possessed of the heart and the feelings of a brother—that heart and

those feelings, which, if allowed to dictate to the pen, would prove a source of the purest pleasure to yourself, and your friends. And therefore it is, that I wish you to write. It is certainly a pity, that the best sentiments should burn out upon the socket within your own bosom. Let them animate the epistolary page, and they will do good; they will warm into life all that is generous and fraternal in the circle of our brotherhood, and give the *consanguined* fluid, which runs in our veins, a brisker circulation through the heart. I know your excuses for not writing more; but pardon me if I cannot admit them. True you are involved in the cares of a family, and the businesses of the world; but I would not say that you are too much so. Yet certainly you are, if you have no time left for anything else. This, however, is not the *burden* of your apologies. There is another thing which you urge; and the urging of which has given me pain. Have you a brother in the world, who thinks meanly of you, on account of your natural abilities, your acquirements, or your condition in life? I presume you have not. If you have, I certainly am not he. Your notions of inability and inferiority are groundless, and ought to be discarded. They betray you into unreasonable suspicions, and create many disagreeable sensations. They deceive you, they impose upon you; and that to the painful regret of some, and I believe I may say all, of your friends, by whom it has been discovered. Be entreated to dismiss them, and resume the place, which your birthright allows you, among the members of our common family.

My school is small as yet, but in a growing state. I have it in contemplation, to offer myself for license, sometime in the course of the summer: perhaps in July. What is to be my success, time must disclose.

You will excuse the freedom, which I have indulged in this letter; and be pleased to give it such an answer as you think it may deserve.

With cordial regards for my sister, and your whole family, I am your affectionate brother,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

Mr. JESSE WORCESTER."

This fraternal letter was probably written, about the time, when he was invited to deliver an oration, at the twentieth Anniversary of Independence. The citizens of New Ipswich took measures for a brilliant civic and military display of their patriotism, and had no fears of disappointment, when the speaker of their choice was ready to address them. There were not many places in New Hampshire, or in any part of the interior of all New England, where, within the same territorial limits, so great a number of well educated people of both sexes could have been convened on that Fourth of July, 1796. And the orator of the day may have had some remembrance, that it was now but the *fifth summer*, since he had wielded the scythe and the sickle.

He began with an original and beautiful analysis of the nature and true end of commemorative celebrations; from which it was natural to remind the large and very intelligent concourse of his fellow-citizens, that the occasion imposed upon the orator of the day a responsibility, of which none could be more unaffectedly sensible than himself. In a statesman-like and christian manner he then reviewed the political and moral grounds of the Declaration of American Independence. And although entirely prepared, both in himself and "audience meet," he must have taken all by surprise, when he so suddenly and happily turned the onward course of his glowing discussion of the principles and obligations of our national freedom.

"CITIZENS OF COLUMBIA,—

You glory in your Independence, you glory in your liberties, you glory in your republican spirit. And well you may; for they have raised you to a pitch of happiness, and an elevation of character, unparalleled

in the history of nations. You cannot place too highly in estimation the privileges you possess; you cannot regard, with too lively a sensibility, the liberties you enjoy; neither can you commemorate, with emotions too grateful, or éclat too exultant, the great events, which brought you to this state.

But let it be remembered, that glorying, rejoicing, and commemorating, are not the whole duty of a republican people. Heaven has suspended the happiness and character of man, in every state, upon unremitting and well-directed exertion; and in proportion as the condition is more elevated and happy, the requisite exertion becomes more strenuous, assiduous, and direct. While, therefore, we exult in the privileges and blessings, which distinguish us a people, from every nation under heaven, we virtually acknowledge, that our every best effort is due for their security and perpetuation.

The history of the world is replete with evidence, that liberty, though dearest of every thing to the human heart, is of every thing the most liable to suffer from supine negligence, or wanton abuse of men. Look at the republics of antiquity; look at those of modern times. Look, and triumph; look, and tremble. Triumph, that all their glory is ours, and tremble, lest their fate should also be ours.

As a constitution, founded on "free and benevolent principles," was the grand object of the revolution, and is that, in which our Independence was gloriously consummated; so is it the grand bulwark of the rights, liberties, and blessings, which we now enjoy, and which we justly hold so dear. The constitution, under which our Federal system is organized, is the sacred palladium of all our national prosperity and glory. Preserve this inviolate, and all is secure; let this be subverted, and all is lost. So long as we are governed by this, we have all the freedom, which, as good citizens, we can desire; but so soon as the supremacy of this is prostrated, we are no longer a free people.

I say so long as we are governed by the constitution; for governed by it we must be, or the so-

cial tie is dissolved, and our republican state at an end.

Nor let it be thought, that submission to constitutional authority is incompatible with the character of independent freemen ; for that is but acquiescence, if I may so say, in our own best will. We have chosen not to range at large in the wild provinces of nature ; we have chosen society, which is, beyond doubt, the state designed by Heaven for man ; and we have bound ourselves to the observance of such laws and governmental institutions, as may result from the general sentiment. And in all this, have we not acted as freely and as independently, as it is possible for a people to act ? Is not the constitution the result of our most enlightened reason, and the object of our most deliberate choice ? And are we not bound in obedience to it, by obligations, as sacred as the first laws of morality, and as commanding as the supreme sanctions of nature ?

But is the constitution, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, irreversibly fixed, and unalterable ? And are we bound to abide it, in all its effects, however injurious it may prove in its operation ? This is by no means pretended. Although we believe it an incomparable monument of the wisdom of man ; yet, like everything else human, it is unquestionably stamped with the mark of imperfection. It certainly is not sacred beyond the touch of scrutiny or reform. Not only is it the right of the people to examine it for alteration or amendment ; but it is their indispensable duty to remedy, so far as may be practicable, every inconvenience, which it may be found to involve. And the constitution itself has not only made provision for this, but has marked out the way, by which it may be done. But so long as it remains unaltered, it is to be regarded as the best possible expression of the public will ; and, as such, it is inviolable. Every attempt, therefore, to subvert its principles, to unnerve its energy, or to obstruct its operation, is an infringement on the rights of community, and a treason against the

sovereignty of the States, which ought to be crushed by the people *en masse*.

Virtue and knowledge are the two main pillars, by which a government, like ours, can be supported. Let either of these fail, and the whole must fall, inevitably, to the ground. As the great object of the social connection is general happiness, it is plainly a fundamental maxim, that a smaller good must give place to a greater, and that private emolument must be holden in subordination to public interest. To deviate, practically, from this maxim, is to contravene the very principle of the republican state; and to practise in conformity with it, is to be, in an eminent degree, virtuous.

Under our free constitution, every man of talents and ambition embraces, within the compass of his hopes, the highest places in the state. Some, however, must be disappointed. And as ambition, in a mind not fortified with virtue, can but illy brook the mortification of a disappointment, it is naturally led to meditate the overthrow of a successful rival, whatsoever consequences it may involve. Hence, slanderous surmises against men in place are industriously circulated, and under the show of 'exclusive patriotism,' clamor and cabal against measures of government are wantonly fomented. The public is taught to believe its 'servants' to be unfaithful or incompetent; violent parties, in continual succession, are formed in the state; and the people, harassed and distracted with endless jealousies and apprehensions, lose, at length, all confidence in the government, and, of course, all respect for its laws. Unbounded licentiousness then prevails, and anarchy, the worst species of despotism, inevitably ensues.

The only security against this fatal declension of things is a general diffusion of knowledge. Knowledge will convince men that virtue is essential to the existence of the republican state. It will enable them to discover in what true republicanism consists, and what are the privileges, which belong to the citizen. It will show them, that if power has its boundaries on

the one hand, liberty has its limits on the other. And, a foe equally to tyranny and licentiousness, it will serve as a faithful sentinel over the designs of ambition within the government, and the intrigues of faction without.

Confidence in government, and acquiescence in constitutional administration, are among the first of the republican duties, and absolutely essential to the well-being of a free state. The best form of government, ever conceived by man, can avail nothing, as to the great objects of the social connection, unless it be carried into effective operation. In order to this, its administration must be entrusted somewhere, and there must be subordination in the state. There must be a supreme power concentrated, there must be officers in the several departments, invested with the authority of the constitution, and to these the people must confide the management of the commonwealth; or the whole business of government is but a solemn farce.

Government is a machinery, the whole beauty of which consists in its adaptedness to utility; and to love a government is to love its genuine effects. It is preposterous, therefore, for men to pretend an attachment to the constitution itself, so long as they are opposed to every principle of it in operation; so long as they are assiduously endeavoring to destroy its influence, by spreading the mania of disaffection through the public mind, by arrogantly arraigning every measure of administration, and by a perpetual cry of 'tyranny and aristocracy' against men in the discharge of their official duties.

To oppose the proper exercise of constitutional authority, is, virtually, to oppose the constitution itself.

It were easy to raise clamors and complaints against the best administration of the best government, which ever existed; and factious men know this to be the most effectual way to sap the foundations of the state, and to throw the political system into ruins.

The popular mind is always in a high degree in-

flammable ; and certain words, pronounced with a certain tone or emphasis, are usually sufficient to kindle it into a blaze. Tell the people that they are free, that they are independent, that they have all the power in their own hands, and they will be pleased, they will love you, they will believe you. Then but point the finger, or cast an oblique glance, at a man in power, or a measure of government, and, with one voice, they will cry out, 'TYRANNY! ARISTOCRACY! OPPRESSION! DOWN WITH ADMINISTRATION!' But this is not the way to preserve the republican state ; and the man who would practise thus, ought to be branded as an enemy to his country.

It is of dangerous tendency to tell the people they are free ; unless you tell them at the same time, in what freedom consists. The multitude stops not to deliberate, it acts from the impulse of the moment, and, therefore, extremities excepted, ought never to be addressed with inflammatory harangues.

Let it not be supposed, that the speaker would inculcate implicit confidence in public officers, or unconditional submission to measures of administration. Far be it from his heart. This only is contended, that none ought to be elected into office, in whom the people have not confidence, that they will be faithful to the public interest, and competent to the duties of their trust ; that while in office, they should be respected, not as the menial 'servants of the people,' but as the representatives of the nation, and promptly supported in the exercise of their respective functions ; and that so long as they continue to 'deserve well of their country,' their characters should be regarded as sacred, and their services should be rewarded with the ingenuous affiance and the lively gratitude of the nation.

The right of election is the most important of any, which a people can enjoy. It in fact involves everything, which appertains to the free citizen. It is in the exercise of this right only, that the people can feel and act as sovereigns ; for as soon as they have elected their officers into place, they step, as it were, into the subject, and have nothing further to do with the gov-

ernment, so long as constitutionally administered, but to strengthen its influence and submit to its operation.

It is farcical for the people to think, either by popular meetings or otherwise, to dictate measures to men in office, or to take any share, either in legislation or administration. They may petition and memorialize, and that in the most forcible manner; yet have they no right to expect, that their 'servants' should act aside from their own judgment of what is right, even should the popular voice be, unitedly, against them. Public functionaries, in every department, taking the constitution and laws of the land for their guide, must act independently, according to their own best sense of the right and the fit, or their oaths of office are violated, and all, but the bare name, of a representative government is at once destroyed.

Every citizen, therefore, who glories in the character of a freeman, must feel the importance of exercising his right of suffrage, with discretion and with dignity. The character of candidates for offices of trust ought to be canvassed with the most dispassionate scrutiny. Every party consideration, every personal prejudice, and every interested bias, is to be utterly excluded from the business of elections; and the only inquiry should be 'which is the man, who will fill the place to the greatest public advantage?'

Forbid it, Heaven, that, on this sacred anniversary, a public orator should suggest a sentiment to the prejudice of virtue or of worth. Perish the tongue, which would cast the smallest blot on the lustre of patriotism. Perish, forever, the hand, which would pluck a single laurel from the brow of merit! But it is a truth, which, at a time like the present, ought not to be suppressed, that violent enmity against tyranny is not an unequivocal indication of warm friendship for rational liberty. Neither is it invariably true, that he, who is the most zealous in promoting a revolution in favor of a free government, is also the most firm in supporting that government, when once established. There are men, dexterous at demolishing, who have no skill in building. And there are men, who delight in perpet-

ual revolution, who have ends to answer by the destruction of the existing system, whatever it may be, and whose principal design is to erect their own interest and aggrandizement on the ruins of the state.

I venerate the patriots of SEVENTY-FIVE ; I venerate those, who stood forward in the contest with Great Britain, and I venerate the men, who are, at this day, truly engaged for the liberties of 'the people.' Yet I dare believe, that some, not to say many, who distinguished themselves by their zeal and activity for the revolution, who were ready to spend their fortunes and spill their lives in the cause of Independence, who still retain such an enmity to the British nation, that they would willingly see their island sinking, 'like a millstone,' in the depths of the sea, and who, on every occasion, talk it 'independently' and vociferously for 'liberty,' 'equality,' and 'democratic republicanism,' are, nevertheless, enemies to the very principles of the constitution, enemies to every system of regular government, enemies to the best characters and best interests of their country ; and therefore not only unfit for any office of trust in the state, but of dangerous influence to the community, even in their individual capacity.

Citizens of America, are we to be duped by clamor and declamation ? Are we to be governed by faction and cabal ? Are we to believe, that the heat of the revolution was the time, and the only time, 'to try men's souls ;' and that every man, who was then a warm whig, is now a true patriot ? Are we to believe, that hatred against Britain, is the same thing as love for our own country ; and that he, who is loudest in clamor against British connections, is warmest at heart for our republican state ? Are we to believe, that, because we have preserved a neutrality, during the belligerency of Europe, our government is, therefore, wholly corrupt ; and that he, who does not join in execrating every measure of administration, and in denouncing every officer in place, is, certainly, a 'tory,' an 'aristocrat,' an enemy to the rights of 'the people ?'

Have we not already seen and felt the pernicious effects of doctrines like these? Have we not seen the firebrands of sedition plentifully scattered in every district of our country? Have we not seen associations, formed in different parts of the community, for the manifest purpose of counteracting the influence of government, and of destroying all confidence in administration?

‘Ten thousand fools, knaves, cowards, lumped together,
Become all wise, all righteous, and almighty.’

Have we not seen the demon of faction rearing his head, and, with hideous aspect, threatening to trample in the dust all authority and all law? Have we not seen the best characters in the commonwealth, the boast of the nation and the pillars of the state, overwhelmed with torrents of obloquy and abuse? Have we not seen the daring, sacrilegious hand stretched forth to rifle of its laurels that venerable brow, which nations have been emulous to crown, and which ages will portray with irradiations of glory? Have we not seen our national honor tottering on the brink of ruin, and our federal system just ready to be wrecked in the vortex of party? Have we not seen our political horizon gathering blackness, lowering, and thickening into a tempest, just ready to burst over our heads with tenfold horror? Have we not seen——But I forbear. The storm is blown over, the clouds are dispersed, and the sun shines forth in meridian splendor.

And, my fellow-citizens, while we rejoice in the present happy state and prospects of our country, let us unite in grateful acknowledgments to those firm supporters of the constitution, and of the rights of nations, who have greatly stemmed the torrent of faction, baffled the designs of party, and, under the auspices of Heaven, saved our nation from infamy, from anarchy, and from war.

Favored, thrice-favored land! Asylum of peace, liberty and happiness! Long mayest thou continue the glory of nations and the admiration of the world. May genial seasons crown thy fields; may prosperous

breezes fill thy sails; may radiant sciences illumine thy paths; may universal love felicitate thy times; may the smiles of thy daughters warm the heart to virtue; may the exertions of thy sons be directed to true glory; and may all thy children unite, in sentiment and effort, for the great interests of humanity, till this scene of things shall be shut, and latest time shall lapse into vast eternity."

If the citizens of New Ipswich and vicinity extolled this oration, as extraordinary and most felicitous, there are those, who, after the lapse of fifty-five years, heartily concur in their admiring judgment. And if it had been repeated on the very last—the seventy-fifth—anniversary of our existence as a sovereign people,—how few sentences would it have been necessary to erase or modify, that it might have received from a similar assembly a similar tribute of applause! What in principle and spirit could have been more appropriate, in respect to existing political divisions and dissensions!

To Mr. Luther Jewett.

"New Ipswich, Nov. 8, 1796.

My dear Friend,—

* * * * Since I wrote you last, my health has been mending considerably; and it is at present in a flattering state. If you have not already consulted physical skill for my benefit; perhaps it may be well to defer it, at least for a while, till I write you again. I submit the matter, however, to your discretion, to do as you think most expedient.

The last Sabbath completed my term of engagement at Pelham, and the next I am to begin at Fitchburg. And the engagements, into which I have already entered, will about carry me through the winter. After I shall have done at Fitchburg, I have a term to supply at Milford, then a term again at Pelham, and

then a term at Methuen. I speak much easier than I did when I first began to preach; and find my business more and more agreeable. The work is important: 'The harvest is great, but the laborers' are comparatively, 'few.' How I shall succeed, is known only to *Him*, in whose cause I have professedly engaged, and in whose strength I trust I have come forth. But I feel happy in the assurance, that I have your best wishes and most fervent prayers, together with those of my other friends, and of all the friends of Zion, for my success.

Last Friday, as I was on my way to Pelham, I rode with Z**** to Hollis. The evening next preceding I waited upon her to Deacon Adams', where we both spent the evening, and she spent the night, very happily, in company with B****. I need not tell you the reason, why I was prepared to entertain sentiments particularly friendly to her; nor will you be surprised to hear that Z***** regarded her as a sister, upon the first acquaintance, nay, even before she saw her. Give me the opportunity to hand her some more of your letters, for it will do me good.

Yours, most cordially,
SAMUEL WORCESTER."

To Mr. Luther Jewett.

"New Ipswich, Nov. 28, 1796.

My dear Friend,—

I had but this moment knowledge of Mr. Crosby's going to Boston; so that I have time only to introduce to your acquaintance my last Independence Oration. You may suppose that I regard it with all the fondness of a parent, and, therefore, have some solicitude that it should make its way in the world under favorable auspices. The printer has not done by it very well. He kept it a long time in his press, or rather in his office, and at length handed it out incorrect. I have marked the errors in the copy which I send to you; and wish you to be so kind as to correct them, wherever you meet with other copies.

I have been told, with an air of confidence, that the Oration would be re-printed in Boston; this, however, I hardly expect. But should you learn, that such a thing is likely to happen, you will take that part in the business which friendship dictates.

I spent an evening last week with the good B****, which I found not much otherwise than spending one with yourself.—Another letter, as soon as possible.

Yours, sincerely,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

Dr. Worcester's enfeebled health and his ulterior plans, constrained him to resign his office as Preceptor at New Ipswich, after holding it with great success, about eight months. He returned to his native place; pursued his studies; wrote sermons; and supplied pulpits, in person, and by exchange, availing himself of the great kindness of the pastor at Hollis.* He again taught school there, during the winter of 1796-7; and formed a class of young ladies, in Geography, Astronomy, History, and Chronology. “They were fine scholars, acquitted themselves most honorably, and gave an eclat to his school, at the close of which was an exhibition of a tragedy and a comedy, and many smaller pieces—which went off very well.”

At an exhibition in the Academy of New Ipswich, in October previous, he seems to have made quite an exertion to prepare his pupils for a comic and tragic entertainment of the patrons and spectators.—In thus gratifying himself and the eager relish of many for the pleasures of the drama, he indicated a trait of character, of which none but his most intimate friends were fully aware, and which sometimes exposed him to the imputation of inconsistency. Descended as he was

* “I rode over four hundred miles,” said the late Rev. E. Smith, of Hollis,—“to help him, in supplying pulpits, before he was settled.”

from Puritans of "the strictest sect," and most cordially reverent to their memory and example, he was yet always ready to consider every subject and object upon its own intrinsic merits. He would not, for example, reprobate a practice or disallow an indulgence, simply because it had been generally reprobated, or disallowed by those of his own religious denomination. Whatever of amusement could be granted to the young, or entertainment to the older, without endangering good manners and good morals, or interfering with the duties of "religion, pure and undefiled," he was willing to grant, and, so far as consistent, to promote. But it is needless to add, that his most liberal toleration of the love of excitement and of mirth, never obtained from him any sanction of "the theatre," as the theatre has always proved itself to be.

His opinions of balls, dancing at fashionable parties, and the like, may be inferred from a remark, when he had come to be a father.—"I should have no objection to my children's attending a dancing-school, if I could be sure, that they would never dance any where else!" And his views of the influence of recreation, in aiding the best development of the mental powers of children and youth, may be also inferred from another remark, in answer to an instructor, who had complained to him of the fondness of one of his sons for something else than "much study."—Conceding, that there might be some reason for the complaint, he did not appear to be greatly troubled. He disapproved of hard lessons for study out of school. "And the longer I live, the more satisfied I am, that there is a great deal of sound sense in the old adage,—

All work and no play,
Makes Jack a dull boy."

In the spring and summer of 1797, he was as laboriously occupied, as his health would permit. He was much abroad, and to save time, frequently rode after dark, to fulfill his appointments. In bad roads, in storms, and in all changes of elements, he was not easily disquieted. His confidence in his skill in *horsemanship* bordered upon recklessness. He was fond of managing an animal, that scarcely any one else could approach. As might have been expected, he had experience of some exciting and amusing incidents. But the mercurial temper of one of the creatures used by him, at this period of his life, once at least caused a very serious train of reflection. Returning from Pelham, in a very dark evening, he was plunged into the Merrimac, by a leap of his horse, as the boat neared the bank; and when he felt his feet upon solid ground, knew not how he had obtained deliverance.

As soon as it became known, that he was a candidate for settlement, simultaneous and urgent applications were made to him, by several very eligible parishes. Candidates of an undisputed evangelical order, and of distinguished abilities, were so few, that there was occasionally a spirited competition in bidding for the choice. An elder, but not a ministerial brother of Dr. W. was much concerned for him, lest he should be unable to sustain the rank to which he had been elevated by the public voice.

He received an unanimous invitation to settle in Pelham, N. H., while, at Fitchburg, Mass., a vigorous movement of a part of the church and society, was aimed to prevent his acceptance of his first formal call, and to persuade him to comply with similar

wishes in their own behalf.* The harmony of the people of Pelham, with other circumstances, opened to his view a most delightful prospect. His inclination, therefore, was very strong for an affirmative answer to their call.

On the other hand, the objections which some would have deemed conclusive against the call from Fitchburg, were to him very weighty arguments in favor. He knew that an arduous work must there be done, and that grievous trials might be anticipated, as inevitable. There were no "Articles of Faith," distinct from the Covenant of the church, which was also one of the "half-way" covenants; and so indefinite in its terms, as to satisfy those, who accounted all modes of faith alike acceptable to God. The expression of a wish to be admitted to all the privileges of church-membership, was all that was necessary. And it is painful to add, but the sequel of events demands the statement, that among the members were some avowed Universalists, reputed Deists, and notoriously intemperate persons, beside others who gave no satis-

* In a recent sketch of the "History of Fitchburg," there are several important errors, relative to the settlement, &c., of Dr. Worcester. It would appear from this "History," that the town took the lead in the "call," and in fact gave it, *the church concurring*.—But a careful examination of the Records of the town, and those of the church, gives the true state of the case. Meetings of the church and of the town had been warned, to be held on the same day. The church at first voted to invite Mr. Noyes, to become their pastor. The town voted against concurrence with the church; but, by vote of 43 to 24, signified their "willingness to settle Mr. Samuel Worcester."—During a short adjournment of the town-meeting, the church voted to give a call to the candidate, who was thus seen to have the decided preference of the town. Their vote was communicated, at the meeting of the town, held by adjournment; whereupon the town, in a formal manner, voted *to concur with the church*, in extending an invitation of settlement to Mr. Worcester. Thus the title of the church to precedence, in calling the pastor, was distinctly recognized, according to ancient and still accredited usage.

factory evidence, that they had ever been converted to Christ. Perhaps no church in Massachusetts furnished a sadder proof of the lamentable results of the "half-way" scheme, and of the doctrine of Stoddard, which had become so extensively consociated with it, and which, as far as it was adopted, was evil and "only evil continually."

Beside other unfavorable circumstances, there was an unhappy division in the town, occasioned by the location of the meeting-house. The controversy upon this subject, seriously threatened to defeat all endeavors to promote unity, prosperity, and peace. And further, the laws of the Commonwealth, as then existing and administered, gave every legal voter in the town a title to act as a member of the parish, whether or not he attended public worship, or paid for its maintenance; and hence a party disaffected towards a godly minister, had a power at their disposal, which they were not often slow to employ.*

In the church of Fitchburg, however, there were godly men and women, like the Simeon and Anna who waited for the consolation of Israel. And there were members of the congregation, in whose general character there was much to praise, and among whom, more particularly the younger part, a faithful pastor might hope to find bright jewels for a crown of rejoicing. These and the majority of the inhabitants gave no countenance to certain "lewd fellows of the baser

* The town was incorporated in 1764. The predecessor of Dr. Worcester was a half-brother of Rev. Mr. Payson, of Ringe, N. H., and had been laid aside from the ministry, by the calamity of mental alienation. For some years, if not from the first, the general state of things had not been favorable to the hopes of pious people. The population in 1797 was not more, probably, than a fifth part as great as at present; and the town has now a character and importance, such as then could have been anticipated by none.

sort," who were to be found within their limits, as in too many other towns, where Arminianism, now waxing worse and worse, with Universalism, then of recent importation, and infidelity, bold and impudent from the imagined death-struggle of Bible religion, often gathered together for Bacchanalian orgies around the intoxicating bowl.*

Such on the whole was the state of things, that Dr. Worcester would have promptly declined a settlement at Fitchburg, if the church had not "voted unanimously, to discontinue the practice of admitting people to covenant for baptism, when they did not consider themselves qualified for full communion." He was informed, also, by responsible persons, that "it had been long in contemplation to revise the Church Covenant; and that a revisal would undoubtedly take place, immediately after the ordination of a pastor."

Confiding in his talents, his judgment, and discretion, and in hope of the change which might be wrought in the town and vicinity, some of his clerical friends, such as Dr. Austin, urged his acceptance of the call. But others of his friends were not easily persuaded, that it could be his duty. Much in doubt and greatly perplexed, he earnestly sought counsel from on high. While hesitating, he decided in the negative, and wrote an answer accordingly. He laid it by, but not, as is supposed, for reconsideration.

* And this picture will certainly not be considered as unduly colored, when it is added, that but a short time before Dr. Worcester's settlement, there was a mock celebration of the Lord's Supper. It was in the night. Amidst the scene of shocking hilarity and impiety, a young man, wrapped in a sheet, and disguised by a frightful mask, suddenly presented himself. There was an instantaneous uproar of consternation. The hall was cleared, as fast as the revellers could push one another down the stairs. Never was a panic created, with a more decisive effect.

Riding abroad, a new view of the question was suddenly suggested, and his decision was forthwith reversed. The truth was, doubtless, that the arguments, affirmative and negative, were so nearly balanced, that it was almost impossible for him to determine the preponderance. He had considered the subject, day and night, with an exhausting solicitude; wishing most devoutly to learn what the Supreme Disposer of all things would have him do. And as not unfrequently happens in a change of scene, his harassed mind recovered its wonted elasticity, and was qualified for its best thoughts and wisest judgments.

His final decision, though sudden, was by no means hasty. He had such ample preparation for it, that in the event he had no ground for regret or self-reproach. He felt relieved, and was happy in the prevailing assurance, that the path of his duty was plain. When speaking of it, at a later day,—“I never repented,” he said to a friend, “after I made up my mind to go: notwithstanding all my trials.” The remark was perfectly in character. There were moments, when his mind seemed to come to its conclusions, with the rapidity of lightning; and the conclusions thus formed were as just, as any upon which he had taken the longest time to deliberate. Generally, he suspended his decision in difficult cases, as long as he consistently could. But what he avowed as his firm conviction, was usually as clear to his own view, as a demonstration or an axiom in geometry.

“Fitchburg, July 22, 1797.

My Brethren and fellow candidates for immortality,—

The relation between pastor and church, or between minister and people, is a relation than which there is

none in its nature more solemn, or in its consequences more important, on this side eternity.

The true minister of the gospel is the ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, sent to negotiate between God and man the great concerns of judgment and of mercy. He has it in solemn charge from his Lord and Master, to declare the whole counsel of God, and to keep back nothing, which may be profitable to the people, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. And if he obtain grace to be faithful in the great business of his embassy, it is to be hoped he will have many souls, as seals of his ministry, and as a crown of rejoicing in the presence of his God. Or, even though Israel be not gathered, still shall he be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. But if, on the contrary, he handle the words of the Lord deceitfully, and prove unfaithful to God, and to the souls of his charge, the blood of those, who may perish forever through his unfaithfulness, will unquestionably be required, with rigor, at his hands.

Such being the office and the duty of the true gospel minister, it is of infinite consequence to any people, that they receive and treat him as they ought. If he bear the unequivocal credentials of his mission, whatever they do to him as Christ's ambassador, they do indirectly at least, to Christ himself. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." And they ought to bear it in solemn remembrance, that the faithful minister is unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one he is a savor of death unto death, and to the other, he is a savor of life unto life.

The matter, therefore, of calling, or of accepting a call, to settle in the work of the gospel ministry, is a matter which always demands the most serious and the most prayerful deliberation. For it is a matter which looks forward to consequences, as solemn as the judgment, and as lasting as eternity.

Deeply impressed with considerations like these, I

have thought it not well to be hasty in answering the call, with which you, my brethren and friends, have seen meet to present me. Is this the part of his vineyard, in which my Lord and Master has called me to labor? Is this the flock, over which the Holy Ghost will make me an overseer? Is there a prospect of my being more extensively useful here, than in any other place?

These are questions, which have pressed on my mind with inconceivable weight; and they are questions, I may add, which in my situation, have been embarrassed with almost insolvable difficulties.

At length, however, although my path of duty appears not altogether so plain as I could wish, I feel myself under a prevailing persuasion, that the voice of Providence concurs with your call. Constrained, therefore, as I am, by a sense of duty, to give you an affirmative answer, I now in this solemn manner, declare my acceptance of your call, and my willingness to take upon myself in the usual way the oversight of this church, and the charge of this people, as soon as God in his providence may render it expedient. I must, nevertheless, reserve to myself the liberty of holding two Sabbaths in every year, as exempt from the contract, that I may spend them as occasion may require.

This answer, my brethren and fellow immortals, I give you with a trembling heart. I feel in some measure my insufficiency for the arduous task, which I contemplate as before me; and am ready to cry out,—“Who is sufficient for these things?” There is great encouragement, however, to be drawn from this gracious assurance of our Lord: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” And may I not trust, that your prayers will ever mingle with mine before the throne of grace, that God would smile on these our solemn transactions, and make them subservient to the furtherance of your salvation, and to the glory of his own holy name.

Pray for me, my brethren, pray for yourselves, and pray for the enlargement of Zion. To God, I trust,

we have looked for direction, and with God let us leave the event.

Yours, in the fellowship and service of the Gospel,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

To the Church and people of Fitchburg."

Mr. Luther Jewett.

"Fitchburg, Aug. 10th, 1797.

My dear Friend,—

A letter from Z. F., this week, informs me that her last from B. A. contained the disagreeable intelligence, that you were lately at New Ipswich, on a tour from Boston to your father's house, for the purpose of recruiting your health. The news touched me. I feel anxious to know something more particularly. And in some hope that this letter may find you at New Ipswich, I hasten to forward it thither.

Do inform me, as soon as may be, how it is with you in every respect. I conclude you have been unable to write much, else you certainly would have written me before now. Surely, I need not tell you the concern I feel for your health, and for your general welfare.

For myself, I am here; and here, perhaps, I may be fixed for life. You have, doubtless, heard how it has been with me, for some time past, with regard to calls, and what answers I have returned to them. What is to be my lot in this place, God only knows, and time only must declare. The aspect of things here, at present, is at least as promising for good, as it ever has been since my first acquaintance among this people. It was here as in most other places; violent and inveterate prejudices reigned predominant in the minds of by far the greater part. They were determined never to like a Hopkinsian. And I need not tell you what difficulties I have had to encounter, and under what disadvantages I have had to labor. But I believe their prejudices are, by this time, in a good measure de-

stroyed. They begin to think, that a Hopkinsian is not that *dreadful creature* they had contemplated. At least they hear with more candor, and reason with more coolness. Their union is now pretty good, and is supposed to be every day increasing and strengthening. Some, however, to the number of three or four, oppose with warmth and obstinacy.

Our Sabbath day assemblies are apparently more and more attentive and solemn; and some few, as I hope, are pretty thoroughly *pricked in their hearts*.— Praised be God, if he have been pleased to make me the instrument of any good to this people, or even to a single soul. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but *He* alone can give the increase.

My work is arduous; but it is pleasing and important.

The day for my ordination is not yet appointed; and whether it will be in the latter part of September, or in the former part of October, is at present uncertain.

Will you not find it convenient to come this way and make me a visit, before you return to Boston? I wish to converse with you about many things, and especially about *one*. Perhaps you are otherwise determined; but I need not tell you how agreeable it would be to me, that you should sit down in this place. What the prospect will be, by the time you wish to settle in business, I cannot say; but if I calculate rightly, it will be pretty good. Come here and see me, that I may tell you more about it.

I have a great deal to do, and many pressing avocations distract my attention. I have even stolen the time for writing this letter; but I trust the occasion will justify the deed.

By our *friendship*, I conjure you, write, or come and see me, as soon as you can.

While on our way, through life's deep maze we hold,
Seasons roll on, and new scenes still unfold.

Yours, sincerely,

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

Dr. Worcester's view of the relation of a pastor to the church over which he is placed, as compared with the church with which he was previously connected, or the "Church general," may be inferred from a vote of the church in Fitchburg, on the day previous to his ordination. "In virtue of a letter of dismissal from the church of Christ in Salisbury, at his request, the church voted to receive Mr. Samuel Worcester to their number and Christian fellowship."

September 27, 1797, was the day of ordination. The sermon was preached by Dr. Austin, on "the nature, extent, and importance of the duty, binding on the *Christian minister*, divinely commissioned to bear the warnings of God to men." The preacher thoroughly understood the circumstances of the occasion, as well as "the signs of the times." He lifted up his powerful voice, like one accustomed to "cry aloud and spare not."

His address to the pastor elect implied, it will be seen, a more than usual degree of confidence, that he would "be valiant for the truth," and "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

"The audience will permit me, first to address a few words to my young friend, the pastor elect.

My very dear Brother,—

To the tender part I take in your personal concerns, of this day, you are not a stranger. Our hearts have reciprocated the mutual affection of brotherly love. Agreeing, generally at least, in the same Christian sentiments, devoted to the same Divine Master, and joint partakers in the same efforts, we cannot but share in each other's circumstances, and prospects. I am not, on this occasion, my brother, and before this discerning auditory, to compliment you, on any ground. I am not to speak, in the ears of these men,

the language of adulation; but that of soberness, and good counsel. If God has given you any promising qualifications, to him belongs the glory, and to him their use. You and I should never forget, that we are, by nature, children of wrath, even as others; that we are encompassed with infirmities; and have nothing, whereof to glory before God. How much do we need the constant influx of the Holy Spirit, to enlarge our hearts in all liberal desires, and prompt us onward, through every discouragement, to growing zeal in our Lord's service! To you our subject applies, with peculiar solemnity, this day. To you our common Father speaks,—‘So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the House of Israel; therefore, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me.’ You have your commission. You must fulfill it. Wo be unto you, if you preach not the Gospel faithfully. Wo be unto you, if any temptations lead you to betray the sacred deposit. You have put on the harness, my brother; never, never put it off. Give no place to the devil. Retreat not for one moment. Maintain your ground, as a good soldier, in the battles of the Lord. You need not a miraculous illapse of divine light, to furnish you with a foresight of innumerable trials. ‘But, let none of these things move you. Neither, may you count your own life dear unto you, so that you may finish your course with joy, and the ministry which you this day receive of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.’ You love this people. You will love, and you must love them. Under the influence of this love, you must be to them a faithful shepherd. You must bear the warnings of God to them, opening to their minds just views of the divine character, government, and law; of the nature of sin; of their total depravity, antecedent to regenerating grace; of the tremendous misery, to which the impenitent are constantly exposed. It will behove you to exhibit to them, also, the single way of escape; to press them with the feeling of absolute dependence; and to strip them of all excuse, while they refuse to yield to the claims of their Maker. This service you

will perform, on all fit occasions, from house to house, as well as from the pulpit, with bleeding tenderness for the salvation of their immortal souls, and with habitual prayer to him, whose promise is, 'Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Brother, you are a dying man. Shortly, your connection with this people will be dissolved; and you will meet them at the tribunal of the Holy Redeemer. Look around upon them, and think how precious their souls are. Can you bear to think of hearing one of them, outside of the shut door, crying in despair, 'Lord, Lord, open to me?' Then be faithful to them all; and persevere to the death. It is probable, that there will be many nominal ministers at the left hand of Christ, at his appearing; as there are always false Christs, and false prophets, to deceive, if it were possible, even to the elect. Take heed, then; it is my fraternal and concluding entreaty. Take heed unto thyself, and to thy ministry, that thou mayest save thyself, and them who hear thee."

This address was from heart to heart, awakening "thoughts" which

* * * "do often lie too deep for tears."

And if when the speaker had added to it his solemn charge to the church and society, the emotions of all could have been revealed, or the disclosures of a few months afterwards could have then been foreseen, the new pastor would have received, as he did, the cordial expression of the best wishes of his numerous friends, but their cheering congratulations would have been reserved for another and a very different day!

CHAPTER V.

Habits and modes of procedure, as a settled minister. Marriage. Domestic management. Instruction of young men. Renewal of covenant in the Church, with the adoption of new Articles of Faith, &c. Palemon to Alexis. Parental feelings and character. Anecdote of the preaching of the brothers, Noah, Thomas, and Samuel. Revival at Fitchburg. Revivals in many places. Missionary spirit promoted. Formation of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. Vindication of the truth, and of ministerial rights. Oration on the death of Washington, &c, &c.

“ I say the pulpit, (in the sober use
Of its legitimate, peculiar powers,)
Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support, and ornament, of virtue’s cause.”

IN his first sermon, after his ordination, Dr. Worcester spoke of himself as one of those, who were reproachfully styled Hopkinsians, or Hopkinsian Calvinists. As a candidate he had honestly preached his personal views of doctrine, leaving his hearers to give their own name to his theological sentiments and affinities. He would no more have concealed these, than he would have committed perjury. But he had to deal with different classes of hearers. There were those who cordially agreed with him, while many knew little or nothing of Hopkinsianism, so called, “save only that it was everywhere spoken against;” others who but needed to be “taught more perfectly” what was truly denoted by the term, in order to be disabused of violent prejudices; while others still would be satisfied with nothing, but “another Gospel, which is not another.”* And as in times more recent, the best

* The profaneness and ribaldry of a portion of these last, when speaking of the sentiments preached in the pulpit of Fitchburg, were shocking in the extreme.

means of withstanding evangelical religion has been found by some, in a hideous caricature of Calvinism, there were those of highly respectable position, who then understood, and also used, far too often, this unmanly and dishonorable device of polemical warfare.

The orthodoxy of the new pastor was so much at variance with the principles and habits of many inhabitants of the town—among these some families of leading influence,—that it would have been impossible to obtain so large a vote as was given for his settlement, if it had not been for his high reputation as a scholar. Fully sensible of his own liability and that of his particular friends, to be watched at every point, he proceeded with great carefulness, yet with a straightforward purpose to “quit himself like a man,” and “a man of God;”—treating all persons kindly and courteously, addressing sound argument and affectionate appeal to every one, so that the “enemies of all righteousness” might not be “able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.”

Courageous as he naturally was, he was strongly disinclined to every form of ecclesiastical controversy. He was ready for any sacrifice of merely personal feeling, rather than be entangled in the meshes of strife. Such, however, were his convictions of truth and duty, that he could not “shun to declare the whole counsel of God,” “giving to every man a portion in due season.” Such, in general, was the condition of the church and the town, that he had a work before him, which was like that of turning a rocky wilderness into fruitful fields and blooming gardens.

It was a frequent saying of a godly man, who loved him as his very soul,—“Mr. Worcester was the first here, that *tore up the turf!*”

Not inattentive to the calls upon him for parochial visits, he made his pulpit the first object of his care. He believed it to be an imperative part of the will of his Master, and indispensable to his highest usefulness, that he should be a "scribe instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven," who "is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

To study, was but little "weariness" of the spirit, however much it was to the weakness of the flesh. And while there is no end to "the making of many books," and much less of "making many" *sermons*, he gave himself, day and night, to his preparations for the Sabbath, as if resolved to do his best, both in the quality and number of his discourses.

He never went to his work, as if he would gladly be excused. His study was a "loved retreat;" and he *lived* in it, as if it was life to be there. The exercise and relaxation which he took, were, in general, more as if a toil or an endurance; while his intense application was relished as a pastime. Thus was he, at the beginning, and thus always afterwards. But while a hard student, his heart "grew liquid," more and more; for he was a scholar at the foot of the cross.

His sermons were usually written out, and made a fair manuscript. Occasionally, he preached from skeletons; but not without his accustomed carefulness, in logical method and rhetorical accuracy. In some instances, at Fitchburg, he committed sermons to memory. The task was easier than it would be for most ministers; but the comparative effect, he soon thought, did not compensate for the exertion.

Previous to his settlement, he had written but few sermons. It is, therefore, no uncertain proof of his

diligence, that when he had been settled a year and a half, his sermons had reached the number 134; and in April 1800, or two years and a half after his settlement, a sermon bears the number 224.—Some of these were *double* sermons, numbered only as if single.

It will be seen at once, that if he *studied* the subjects of his sermons, and wrote with care, as he most certainly did, he could have found little time, that he could have considered intervals of leisure. And that he could have written so much, is the more remarkable, as his attention to other labors was so manifold and incessant, that these alone would seem more than enough for any one man's employment. As he had been before, so now he was industrious to a fault. In "redeeming time," it might have been said of him, that he was "righteous overmuch." But, truly, the days were evil.

There was a great variety in his ministrations. His sermons differed much from those of most of the clergy in the immediate neighborhood; even of some with whom he thought it best to cultivate the fellowship of exchanges.

His doctrinal sermons were practical, and his practical sermons were doctrinal. He had such a knowledge of men as they are, and lived so much as in closest contact with their thoughts and intents, that he could not be satisfied with any mode of discussion, which did not bear upon the affections, the conscience, and the will, with a powerful concentration of important truth. He studied the Scriptures, so as to be always ready with his "infallible proofs" of what he preached, as the truth of God. And his texts were seldom, or never, as mottoes only, or words of accommodation; but they were to his sermons, like the

mountain springs to the streams that are never dry.

He bestowed great labor upon the *plan* of a sermon; distributing his matter under appropriate general *heads*, and marking specifically the minuter affinities of a just classification. In the selection of subjects adapted to the wants of his people and the state of the times, and in the disposition of the parts and topics of a discourse, according to the best models, few preachers have excelled him.

His style in the pulpit was neat, and *elegant*, in the proper sense of the term; but chiefly marked by perspicuity, precision, and strength. For exactness and strict congruity of thought and language, he gave the preference to certain words, which, at least, all the children could not have understood; and which those of "larger growth" might have need or inducement to search out diligently. But words of this character were so few, or were so used, as not to obscure his meaning to an attentive hearer, of common intelligence; or to be questionable, except to the uncandid and censorious.—Some who thought him *verbose* and diffuse, were always brought to a stand, when asked to alter a given sentence, so as to retain the exact idea intended, but omitting a part of the writer's own expression.

One of the surest tokens of his excellence as a preacher was the attention of the children and youth to his sermons, as well as to his catechetical instructions. There are living witnesses, who have much pleasure in remembering how interested they were, in their early days, when they heard him preach, even his most elevated and elaborate discourses. They could always find something, which they at least thought that they

understood; while his manner alone left upon their tender hearts a serious and salutary impression. He preached to them, at times, in a whole discourse, and with very happy effect. He often addressed them, in the application of his other sermons; as if he would have them feel, that he was always preaching to the young, as well as to the old.

His care of the children was very constant and affectionate, in every way by which he could gain influence over them, both for their mental and spiritual culture. When he saw them at their homes, or met them in the road, he would call them to him, as to a father; and what he said to them, as he put his hand upon their heads, and smiled into their delighted faces, or exchanged a sweet salutation of the lips, many of them so laid up in their hearts, that the years of more than half a century have not effaced the memory.

When at their meetings to recite the catechism, any of them were restive and unquiet, he would not speak to them, as if he were displeased or excited.—But in the mildest manner and most winning, he would say: “*My little children, you will all try to be as still as you possibly can be.*” He never thus spoke in vain.—“We all loved him,” says one of the survivors, “and we *feared* him, too.” The remark must be understood, as particularly applicable to the children of *the parents who loved him.*

He devoted much time to the common schools of the town, and gave great impulse to popular education among all classes; believing that the intellectual advancement of the rising generation was most intimately connected with his own highest usefulness as their pastor.—He also opened a chamber in his own house, as a school-room, in which he taught some of the older

youth, in studies not pursued in the schools of the town. Several were qualified by him to be teachers, who, in their own town, or elsewhere, did much to raise the standard of common school instruction.

A singing-school he also taught; and was unwearied in encouraging all, who had an ear and voice for sacred music, to cultivate their talents. He would meet the members of the choir, from time to time, and give them the benefit of his fine taste and skill. Especially would he assist them, when any extraordinary occasion called for an anthem, and other appropriate selections of psalmody.

In church-meetings, in conference-meetings, in weekly lectures, in social visiting,—in short, in all modes of access to the minds of his people, he was indefatigable in efforts for their improvement, happiness, and usefulness.

He adhered through life to the general system of doctrines with which he began his ministry; as well as to his early habits of elevated and thoroughly studied style of preaching. Still, his sermons at Fitchburg were more uniformly cast in the distinctive Hopkinsian mould, than those written at Salem. Growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; increasingly susceptible of the tender and melting attractions of the cross,—the *atonement* became to him, theoretically and practically, the “ALL IN ALL” of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God. And hence it was his special delight to preach CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED; and as his heart went forth in the expanded charities, which embraced the whole world’s evangelization, he gave less and less prominence, and less and less space, to those statements and discussions of dogmatic and metaphysical theology, which entered

largely into his earlier ministrations, and for which there was then a most urgent demand, throughout New England.*

In the month of October, after his ordination, Dr. Worcester was united in marriage with Miss Zervia Fox, of Hollis. She was eight years younger than himself, and was a pupil in several of the schools, which he had taught. Her father, Dr. Jonathan Fox, who was a pious physician, very highly respected, died at an early age. She received from her mother, the instructions, with the example of one, who sought to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—In the kind providence of God, she was spared to her husband, a “helpmate,” indeed, through the whole period of his public life; ministering to him most faithfully in all the offices of their sacred and endeared relation. Of his own feelings as a husband and father, illustrations can be given. But of herself, as she still survives, no more is permitted to be said in this place.

The letter which follows was superscribed, “Deacon Leonard Worcester, Worcester.” It was dated, Fitchburg, 7th Feb., 1798.

My dear Brother,—

Till this day, I have not heard a word from Worcester, since I saw Mr. Austin. I congratulate you, with

* Dr. Worcester probably never adopted any article of belief, called Hopkinsianism, unless it was such as had been already recognized as a part of the theology of Edwards, or was a legitimate, and not an *ultra* inference from well established facts and principles. And the vitality of Hopkinsianism, as received by divines of his order, has, within fifty years past, so pervaded the orthodoxy of New England, and that too, so silently and imperceptibly, that there are hundreds of very good Hopkinsian ministers, who may never have given any more particular attention to Hopkins’s “System of Divinity,” than to the “Aphorisms” of Confucius.

warmest cordiality, on the pleasure with which you embrace another babe—*another son*. May Heaven, from whose benignant hand you received the dear pledge, make it a comfort to you, and a blessing to the world.* May it heal the *wound*, as yet, perhaps, bleeding, in the bosom of its parents. I am rejoiced to hear that my sister is so comfortable. How tender must be your feelings—how ardent your gratitude!—But we have a *brother* who claims our sympathy.—When presenting, and receiving fraternal congratulations, *the spontaneous tear reminds us of him*; † and the fervent aspiration escapes from the heart. His God, however, *lives*.

For a considerable part of the time, since we removed, your sister, (if you will please to acknowledge the relation,) has not been favored with her usual state of health. She is still unwell.

Either next week, or the week after next, is the time on which I fixed, more than two months ago, for a ride to Worcester. But upon that time, I have not as yet been able to lay my hand. Like happiness, when pursued through the streets of this world, it seems just before me, but is not to be overtaken. Hope, however, still remains.

What have you done about ordination sermons? I expected to have seen Mr. Hall, on his return from Sutton. But as he returned another way, and sent me no intelligence, I have been quite at a loss with respect to the charge and right hand. I have transiently heard, however, that the sermons are out. I hope that this is the case. And if it be, will you please to send me a hundred or two by brother Smith?

My father wishes me to write concerning David! I need not give the history of the unhappy affair which renders him, at present, an object of parental solicitude.—If I rightly judge, it is my father's desire, that you would take him for a time, and that afterward he

* It has been even so. That little son was baptized—Samuel Austin Worcester.

† Their brother Noah had recently been bereaved of his inestimable wife.

should live with me. The particular reason, why he wishes David to live with you, is, that he thinks, that with you he would be more likely to be kept in business, and have fewer temptations. And the reason, why he wishes him to live with me, is, that he may be in the way of an education. My father seemed aware, that it could not be very agreeable to you to take him. It is a solicitous affair; and for myself, I feel ready to agree to what shall, on the whole, be thought best. David is naturally a bright boy. Mr. Smith can give you more particular information, and to him I refer you for the rest.*

Your sister joins in congratulations, and good wishes, with your affectionate brother,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

Mr. LEONARD WORCESTER."

In the management of his domestic affairs, he was mindful of the importance of having his house in order, and of giving his parishioners a good example. He spent little time, however, upon his worldly interests. Not even his garden had much more of his attention, than if it had been supposed capable of taking thought for itself. It seemed as if he felt, that his *salary* should support him, without any sweat of his brow in sowing or reaping.† He was obliged to live frugally, that he might be just, and "owe no man any thing," beyond his means, as well as his intentions to pay. But he was so "given to hospitality," that his guests loved to see him again at his own table. He was high-minded and generous, in all his pecuniary transactions; and as far as the farthest, from covet-

* This was a half-brother, who, after a short season of youthful irregularity, gave promise of an excellent character in manhood, and, perhaps, of distinction. But he died suddenly, at the age of twenty-three. He was much beloved and lamented.

† He was to receive \$333 33, for salary, with the use of some land, worth, perhaps, a hundred more.

ousness, or any form of calculating selfishness. A mean action would have been as revolting to his feelings, as a petty larceny. Irreproachable in the morals of good manners, and the manners of good morals, none could “find occasion against” him, “except concerning the law of his God.”

His preaching was thus enforced by his daily walk and conversation. Whatever he inculcated upon others, it was his evident purpose to do himself. Of his secret communion with God, his people, of course, would know little, if anything, except as he was seen to be “rewarded openly.” But he was a man, who led others in prayer, with no common “unction from the Holy One;” and there was no occasion to inquire, if he “entered his closet.”—In no duty of his private life was he more faithful, than in his devout observance of holy time. He was in this a pattern for all. And before the sun went down on Saturday evening, the hour of “preparation” in his family had fully come.

To the regular labors of the ministry, Dr. Worcester added the instruction of a few young men; principally of those who were fitting for college. As they boarded in his family, he hoped to derive a pecuniary benefit, which, with his limited salary, was much needed. He wished also not to lose his acquaintance with the classic languages. At the same time, he felt as the highest motive, the hope of doing the greater service to the Church and the world.

“Fitchburg, April 9, 1798.

My dear brother,—

I am this moment informed, by Mr. F****, that he is going this afternoon to Worcester. Mr. F. is residing with me, at present, as a student. ♦ He has, for

some time, been studying with a design to prosecute a public education. But as his finances are low, and he considerably advanced in years, he has now abandoned the design of a public education, and has placed himself here, to be directed and assisted in his studies by me. The profession of divinity is his object; and it is with regard to this, that his studies are to be directed. 'Has my brother, then, become a theological preceptor?' No.—I expect only to prepare Mr. F. to pursue the study of divinity, under the direction of a more skilful instructor. I said 'to prepare him for the study of divinity:' but I fear, indeed, that he has not, as yet, that necessary pre-requisite, which it is the prerogative of the Divine Spirit, solely, to give. If he continues with me, however, I must direct his attention, in a variety of studies; and among the rest, in the reading of some theological books. If you could procure from Mr. Austin for me the loan of Dr. Clarke, on the Being and Attributes of God, it would be an obligation, I suppose, to Mr. F. and to myself.*

I shall return you, by this conveyance, the volume of Sermons, which I have kept too long. I think it an excellent volume; its words are like goads. If it be convenient, will you be so kind as to send me Newton on the Prophecies? If you cannot send that, please to send me the book, which you want me to read most.

The renewal of our church covenant is contemplated, as an immediate object. It is an important and solemn affair. I have endeavored, by subjects chosen for the purpose, to prepare the minds of the brethren, in some measure, for the business. But how I shall succeed in establishing a covenant and confession, which will answer my feelings, is matter of uncertainty. Indeed, I am not without my fears. The

* The young man remained with Dr. Worcester but a short time, and afterwards became a Universalist preacher. But there were others, like the eminent Samuel Shattuck, M. D., of Boston, upon whom he could afterwards look with much pleasure, and who remembered him with most cordial respect and gratitude.

great Head of the Church, however, will order the matter, as will be most for his glory. And to his direction I would wish, submissively, to refer it. Write me, if you have leisure, what your feelings would be, with regard to setting the doors of the church open to professed Universalists!

Mr. F. is in haste. If you have by you a copy of your church covenant and confession of faith, be so kind as to send it by the bearer.

Accept our usual salutations—respects to Mr. and Mrs. Austin.

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

Mr. LEONARD WORCESTER.”

Early in the spring of 1798, the contemplated revision of the covenant was brought forward in regular church-meeting. The vote for revision was *unanimous*.* A committee was appointed to prepare a revised form; and with them it was left, discretionarily, whether to prepare a confession of faith, distinct from the covenant, or to exhibit both in one. A revised form was soon prepared by the committee, and submitted to the church. But it met with opposition. The *Universalists* in the church, and some others, raised clamors against it, and used their utmost exertions to prevent its adoption. It was deemed prudent not to push the matter hastily; but to give time, and to use all proper means to conciliate and harmonize. At length, however, Sept. 11, 1798, the revised form of covenant and distinct articles of faith were received and established in the church. The “Articles” are inserted here, that the pastor’s own “faith” may have a distinct and explicit witness, in this Memoir of his life.

* It is not to be supposed, that *all* the members were present.

*Doctrine of Faith.**

ART. 1. You believe, that there is but one God; the sole Creator, Preserver, and moral Governor of the universe; a being of infinite power, wisdom, justice, goodness and truth; the self-existent, independent, and unchangeable fountain of good.

ART. 2. You believe, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given by inspiration of God; that they contain a complete and harmonious system of divine truth; and are our only and perfect rule of doctrinal belief and religious practice.

ART. 3. You believe, that according to the Scriptures, there are, in the unity of the Godhead, a Trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that these three persons are in essence one, and in all divine attributes equal.

ART. 4. You believe, that the one Supreme God has made all things for himself; that known unto him are all his works from the beginning; and that he governs all things according to the holy and unchanging counsels of his own will.

ART. 5. You believe, that the divine law, and the principles, and administration of the divine government, are perfectly holy, and just, and good.

ART. 6. You believe, that the first parents of the human race, were originally holy in the image of God; and that they fell from their original state, by voluntarily transgressing the divine command in the article of forbidden fruit.

ART. 7. You believe, that in consequence of the first apostacy, the heart of man in his natural state is enmity against God, fully set to do evil, dead in trespasses and sins.

ART. 8. You believe, that Christ the Son of God, equal with the Father, has, by his obedience, sufferings, and blood, made infinite atonement for sin; that

* This Confession of Faith appears to have been formed by the pastor, from a document which he is supposed to have drawn up for his own private use, when licensed to preach, or at his ordination.

he is the only Redeemer of sinners ; and that all who are saved, will be indebted, altogether, to the sovereign grace of God through his atonement.

ART. 9. You believe, although the invitation of the gospel be such, that whosoever will may take of the water of life freely ; yet so great is the enmity of the carnal mind against God and the gospel, that no man can come to Christ, except the Father, by the special regenerating influence of his Holy Spirit draw him.

ART. 10. You believe, that those, who embrace the gospel, were chosen in Christ to salvation before the world began ; and that they are saved, not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to the distinguishing mercy of God, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

ART. 11. You believe, that for those, who once believe in Christ, there is no condemnation, but they will be kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation.

ART. 12. You believe, that there will be a general resurrection of the bodies, both of the just and of the unjust.

ART. 13. You believe, that all mankind must one day stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive a sentence of just and final retribution, according to their respective works ; and that from the judgment-seat, the wicked will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

ART. 14. You believe, that Christ has a visible church in the world, into which none, in the sight of God, but real believers, and none, in the sight of men, but visible believers, have right of admission.

ART. 15. You believe, that the sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper ; that believers of regular church standing only can consistently partake of the holy supper ; and that visible believers with their households only can be consistently admitted to the ordinance of baptism.

The covenant was no "half-way covenant;" and whatever difficulties were apprehended in introducing

and establishing the "Doctrine of faith," the pastor does not seem to have been much disquieted. He made all his arrangements, as if expecting a permanent abode at Fitchburg. He built a house, and with such resources as he could command, took counsel for his household, not as one, that anticipated a premature or near departure.*

In so doing, he had the concurrence of his warm friends, who forsook him not in the days of his trial. No better friends did any pastor ever find, than some whom he there had the happiness to enjoy.

He was a constant observer of public affairs, and did not feel that he was in any sense disfranchised, because of his relation to "the kingdom" which "is not of this world."—Some of the results of his political "musing" may be seen in a remembrance of his friend "Alexis." This is the last of "Palemon;" and is most plainly an *effort*, towards an agreeable episode in the serious epic, which he had commenced.

To Alexis.

"July, 1798.

My Friend,—

When we look into the history of republics, whether ancient or modern, we find them all to have been obnoxious to the rage of faction, or at least, to the mania of party disaffection. The same is the fate of our own dear country. I shall not undertake to give in this letter, a history of the party spirit, which is at this day so prevalent, and in many instances outrageous

* Ministers were settled for life, and not with the clause of the "six months' notice," in the contract; but he might not have objected, as some have, to the innovation upon the ancient usage. Twenty years afterwards, when asked his opinion upon the propriety of such a mode of settlement, he pleasantly answered: "Well, I do not know: *some horses stand best, without tying!*"

among us. A remark, however, upon the influence of the *press* on this spirit, may not be unacceptable. As it has been my lot, within a few years, to reside for a longer or shorter time, in different parts of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, I have had considerable opportunity to notice the opposite political opinions, which obtain in places where different public papers have circulation. Two papers printed at Boston, 'The Columbian Centinel,' and 'The Independent Chronicle,' seem to have taken the lead, among these vehicles of political information, and fomenters of party spirit. 'The Centinel' is what is called a Federal, or by some, an aristocratic paper. 'The Chronicle' is anti-Federal or Jacobinic. In towns or districts, in which the Centinel, or papers of the same political stamp, have pretty general reception, the people are federal, or strongly in favor with the existing Federal Government, and with the leading measures of administration. On the other hand, in those portions of the country, where the Chronicle has circulation, the people are opposed to the government, or at least to the administration. I have found it indeed, to have been almost invariably the case, that the man who has been in the habit of reading the Chronicle, or a paper of the same description, as his principal source of political information, has enlisted himself under the banner of what is usually termed Jacobinical opposition; while those who have not been under the influence of such papers, are *as* invariably well contented with the government, and well affected towards administration. A man's political sentiments, or party standing, may be known, *generally*, to be sure, by the public paper which he reads, or rather has been in the habit of reading. This you may say is nothing remarkable. A man would doubtless choose the paper, which best accords with his own feelings and views. Be it so. It is a fact, however, which I have found none disposed to deny, that, as a general case, people have not first formed their political opinions, and of course, *taken their sides*, and afterwards chosen their paper accordingly; but have formed their opinions, and *derived*

their feelings from their papers, in the first instance.

The two papers above specified, had opened to themselves an extensive circulation, *anterior* to the rise of the existing party spirit; at least, before it had taken the direction which it now holds. After they declared in opposition to each other, they were still received and read, within their respective established circles, and from them the people imbibed their political notions and party spirit. I say 'from *them*,' not however, from the Centinel and Chronicle only, but from them, and others of their respective complexion.

As it has been in this section of the Union; so also has it been, as is thought, throughout the whole. Public papers have been made the engines of party, and have respectively shaped the political opinions and characters of their readers, according to their own model. Especially has this been the case, in regard to those in opposition. The mass of the people are, perhaps generally, disposed to be quiet under their government, if not *extremely oppressive*; unless their feelings and passions be excited and influenced, by factious harangues or publications. Hence those more especially, who are found in opposition, have doubtless been moulded into their present temper, principally by the influences of the public papers, which they have read.

What will be the issue of the party effervescence, now increasing through the state, I will not undertake to predict; but may that auspicious providence, which has hitherto attended on our national concerns, attend them still, and preserve us from every destructive calamity.

Yours, most affectionately,

PALEMON."

August 2d, he wrote to his friend Jewett a brief letter, apologizing for his expected absence at the approaching Commencement, which to his class was the time for the "Second Degree." But he had first of all

to communicate the joy which had that day been afforded, by the “present of a lovely daughter. Thanks be to that God, from whose hand we receive every blessing.”

This daughter was born, Aug. 1.—On the Sabbath following, as was the custom of the Puritan fathers, he gave public thanks for the token of divine favor. And on the same Sabbath, or Aug. 5th, the little one was carried to the house of God, that it might be dedicated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—in the ordinance, which the father ever administered with impressive solemnity.* And those who ever saw him

* As the former seal of the covenant was appointed for *the eighth day*, it was his desire that his children should be baptized, as nearly at the same age as might be practicable, in a service on the Lord’s day. He always spoke against the *delay* of infant baptism; believing it more important that the child should be dedicated publicly at an early opportunity, than that *both* the parents should be present.

“1738. Oct. 15. (Sunday.) We baptized our child, John.” The child was born the day previous. “1740, Nov. 16. (Sunday.) We baptized our daughter by the name of Sarah:” born Nov. 14.—“*Journal*” of Rev. Thos. Smith, of Portland.

For similar baptisms, see Appendix, p. 762, *Dwight’s Life of President Edwards*.

But such instances as the following were not uncommon:—“In the year before his death, Mr. Willard baptized in the church standing in this place, the celebrated Benjamin Franklin, on 17th January, 1706, the very day of his birth, who was born in a house directly opposite to the front part of this church.”—*Dr. John Pierce’s Election Sermon, delivered in the Old South Church, Boston, 1849*, p. 39.

A clergyman now living, who thus early baptized his first child, assigned as his reason, that “*whatever is a duty cannot be done too soon.*”

Dr. Worcester’s practice in “*Family Government*” accorded very nearly with the “*Rules*” drawn up by Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, of Malden, who died June 10, 1705, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. “*First Rule*. It is the duty of parents to endeavor to bring their children within the compass of the covenant. Here let them, 1. Labor to be in covenant with God themselves, who will entertain theirs with them. 2. Present them to baptism, (the seal of the covenant,) with convenient speed. 3. Give them good names,” &c., &c. “*Wigglesworth Papers*.”—*Chr. Obsr’y*, vol. IV.

hold a child of his own, as he applied the baptismal seal, could not soon forget the affecting tenderness of his voice and his countenance.

To the mother's name, he joined *Fidelia*, when he baptized that "lovely daughter," of whom he wrote to many friends. While in college, he was quite partial to the signature of FIDELIO. Some "words" were to him as "things," and some names were exponents or symbols of associations, remembrances, or congenialities, which he was most happy to renew and perpetuate. His second daughter, born less than two years after the first, he called Lydia Lucretia. She thus bore the name of that sister, whom he so much loved, and the mother whose memory was like a vision of heaven; while she would also remind him of the character of a woman, most admired of all, whose virtues have been celebrated by classic history.—And when in no wise unwilling, that his own name should be asked and granted for his eldest son, born Sept. 4, 1801, in the same rural village, he gratified *himself*, most of all, by a tribute to MELANCTHON;—who, among the greatest of the Reformers, was, in his maturest estimation, the nearest of a kindred spirit to the disciple, that leaned upon the bosom of his Lord.

His other children all received names, by which he testified his regard for relatives or special friends. In some instances, he appeared to consider the question of a choice between different names as of very serious importance. In 1810, on the morning of the Sabbath when his third son was to be baptized, he remarked with very great earnestness and tenderness,—“ I have been hesitating much what it is my duty to call him. My mind, however, has been about equally divided between *Joseph Addison* and *John Norris*.—He fixed

upon the latter, and for reasons which may be obvious in the sequel. He felt, that "he who bears an honored name has an additional incentive to virtuous deeds and noble aims."*

Fond of children; anxious that his own should confide in him implicitly,—he began, in the outset of his experience as a parent, a system of treatment, which he steadily maintained, until with a sweet farewell, he turned away his eyes from the six, that had been spared from his eleven.† Sooner than most parents, and those who mean to lose no time, he felt that an important work was to be accomplished, in "training them in the way they should go." He had one or more serious struggles for the mastery; but brought them all under his control, and, generally, before they were old enough to know how it was done. He did not much use "the rod,"—*literally the rod*, never. But there was a virtue in his *hand*, which, with few exceptions, afterwards made his uplifted finger alone suffice.

In some instances of the discipline of his children, in their early age, he might have been thought severe. But there was a "goodness" mingled with the "severity," which always overcame them in the end. And he never permitted a child, who was under correction, to pass out of his hands, until there was the appearance of entire submission. The witness of a relative may be taken, as uniformly applicable to his course, from first to last.

* Not one of his father's sixteen children had a *double* name. Such names, some may not know, were not at all common, until after the Revolution.

† "If I could have my choice," he said, "I should prefer to have the larger number of *daughters*. I believe it is easier to train them for usefulness, and they are more likely to be devoted to the Savior." There were born to him, four sons and seven daughters. Two sons and three daughters died young.

“ I used to admire his paternal character. I thought him very fond of his children, and used to feel a sympathy for him, that he had so little leisure to give to them, when he enjoyed that little so much. How affectionately he would take E..... or A..... in his arms, and take a few turns with them, before going up to his study, when he came in from abroad! Nothing escaped his notice when with them. I remember one morning, * * * who was generally very gentle and pleasant, became very irritable while I was dressing her hair. This continued during breakfast, and was checked by him, but not subdued. This irritability broke out again, while he was reading for prayers; when laying aside the great Bible, he took her from her mother; corrected her, reducing her to instant and complete submission, and returned her to her mother. After prayers, he took her again, on his knee, went over mildly and gently the events of the morning; showing her that he had noticed everything; and pointed out to her wherein she had erred in her conduct and temper, until her spirit seemed perfectly penitent and subdued. I listened with admiration. Oh! what a father, thought I!”

He watched the very first indications of character in his first-born, and in each of the others, so as to predict concerning some of them, what came to pass, although the prediction appeared very singular and very doubtful. He was not eager to draw out their minds before the time, but he had great pleasure in analyzing their intellectual tendencies. As early as he could, he would ascertain, if they had an ear and a voice, for the melodies of sacred song. And when overwhelmed with exhausting labors, he would sit down, in a morning hour, to teach them their “letters,” or some other lesson, by which he could discern or prove their capabilities.*

* Before going to his study, one beautiful morning, he sat down for an experiment of this kind upon the little daughter, who was the subject of the

While careful not to encumber or unduly stimulate the mind, he was yet desirous of having his children advance steadily, and learn something every day. He was not afraid of putting them under early responsibilities; as if remembering what services had been performed by himself, in his childhood and youth. He did not talk as much with them, as many other fathers do with their children. But his words were to the point and the purpose. And of all their impressions and recollections of him, the very first would be, that he was a good man, who could say with the apostle, "I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in truth."

At the family meeting in Hollis, in September of this year, 1798, to which allusion was made, in the sketches of Noah Worcester, Esq., there was one incident, which has often been mentioned with a lively interest. The brothers, who had entered the ministry, kept a Sabbath, at Hollis.—Noah preached in the forenoon; Thomas in the afternoon; and Samuel, at a third service. "The sermons," according to a living witness, "were each characteristic of its author. Noah's was plain and strong; Thomas's easy and taking, from John vii. 37; Samuel's scholastic and profound. Hearers differed in opinion, as to which

discipline, which has been described, and who, as he was surprised to find, had begun her alphabet. He proceeded along from A to P, obtaining correct answers, the greater part of the way. Pointing with his pencil to Q, he said,—“And what is *that*?”—Never having heard, the hopeful pupil looked at the letter, twisting and pressing her lips, as he himself unconsciously sometimes did. She suddenly sprung, as if with an *eureka*, like that of the old philosopher, and clapping her hands, exclaimed,—“*O! dat be O, wid a tail to him!*” The exhilarating convulsion of the father's dignity, was as good for his health, as the shock of his morning shower-bath, and far more grateful, to say the least, than the *pepper*, with which, by medical advice, he was then accustomed to sprinkle his cup of coffee.

performance was the best; but they all agreed in one point, that Noah Worcester, Esq., was a very fortunate man, to be the father of such an unrivalled triumvirate of sons.”*

Dr. Luther Jewett.

“*Fitchburg, Jan. 2, 1799.*”

My very dear friend,—

I grow more and more sensible of being very unhappily located, in regard to my friends. So completely shut out am I from their circle, as extremely seldom to receive, and equally seldom directly to convey, a letter.

Since you saw me, I have passed through many interesting scenes and changes. I have become a Husband, a Parent, a *Pater-familias*, in my own house. These several relations bring with them new duties and new cares, new anxieties, and new enjoyments. They throw one upon a new scene of action, and clothe him with a new set of feelings and habits; and they call into exercise all that is tender, noble, and excellent in the human composition. God grant I may sustain them, with increasing pleasure, usefulness, and virtue; and that in due time you may derive from them more than your fondest expectations anticipate.

Have you read Robinson’s Proofs of a Conspiracy against the Religions and Governments of Europe, and the Abbe Barueil’s Memoirs of Jacobinism? If not, get them as soon as you can. They must engage the attention—as must the great scenes, indeed, which are opening in such rapid succession, on the broad theatre of the world,—equally of the philosopher, the

*Leonard did not leave his printing office, until the year following. If the five own brothers, who were all at that family meeting, had been seated in the order of age, *he* would have had the place in the centre. And this place he was fitted to occupy, by his stature of six feet, three inches. As the father and sons, with their wives, walked to the meeting-house, in the order of age, they were a spectacle for the eyes of many.

politician, and the divine. After reading those books, we cease from wonder and astonishment at enormities, which before, we thought human nature incapable of committing. I conceive the grand *maxim* of Illuminatism, viz., that ‘The preponderancy of good to the ultimate result, consecrates or justifies all the means, which may be used in obtaining it,’—to be the maxim, by which the ruling powers in France are governed, in all their measures.

But He who is Governor among the nations will soon ‘punish the fruit of their stout heart, and the glory of their high looks.’

Accept our most affectionate regards and best wishes.

SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

Soon after the date of this letter, the hearts of sincere believers, at Fitchburg, were made glad and grateful, by the multiplied cases of awakening and conversion. But a most virulent opposition was aroused. Some of the inhabitants had never seen, and never wished to see the work of God, “on this fashion.” Not the least of the occasions of offence and denouncing clamor, was the circumstance, that, as in many places at the time of the GREAT AWAKENING, *members of the church were among the happiest subjects of the revival.*

From twelve to twenty heads of families were of this class,—openly declaring, that they had never before had any witness of being “born again.” They, of course, were not “added to the church,” like others, and hence the fruits of the harvest did not appear *numerically*, as in ordinary cases at the present day. But none afforded more joy to the pastor, than these converted church-members; and none, probably, were more instrumental in saving others.

He had been ordained but a short time, before his

preaching occasioned a deep solicitude in the minds of a portion of the church. When a communion season was approaching, they were in great distress. They trembled to eat and drink at the Lord's table, and they dared not stay away. A great effect was also produced by the discussions and the devotional services, preparatory to a renewal of covenant. There was never, it would seem, in any town of New England, an example of a revival, which more truly and strikingly *began*, and was carried on *in the church*.

It is painful to add, that, in all probability also, a more bitter and malignant spirit was never manifested by opposers. Disgraceful and despicable measures of annoyance were devised. Even the pastor and his family were treated by some, with a disrespect and insult, which would now be scarcely credible. But the most grievous were his trials from "false brethren," who either openly led, or fully sanctioned, the general course of the opposers of the revival and of the truth of God. From among these a society or league was formed, upon the basis of a "Universalian Compact," in order to withstand, more effectually, the doctrines of the Gospel, which were so hated and execrated under the name of *Hopkinsianism*, or the interchangeable and blasphemous appellation of "*hell-fire*."

As in the character of the opposition generally, there was a manifest counterpart of the enmities and conspiracies of the Jews against Christ and the apostles,—so the saying of the Master was here fulfilled: "I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."—Still the revival went forward. And the experience of the pastor was invaluable,

in respect to his advancement in piety, and the increase of his power as an instrument of the Lord.

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 received, in former instances, a rich experience in 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 Puritans of New England, 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 these revivals, as has been already intimated, the spirit of missions, as a legitimate consequence, received a new and powerful impulse. This spirit which has always existed in greater or less degree, from the very first planting of the New England

churches, would unquestionably have been greatly promoted by *organizations* or societies, distinct from churches. After such organizations had been formed in England, Scotland and elsewhere, many pastors and church-members in this country contributed to their support. At different times, also, before the Revolution, there were attempts to form associations for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen, which should be independent of all foreign Societies. But these were not encouraged by the royal authority; and acts of incorporation by the colonial legislatures could not have the seal of the crown. Thus when, in 1762, divers very respectable citizens of Salem and other towns obtained an Act from the Massachusetts General Court, incorporating them as an association for spreading the Gospel among the Indians of North America, the King declined to give it his sanction.*

*One of the leaders in this movement was Edward Kitchen, Esq., a prominent member of the church, now called the Tabernacle Church. The supposed reason for denying the royal patronage to Colonial Missionary Societies, is correctly stated by Mr. Felt, in his *Annals of Salem*, Vol. II., p. 601. "Such denial seems to have been exercised for the purpose of letting a missionary society in England have unobstructed course in our country, and thus more fully promote the cause of Episcopacy."

In a letter of Jonathan Edwards to Rev. Mr. Erskine, of Scotland, dated Northampton, Oct. 14, 1748, it is said: "It is a thing, that has a favorable aspect on the design of propagating the Gospel among the Indians, that many of late have been remarkably spirited to promote it, and liberally to open their hands in order to it. Mr. Brainerd's going to Boston before his death, and people there having some acquaintance with him, and with his labors and success among the Indians, gave occasion to a considerable number of men in Boston, men of good substance and of the best character, to form themselves into a Charitable Society, that by their joint endeavors and contributions, they might promote the instruction and spiritual good of the Indians; who have done some very liberal things for the Indians in New Jersey, and also for the Six Nations. The people of Northampton have also had their hearts remarkably opened, to contribute to the maintenance of Mr. Spencer's Interpreter; and one individual at Springfield has been moved to devote a considerable part of his estate, to promote the propagation of the Gospel among the Six Nations."—*Dwight's Life, &c.*, pp. 269-70.

In 1787, a "Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and others in North America" was incorporated by the Legislature of Massachusetts. It was directly occasioned by a commission, which some gentlemen had received from the "Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge," in Scotland,—authorizing them to act as Commissioners. In 1789, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church "passed an order, requiring the churches under their care to take up collections for a Missionary Fund." *A mission from this Church to Africa had been contemplated in 1774*,—the same year in which the Connecticut General Association resolved to send missionaries to the northern and western wilderness. In 1780, two missionaries were sent from Hartford County, to labor in Vermont; and in 1798, the General Association formed themselves into *the Missionary Society of Connecticut*. The New York Missionary Society, "for sending the Gospel to the frontier settlements, and among the Indian tribes in the United States," preceded this last, being formed Nov. 1, 1796.*

The New York Theological Magazine, from its commencement in 1795, diffused much missionary intelligence. As Dr. Worcester's brothers Noah and Thomas contributed to its pages, he would of course

* Baird's Religion in America, p. 277. Gen. Assem. Mag. Vol. I. Am. Ed. Soc. Quar. Reg. Vol. II. N. Y. Miss. Mag. Vol. I. See a Report of the visit of Drs. Morse and Belknap, to the Oneidas, &c., in 1796,—Mass. His. Coll. Vol. V—VI. First Series.—Those Indians were then much farther from Boston, than the Cherokees now are, west of the Mississippi.

Rev. Samuel Kirkland, a devoted missionary to the Oneidas, was father of J. T. Kirkland, D. D., late President of Harvard University. When the son was ordained pastor of Summer-Street Church, Boston, in 1794, the venerable parent charged him in the presence of the people, as if he trembled for the future. "O never rob *him* of his glory, who is God-man, Mediator; never deny the Lord who hath bought you!"

be a constant reader. The London Evangelical Magazine he could see occasionally; and thus the exciting journals of the missionaries in the South Seas, in Africa, and in the far East, were imparting a genial impulse to his benevolent sympathies. With his home in the hill-country of the interior of Massachusetts, his spirit went often abroad, as he remembered the saying of his Master: "THE FIELD IS THE WORLD."*

Before he left college, a concert of prayer for the conversion of the world was sustained in his native town, and in many other places. And having received a fresh anointing from the Lord in the blessing upon his ministry, the Gospel had become to him so truly the word of a "quickenings Spirit," that he was most willing and anxious "to spend and be spent" for the name of the Lord Jesus. It was his delight to "lend his assistance to every wheel in motion, designed to ameliorate the condition of man;" and one of the first to move in any new enterprise or labor of christian faith and love.

Thus at the formation of the Mass. Miss. Society, in May, 1799, he was found ready to do all in his power, to advance the object of the institution. He had been less than two years in the ministry, and, of

* "The letters of Melville Horne were blessed, first to excite reading Christians to remember their faults, in not having before united their exertions for the souls of their fellow-men. The unexpected union and zeal that attended the forming of the London Missionary Society, was another prominent event in this connection. We well remember the interest we took in the Ship Duff, freighted with missionaries to the Islands, lately discovered by the enterprising Cook. With attention, we have read the accounts of Carey and others, instructing the superstitious Hindoos to leave their *castes*, and to believe in Jesus of Nazareth. With a lively interest we have followed the journals of Vanderkemp and Kircherer, near the Cape of Good Hope, preaching Jesus to the willing Hottentots, who have been considered among the most abject of the human race.—*Dickinson's Sermon, before the Mass. Miss. Society, May 28, 1811.*

course, had not yet taken his place, in public estimation, with Spring, Emmons, Austin, and others, who “seemed to be pillars;” and upon whom the friends of the movement naturally leaned. But he had his full part in the preparatory deliberations. In a very short time, by a change of local position, and from other causes, he became the leading spirit of the worthy brotherhood, whose anniversary was hailed as the “feast of tabernacles.”

There is an unwritten history of the preliminary proceedings, which deserves a notice beyond the limits of a few sentences or paragraphs; for it was this Society and that of kindred character, in Connecticut, from which came the men and the organization of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. And in the same revivals, which gave birth to these Societies, the mother of Samuel J. Mills was wrestling with the Angel of the Covenant, for the conversion of that child of many *missionary* prayers.

Rev. Joshua Spaulding, pastor of the Tabernacle Church, in Salem, and as such the predecessor of Dr. Worcester, was at the head of all others, in the exertions, which immediately led to the formation of the Mass. Miss. Society. “We must have,” he proclaimed to his clerical and lay brethren,—“we *must* have missionaries to go out into the highways, all around us and among us. We want a missionary in *Marblehead*; and we *need to send missionaries into Boston!*”*

* The Old South Church alone, among the Congregational churches, could be relied upon as evangelical. And this, in the opinion of many, hardly had breath enough for life. Two Baptist churches had a great influence in sustaining vital piety.

Mr. Spaulding had less influence, for several reasons, than he would otherwise have had. He was an eccentric, though a truly godly man. In his politics, he was a violent anti-federalist; and most of the clergy were

At the Massachusetts anniversary of election, in 1797, there was a consultation upon the subject of a new organization for the spread of the Gospel; but nothing was done, except to agree upon further inquiry and a renewal of consultation, the next year.— In 1798, a more formal meeting was held. Some of the most influential pastors opposed Mr. Spaulding, and such as more or less agreed with him, in his views of the desirableness of missions at our own doors, to “strengthen the things which remained and were ready to die.” The project was even derided by some, as unnecessary or preposterous; while others stated their objections, as if wishing for more light, and by no means “fierce for moderation.”

There was an honest and serious apprehension of failure, from the unpopularity of any measures, which implied, that, in the very heart of New England, there were waste places and desolations. It is this, doubtless, to which Dr. Samuel Spring referred in his Missionary Sermon, May, 1802:

“Though encouraged and even pressed by devout, praying characters to form a Missionary Society, several years before it was instituted, yet we trembled and hesitated and paused and postponed the object repeatedly, *lest our number and influence might prove inadequate to the honorable execution of the design.* But in consequence of the example of others, and the opening field of usefulness, with confidence in the divine promise and support, we formed the Society, and marked out our missionary ground.”

thus opposed to him. But he had also adopted *Millenarian* views of the coming of Christ, and his judgment was deemed unsafe.—Still he did more at this time than any other individual, to constrain his brethren in Massachusetts, to move forward in the cause of evangelization. But of this fact no more has seemed to be known, than of the origin of the Am. Home Miss. Society, in 1825, from the appeals of Rev. Aaron Foster, now of E. Charle-mont, Mass., and then a member of the Senior Class, at Andover.

In May, 1799, a plan having been so devised, as to make the proposed Association appear before the world, as instituted upon a much broader basis, than that of *home* missions, a sufficient number of the more eminent ministers, chiefly those known as *Hopkinsian*,* were induced to assume the responsibility of the new undertaking. The constitution adopted, May 28, 1799, declares, that “the object of this Society 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 Mr. Spaulding. “If that is your object, you should send

* It is worthy of note, that the great missionary organizations of these latter days were formed, as they are now sustained, by men whose theology has been often represented, as utterly inconsistent with the labors of true christian beneficence. And in truth, it must be admitted, that some Hopkinsians appear to have been in a state of mind, like that of Andrew Fuller, before he saw “the way of God more perfectly.” “1750. Aug. 30. I found my soul drawn out in love to poor souls, while reading Millar’s account of Eliot’s labors among the North American Indians, and their effect on these poor barbarous savages. I found also a suspicion, that we shackle ourselves too much in our addresses to sinners; that we have bewildered and lost ourselves, by taking the decrees of God as rules of action. Surely Peter and Paul never felt such scruples in their addresses as we do. They addressed their hearers as *men*—fallen men; as we should warn and admonish persons who were blind, and on the brink of some dreadful precipice. Their work seemed plain before them. O that mine might be so before me!” Upon this his biographer, Dr. Ryland, remarks: “Here we see the first workings of compassionate feelings of heart, which at length led him so happily out of the entanglements of False Calvinism, and excited him to such exertions for the salvation of the heathen.”—*Mems. of Fuller*, ch. IV.

The mistake of Fuller was, in “*taking the decrees of God as rules of action.*” The *precepts* of God, but not his decrees or purposes, are the “**RULES OF ACTION.**” Thus the apostles had no “scruples” in addressing men, as they did. And thus Paul, having said—“there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship,” could also say,—“Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.” The *consistency* of the two sayings is to some as much a problem, as the question concerning Christ, as being the Son of David: “How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, &c.? Matt. xxii. 43-45.

missionaries to *Boston!* *There, certainly, CHRIST is seldom or never preached."*

It is noticeable, that his idea of *city missions* has now been adopted, with great interest and effect. But the Mass. Miss. 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, "to all who are desirous of the spread of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 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 affin-

ity and fellowship with others in Great Britain. Establishments precisely similar to those now sustained by the American Board of Com. for For. Missions, might have been organized and cherished, in the strictest accordance with the purpose of the Mass. Miss. Society. And the simple fact is, that it was not until long after the Amer. Board of Com. for For. Missions was formed, that this Society and others, which are now purely *home* societies, became such, or 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 Mass. Miss. Society, was a society of *Massachusetts missionary men*; not a missionary society for Massachusetts!

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 might have been sent by the Mass. Miss. Society to Bombay, Ceylon, or the Sandwich Islands, just as *constitutionally* as they were afterwards sent by the Amer. Board of Com. for For. Missions.—It may be added, that the Mass. Miss. Society was made directly subservient to the plans of this great organization. Its affairs were conducted with such exclusive reference to remote localities, and general objects em-

braced in the spread of the Gospel, that a "Domestic Missionary Society" was found necessary for the wants of Massachusetts.—This Society was merged in the Mass. Miss. Society, when the latter became what it now is, strictly *domestic*, as having no missionaries among the *heathen*.

Rev. Samuel Austin was the first Secretary. Dr. Emmons very reluctantly accepted the office of President. He was almost "taken by force." Dr. Spring had many doubts and fears. Rev. Messrs. Niles, of Abington, Dickinson, of Holliston, Alexander, of Mendon, Barker of Middleboro', were fully decided, as were others like the subject of this Memoir,—with a few such laymen as John Simpkins, Esq., of Boston, John Punchard, Esq., of Salem, and Leonard Worcester, of Worcester. At a private house, these "with one accord" continued in prayer and deliberation, on a memorable night, until a later hour than Paul preached at Troas. It was past midnight, when they had settled the question of forming a society.*

The first mission projected, was that of a settled minister, and of a candidate, to the region between Whitestown and the Genessee River. And in the view of the first Directors or Trustees, so much was it the "day of small things," that, at their meeting, July

* And the most of them then made themselves as comfortable as they could, in accommodations upon the floor, until the morning!

The names of the first signers of the Constitution, were David Sanford, Daniel Hopkins, Nathaniel Emmons, Ezra Wild, Samuel Niles, Samuel Spring, Joseph Barker, John Crane, Samuel Austin, Joshua Spaulding, Timothy Dickinson, Jacob Norton, Jonathan Strong, Peter Sanborn, John H. Stevens, Paul Litchfield, Eli Smith, Samuel Mead, Eliphalet Gillett, Freegrace Reynolds, Titus Theodore Barton, Andrew Beattie, Jonathan Powers, Daniel Hardy, Jr., Charles Coffin, Jr., John Simpkins, Isaac Tompkins, John Wait, Leonard Woods, Elijah Parish, Samuel Worcester, Leonard Worcester, George Odiorne, Kendal Kittredge, Jedediah Morse, Nicholas Pike, Calvin Park, Jonathan Homer, John Punchard, &c., &c.

15, they voted thanks to their Treasurer *for the generous deposit of ten dollars* for the use of the society!"

At the next anniversary, however, the funds had increased to more than one thousand dollars; and it was quite apparent, that the chief difficulty would be in finding suitable men to engage as missionaries. There were vacant pulpits for all those, who were qualified for missionary service; and the churches could seldom be found willing to spare their pastors, even for a term of three months. Besides, the active friends of Zion in eastern Massachusetts, and in New England at large, had but a small share of this world's goods. They might have recurred, not unaptly, to the words of Peter: "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

In Boston itself, the capital of the descendants of "the fathers" and of the Pilgrims, so little interest was manifested in the objects and meetings of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, for some years after its formation, that the question was distinctly entertained by some of the members, whether the anniversary should not be held in Salem. The reasons for thus honoring Salem, were good and sufficient. In anticipation, it may here be mentioned, that it was in Salem, in June 1803, that the first Number of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine was edited and published.

It had the same foreign missionary spirit and general character, that may now be seen in the Missionary Herald. But if any one would see an amazing contrast, and a most cheering demonstration of an immense progress, let him read some of the last numbers of the Herald of the A. B. C. F. M., and some

of the first of the Magazine of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. And let him compare, also, the Massachusetts Missionary Society, in 1801, with its two or three missionaries, a part of the year, with the present American Home Missionary Society, in 1851, with its more than one thousand missionaries from the Aroostook, to Oregon and California!

Dr. Worcester returned home from the meetings, at Boston, during the election week of 1799, much refreshed and animated by his intercourse with brethren, and the prospective results of their consultations. He had been declining in health. For some time, his studies and labors had been interrupted by general debility and frequent prostration of his nervous system. But his reputation gained rapidly, and no young minister of New England has ever been known at so early an age, to command higher respect for weight of character.

From a goodly majority of those, who were properly the people of his charge, he was honored with every mark of confidence and esteem, which any pastor could reasonably expect. Very grateful, and somewhat uncommon, were the tokens of regard from the younger members of his congregation. And with a large portion of the church, he enjoyed the fellowship of saints, in no doubtful "earnest" of the communion in celestial glory. The Lord was manifestly "working with" him, and "confirming the word with signs" of life eternal to the "dead in trespasses and sins."

But to those in his congregation, and more in the town, who "loved darkness rather than light," his clear and pungent exhibitions of "the truth" were as the

piercings of a sword. Some of the Universalist members of the church were busily engaged in igniting all the combustibles of infidelity and immorality, within the limits of the town. They addressed themselves, also, to the sympathies of such neighboring ministers and church-members, as had no favor for Calvinism, and with whom spiritual regeneration was sheer enthusiasm, or hypocritical pretence.

The adoption of the revised Articles and Covenant, led to some efforts of Christian fidelity, to reclaim "those that were out of the way." Some who were living in neglect of public and family worship; or who by other violations of covenant were justly disciplinable, were expostulated with by their brethren. No case, however, was yet pursued through the successive stages of "dealing" to excommunication. But an uneasiness was created, and much available occasion afforded to organize a strong and embittered resistance to the reformed administration of the government of the church. In general, the state of things was very much the same, as at Northampton, in 1749,—or just half a century earlier,—when Edwards took his memorable stand against the admission of members to the church, who gave no evidence of real conversion.

Early in June, and but a few days after the pleasant scenes in Boston, one of the leaders of the opposition contrived a meeting for Universalists, in Fitchburg, and the neighboring towns, to hear a discourse from a notorious hierophant of their delusive and destructive sentiments. The whole contrivance was managed so secretly, that the pastor of the church knew nothing of the meeting, until he saw the people gathering towards the house of worship.* He went himself, and sat in

* The key, which was usually kept in the entry of his house, had been taken by stealth.

his family pew. The preacher took for his text: "And to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God," &c. &c. (2 Thes. chap. 1.) He expounded the term "vengeance," as meaning the *ferocity of God's love*; and in like manner disposed of all the other terms, by which the apostle had spoken of "everlasting destruction!" Having concluded, he remarked to the assembly, that he had now endeavored to give them his ideas of the truth; but if there was any person who wished to say anything, liberty was now given. Dr. Worcester instantly rose, and said,— "If the preacher will come down upon the pulpit stairs, I should like to ask him two or three questions." He complied with the request, and was asked,— "By what authority, Sir, have you entered my pulpit?"— Somewhat disconcerted, he answered,— "By your consent."— "*I never gave consent; I never knew anything of this meeting, until the people began to assemble,*"— was the emphatic reply. At that instant, a voice* was heard from the choir:—" *You lie, Mr. Worcester!*"

Amidst the confusion which now began, the pastor, after a very dignified and impressive comment upon such an astounding outrage, invited the assembly to remain a little longer, and attend to an exposition which he would give of a chapter in the New Testament. He then read and expounded *the Epistle of Jude*. It is not probable, that those words of fearful rebuke of "certain men crept in unawares, * * ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness," were ever brought to bear upon any assembly, with a

* From one whose own falsehood was now exposed. But he was not one of the citizens of the place.

more direct, and scorching application. The effect was indescribable.

Promptly after his pulpit had been so occupied, and, as he felt, desecrated and defiled, the regular incumbent delivered a discourse from the words, "That we, henceforth, be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

He first showed, that "it is a primary object of the propagators of error, to bring the true doctrines of the Gospel into contempt." And in illustrating the point, he reminded his hearers of the course recently pursued.

"Those of you, my hearers, who were present on the occasion, recollect very well, that the method of seduction now under consideration, was lately put in practice, in a public performance in this place. Instead of argument and serious address, vehement declamation, and even ridicule, were adopted, with an obvious design to bring the great truths of the Gospel, as holden by Orthodox Christians in all ages, into public derision. And answerable to the worthy intention, in such as were prepared for the purpose, a levity very unbecoming the house and worship of God, to say the least, was excited. By this means, gross and indecent as it was, the speaker, in a very few minutes, effected more, no doubt, in some particular minds, than he could have done in a day, by serious and rational discussion. With many, it is a much easier matter to laugh, than to reason. But if they can be made to laugh at any doctrine, it answers about the same purpose, as if they had been reasoned or argued out of it. Having once made it an object of their merriment, they afterwards hold it in contempt; or at least, care not to admit it, as a serious article of their creed. And this is exactly what is aimed at, by those who practice this method of seduction.

But an honest man, my hearers, a man who is serious in the serious cause of truth, would never stoop to this. In a discourse upon the great things of religion, a discourse in which a question of no less magnitude and concernment, than that of eternal damnation is involved, you will never hear him use ridicule instead of argument, or vehement declamation instead of serious address. He will never attempt to excite your laughter, instead of convincing your consciences.

2. Deceivers generally address themselves to the passions, rather than to the understanding. * * *

3. Deceivers will very commonly endeavor to confound, and carry you away with a multitude of words; with noisy, incoherent declamation. * * * * *

4. Nearly allied to what has now been brought into view, is another artifice, commonly made use of by heretical deceivers. They affect to disclaim all dependence upon human reasoning, and attend wholly to the Scripture. Hence, if you undertake to show, by the connection and analogy of Scripture, that texts which they adduce are not to their purpose, they will not attend to your argument, but make a great show of insisting upon a plain—‘Thus saith the Lord!’ This is a very artful method to make people think, that they have a great regard for the Scripture, and that they draw their doctrines wholly from that source. This they were taught by their father, the Devil. He quoted passages of Scripture, that he might tempt and deceive Christ; and if he transform himself into an angel of light, no marvel, says the apostle, if his ministers do likewise.

Again. They affect to be pleading for the character of God. Thus did the false prophets of ancient times. They accused Isaiah of uttering things injurious to the divine character, and raised such a clamor against him, that at length he was sawn asunder, as an impious blasphemer. The same clamor was raised against Christ by those, who, when he was on earth, opposed his doctrines. And the same clamor has been raised by infidels and heretics against the orthodox doctrines of the Church, in all ages. Especially is it

thus at the present day. Infidels, Socinians, and Universalists, all join in the cry, that the orthodox scheme of Christianity is repugnant to the benevolence of the divine nature. Theirs is a scheme on which they all loudly and vehemently declaim, while they in their several ways affect great zeal for the Church of God, which, as they pretend, is so grievously injured. And this sheer artifice has, with many, no doubt, very great influence.

As they affectedly plead for the benevolence of Deity, so also do they affect to be exceedingly benevolent, themselves. No people pretend to greater benevolence than Deists, unless, indeed, they be the Universalists. They all pretend to have a great concern for the happiness of their fellow-men, and affect to pity those poor unhappy creatures, who are so chained down by prejudice, ignorance, or the force of education, as not like them, to throw off, what they are pleased to call, the shackles of superstition and bigotry. And they take care to express a very strong hope and confident opinion, that mankind will soon be so enlightened, as to see as they see, and enjoy the liberty which they enjoy. ‘Oh, I have no concern,’ says the Deist, ‘but that you will all very soon get rid of your superstitious notions, and become Deists.’ And so says the Universalist, ‘I am not at all concerned but that you will all very soon become Universalists.’ Artifices like these are designed to make people believe, that they are very sincere, and with weak and ignorant people, have oftentimes a mighty effect. *They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

I have taken the liberty, my hearers, to bring into view the pretences of a man, who has lately been among you in the character of a preacher. Although I could hardly consider him, or his preaching, as of sufficient consequence to demand so much attention; yet as he had furnished me with so fair an occasion

for exposing the artful practices, *the sleight and cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive you*, I thought it my duty as a watchman upon these walls, to improve, though in weakness, the occasion thus offered. On hearing him for myself, I confess, it appeared to me scarcely necessary to say anything to refute him. For his discourse was so glaringly absurd, as evidently to carry its own confutation on the very front of it. It was thought advisable, however, to ask him a number of questions, for the purpose of bringing him out, and showing him in his full length. This was accordingly done; and it was imagined sufficient to do away every unfavorable impression, which he might have made upon any minds. But to my regret, I understand, that there are some, who are more or less carried away with him. With such I do not expect that anything, which can be addressed to their reason, will be of any avail; for it must be exceedingly evident, that their reason is allowed to take but very little, if any, part in the affair.

I shall take the liberty, however, briefly to state some of the ideas which were advanced by their preacher, that they may look at them once more, and that others, too, may judge.—In answer to questions which were put to him publicly, he said, that ‘God has nothing to do in the punishment of sinners;’—‘they are punished by themselves only;’—that ‘the covenant which was made with Adam was a bad one, and was, therefore, disannulled;’—that ‘the divine law under which men now are, has no penalty annexed, and threatens no punishment;’—that ‘there will be no future day of general judgment;’—that ‘God never was displeased with his creatures, nor ever can be;’—that ‘he never cursed or damned any of his creatures, but must and will bless them, and only bless them;’—that ‘there was never any need of sacrifice or atonement, to make a propitiation to God for sin;’—and that ‘the Son of God suffered and died, not to make atonement for sin, but barely to seal a testimony to the truth, and to convince mankind that God is not displeased with them,—mankind think that God is displeased with them for their conduct, and could not

have been convinced of the contrary, by any other means than the death of God's son !'

I might proceed. But what has here been stated, may suffice as a specimen of the whole. I cannot be suspected of designed misrepresentation, for there were many present to hear ; and I think I have not misstated. Now suffer me to ask, if there be any of his disciples present, whether you are prepared to subscribe to these doctrines. Some of you have called them good news. But do you believe them to be the Gospel of Christ ? Are they holy doctrines,—doctrines which lead to a holy life ? Do you find yourselves influenced by them to attend more seriously to religion, to repent of your sins, and to walk humbly with God, in a course of holy obedience to his commandments ? Do you believe, that these are the doctrines which Christ preached, and for which he was persecuted to the cross ; the doctrines which the apostles preached, and which had such a powerful effect in pricking sinners to the heart, making them cry out, *Men and brethren, what shall we do*, and finally turning them from their vicious and sinful courses into the way of a holy and religious life ?

Perhaps you will say,—‘we do not know whether all which he advances is true ; but still, on the whole, we liked the man and his preaching.’ Be it so. But if these doctrines, which are here stated from him, be not true, are they not then fundamental error ? Do they not go to the total subversion of the Gospel ?—If it be true, that sinners are really under the displeasure of God and the curse of his law ; and if Christ suffered and bled for the special purpose of making atonement for their sins, then would it not be a total subversion of the very foundation of the Gospel to say, that ‘God never was displeased with his creatures, and that Christ died, not to make atonement for their sins, but to seal a testimony to the truth, and convince them that God was not displeased with them ?’—For myself, I hesitate not to say, that I have quite as good an opinion of an open and avowed infidel, as I can have of the man, who will avow sentiments like these ; and that I

believe these sentiments to be even more dangerous and licentious in their tendency, than downright Deism.

Yet this is the man, to whom I was called upon to give the right hand of fellowship, as with me a fellow-laborer in the vineyard of Christ! Be offended who may, —I affirm, that, as are his sentiments, so is his character—notoriously vile, licentious, and infamous. This is no slander; it is what I am ready, if called upon, to prove; and I mention it for the sake only of exposing to your view, the unreasonableness and folly of running after every creature that comes along, and bidding him ‘God speed.’

You will allow me to talk plainly, for you have constrained me; the occasion requires it, and gives me full liberty. I wish not to offend, unless such truths, as I think to be important to be held, are offensive. I am aware, that I have already been censured and reproached; but this does not move me. I have made up my mind to meet, without dismay, any censures and reproaches which are incurred, by a faithful discharge of my duty, and I thank my God, they do not hurt me.

It is but a few months ago, my friends, that you were bidding ‘God speed’ to a man, who had never any regular introduction into the ministry; who was not even a professor of Christianity; and whom none of you could suspect of having any deep or serious concern for the cause of truth or religion. And now you have renewed the solemn mockery with one of still worse character. Thus you “suffer fools gladly.” I do not mention this for the sake of reproaching you—far be it from my heart—but for the sake of bringing you, if possible, to a serious consideration. I beg you to pause for a moment, and solemnly to reflect upon the matter.

Do you believe such persons to be the real ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ, sent forth with the messages of grace, to bring men in Christ to become reconciled to God? Do you believe, that Christ owns and acknowledges them as his ministers? Is it thus, that you esteem the sacred and solemn institutions of

the Gospel ministry? Is it thus, that you choose to manifest your regard for Christ and his divine institutions? Suffer me to ask, what were your views? Perhaps they were to show your dislike and disrespect to your own minister. Be it so; you have not injured him at all. He has no complaint to make against you as it respects himself; the Lord judge between him and you.

In thus running after unauthorized teachers and doctrines, have you any serious regard to the honor of God and religion, or any serious regard to the spiritual good of your own souls? Do you find, or wish to find, that they impress upon your minds a deep sense of the importance of a holy religious life, of immediate repentance, and of devotedness to the service of God? Or is it not the case, that you have itching ears to turn away from the truth, and be turned unto fables, that you may put yourselves at ease in a state of impenitency and ungodliness?—I doubt not, that some of you will say, that you have a right to hear such preachers as you please. But will you pause and consider of this a moment? Has not Christ expressly admonished you to beware of false teachers, and by his holy apostles to mark those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrines which you have received, and avoid them? Is not the Bible full of the most solemn warnings against false teachers and false doctrines; and in respect to disorderly and irregular practices, which affect sacred institutions? And is it thus, that you choose to show your regard to the warning voice of God? Will you wantonly fly in the face of divine admonitions?

You wish, no doubt, to find out some way in which to get rid of the force of those hard and disagreeable doctrines, which you cannot endure! But what, my friends, do you expect to gain by this? Do you expect to make your condition any better, in reality? If by any means you should bring yourselves to disbelieve the great truths of the Gospel, and thus rid yourselves, for the moment, of the trouble which they give you,—can you expect to alter the nature of those

truths, and finally to escape from their force? By making yourselves believe, that all men will be saved, do you expect to alter the eternal truth of Jehovah,—‘He that believeth not, shall be damned?’ By making yourselves believe, that God cannot be displeased with his creatures, do you expect to do away the force of that solemn declaration of Truth himself,—‘He that believeth not the Son is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him?’ No, my friends. No. Hear what the Lord says,—‘Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; This shall ye have at mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.’ Of what avail, then, are all the pains which you take to deceive yourselves and to be deceived? What, if in the end, all those doctrines, which you so much oppose, prove true, and you be found with a lie in your right hand? ‘Judgment will assuredly be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding places.’

Be entreated, then, I conjure you, to lay aside, for a little season, your prejudices and bitter feelings, and think seriously and solemnly upon these things. But a little while, my friends, and you and I shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. If you will forbear your resentment and reproaches till that solemn period, you have my consent, that then you may load me with as much odium and reproach for my plain and faithful dealing this day, as you shall then think best. Suffer me to address you individually, in the language of Scripture,—‘If thou wilt be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.’

A word to those of you, my friends, whose minds are in some measure religiously impressed. On your account partly, at least, it cannot be doubted, the deceiver was brought down among us. It was an effort of Satan and his partisans to divert your attention, and throw you back into your former state of carnal ease and security. Satan is evidently alarmed for his

reign in this place. He feels that his interest is in danger, and is making his utmost exertions, and rousing his votaries to do the same, that he may maintain his ground. But thanks to sovereign mercy, his limits are prescribed, and beyond them he cannot pass. It is matter of rejoicing, that so far as has been learned, you continue unmoved; and the effort which has been made, has produced a very different effect from what was intended. Thus it will ever be; the head of the serpent will be broken. God has evidently begun a good work among us, and I trust in his sovereign grace, that he will carry it on, in spite of the rage and opposition of earth and hell. Be not dismayed or discouraged, my friends, for God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly; and 'to him that overcometh,' says the great Captain of Salvation, 'will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.'

My brethren and friends, it is a matter of very extensive notoriety, that, not many years ago, a spirit of infidelity was alarmingly prevailing in this place. For some little time since, however, it has seemed to disappear. But what has become of it? Is it extinct? Or has it only assumed another form? It is very well known, that Deists have no controversy with Universalists. But is the spirit of infidelity, after having assumed the name of Universalism, less hostile to the truth and religion of the Gospel, than it was before? Or does it assume this name, only for the sake of carrying on its opposition to the true Gospel with less odium, but still greater success? Let facts, which have recently transpired, be allowed to testify. Your eyes, it is believed, are by this time, generally, opened. You cannot easily suspect that spirit of being very friendly to truth and religion, which is so little scrupulous with regard to the means and the character, which it countenances and employs in its service.

I have repeatedly taken occasion to represent Universalism, as a heresy of the most dangerous and licentious tendency; as such, I believe it is universally regarded by the friends of the truth as it is in Jesus, and

such you will now believe it to be. I do not undertake to say, but that some honest people may be led away in their simplicity, by sleight and cunning craftiness, and be far gone, for a while, in this heresy.—But it is a fact which cannot be denied, even by its friends, that wherever it prevails, it is chiefly among the most loose and licentious in principle and practice,—at least among such as were never suspected of any very serious regard for religion. Unless you can believe, therefore, that the licentious and irreligious are the most likely to embrace the truth, you cannot believe Universalism to be true. Nay, unless you can believe, that the doctrines of the Gospel, instead of calling men to a holy and religious life, throw off their restraints, and grant them still greater indulgences in ungodliness, you cannot believe, that the preacher, who was so lately among you, preached in the name of Christ and his apostles, or that his disciples are such, as were the primitive converts to Christianity.

Having your eyes thus opened, I trust, that you will be “no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Remember the solemn imprecation of the apostle Paul,—‘Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed.’—And the injunction of the apostle John: ‘If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.’—‘Wo unto the world, because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh!’ ‘There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest.’ But ‘blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.’”

Thus did the insulted pastor vindicate his office and the truth. He was now fast approaching a complicated series of ecclesiastical struggles. The time was at hand, when an exposure was to be made of the sad declension and defection of many churches, which still claimed to be in fellowship upon the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of the Platform of 1648, and the Confession of 1680. The practical results of the untoward alliance between Church and State, were also to be exhibited. And the church in Fitchburg, under the guidance of a pastor, endowed with gifts and graces for the purpose, had been destined to lead the way, in the painful, but happy deliverance of the true churches of "the fathers," from civil bondage on the one hand, and formalism and corruption on the other.

From the controversy, which was now so inevitable, Dr. Worcester would gladly have retired. When he saw himself made the especial mark of the assailants, he signified to some of his friends his preference to leave the ground. He was even anxious to be dismissed: so much so, that they could not refrain from suspecting, and from intimating to him, that he did not sufficiently regard their welfare. He concluded to await the clearer indications of the divine will. His resolution was the more fortified, as his opposers, and the malcontents generally, became violent and outrageous in their measures and menaces.—He was not to be intimidated or coerced. Ready to depart in a regular manner, at the earliest moment of propriety, he could respond to every experiment upon his firmness,—“Should such a man as I flee?”

In his accumulating trials, he exceedingly felt his personal loss, in the removal of his brother Leonard to Peacham, Vt. It was a great disappointment to

him, not to be able to assist in the services of that brother's ordination.*

“ *Fitchburg, Oct. 17, 1799.* ”

My dear Brother,—

It is with singular regret, that I relinquish the hope of being present at your ordination—a hope, which I have hitherto cherished with peculiar fondness. But I must bow in submission to the voice of a sovereign and holy Providence. My father, whom I expect to be the bearer of this, will inform you of my condition.

The scene before you, my brother, is peculiarly interesting and trying. It must awaken feelings, to which you have heretofore been a stranger; and give you a more impressive sense, than you have ever before had, of what is contained in the apostolic exclamation, ‘*Who is sufficient for these things.*’ But thanks be to God, there is One, whose grace is sufficient; and of his fulness—it is my fervent aspiration,—may you abundantly receive, and grace for grace, that you may be enabled to sustain the weighty and solemn charge, which you are about to take upon you.

Though absent in body, I shall be present in spirit, and with rapture bid you welcome into the vineyard of our common Lord. Welcome to a participation in the labors and honors, the anxieties and consolations, the reproaches and the triumphs, of the christian ministry. O my brother, gird up the loins of your mind, and be strong, *in the Lord.* And *being yourself the faithful minister,* may you ere long know, that as there

* When Leonard was considering the question of entering the ministry, he had to rely mainly upon his own convictions of the will of Providence. The brothers Noah and Thomas were disposed rather to discourage him, in consequence of his age, his family, and his great usefulness at Worcester. But his brother at Fitchburg, although not prepared at first to speak decidedly, favored his plans, and was willing to confide in his judgment. He had made great attainments, in course of the ten years after he became of age; and highly as he was estimated, he was found in the pulpit to be far in advance of many, who had enjoyed the best means of a liberal education. Few pastors of New England ever had a more honored ministry. He was ordained, Oct. 30, 1799.

are no sorrows like *his* sorrows, so are there no joys like *his* joys.

Unable to write more—I can only add an assurance, that you have a brother, who will never forget you, in

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

Mr. LEONARD WORCESTER.”

Dr. Luther Jewett.

“*Fitchburg, Oct. 21, 1799.*”

My dear friend,—

I have lately received your much esteemed favor of Aug. 23d, by which I learn, that you have forwarded three letters, since you saw me, but have received none in return. Our correspondence is certainly attended with great infelicity. I have received but one of yours, besides that of 23d Aug. I wrote and sent off one, if I rightly remember, in the latter part of May. Besides that, I have forwarded none. I fear that I can frame no apology satisfactory to my *own feelings*; but must acknowledge a criminal negligence. For neither want of health, nor the want of direct conveyance, can fully satisfy the *unpardoning severity of friendship!* I should exceedingly regret the discontinuance of our correspondence; and am pleased with your proposal. There is a Post-Office in Leominster, from which I could receive letters any week.

You express a very kind solicitude for my health and prosperity. I have been more unwell than is usual for me, for the most of the time since the first of June. In July, I was obliged to make a tour for my health, by which it was in some measure recruited; and I was afterwards on the mending hand, till three or four weeks ago, when, in consequence of a cold, an abscess began to form on the lower part of my face. It has been a terrible sore, but is at present in a good way; and as it has discharged pretty copiously, I hope it will be for my better health. My confinement at this time is peculiarly unhappy, as it prevents my attending the ordination of my brother at Peacham.

Had I been able to go to the ordination, as I ardently wished, I should have made it in my way to visit my brothers and friends on Merrimack River, on my journey up, and should certainly have called on you, in my return. But of all the happiness, which I had so fondly anticipated, I am providentially deprived. I must stay and learn resignation, and a better discipline of my hopes and desires at home. An important lesson, you will say, truly—and worth the staying at home all winter to learn.

There is a hopeful and prevailing seriousness, at present, among my people. I am frequently called upon by persons, who wish to converse on the subject of their spiritual and eternal concerns: and many of my hours, every week, are happily spent in this way. Still, however, there are many adversaries.

I rejoice to hear of your health and well-doing. God Almighty bless thee, my friend.

Mrs. Worcester has your lady in very affectionate remembrance.—As the gentleman by whom I shall forward this to Newfane, is now waiting—I fear impatiently,—I must hasten to a conclusion. Send me another letter by the first westerly wind. I must believe you to have some skill in your profession, for *your cordials always do me good.*

Yours, with unabating friendship,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

When, in Feb. 1800, the life and character of the departed Washington, were the theme of thousands of eulogies, an Oration by the pastor of Fitchburg was well received. Although hastily prepared, and in much weakness, it was thought worthy of publication. It could be applauded even by his sectarian adversaries, as Washington himself could be extolled to the highest heaven, by the very men, who, as political enemies, had done so much to bring his hoary head in sorrow, to the repose of his ashes in the tomb of Mount Vernon.

Rev. Leonard Worcester.

“*Hollis, June 6, 1800.*”

My dear Brother,—

Yours, by favor of Mr. Goss, I have been so happy as to receive. It was refreshing as *the dew of Hermon*. I need not tell you with what painful sensations I contemplate the immense distance, which separates between me, and the congenial brother, whose proximity, I once considered as the most agreeable circumstance of my local situation, and in whose society, I had so fondly hoped to share largely in the *endearing comforts of fraternal friendship*. But God is wise and good; and in the allotment of his providence, I would submissively acquiesce. I trust, that Peacham is the place, in which, instrumentally, you are to do much for that beloved kingdom, in which, if our hearts be right, all our most ardent desires are united.

I am rejoiced to hear, that God has begun a gracious work, in your neighborhood. I pray it may go on and prosper, until the *mountains*, all around you, break forth into singing, and the *wilderness* shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. O, my brother, God hath not forgotten Zion. He is mindful of his promise,—‘When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.’ We have good news from many places. At Abington and in the vicinity, the divine power and grace are gloriously triumphant indeed; and the work at Yale College must certainly be considered as an eminent token of good to the church.*

* Dr. Dwight became President of Yale College, in the autumn of the year, when Dr. W. graduated. In 1797, he delivered two admirable Baccalaureate Discourses, on “the Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy.” These were published in 1798, and, wherever read, could not but exert a most salutary influence, when so many, both of the educated and uneducated classes, were becoming infatuated by the sophistries and “abominable works” of “the fool,” who “hath said in his heart—no God.” A vast change was wrought in the opinions of young men in Yale College. In a short period, the roaring tide of infidelity there was effectually turned; and revealed religion was invested with dignity and glory, in the eyes of those who had before regarded it with scorn. It is to *this* “work” more particu-

Our Missionary Society is in a flourishing state. The number of members amounts to upwards of 120; and the money already in the hands of the treasurer, to about \$1,050. Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he will raise up laborers for the important work.

I have this week attended election at Concord. 'You know the man,' who preached, 'and his communications.' I therefore need tell you no more than that his sermon was, in my opinion, a good one *for him*.* A copy of it is left for the press.

At Fitchburg, I do not know, that any very considerable alteration has taken place, since I had the happiness to see you there. Some serious attention to religion continues to be visible; but I find it is rather abating. Efforts are still making to propagate the doctrine of universal salvation; preachers for the purpose are from time to time admitted into the town; and a considerable number, especially of the upper part of the town people, attend upon their preaching. To counteract their influence, I have thought it expedient to attend pretty largely to the doctrine of eternal punishment; and accordingly have preached three

larly, that Dr. W. is supposed to refer in the above letter. According to Prof. Goodrich's "Narrative of Revivals of Religion in Yale College," &c., (*Qu. Reg. Am. Ed. Soc.*) there were "instances of conversion, marked with the same strong impressions of truth, as were common at that day," [in the revivals at the close of the century;] but after Dr. Dwight had succeeded Pres. Stiles, it was not until 1802, that there was a revival, which has been recorded as "a memorable dispensation."—If Dr. Dwight had been at *Harvard College*, what a difference might have been made, in the religious history of Massachusetts, during the present century!

* Just before their brother Noah preached the New Hampshire Election Sermon, he thus wrote himself to Leonard:—"There has been a Jacobinic bustle in our State, with a view to exclude Governor Gilman from his office. But it is now pretty certain, that the object of his enemies will not be obtained. The progress of vice and the spirit of faction give us reason to fear, that, as a nation, *we have seen our best days*. It is truly lamentable, that *gray hairs should be seen so early upon our national existence!* And the friends of God and of Government are loudly called upon, to exert themselves for the safety of the nation." Those "*gray hairs*,"—now in CALIFORNIA?

Sabbaths on the subject, from this text, ‘*The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him.*’ The sermons were thought by some to be very convincing; and it is possible, that, in due time, they may appear from the press.

I thank you for your Oration; and wish it were in my power to send you as *good a one* in return. And, therefore, since there is a willing mind, you will be pleased to accept, according to what I have, and not according to what I have not. If it do not answer your expectations, it may serve to correct a mistake, and to convince you of the impropriety of judging of a performance before you have seen it.

In regard to visiting at Peacham, I can say nothing with certainty, only that inclination is not wanting. I think it will not be convenient for me to attend Commencement. And as I wish, if it may be consistent, to take your sister with me, when I visit in your quarter, the probability is, that you will not see me before winter.

We have an affectionate remembrance of our dear sister.

Your brother, as always,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

Dr. Luther Jewett.

“*Hollis, June 6, 1800.*”

My dear Friend,—

Yours of 20th April, I have been so happy as to receive. I need not tell you with what feelings of regret, I contemplate the immense distance, which separates between me, and *the friend, whom I regard as a brother*, and in corresponding with whom, I had fondly hoped to receive so much pleasure and improvement. But He, by whom the bounds of our habitation are determined, is wise and good. I trust your removal, disagreeable as it is to me, on personal considerations, will be on the whole, for the furtherance of your own interest and happiness, and of the good

of the community.—I am sensibly touched with the unhappy and afflictive occurrences, which you have lately experienced. A place exempt from disappointment, disaster, and sorrow, I presume, my friend, you do not expect to find in this world. Yet this world, no doubt, is a good one, being perfectly adapted to answer the purposes of our present existence; and it is subservient to our moral improvement, and our future well-being. Happy should we be, would we learn to meet every event with equanimity, and habitually to derive our chief comfort from sources, beyond the reach of casualty and disappointment.

My health is, at present, in quite as good a state as usual. My family is here with me, on a visit, all well. In regard to my situation among my people, nothing very noticeable has transpired, since I had the pleasure of seeing you at my house. You are not unapprized, that I always hold myself in readiness for a removal. I know not why it is; but although I contemplate a removal as no improbable event, it gives me no disquietude.

I saw your brother Adams at Leicester, about three weeks ago—he and his family were well.

The Oration which accompanies this, you will be pleased to accept. If it were a great deal better, you should be quite as welcome to it.

From the coldness and dulness of this letter, I believe you will be induced to think, that a chilling frost has gathered around my heart. But need I apologize, my friend, to you? Having returned this evening from election at Concord, I find myself exceedingly fatigued, and my spirits very languid. My letter will be called for, early in the morning. You may expect another letter from me, soon as opportunity presents. I know you will write as often as possible.

Mrs. Worcester has an affectionate remembrance of Mrs. Jewett. My respects you will make acceptable to her.

Yours, with unabating affection,

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

His political sentiments again had an utterance, on the ensuing 4th of July. At that time, he poured out a strain of argumentative, and indignant protestation against the doctrines of the "*Illuminati*," or the infidel, impudent, and pestilent pretensions of the devotees of the French republic; which, already in the hands of the First Consul, was about to give entire place to the military despotism of the imperial eagles. It was a subject upon which he had read very thoughtfully, and which he had ample resources to illustrate. Not many of our statesmen had more knowledge of modern history, or were any better qualified to impart counsel, at such a crisis.

But it is our privilege to know, that the apprehensions which he and so many others felt, were never realized. The Supreme Ruler of all things had purposes to accomplish, of which, agreeably to past methods of his will, only *wicked* men can be employed as leading instruments. Not improbably, our own political institutions needed modification, and some great changes, which were not contemplated in the primary *ideal* of the purest and most patriotic Federalism; while in the old world, nation must of necessity be dashed against nation, and revolution succeed revolution, until the time of the end.

CHAPTER VI.

Sermons on the punishment of the wicked. The "Fitchburg controversy."

Efforts of the legal voters of the town, to control the pastor and the church. Mutual Council, June 22, 1801. Ex parte Council, Sept. 15, 1801. Protest of the church. "Facts and Documents," &c. Further measures of opposition. Proposals of conciliation, &c. Second ex parte Council. Council of advice to the church. Third Ex parte Council. Second Mutual Council. Farewell to Fitchburg.

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. * * * Wo unto them!

EARLY in the year 1800, Dr. Worcester gave a more particular attention to the doctrine of "eternal judgment," which was so generally controverted and denied by his opposers. He preached and published "Six Sermons," on this subject. It was his purpose to refute the popular arguments and objections of Universalists,—with many of which he had become familiar, by the developments of the opposition to the truth, at Fitchburg.

"Observing, with deep concern, the efforts which were making, to propagate the doctrine of universal salvation, among the people of his particular charge; the author had, for some time, felt it to be a duty, incumbent on him, to use his endeavors to counteract those efforts, and to prevent the spread of what he considers a most dangerous delusion. With this view, the discourses, here respectfully presented to the public, were written and delivered; with the same view, and in compliance with particular request, they are

now published from the press. They claim no comparison with the excellent publications, previously extant, on the same general subject. A hope is, however, indulged, that since they may fall into the hands of some, who may want opportunity or inclination, to peruse the more elaborate and voluminous productions of an Edwards or a Strong, they will not be totally useless.

As these discourses were designed to meet and explode the popular universalism, some things are insisted on, which, to those whose knowledge of the Universalian scheme is derived wholly from books, may appear unimportant.

The facility, with which Universalism, in its various and perpetually varying forms, is propagated, is owing in a great measure, it is believed, to the very lax sentiments, and the defective conceptions of the depraved state of mankind, and of the nature and importance of real Christianity,—which are extensively prevailing. Let it be believed, that the depravity of human nature is but a slight infirmity, not hereditary, but contracted; that religion consists chiefly in charity and civility to mankind, and the power of godliness is a mere delusion; that a person's religious opinions are of no material consequence, provided he be sincere; in one word, that, bating some slight shades of difference in external character, men of all classes and descriptions are in a moral estimation, very much alike:—Let this be believed, and there remains but a very small step to complete Universalism. Hence, it was conceived to be of primary importance, that the axe be laid to the root of the tree; that the native moral condition of mankind, and the grand distinction between the righteous and the wicked, in regard both to the state of their hearts, and the relations they bear to God, his law, and his kingdom, be clearly exhibited, in the true light of Scripture. This may suffice to apologize, if apology be needful, for the introduction of some leading articles, which, though they may appear not to bear so directly on the grand point in question, are, however, the foundation of the whole connected series of argu-

ment, and will, therefore, be attended to, it is hoped, with great seriousness and candor.

*Fitchburg, 27th October, 1800.**

The text which he chose for this course of sermons, is the declaration in Prov. x. 24.—THE FEAR OF THE WICKED, IT SHALL COME UPON HIM. The doctrine is, that “the wicked will be punished with misery after death; and their punishment will be endless.” The two propositions which are embraced in the doctrine, as thus stated, are considered separately, the former in the first and second sermons, and the latter in the third and fourth. In the fifth and sixth, the preacher “attempts some improvement of the subject.”

The proof of the first proposition, viz.,—“The wicked will be punished with misery after death,”—is “arranged under several distinct articles.”

“1. There is, according to the Scriptures, a great and *essential* difference, between the righteous and the wicked.

2. The great and holy God, as represented in the Scriptures, has very different feelings towards the righteous, from what he has towards the wicked.

3. The Scriptures assure us, that the righteous are in a pardoned or justified state; but the wicked in a state of condemnation, under the curse of the divine law.

4. The Scriptures promise safety and peace to the righteous; but declare, that a punishment the most tremendous awaits the wicked.

5. The Scriptures represent the death of the righteous, as being happy; but the death of the wicked as being terrible.

6. It is very explicitly revealed in the Scriptures,

* “Preface” to “Six Sermons, on the Doctrine of Future Punishment. By Samuel Worcester, A. M., Pastor of the Church in Fitchburg, &c. 1800.” 18 mo. pp. 156.

that, although the righteous be happy, the wicked are miserable, in the invisible world of spirits."

The argument, then, it will be perceived, is that of the revealed testimony of "a just God, and a Savior." The passages of Scripture which are cited, and more or less critically examined and expounded, constitute a chain of perfect moral demonstration. The same remark is equally applicable to the "proof" of the second proposition, viz., "That the future punishment of the wicked will continue, duration without end."

"1. It appears from the Scriptures, that there will be a tremendous distinction between the righteous and the wicked, in the day of general resurrection.

2. The wicked will be separated, and awfully distinguished, from the righteous, in the general judgment.

3. The Spirit of inspiration speaks of the scenes, which are to take place, at the end of the present world, viz., the general resurrection and judgment, in such a manner as to lead us into the conclusion, that, by them the scene of Providence, respecting men, as candidates for future or eternal reward, will be closed, and that afterwards there will be no probation.

4. The wicked, who fall under the sentence of condemnation, in the last great day, will never obtain a part in Christ's salvation.

5. The Scriptures, instead of warranting the opinion or hope, that the future punishment of the wicked will sometime come to an end, assure us in language than which none could be plainer, or stronger, that it will *never* cease.

Inference I. From what has been offered in the preceding discourses, it is obvious to infer, that the Scriptures, on a fair construction, give no support to the doctrine of universal salvation."

The whole of sermon V. is appropriated to this point alone. In sermon VI. the preacher begins with

Inference II. The eternal damnation * of the wicked is not incompatible with justice.

Inference III. The eternal damnation of the finally impenitent is not incompatible with goodness.

Inference IV. The future punishment of the wicked is not designed for *their personal good*.

Inference V. The doctrine of eternal punishment, so far from obscuring, eminently illustrates the glory of the Gospel.

Inference VI. A cordial belief and acquiescence in the doctrine of eternal punishment, is no indication of the want of true benevolence.

Inference VII. The doctrine of universal salvation, in whatever form, is, in its tendency and general influence, most dangerous and pernicious.

The manifold objections of the ablest advocates of the doctrine of universal salvation are fairly met, from the Scriptures and from right reason. The discussion throughout is elevated, dignified, earnest, and solemn. There is a seeming determination to avoid everything, in spirit and style, which might offer any plausible occasion of offence to those whose false refuges were so assailed by "the weapons," which are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

In sermon II. the preacher says,—

"Some, in the present age of licentious speculation, have labored to make themselves and others believe, that there is no hell, beside what people endure in the present life from the lashes and stings of a guilty conscience. With equal reason might we suppose there is no heaven, beside what is enjoyed in this world, in the plaudits of an approving conscience, and in comfortable reflections. The Scriptures reveal a hell, pre-

* This word, and those of kindred nature, Dr. W. did not refrain from using in the proper place, but was accustomed to utter them with a tone of deep solemnity, blended with sorrow; and not with the fluency and harshness of the tones of denunciation or invective, "as the manner of some is."

pared in the invisible world for the wicked, as clearly as a heaven, prepared for the righteous; and we have as much reason to believe the one a reality as the other. The passage, now in view, is clear and conclusive on this point. The rich man died, and the next thing heard of him, *in hell* he lifted up his eyes being in torment. * * * * *

Before we come to a close of this discourse, it may be expedient to take notice of a newly invented notion, which may possibly come forward, in the form of an objection, against the conclusiveness of what has been delivered.

It is said by Dr. Joseph Huntington * and his disciples, that all the terror which the Bible denounces is the voice of the law, and all the peace and good news, which it proclaims, the voice of the Gospel. ‘We find the law and Gospel displayed side by side through the whole. The law everywhere sounds with awful terror in accents of pure justice, towards man, without a Savior. The Gospel is all mere news, good news, glad tidings through a Mediator.—The law tells what man deserves in his own personal character; the Gospel, what the Son of man, the Son of God deserves.’ † ‘The voice of the whole law and the voice of the Gospel are exceedingly distinct and diametrically opposite.’ ‡ The grand position, if I do not mistake it, is this: ‘Though the voice of the law thunder with awful terror, through the whole Bible, denouncing everlasting destruction, yet the Gospel sounds, at the same time, in the mild accents of mercy, proclaiming peace and eternal salvation, to all mankind. When the law says, ye *shall* surely die, the Gospel says, ye *shall not* surely die! § Hence, the law and Gospel are in diametrical opposition, the one to the other. But the voice of the Gos-

* Of Coventry, Conn. He died in 1795. After his death, his work, “preposterously styled” *Calvinism Improved*, was made public. It was answered by Rev. N. Strong, D. D., of Hartford, in 1796,—the same year in which it appeared.

† “*Calvinism Improved*, p. 32.” ‡ “*Ibid*, p. 43.”

§ “Compare Gen. iii. 4 with chap. ii. 17.”

pel will prevail, the law will be arrested in process, and all mankind will be saved.’* All this, it should be remembered, though it be confessedly the main pillar of the Huntingtonian scheme, is *naked assertion*, without a single argument to support it.—But, should it be granted, which, however, is not true, that all the terror, which the Bible denounces is the voice of the law, and all the peace which it proclaims, the voice of the Gospel; what does this go to prove? Upon this hypothesis, the law speaks to sinners, and the Gospel to saints, only, for the Bible, as we have shown at large, everywhere speaks peace to the righteous; but terror to the wicked. But if the law and Gospel run side by side, † as it is so confidently asserted, the one denouncing wrath, and the other proclaiming peace, to all mankind; why should this distinction, between the righteous and the wicked, be so scrupulously marked and so constantly exhibited, in every part of the sacred volume? Why should not the Bible speak terror, in the language of the law, and peace in the language of the Gospel, to all, without any discrimination of character? Dr. Huntington makes the difference in the moral character of men, in this world, exceedingly small; and immediately after death, according to his scheme,

* “If the law and Gospel be diametrically opposite, we certainly want more substantial proof, than any furnished by Dr. Huntington, that the *law* will not ultimately prevail, and all mankind be *damned*.”

† “That ‘the law and Gospel are displayed side by side,’ is doubtless true in a certain sense, but not in the sense of Dr. Huntington. Instead of being *diametrically opposite* they are perfectly *harmonious*. Christ says, Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. It is difficult, perhaps, to conceive of a greater absurdity, in a governmental view, than Dr. Huntington’s notion of law and Gospel.—A law is enacted by the sovereign authority of the United States, which expressly threatens death to every transgressor; but at the same time, and by the same authority, it is promulgated, that every transgressor of that law shall certainly be pardoned and restored to the favor and protection of the government. Now, I ask, of what force is the law? Will it impose the least restraint, or operate with the least efficacy to deter from the crime, which it contemplates? On the contrary; will not the law, and the *authority*, by which it was enacted, be trampled in the dust, with the most wanton licentiousness and contempt!”

they are *all* to be perfectly holy and happy. But if so, the question is repeated, why should not the law thunder terror, and the Gospel proclaim peace, in the ears of all alike? If, indeed there might be some little difference in the language, which the Bible holds towards the righteous and the wicked, while they continue in the present state; still what reason can be imagined, why their condition should be represented, as so extremely different, in the future and invisible world? Why should Christ show us Lazarus, in Abraham's bosom, and Dives in hell? If the doctor's theory be just, the law must thunder its terror in the ears of Lazarus, as well as in the ears of Dives; and the Gospel proclaims peace, as well to the one as to the other. Why then did not Christ show us both Lazarus and Dives, at once, in Abraham's bosom and in hell? Certainly, upon this hypothesis, there must have been the same propriety, in placing Dives in Abraham's bosom, as in placing Lazarus there; and the same propriety, in placing Lazarus in hell, as in placing Dives there. Upon this hypothesis, moreover, in the place of saying to the *unbelieving* Jews, There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and *all the prophets* in the kingdom of God, and *you yourselves* thrust out; Christ might with equal propriety have said to his *disciples*, There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see *Cain*, and *Pharaoh*, and *Ahab*, and *all the false prophets* in the kingdom of God, and *you yourselves* thrust out. Instead of representing *the wicked inhabitants* of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, as confined in hell, reserved in chains of darkness unto the day of judgment to be punished, and set forth as ensamples to those that after should live ungodly; St. Peter, and St. Jude, might, with equal propriety, have represented *all the ancient saints and prophets* under the same awful circumstances. In a word, upon this hypothesis, the passage formerly quoted from the third chapter of Isaiah, and all similar promises and threatenings, throughout the Bible, might be reversed, and yet speak a language as agree-

able to truth, as they do in their present form. ‘Say ye to the *wicked*, it shall be *well with him*: Wo, to the *righteous*, it shall be *ill with him*.’

But, not to pursue further into this region of absurdity and illusion, it may be sufficient to remark, that the doctor’s whole theory rests on the supposition, that all mankind are of the *same* moral character, and in the *same* moral state. Hence, if there be an *essential* difference between the righteous and the wicked, and if there be that difference which we have displayed, in the language, which the Scriptures hold towards these two distinct classes of mankind, the Huntington scheme has no foundation in truth.”

Mr. Winchester is noticed, several times, as for example, in sermon VI.

“It is argued by Mr. Winchester* and others, that sin cannot be an *infinite* evil, because it is the act of a *finite* agent. But merely its being the act of a finite agent determines nothing, in regard to its criminality. If, as Mr. Winchester asserts, ‘actions must take their denomination from the *actors*, and not from the objects,’ it will follow inevitably, that all the actions of the same actor must be equally criminal. But who will admit this? Some actions of the same finite agent are not criminal in any degree; and some, which are criminal, are much less so than others.

Here it may be objected: If every sin be *infinitely* criminal, how can one sin be more criminal than another? To this it may be answered.—If a cord be *infinitely* extended, it is an *infinite* cord; for it has one infinite dimension. But another cord, infinitely extended, may be much thicker, or larger, than the first, and yet be only an infinite cord. So, also, one sin

* Elhanan Winchester became a preacher of Universal Salvation, in Philadelphia, in 1781. He died in 1797, aged 45. His system was much the same as that of Chauncey. He held the doctrine of “Restoration,” but not upon the same grounds as Murray, who came to the Colonies, in 1770,—preached in various places, and died in Boston, in 1815.

may be infinite in one sense, and that such a sense as to deserve an endless punishment; and yet another sin be much greater, and of course, deserve a punishment much greater in *degree*, though not in *duration*.

The fallacy of Mr. Winchester's reasoning, in opposition to the infinity of sin, lies in this,—he contemplates the *act*, instead of the *criminality* of the act. But the *act* is one thing, and the *criminality* of it is another. We do not suppose, that the *act* itself is, in strictness, *infinite*. But, we say, that, as it is an offence against a God of *infinite* worthiness and glory, as it is a violation of *infinite* obligations, and as it opposes and seeks to destroy *infinite* good, it must be *infinitely* evil or criminal. But if it be infinitely criminal, it certainly deserves a punishment, in some sense, infinite. Hence, as the sinner cannot endure a punishment, in any sense infinite, in a limited period, it clearly follows, that he may *justly* be punished *eternally*.

But even could it not be made to appear, that the sins committed deserve an endless punishment, there is still another ground on which the justice of God, in punishing the sinner forever, may be vindicated. There can be no injustice in suffering the sinner to go on in sin, and punishing him continually, and *forever*, as he sins.

Dr. Chauncey, * Mr. Winchester, and all the Univer-

* Rev. Chas. Chauncey, D. D., ordained pastor of the First Church, Boston, Oct. 25, 1727.—died, Feb. 10, 1787, aged 82; *who probably did more than any other individual to transform the religious character of Boston and the surrounding region.*—*Wisner's History, "Old South,"* p. 44.

He wrote vigorously against the *Great Awakening*. "To him, among all the eminent divines of New England, belongs the unhappy pre-eminence of having been the first to take the spirit of doubt to his bosom. He was said to question the consciousness of the soul between death and the resurrection; he wrote in his latter days against the eternity of retribution; and he nourished that sarcastic hostility to the sentiments of past ages and the determinations of venerable bodies on doctrine, which, like a light troop of scouts, precede the main assault, and explore the danger. Deeply significant was his passing sneer against the Homousianity of the Nicene Council."—*Pages from the Erel. His. of N. E. during the century between 1740 and 1840*, p. 25.

In a letter to Dr. Stiles, May 6, 1768, he refers to "a finished quarto volume," which had "lain by for some years,"—"written with too much free-

salists, on the purgatorial scheme, make a pompous parade of language to set forth the divine mercy and grace, which, according to their doctrine, is displayed in the Gospel. They would have it believed, that the doctrine of the *Restoration* gives a vastly higher conception of these amiable attributes of the divine nature, than what is given by the orthodox doctrine. But is this the truth of the fact? This class of Universalists hold, that some of mankind will be pardoned, in the present life, and at death pass immediately into a state of perfect blessedness; and that the rest dying in their sins, will be punished in the future world, *according to their deserts*. We also believe, that some of mankind will be pardoned, and justified in this life, and at death be made perfectly blessed; and that the rest dying impenitent, will be punished, in the future world, *according to their deserts*. Where, then, is the great difference between the two schemes? It lies, fundamentally, in this. We believe sin to be *so great* an evil as to *deserve* an *endless* punishment; but *they* hold sin to be *so small* an evil, as to *deserve* but a *limited* punishment. Where, then, is the *superior* display of *mercy*, which they so pompously proclaim? Certainly, there is not, upon their scheme, a greater display of mercy and grace, in the salvation of those, who are pardoned and justified, *in this life*, than there is upon ours. According to our doctrine, those who are pardoned and saved, receive the pardon of crimes of *infinite* demerit, and are saved from *end-*

dom to admit of a publication in this country. Some of my friends who have seen it, have desired I would send it home [to England?] for publication, and to have it printed without a name. I question whether it will ever see the light till after my death, and I am not yet determined whether to permit its being then printed, or to order its being committed to the flames. It is a work that cost me much thought and a great deal of hard labor. It is upon a most interesting subject."—*Mass. His. Coll.* 1 series, vol. 10, p. 163.

His work, "The Salvation of all Men," &c., was published anonymously; but "I am informed," says Dr. Edwards, in the Preface of his admirable Answer,—"that he and his most intimate friends have made no secret of the author's name."—*New Haven, June 29, A. D., 1759.*

Dr. C. wished *Paradise Lost* translated into prose, that he might understand it!—*Tudor's Life of Otis*, p. 149.

less misery : But according to their doctrine, those who are pardoned and saved, receive the pardon of crimes of *small* demerit, and are saved from only a *temporary* punishment. There is, therefore, according to our doctrine, an *infinitely greater* display of grace and mercy, in the pardon and salvation of a *single sinner*, than there would be upon theirs, in the pardon and salvation of *all the unnumbered millions of the human race*. For the grace and mercy displayed must bear a proportion to the greatness of the sins pardoned, and of the punishment remitted.*

Is it, then, towards those who die impenitent, that the mercy and grace, so much celebrated by the Universalists, is displayed? Is there any display of divine grace and mercy, in forbearing to punish them, *after they have suffered according to their deserts*? Reason and common sense answer, no. Why, then, so much pompous and pathetic declamation on the subject of *grace and mercy*? Why not talk in plain and honest language, and say, 'Sin is but a *small evil*, a mere 'privation,' 'an act of a worm,' and deserves but a *small* punishment: Therefore, however you may live in the world, you may be sure of perfect happiness hereafter, for God cannot, *in justice*, punish you eternally.' This is the *Universalian Gospel*, stripped of its tinsel and glare, and exhibited in its true form. But what is there in this Gospel, of mercy and grace? Are not *mercy* and *grace*, and *Christ*, totally out of the question, and out of sight?

True, indeed, we are told, that all will be saved, *through the merits of Christ*. Shall we look, for a mo-

* "Upon the Universalian theory, all sins of the whole human race put together, would not amount, in the total sum, to *infinite*; neither would the punishment, which they deserve, even allowing each one to deserve a punishment drawn out to 'ages of ages,' be equal in the aggregate whole to the *endless* punishment of a single individual. Hence, according to their doctrine, were all the millions of mankind pardoned and saved, without any punishment, there would not be so much forgiven them, as according to our doctrine, is forgiven a single redeemed sinner. Nay, it would fall *infinitely* short; for between *finite* and *infinite*, there is always an *infinite* disproportion."

ment, at this? Sinners, who die impenitent, *punished according to their deserts*; and yet, afterwards, *saved by the merits of the crucified Redeemer!* Is it here, then, at length, that the '*unparalleled grace and mercy,*' so loudly proclaimed by Universalists, is to be found? Is it, in demanding the *blood of Immanuel*, as an additional atonement, *after punishing sinners as much as they deserve*, that the divine *mercy and grace* are so illustriously displayed? If this be *mercy and grace*, what, then, is wanton *injustice and cruelty!*

On the whole, the tumid and impassioned declamation of Universalists, on the subject of divine mercy and grace is all a mere farce. For according to their doctrine, those who die in their sins will not be released from punishment, *until they have paid the last mite*; and even those who are pardoned in this life, and admitted, at death, to immediate happiness, are saved, *not from the vengeance of eternal fire*, but merely from a punishment, not only *temporary* in its continuance, but designed as a '*merciful and salutary discipline,*' for the good of the sufferers. In all this, there is not the least appearance of divine mercy and grace. While the doctrine of eternal punishment gives the highest possible conception of the infinite mercy and grace of *Jehovah*, displayed in the work of redemption, and in the salvation of the redeemed; every scheme of Universalism presents a partial and false exhibition of the divine character, and totally obscures the glory of the Gospel."

The closing address, and appeals to different classes of hearers, were such as would be expected from the preacher and the occasion. In the "Appendix" to the Sermons, as published, there is "a concise view of the more noticeable Scripture marks, by which false teachers are distinguished," in order that it might be "determined, correctly, to whom the character of false teacher or deceiver belongs,"—"the preachers of eternal punishment," or those who say,—*Ye shall not surely*

die! There is also a comparison of the doctrines of Deists and Universalists, from which it appears conclusively, that the latter “build on a foundation, completely DEISTICAL; and for them to talk of mercy, grace, or Christ, is idle, preposterous, illusive.”

“Deists have told us, long ago, that sin does not deserve an endless punishment; that a God of infinite goodness cannot punish eternally; and that all mankind must be finally happy. Is not this the Universalian doctrine?”

Deists have told us, long ago, that men will be treated according to their deserts; that virtue will be rewarded and vice will be punished. Universalists tell us the same. Deists, however, have not been agreed among themselves, respecting the punishment of sin. Some of them have supposed, that the wicked receive all their punishment as they go along; others have supposed there may be some punishment after death: But the greater part of them have left this matter in a state of obscurity. It is thus also with Universalists. Some of them hold, that sinners receive all their punishment as they pass along through life; others suppose that there will be a state of punishment in the future world; but most of them appear to be in a state of doubt and uncertainty, and will not answer the plain question, whether they believe in any punishment after death, or not.

Deists have, long ago, denied and derided the power of godliness, or experimental religion, as delusion, superstition, and fanaticism; and have rejected and jeered the idea, that there is any essential difference between the righteous and the wicked, or, that there are any in the world, whom God acknowledges and loves, as his peculiar people. Do not Universalists do the same?

Deists have, long ago, told us, that it is of little or no consequence, what a man's religion, or religious sentiments be, provided he be sincere in his way.

Universalists, notwithstanding all their zeal for proselyting, tell us the same.

Deists deny the divine authority of the Scripture, principally, it is believed, because they suppose the Scriptures to teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, and the necessity of a holy life, in order to a happy immortality. Universalists profess, indeed, to believe in revelation. They deny, however, many of them, if not all, that the whole Bible is the word of God; and, like the Deists, delight in representing the Scripture, as being, in some parts of it, contradictory, frivolous, and absurd. It is customary with them to draw into question the divine authority of any particular text, which lies as an inseparable obstruction to their scheme; and some of them honestly declare, that if they believed the Bible does not teach the doctrine of universal salvation, they would not receive it as a revelation from God.

The author has been constrained to make these remarks, by a sense of justice to the cause of truth. As they are made in the spirit of seriousness and candor; he earnestly entreats for them a serious and candid consideration."

These Sermons of Dr. Worcester, on Future Punishment, gave very great satisfaction to his friends, and extended his reputation, as an able theologian and powerful writer. They established many minds, which had been unsettled, and greatly assisted him in his private parochial labors.* Meanwhile, his opposers were not any less active or unscrupulous than before, in efforts and expedients to compel him to resign his charge. The consequent state of things, it is not easy to describe, without a citation of documents, and those details, in which general readers have but little interest.

* Those who should now read them carefully, would find that the *Universalism* which he withstood in 1800--1, has changed but little; although that form which now prevails most, has been erroneously represented, as having no earlier date than 1818.

But as a part of the ecclesiastical history of New England, the "FITCHBURG CONTROVERSY" should not soon be forgotten. It is memorable, as disclosing in its progress *the first organized scheme in Massachusetts, to subject the church to the will of the town, or parish, in all matters relating to the settlement and dismissal of pastors.*

The alleged wrongs of several excommunicated persons, were made the pretext by themselves and others, for a recourse to their legal rights as citizens. And if the excommunicated could not regain their church standing, by ecclesiastical means, it appears, unhappily, to have been resolved, that, by the votes of the town, the pastor should be made a sacrifice to their *resentments*, under the name of their *rights*.

The new form of covenant which had been adopted, was not in the least designed to abridge the privileges of any member of the church; and no offending member was made a subject of discipline, on account of any specification, by which the new covenant differed from the old. The new covenant was this:

"You — — do now in the presence of God, angels, and men, avouch the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be your God; the supreme object of your soul, and your chosen portion forever. You cordially acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ, in all his mediatorial offices, prophet, priest and king, as your only Savior and final Judge: And choose the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide. You humbly and cheerfully devote your whole self, soul and body to God in the everlasting covenant of grace; consecrate all your powers and faculties to his service and glory; and promise through the help of divine grace, without which you can do nothing, that you will give diligent heed to his word and ordinances, and to the

motions of his Spirit ; that you will seek, in all things, the honor of his name and the interest of his kingdom ; and that henceforth, denying all ungodliness and every worldly lust, you will live soberly, righteously and godlily, even till death. And you join yourself cordially to this as a true church of Christ ; unreservedly engaging to submit to its discipline, so far as comfortable to the rules of the gospel, and solemnly covenanting to strive, as much as in you lies, for its gospel peace, edification, and purity ; and to walk with its members, in all memberlike love, faithfulness, watchfulness, circumspection, meekness, and sobriety.”

“ It was intended, indeed, that the new form should be used in the future admission of members. Still, it was not considered as an absolutely indispensable term of admission, that the candidate should consent to every article in the doctrine of faith. If any person, offering himself as a candidate for the communion of the church, should have his doubts, respecting any article of our faith, he would not be, *immediately*, admitted ; but, if there were nothing beside, in the way of his immediate admission, he would be requested to stand, for a season, on probation. In the mean time, it would be considered as the duty of the brethren, and of the pastor especially, to endeavor, by all proper means, to remove his doubts, and to enlighten him more fully into the doctrine of Christ. But, if after standing for a suitable time, on this probationary footing, it should appear, that the difficulties in his mind, though not fully obviated, do not result from enmity to the truth, but from some other cause, and that he is really a subject of the true christian temper, the article, in question, would be dispensed with, in his favor, and he admitted according to his desire : *For it was never designed to exclude any from our communion, who appear to be the real subjects of experimental religion.* This is with us a principle, in regard to the admission of members ; and this liberal principle was occasion-

ally explained, while the articles of faith were under consideration, and after they were adopted.”*

All explanations and efforts of conciliation were fruitless, in respect to some members. During the winter next succeeding the introduction of the new forms of admission to the Church, the opposing party gained fast in numbers and influence, and were quite sanguine of success in abrogating what had been done. But their hopes withered in the spring, just at the time, when the church was visited with a refreshing from on high.

“In this work of grace, *the Church shared its full proportion*. Several of the members, impressed with a solemn conviction, that they had only a name to live, and that, when they joined the church, they were totally unacquainted with the power of religion, were led to inquire, with deep anxiety, *What they should do to be saved*. These, the most of them at least, obtained, afterwards, a comfortable hope. Others of the church, who had been for a length of time, in a cold or lukewarm state, were awakened and enlivened; and received, as we trust, fresh anointings of the Spirit of grace.

By this gracious work of God, the church, as might well be expected, was greatly strengthened and confirmed. Not only were there considerable accessions of new members; but a large proportion of those, formerly in the church, who had appeared in the opposing minority, were brought over, one after another, and became decided and firm supporters of the new order of things. We wish not to introduce any invidious remarks, but it is a truth, which we feel ourselves

* Statement by Dr. Worcester, in his pamphlet, entitled,—“Facts and Documents, exhibiting a Summary View of the Ecclesiastical Affairs, lately transacted in Fitchburg; together with some Strictures on the Result of a late Party Council, in said town, and General Observations; the whole designed to vindicate the rights of the churches, and to illustrate the subject and enforce the importance of Christian Discipline, &c., January 1802.” pp. 118.

bound to declare, that, so far as we know, *not a single individual of those, whether in the church or out of it, who have been subjects of the religious awakening, or have appeared in any measure to favor the work, has continued in opposition to the new forms.*

Still, however, the *Universalists*, and a few others under their influence, continued in opposition; and in proportion as their strength in the church decreased, their enmity appeared to increase. *They allowed themselves to speak lightly and reproachfully of the religious awakening, and of the known subjects of it;* and in but too many instances and ways, used their endeavors to check and suppress a work, by which the church was continually gaining strength. Among other means, used for this obvious purpose, Universalian teachers were introduced and encouraged; and great exertions were made to divert the attention of the people from things of a more solemn and impressive import, and to gain their ears to the delusive song of Universalism. And so great was the success, which for a while attended these efforts, that the more sanguine in the cause, did not hesitate to boast, at one period, that more than half the people in this town were Universalists; and the friends of truth and religion were not without serious apprehensions, that this boasting was but too solidly founded.

Meanwhile, discontents of different kinds, and on various accounts, prevailed in this place. Some were disaffected with what had been done to promote the better order and discipline of the church; some with the public ministry of the pastor; *and these discontents appeared to be very much inflamed, by the serious attention to religion among us.* It is particularly to be noticed, also, that old animosities and prejudices, originally engendered by long and ardent contests, respecting a parish in the westerly part of the town, and respecting the placing of a new meeting-house, continued to operate; and were occasionally fomented and blown into a flame, by passing occurrences. Owing to these several causes, the town was most

unhappily split into parties, and was, from time to time, in a very tumultuous and distracted state.”

Early in the year 1800, the brethren of the Church proceeded with all due tenderness, and in a strictly Congregational and Scriptural manner, to deal with five or six members, who had set the covenant, the church, and the pastor, at defiance; and whose several cases of disciplinable offence, would now be acknowledged in any evangelical church, to be most palpable, if not flagrant. They could here be particularly stated. Those who were subjected to discipline, were, in the course of a few months or a year, cut off or suspended. A part of them *were already members* of the “Fitchburg Universal Christian Society,” which embraced all descriptions of disaffected persons, claiming, by a vote of the town, an exemption from ministerial taxes.

April 17, 1801, it was voted by the Church, “That it be henceforth a standing order of the Church, that no known Universalist shall be admitted to the privilege of occasionally communing with us, in the holy ordinance of the Lord’s Supper.” Every action of this kind was a new occasion of excitement. The cry of *Hopkinsianism*, bigotry, intolerance, oppression, waxed louder and louder. Even the very children in some families became so accustomed to hear the word “*Hopkinsian*,” pronounced in tones of bitter reproach and reviling, that they would employ it in their petty strifes and bickerings, as one of the very worst of *hard names* to characterize an object of their resentment.*

The Records of the Church, for the year 1801, contain some letters of admonition from the pen of

* For some years after this time, it was common among the school-boys, to say—*You are a Hopkinsian*; meaning the same, as, *you are a contemptible fellow*.

the pastor, which are eminently Christian and apostolical.

All manner of representations and misrepresentations went forth, and indefatigable means were employed, to inflame the daily increasing opposition. A considerable number of persons in the vicinity, were ready to sympathize with the opposers of the pastor of Fitchburg; while some, who were themselves members of Arminian churches, frequently went to hear him, on the Sabbath, and at other times,—so refreshing to their hearts were his ministrations in the Lord.

The difficulties were aggravated by the conduct of the people, in the westerly part of the town. These, having long wished to be united with others “in the contiguous corners of Westminster, Ashburnham, and Ashby,” by “incorporation as a distinct town, or at least a distinct parish,” had met with opposition from the town; and had become greatly incensed. Many came forward with a request for “the use of the meeting-house, a part of the time, proportioned to their taxes.” This movement was popular with “the malcontents of all classes.” Hence their request was ultimately granted. The use of the house was apportioned among four Societies, viz: The petitioners, the Baptist Society, the “Fitchburg Universal Christian Society,” and the regular Congregational Society. The apportionment to this last was but *seventeen* Sabbaths.

“Things were, by this time, in a most entangled and tumultuous state; and exhibited to the serious and reflecting mind the most melancholy prospect. Revolution succeeded revolution, in the most rapid succession; and what would eventually be the issue, was beyond human calculation. At length, after many

things, done and undone, the town, by a major vote,* declared it to be their mind, that a dissolution of their contract, with the pastor, would be for the peace and happiness of the town. Of this vote the pastor received a formal notification, accompanied with a request for an answer. After some time taken for consideration and advice, the pastor laid the matter before the church; and, in a formal manner requested the church to join him, in measures for a regular dismissal. The church, unwilling that the pastor should leave them, were exceeding reluctant to do any thing, which looked towards his dismissal, even so much as to refer the matter to a council. At length, however, the pastor obtained the consent of the church, that he should return the following answer to the town.

Friends and Fellow-citizens,

At the hands of a committee, appointed for the purpose, I received, not long since, the copy of a vote, stated to have been passed at a legal meeting of the town of Fitchburg, on Monday, 6th ultimo; and purporting, that the inhabitants of said town think it would be for their peace and happiness, to dissolve the contract with me as their minister, in the manner specified in the said contract. As the matter was thus laid before me, I have attended to it, as I trust, with a deliberation, seriousness, and candor, suited in some measure to its solemnity and moment. I have, also, laid it before the church; and, notwithstanding their reluctance and deep regret, have, at length, obtained their consent to the following proposals, which I now beg leave to submit.

1. A Council, consisting of five churches, and mutually chosen, in the regular ecclesiastical manner, shall be called, as soon as convenient, to assist with their advice; and co-operate, if they shall judge it suitable, in my regular dismissal: The expense of the Council to be defrayed by the town, as in such cases is usual.

* " People, professedly of other denominations, and exempted, by certificate, from taxes to the Congregational ministry, were allowed to vote on this occasion."

2. If the town have any allegations to lay before the Council against me, they shall fairly state them to me, in writing, at least ten days prior to the sitting of the Council; and if no allegations be thus stated, it shall be understood, that the town have nothing, particularly injurious to my ministerial or christian character to allege against me.

3. The civil contract, between the town and me, as their minister, shall remain in force, until the pastoral relation be regularly dissolved.

If the town agree to these proposals, I shall hold myself bound to abide by them, and shall govern myself accordingly.

Men and Brethren,

I cannot persuade myself to conclude this paper, without expressing to you the deep concern, with which I have observed the operations and effects of the spirit of party, contention, and disorder in this place; a spirit, which, though it may have taken a different direction since, had, however, been prevalent, and in awful progress, long before I came among you; and which, if not suppressed or restrained, is likely to prove the ruin of this town. For myself, I think I have had, and still have, an ardent desire for your highest good; *“seeking not yours, but you, and willing to spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I might love you, the less I might be loved.”* But, if in any measure or respect, I have been the *blameable* cause of the present unhappy state of things among you, I sincerely wish I may be convinced of it, and deeply humbled before the all-seeing God for it. And I most earnestly and affectionately recommend it to all, seriously to consider the part, which they have taken, in promoting the present difficulties, and the motives, by which they have been actuated. The dismissal of a minister is certainly a most solemn affair; and every thing relative to it, ought always to be conducted with the greatest deliberation, regularity, and seriousness. Tumult and disorder but illy become transactions of this solemn nature, and momentous consequence. Let us all, then,

bear in remembrance, that we act under the eye of that God, whose honor is deeply concerned, and before whose awful, and enlightened tribunal, we are soon to be summoned together for final audit, and everlasting retribution.

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

Fitchburg, May 23, 1801.”

“ To these proposals the town acceded ; and a Council, mutually chosen by the pastor and church, was accordingly called. The following was their result :

Although a spirit of division and separation appears to have been most unhappily prevalent, among the people of Fitchburg, in consequence of which the situation of their reverend pastor is rendered very uncomfortable, and the prospects of his usefulness among them are greatly impaired ; yet, taking into consideration the continuing, and even increasing, attachment of the church to Mr. Worcester, the union which subsists among those, who have not separated themselves to other denominations, and the cheerful readiness of Mr. Worcester’s friends, expressed by the committee of the church, to submit to the increased burden of his support ; we cannot conceive, that it will be promotive of the interests of religion in general, or the welfare of this particular society, that Mr. Worcester’s pastoral relation to them should be dissolved : and we feel ourselves bound to recommend to Mr. Worcester, that he submit still longer to the inconveniencies of his situation ; trusting in that God, who can change our darkest prospects, and increase the consolations of his suffering servants, in proportion to their trials.

We have not been inattentive to the fair prospects, which invite Mr. Worcester’s removal, and the sacrifice which he is called to make, by a compliance with this result ; yet, believing that the greatest good, in his view, is the interests of religion, we doubt not his ready compliance with what we now unitedly recommend to him, as the path of duty.

We are not insensible, that this result is very different from the expectations of many ; but we persuade

ourselves the propriety of it will be obvious to those, who take a serious view of the respectable numbers of this church, warmly attached to Mr. Worcester, and the considerable majority of those, yet forming the Congregational Society in this place, who seem desirous of his continuance with them : it being evident from written statements, that, from the number of one hundred and eighty-five voters, there are seventy, who have expressly, and by name, manifested a desire that Mr. Worcester should tarry with them ; and that fifty-two have withdrawn under a compact for the support of universal teachers ; leaving a remainder of sixty-three, some of whom are of different denominations, and the remainder, at least many of them, have not expressed their sentiments.

While we cannot but express our tender sympathy with the reverend Pastor of this church, under the weight of so formidable, and as we think, so unreasonable and unchristian, an opposition, as exists in this place, to him and his ministry ; we are extremely happy to find, that he is exonerated, even by the united testimony of his opposers, from all imputations of irreligious and immoral conduct ; that his discharge of the duties of the christian ministry has been apparently so faithful and so faultless ; and that, while he has been officially set for the defence of the Gospel, he has contended so earnestly, and, for aught that appears to the contrary, so discreetly, for the faith once delivered to the saints. We most earnestly supplicate for him the anointings of divine grace, the consolations of habitual communion with his ever-present REDEEMER, such acceptance with the people of this town, as will render his services extensively useful, and a happy preparation for a triumphant exchange of the afflictions of this state of trial, for the joys of a better world. We are confident, that he will not shrink from the painful labors, or be removed from the firm and inflexible defence, of the glorious Gospel of Christ, to whatever conflicts he may be reduced, in this day of growing scepticism and infidelity ; and that he will continue stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord, under the strong assurance, that his labors shall not be in vain in the Lord.

The Council are exceedingly happy to find this church, as a branch of the kingdom of our dear Lord, so apparently established in the faith; so united, so affectionate, and so faithful, in holding fast the word of truth, and maintaining the all important concern of the disciplinary purity of Christ's house. We congratulate them on the pleasing symptoms of the presence of God with them, by which they are influenced to arise and trim their lamps, and to stand, as a part of the hosts of the Lord, in opposition to that flood of demoralization and error, which threatens to inundate the land. We exhort them to put on bowels of mercies towards those, whose efforts are directed, or seem to be directed, to weaken their christian hopes, and to betray them into a dereliction of gospel truth and gospel zeal; to be meek and inoffensive in all their ways; and to glorify God, in their bodies and in their spirits, which are his.

As the Council cannot discern any justifiable reason, why so large a portion of the people of this town should become disaffected to the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Worcester; as nothing whatever is alleged against his personal character or ministerial respectability; as it is not made evident that the current of his preaching is the exhibition of any other doctrines than those, which he was understood to hold, at the time of his ordination, and which are established in the platform of the generality of the New England churches, and the formulas of most protestant churches in America and Europe; we beg of them seriously to deliberate, whether they can justify their alienation, under the eye of the SOVEREIGN of the world; whether it really promises to issue in the harmony and happiness of the town—in the advancement of true religion here, or the augmentation of any well formed hopes of future glory.

Though it is not the province of the Council to determine any legal questions, respecting any property, which is deemed common, and they have no inclina-

tion to interfere with any of the civil or religious rights of any individuals or bodies; yet they beg leave to suggest, that they are of opinion, that the church ought not to be denied those accommodations for the celebration of such ordinary acts of worship and duty, as have been considered as essential to its existence and prosperity from its first foundation. The Council cannot give any countenance to those irregular and equivocal measures, which appear to have been adopted to strip the church of its privileges in this respect, and to take from them a pastor, so apparently dear to them. We hope that so unhappy a precedent will not be drawn into general indulgence. We beg for the best prosperity of this church and town; and commend you, brethren and friends, to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance, among all them that are sanctified.

Voted, unanimously; except that one member of the Council hesitated with respect to the expediency of Mr. Worcester's continuance in this place.

JOHN CUSHING, *Moderator*.

A true copy—Attest,

SETH PAYSON, *Scribe*."

"Of this result, though different from his previous expectations and wishes, the pastor expressed his acceptance. It was, also, in a formal manner, accepted by the church, and by the town. In the town, however, many were dissatisfied; and none perhaps more so, than those, *who had been excommunicated from the church, and whose cases had been summarily stated to the Council.*"*

Inflammatory reports went abroad, and were "circulated with the greatest industry and assurance," as

* The Council consisted of Rev. Messrs. Cushing, of Ashburnham, Lee, of Royalston, Payson, of Rindge, Austin, of Worcester, and Hill, of Mason,—with the delegates of their respective churches. It was convened, June 22, 1801.

if the church in Fitchburg had been guilty of the most wanton oppression and tyranny, in the discipline by which some of the members had been suspended or excommunicated.

It was said of these last, that they "were cut off, *because they would not subscribe to the new forms of the church.* Than this report nothing could be more false and calumnious. We solemnly aver, that we never had the least inclination to discipline any of our brethren, or to abridge them of their church privileges, in the least iota, on account of their dissenting from us, in regard to the new forms. There are three or four in the church now, who have never subscribed or consented to our revised form of covenant and articles of faith; but as they walk orderly with us, they are in the full enjoyment of all church privileges, and we know of no inclination, in any one, to call them to an account for dissenting. In one word, we never have used, or thought of using, any compulsory measures, with any, who differed in opinion from us, in regard to the revisal of our covenant; but have used great carefulness and pains to conciliate their minds, and to persuade them to walk peaceably and regularly with us.

In regard to *Universalism*, indeed, we have no disposition to dissemble, that, in our view, it is a most dangerous, and *censurable heresy*; and that it is highly important, the churches of Christ should bear their public, solemn, and decided testimony against it. A conviction of this, however, has been impressed on our minds, *chiefly by what we have lately seen of its spirit and effects.* And we are fully in the belief, that had even the *Universalists*, in this church, walked with us, in any good measure decently and orderly, we should never have inflicted any censure upon them, on account of their sentiments.

We were not unwilling to live and walk peaceably, with our dissenting brethren; but they would not walk peaceably and regularly with us. And it was for

their disorderly conduct, their neglect of sacred duty, their flagrant violation of covenant engagements, aggravated by the unchristian temper, which they manifested, that we cut them off from our christian society and communion.”

During the year, between the latter part of June 1801, and that of June 1802, there was one continued succession and complication of movements in the warfare against the pastor and the church. No less than three *ex parte* councils were convened. Probably, not a week passed, if a single day, when something was not devised or attempted, in public, or in private, to aggravate the existing unhappy dissensions, and render all overtures of christian conciliation and pacification utterly useless, and even worse than in vain. Such a state of things has no precedent, in the previous history of New England; and it would not be easy to cite a parallel from any of the most violent ecclesiastical conflicts of more recent days.

By the middle of August, a plan was fully matured to carry a measure with the forms of ecclesiastical sanction,—by which *the church of Fitchburg itself should virtually be excommunicated*, and the excommunicated of the church should be enabled to take the place of the church, in the legal relations of the town to the minister. Such a high-handed operation could never have been undertaken, without pledges of assistance from *clerical counsellors*, whose reputed abilities and general standing would have much influence in favor of any decision, which they might see fit to promulgate in a Council, however *ex parte*, or jesuitical,—unauthorized by truth, or dangerous to the “liberty of the children of God.”

“To many, as before stated,” says the narrative of the pastor in his “Facts and Documents,” &c.; the result of the Council of the 22d of June was very dissatisfactory. They were still determined to procure, by some means, the removal of the pastor, and the overthrow of the established order of this church. Manifestly with this view more than any other, the excommunicants, *by and with advice*, projected another Council. Their plan was to get a Council to establish *them*, as *the first church* in Fitchburg;* and, then, it was supposed the accomplishment of their ultimate design would be easy. Apprized of our sentiments, respecting the impropriety of joining with excommunicants, they forwarded a request to us to join with them in calling a Council; in the full expectation, no doubt, that the request would be refused, and that, then, they would have a plausible pretext for calling a Council, *ex parte*, the thing which they wished.”

The church could not grant such a request of a Committee of the five excommunicated, because, as stated to them by the pastor,—“We know of *no rule in the Gospel, no provision in the platform, no precedent in the usage of the churches*, which will authorize, or warrant a church to join with excommunicated persons in calling a council. There would be an impropriety in our granting your request, on its present basis. This I state as being, so far as I can collect it, the sense of this church. It is also the sense of many respectable characters, clergymen and private Christians, with whom I have taken opportunity to confer on the subject.”

To this statement of the pastor, in his letter to one of the Committee, Aug. 18, 1801, it was added :

* “We, they pretended, had formed a *new church*, because we had revised the covenant; and, as they had never consented to the revised form, *they* were to be considered as *the old church!*”

“I, therefore, suggest to you, whether you may not have all, which you consider, as matters of grievance, brought to an impartial hearing, through the medium of *those members of the church*, who are with you in this business. If there be any, *in the church*, as it is intimated there are, who are dissatisfied with the proceedings of the church, respecting you, as well as respecting themselves, they can bring the whole matter before a Council; and when once it is brought forward, you will, doubtless, be admitted, by the Council, to speak for yourselves. I am candid when I say, that, to me, the method, here suggested, appears the most eligible, even for you. It will not be chargeable with the impropriety, attached to the method, which you seem to have adopted; and you would have all the opportunity for statements to the Council, which you could wish.

If this method should not appear eligible to you, I would further suggest, that we should recognize, as proper, what is called *the third way of communion*, pointed out in the platform; and should be willing to submit our proceedings to the review of any sister churches, who should wish, *in this way*, to examine them. Satisfied in our consciences of the rectitude of our intentions, and believing that we have proceeded according to the rules of the Gospel, we rather invite, than shun, fair and regular examination,” &c.

It may surprise some, that there was “*no precedent known in the usage of the churches*, to authorize or warrant a church to join with excommunicated persons in calling a council.” This was said, advisedly. And the fact is to be explained in part, by the very common neglect of discipline in the churches; but chiefly by the difficulty of finding a proper case for an *ex parte* council, when those called should sacredly regard the limitations and rules, which had been prescribed in the “*Ratio Disciplinae* of the New England

Brethren," as the accredited "usage of the churches," in respect to such councils.

At the time of the Fitchburg controversy, an alarm appears to have been created, by the prospect of a resort to ex parte councils, by the Arminians and Arians, to hold in check, or to over-awe the spirit of doctrine and of discipline, which was now manifesting itself to their especial dissatisfaction. And as yet the authority of these councils, as a substitute for the process by "the third way of communion," was so questionable, that Dr. Worcester did not hesitate to resist "the usage of the churches" in this particular, as alike "repugnant to both Scripture and Platform." He reasoned with great force against ex parte councils, of every description and in any circumstances.

The standing of excommunicated persons, also, would seem not to have been so well defined, that, while they might be permitted to have part in a mutual council, they were not by any means thus recognized, as having the same rights, as before they were separated from the church. In several respects, the practical principles of ecclesiastical procedure were quite unsettled and indeterminate.

A more extended field of observation, and not unlikely an experience less personal to himself, reconciled Dr. Worcester, at a later day, to "the usage," which, in his earliest investigations of the subject, he considered a dangerous innovation upon the Platform, and unwarranted by the Scriptures. He so far modified his opinions, as to admit, that, in an extreme case, and such only as can but seldom occur, it may be justifiable for individuals to appeal to an ex parte council; provided, however, that there must always be a rigorous adherence to "the usage of the

churches," as described by Mather.* Such a case there *was not* at Fitchburg, in 1801. And the merits of the controversy were unaffected by the question, whether an *ex parte* council has authority to review the proceedings of a church.

To the pastor's letter, Aug. 18th, one of the "injured brethren," as they styled themselves, replied,—“ We cannot, with propriety, shift the ground we have taken, but are willing to wait your decisive answer, till the 20th of this instant.” An answer was returned, Aug. 25th, unanimously refusing the request of the excommunicated, and ably vindicating the refusal. The substance of the document was, in a few weeks, embodied in a “solemn protest” against the jurisdiction of an *Ex-parte* Council,—the first of the series,—which assembled at the call or desire of the excommunicated, and agreeably to their plan of operations.

“ *Fitchburg, Sept. 14, 1801.*”

Reverend and Respected, †—

Having learned, *though not from any official or regular notification*, that by virtue of letters missive, from certain individuals, you are expected to form a council

* *Ratio Disciplinae, &c.*, in 1726.

Some years after Dr. W. was settled in Salem, he once gave advice to the Tabernacle Church, to comply with a request for an attendance in an *Ex-parte* Council. When reminded of his own authority against such councils, he pleasantly responded —“ It would be very hard, *if a man were not allowed to grow wiser, as he grows older.*”—The Tabernacle Church, it may here be mentioned, originated in a division of the First Church, in consequence of a process of discipline, according to “*The Third Way,*” &c., in 1734-5. In those days, the decision of a council could be enforced by law.

If a full and fair history of *Ex-parte* Councils could be written, it might appear that they have done more evil, incalculably, than would have ever been experienced, if they had been utterly repudiated, from the beginning, hitherto.

† Not—Reverend and *Beloved*. Dr. W. was in the habit of using terms of courtesy, which he could also use in godly sincerity.

in this place, on Tuesday, Sept. 15th, current, for purposes which deeply concern us; we, the Church of Christ in Fitchburg, beg leave respectfully to present our solemn PROTEST, against your proceeding, as a council, to take cognizance of any of our conduct or concerns. As a basis of this protest, we offer the following things.

1. We hold it, as a principle, that individuals cannot, of right, in any cases, and especially in cases *touching the interior polity and discipline of a church*, convoke an ecclesiastical council. As we conceive, the right of convoking ecclesiastical councils belongs to churches only; and we have neither precept nor example in the Christian code, nor provision in the Congregational platform, for this right to be exercised by private individuals. Indeed, a council, convoked by individuals, cannot, with any propriety, in our opinion, be called an *ecclesiastical council*, nor have a right to take cognizance of any ecclesiastical cases.

It is a fundamental principle in the constitution of Congregational churches, *that every regular parochial church, 'has sufficient authority, within itself, immediately derived from Christ, for the government of itself in all cases ecclesiastical.'* (Mather.) This we believe to be according to the Gospel. It is not to any number of churches, consociated or combined, it is not to any council or synod, but to each and every regular Gospel church, in its distinct capacity, that Christ has delivered 'the keys of the kingdom.' And we can find nothing in the Christian Scriptures, which will authorize or warrant any one church to interfere in the discipline, or internal polity of another, (unless it be in the way of *regular admonition*;) or any number of churches, any council or synod, to interfere in the interior concerns of an individual church.

But, if individuals have a right to call a council, and the council, so called, have a right to take cognizance of our internal concerns, we are in a state of dependence, the most degrading and deplorable. We are dependent on the will and caprice of every unruly member, who can find churches disposed to espouse

his cause, and suited to answer his purposes. We are liable to be embarrassed and controlled, in all our measures, by churches the most diverse from us, in doctrine and discipline; for it is precisely to such churches, that disaffected individuals will have recourse for counsel and assistance. In a word, we are liable to be obstructed and harassed, upon all occasions, and to be brought into complete bondage, by every turbulent and revengeful spirit.

To admit that individuals have a right to convoke a council to take cognizance of the affairs of a church, to which they may belong, or have belonged, is to place the minority in the church, however small, upon equal ground with the majority. Nay, for individuals to call a council, and arraign the church before it, is to exercise a power, even greater than a whole church can exercise: For no one church can arraign another church before a council. It also supposes an ecclesiastical judicatory, superior to the church, to which they have right of appeal; and by which the decisions of the church may be overruled, or reversed. But, how repugnant is this to both Scripture and Platform!

If we be told, that the convening of councils, at the request of individuals, is agreeable to the usage of the churches, we have only to reply, that the usage of the churches is, with us, no authority, any further than it is warranted by the laws of Christ.*

2. If it were admitted, that individuals, *while retaining their church standing*, may convoke an ecclesiastical council, still we should maintain, that *excommunicated persons* have no such right.

Individuals, when excommunicated, are totally cut off from all the rights and privileges attached to church membership. Hence, should it be granted to be a right, or privilege, belonging to individual church members, to convoke a council, it could not be recognized as belonging to excommunicants. In the simple

* In course of the controversy, it was argued, that, if churches are not *infallible*, but are liable to err, and to do injustice, the same is true of councils. If churches are liable to *prejudice*, so also are councils.

act of complying with the request of the excommunicated persons for a council, churches take a part in direct opposition to the church, by whom the censure of excommunication was passed, *and become parties in the business*. This church, by the censure of excommunication, declare certain individuals to be totally unworthy, and disfranchised, of all church privileges. But, by sending elders and messengers to act in council, at their request, other churches declare these same individuals to be still endowed, at least with the *supposed* right, attached to church membership, of convoking a council. Thus, in the face of the world, they set aside our decision, at least in part; and virtually declare us incompetent, as a church, to the purposes of self-government, and to the discipline of our own members.

Here we are constrained to ask, By what authority may other churches, in this manner, counteract, and make void, our disciplinary proceedings; and *on the bare representation of the delinquent*, take such a step, *for the first*, as cannot fail to make a strong impression on the uninformed, or misinformed, public mind, to our disadvantage? Is this agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel? Is it the part of true Christian *charity*, or sisterly communion?—Is it CATHOLICISM?

If from any representation made to them, our sister churches apprehend, that we do not walk orderly, according to the laws of Christ; ought they not to forbear their censures, until, in a more *private, friendly*, and *Christian* way, they have obtained some explanations and statements *from us*?

We will not dissemble, that we feel ourselves injured; and that we consider the granting of a council, at the request of individuals excommunicated by us, and as we believe, according to the laws of Christ, an unwarrantable, and unprecedented invasion of our liberties and rights as a Christian church. And we must be permitted to ask further, Have we as a church of Christ, or have we not, the right of judging, *independently*, of the qualifications of our own members? Or have other churches a right to interfere in this busi-

ness? If other churches have a right to say whom we shall retain in our communion, have they not, also, a right to say whom we shall receive? And, if so, are we not in a state of complete bondage? *Has not the same church which admits individuals to the privileges of members, a right, also, to cut them off from the same privileges, whenever it shall judge them to be forfeited?* If this be a right which belongs to every Church of Christ, then, before other churches have anything to do, in the way of council and communion, with those whom we have excommunicated, *ought they not, IN A REGULAR AND FORMAL MANNER, to declare us unworthy to exercise the rights of a Christian church, AND NO LONGER IN THEIR FELLOWSHIP?*

If it be said, that those who have applied for a council, in this instance, are not *all* excommunicated persons, we reply in one word, that, in the most explicit manner, we have manifested our willingness to join in a *mutual* council, *with any of our members*, who feel dissatisfied *with any of our measures*.

3. If, after all, it should be admitted, that in ordinary cases, even excommunicants have a right to convoke a council, before which to arraign the conduct of the church; still we should insist, that those from whom you received letters, in the present instance, cannot, with any consistency, be considered as holding that right. By their own act they have cut themselves off, completely, from all rights and privileges in regular Congregational churches. They have, in an open and formal manner, *gone out from us*, and declared, that *they are not of us*. In open contempt of our communion, and of their vows, they have joined themselves to another, and what we consider, a most heretical denomination, and entered themselves under the bonds of a solemn compact to support and promote it. Nor have they as yet manifested the least disposition to return to us, or to the faith, and order of Orthodox or regular Congregational churches. So far from it, they still stand pledged, (by compact,) not to return; and even in the interval, while they were seeking a council, they were promoting the most disorgan-

izing measures for the furtherance, ostensibly, of their separate society.

Now, we beg leave to ask, With what consistency can they apply for a council to Congregational churches? If they want a council for any purpose, why do they not apply to *their own sect*? Perhaps they wish for the patronage of Congregational ministers and churches. POSSIBLY, *they even imagine, that Congregational churches and ministers have become so lax, in doctrine, discipline, and manners, as to be prepared to countenance and sanction the most heretical opinions and the most disorderly practices!* But will Congregational ministers and churches cherish this idea; and by an act the most public and solemn, give it authenticity?

Finally: If it might be at any time, suitable for churches to comply with a request for a council, from persons under the peculiar circumstances of those now in question; yet the present is, in our view, a most unhappy time for such a precedent.—The awful spirit which is prevalent and in progress, at the present day, is well known,—a spirit, disposed to trample on all order and authority, civil and ecclesiastical, and to introduce unbounded licentiousness and confusion into church and state.

We deeply regret, that, in justice to ourselves, and to the injured cause of truth, order, and religion, in this place, we are obliged to state, that this spirit has been most conspicuous in the conduct of those who have called for a council, on this occasion. And will the Churches of Christ, even in NEW ENGLAND, countenance and encourage such a spirit? Will they tamely suffer their walls to be thrown down, and their most sacred privileges to be trodden under foot? We entreat it may be seriously considered, whether a compliance with the wishes of these people will not open a scene of endless disorder and confusion in the churches?

Such are the principal reasons, on which we ground our protest against a council, called in the manner, and under the circumstances, of the present instance. It is not because we dread the light, that we enter this

protest. No, gentlemen, we do not fear the light. On the contrary, most gladly should we embrace a fair and proper occasion to lay the whole scene of our conduct before the world; for we feel an unabating confidence, that, in that event, we should stand justified in the sight of all impartial judges. And we hesitate not to declare it as our charitable opinion, that had our sister churches been well informed of circumstances, they would not have complied with this request for a council.

However, if any of the reverend and respected gentlemen, elders or messengers, convoked on this occasion, will apply to us in the capacity of private Christian brethren, and on their own behalf, for any information or explanation, we are disposed to treat them with all respectful attention, and to communicate on any subject freely. Though we assert our independence in regard to internal polity and discipline, and do not acknowledge the right of councils, called by individuals, nor of any other judicatory, whatever, to interfere in our interior concerns; we still acknowledge the communion of the churches, and particularly the right of communion, in what is called the third way. If any of our sister churches be dissatisfied with our doctrine, discipline, or manners, we shall receive it very kindly, if, *in the regular Gospel, and sisterly way*, they should admonish us of our wrong, and endeavor to reclaim us from our wandering, and re-establish us in the right. And if, after a regular process of admonition, we be found incorrigible or irreclaimable, they will doubtless have a right to reject us from their communion. *Then, also, and not till then*, as we conceive, may they of right attend to any whom we have excommunicated; and if they judge them to be qualified, admit them, *not by act of council*, indeed, *but in the regular ecclesiastical manner*, to their Christian communion.

In church-meeting, voted unanimously.

Signed by the Committee."

“After the reading of the protest, a short pause ensued. At length a member of the council rose, and observed, *that in this land of liberty, our free constitution allows citizens the right of appeal from a lower to a higher judicatory, and in his view the protest did not do away that right.** The gentleman dilated upon this idea, adverted to what is practiced in our civil courts, and even in courts-martial, and concluded with an expression of his opinion, that the council might proceed to a hearing. To him all the council gave heed, and accordingly proceeded.

We forbear to give a detail of what passed in the public hearing, and shall only observe in the general, that the party were admitted as witnesses in their own cases, that their mutilated representations were, apparently, received, without any abatements, as just and true, and that to others, besides the members of the church present, the whole had but too much the appearance of a mere forensic show.” †

If it had not been for the misapplied talent and tact of one member alone, it is quite presumable, that a majority would have voted to dissolve the council, in a very short half day, after the presentation of such a Protest. In truth, with all the open and the concealed hostility, which existed against “the doctrine of faith,” and the exercise of discipline for the purifying of the church of Fitchburg, it is very doubtful if such an *Ex-parte Council* could have ever been convened;—unless there had been an unwearied effort of *management*, and

* “Query. Are the laws of Christ repealed—or is *our free constitution* our rule, *in ecclesiastical cases, ‘in this land of liberty?’*”

† Writing to one of his brothers, Sept. 14, the day previous to the meeting of the *Ex-parte Council*, the venerable father of Dr. W. spoke of the council, the supposed object, and the expected members. “Your brother says, he don’t fear them any more than so many emmets. He wishes the council to gratify the desires of the excommunicated, and embody them in a church. He thinks it will be an effectual means to separate the iron and clay in the image. This he wishes for.”

also, it is to be feared, not a little of the dissembling and collusion, which can poorly stand the ordeal of THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT DAY.

As it was, the council were evidently embarrassed and greatly perplexed. They could not be persuaded to do for the excommunicated, what most of all was desired and expected, viz., to *recognize them as the Church of Fitchburg*; or, at the least, to give them a church standing, of which they could take advantage, *as citizens*, in their purpose to annul the legal contract with the pastor, and coerce him to a removal. This was a sore disappointment, after so much of boastful anticipation and taunting menace.*

In the words of the Scripture, it may be "*an instruction and an astonishment*," to contrast the Result of the *Ex-parte* Council of Sept. 15th, with that of the Mutual Council of June 22d. It will be borne in mind, that all the matters in dispute had really been considered by that Mutual Council, less than three months before!

The *Ex-parte* Council consisted of the church in Leominster, Rev. Francis Gardner, with two delegates; church in Shirley, Rev. Phineas Whitney, and delegate; church in Billerica, Henry Cumings, D. D.,† and two delegates; church in Bolton, Rev. Phineas Wright, and two delegates; and church in Lancaster,

* "Manifestly leagued together and feeling strong in the party which supported them out of the church, they placed the authority of the church at defiance, and contemned the church it-self and all its proceedings." "When a brother, with tears in his eyes, and in a manner the most moving, addressed Mr. D. upon his case, entreated him to manifest a different disposition, and expressed how *hard* it would be for a church to proceed against him, as, if he continued obstinate, they would be obliged to do; he only replied, in a very sarcastic and menacing tone, '*I guess you will find it HARD, before it is done with!*'" Ex uno, disce omnes.

† A native of Hollis, and a man of undisputed ability. Dr. Worcester's father had known him, "when a young preacher." See above, p. 65.

Rev. Nathaniel Thayer, and delegate.—“ They unanimously accepted the following Result.

It is our settled opinion, that the aggrieved of any church, whether under temporary suspension, or excommunication, if they think themselves unjustly censured, may, with great propriety, apply to the church to join them in the choice of a Mutual Council to judge between them. If the church refuse to comply with such request, it is reasonable and agreeable to the common usages of these churches, for the aggrieved to call a party council to take their case under consideration and give their judgment and advice.* Upon this ground, we have complied with the call of the censured and excommunicated members, in this place. Could a mutual council have been obtained in the usual way, or in any other way which would have allowed them an equal voice in the choice, and placed them upon equal ground as a complaining party, we should gladly have excused ourselves from the present trouble. †

* In his “ plain and candid Strictures upon this extraordinary result,” Dr. W. inquires:—

“ If every regular Gospel church be instituted, by the laws of Christ, a *proper judicatory*, and have received from him authority to decide, *ultimately*, in all cases of discipline, arising within its own pale, and there be no provision anywhere made for an appeal from the church, or for the interference of councils, in disciplinary cases; is it ‘reasonable’ for suspended and excommunicated individuals to disregard the decisions of the church, and to call a ‘party council’ to ‘take their case under consideration, and,’ in the authoritative manner of the present instance, ‘to give their judgment and advice?’ Is it ‘reasonable’ to appeal from a *judicatory, properly and legally constituted, to a self-created tribunal?* Is it ‘reasonable’ to disregard the authority, and make void the institutions of Christ, and to teach and observe, for, rules of discipline, the opinions of men? *Is this ‘agreeable to the common usages of these churches?’*”

† “ If the venerable council really wished to ‘excuse themselves from the trouble’ of attending to the business, and to have it referred to a ‘mutual council,’ what could they wish for more, in favor of their ‘party,’ than what was repeatedly offered? It will be observed, that the ‘party,’ in favor of which this declaration was made, included, not only the *excommunicants*, but, also, the *suspended members of the church, who were with them, and whom we offered, and even expressed a desire, to join in a ‘mutual council.’* To the party, therefore, as a ‘party,’ we offered the privilege of ‘an equal voice in the choice, and equal ground as complainants.’ This was, perhaps, too much for our own consistency, and for the views of the council. We think, however, the venerable council might, with great propriety, ‘have excused themselves from the trouble,’ of this remarkable declaration.”

We are very sensible that they who form their judgment, upon hearing a party in their own cause, are under great disadvantages, and liable to mistakes, after all their endeavors to obtain light and evidence.* What the complexion of our result, respecting the excommunicated members, would have been, had the church been disposed to give us what light they were able, we cannot say. We shall honestly express our minds, according to our view of the case, after attending to the statements that have been laid before us, in the votes of the church, and from those we have had from the representations of the aggrieved in public.

Although it is our firm belief, that a diversity of sentiment, in regard to points, about which Christians equally good and learned disagree, † ought not to be made a ground of censure, yet we are far from supposing the aggrieved are not culpable in any instances. But considering circumstances, viewing them with an eye of candor, and making reasonable allowances for the infirmities of human nature, they do not appear to us to have merited the severe censure, which has been inflicted. ‡

* "Not only was the 'party heard in their own cause,' but by judges of their own choosing, and in a manner agreeable to their own mind!"

† "If, in this sentence, the council had reference, as doubtless they had, to the cases immediately in view, their meaning must be, that '*Christians, equally good and learned, disagree in their sentiments,*' respecting 'future punishment;' and that no sentiment, respecting this point, ought to be made a ground of censure. For so far as sentiment was, in any measure, in question, in the present cases, it was the Universalian sentiment. In this public and solemn manner, then, have this venerable council taken Universalism under their protecting and fostering wing! Throughout the whole of this result, there is not the least disapprobation of the sentiment, either expressed or implied; but from the whole, not only of the result, but of the public hearing, it appears, that they consider Universalism, at least innocuous and innocent, if not true; and are willing to extend their patronage over it, and to cherish it in their bosom. If it were before believed, that these gentlemen were not opposed to Universalism; it was hardly expected, that they would yet, in so open and solemn a manner, declare themselves its advocates and patrons.

Are the churches of Christ, then, to admit the *infidel* doctrine, that it is no matter what a man's religious sentiments are, or whether he have any or none; and to cherish, in their bosoms, *Socinianism, Universalism,* and even, perhaps, *DEISM*, as soon as they become popular, and obtain the patronage of great names? If so, what is to be done with the solemn premonitions and warnings of Christ and his apostles, respecting error? And how are the churches to answer their proper character and design, as '*the light of the world,*' and '*THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.*'"

‡ "So, then, the neglect of family religion and public worship, the neglect

As members of civil society, their characters appear fair, and some have merited respect and esteem, for exemplary and useful lives.* Justice, also, obliges us to observe in their favor, that they have not been charged with a violation of their first covenant, by which only they consider themselves as bound, and by which only they think it reasonable to be tried. †

We do not approve of their signing the compact, ‡

of the special ordinances of Christ's house, the promoting of 'divisions and offences contrary to sound doctrine,' and to the gospel order of the churches, the most open and flagrant violations of covenant engagements, are to be *charitably* imputed to the innocent 'infirmities of human nature,' and passed over in silence! How grateful must not the unruly and disobedient, in every place, feel, for such powerful advocacy! But is it not a solemn affair, thus to '*strengthen the hands of the wicked, that they should not return from their wicked ways?*'"

* "Here we have the *ground*, we suppose, on which the venerable council rested their result. Because some of their party were of some *repute* and *popularity*, in the world, they judged them all proper characters for a standing in the Church of Christ. This was evidently the ground, on which they proceeded, in the public hearing. One of the reverend members of the council, inquired, and in a manner as if it were of great importance in the case, *whether one of the party had not heretofore been a selectman or town clerk?* And this, we think, may be fairly exhibited, as a specimen of the kind of evidence, which they seemed most to seek, and on which they apparently placed the greatest stress. The church had expressed *their* opinion of the *religious* character of those people, by the censures inflicted on them; but, regardless of the opinion of the church, and apparently regardless of *religious* character, the council seemed chiefly concerned to know the *civil*, or *popular* characters which they sustained in the world. But is this, then, the ground on which churches are to proceed in judging of the qualifications of their members? '*As members of civil society,*' have not the characters of many *deists* 'appeared to be fair,'—and have not 'some of them merited respect and esteem,' for what are generally reputed in the world, as 'exemplary and useful lives?'"

† "Must not people be in a *very singular situation*, when '*justice obliges*' their advocates, 'to observe' that 'in their favor,' *which has no foundation in truth!* We assert, that those people *were* 'charged with a violation of *their first covenant.*' The church never considered them 'as bound' by any other covenant, and never thought of 'trying' by any other, than what the venerable council *here* call their 'first covenant.' This we constantly declared to the censured people, while dealing with them; and the committee of the church supposed the matter was explained, with sufficient clearness, to the gentlemen of the council, in the time of the conference."

‡ "They did not disapprove of their being Universalists, nor of their using their endeavors to promote Universalian teachers, and the spread of Universalism, nor of their leaving the stated worship of the church, to attend upon Universalian preaching; and they even declare, that they 'should not consider it as disorderly, or a bad precedent, for any regular minister to administer sacred ordinances to them, in their own town.' Why, then, should they disapprove of their signing a 'compact' for their better regulation? The compact has, indeed, been a snare to them, and proved a hindrance to the accomplishment of their designs against the pastor and the church: but could it be on this account, that the venerable council did not approve of their signing it?"

as it is called, nor of the instance of offering a child for baptism, at the west meeting-house. And as we consider family worship an important duty, we wish any who have neglected it, but profess a sense of the importance of prayer in general, seriously to review the grounds of their past omission.*

Whilst we are far from justifying the above instances of conduct, and some others with which the aggrieved may be chargeable, yet when we consider excuses and apologies which they have made, together with their ideas of their singular situation under the new covenant and order of things, which have lately been introduced into the church, we do not think any of them culpable to such a degree as to exclude them from christian communion in gospel ordinances.†

Until they can obtain a mutual council, equally chosen by the church and themselves, before whom both parties can stand on even ground, we think that other churches may reasonably admit them to the enjoyment of christian privileges, without any infringement of the rights of particular churches, who are

* "The sentiments, respecting prayer, of the particular person, here obviously alluded to, are completely *deistical*. The *breast*, he says, is the 'closet;' and when any one feels disposed to pray, he may pray: but to observe stated seasons of prayer, and, especially, to pray before others, is, according to his representation, totally pharisaical and preposterous. In this way it is, that he 'professes a sense of the importance of prayer in general.' And these, his professed sentiments, respecting prayer, appeared evidently, as we think, to be admitted by the council, in the time of the public hearing, and are here alluded to in the result, as an excuse, or palliation of his neglect of family worship."

† "What, then, was 'their peculiar situation?' Only this: they were a minority in the church, and, therefore, could not govern the church according to their pleasure; and they were under the necessity, also, of worshipping and communing, unless they absented from our worship and communion, with people, who had a little more explicitly, than before, professed their belief in the Calvinian doctrines, and their obligations to walk in all respects agreeably to the holy precepts of the gospel. This was 'their peculiar situation.' And their being in this situation is admitted, by the council, as an excuse for their neglect of family and public worship, for their absenting themselves from the visible communion of the church, for their embracing and endeavoring to promote Universalian sentiments and teachers, if, indeed in the view of the council, this needed any excuse, and for their going out from us and joining a society, manifestly formed in opposition to us. In one word, as we were *Calvinists*, and they were, *on that account*, opposed to us, the venerable council could easily excuse all the irregularities of their conduct; and, notwithstanding some things, too glaring to be publicly approved, could freely open to them the bosom of their own fellowship, and recommend them, also, to the fellowship of other churches!"

obliged to act according to their ideas and sense of duty, although they are liable to mistakes as well as private members.*

We also add, that until such a council can be obtained, as it may be inconvenient for the aggrieved to repair to distant churches, we shall not view it as disorderly or a bad precedent, for any regular minister to administer the ordinances to them in their own town.†

We most sincerely lament the unhappy differences, which have taken place among christian professors in this town, whereby several have been excluded from christian fellowship.

We earnestly recommend to the censured brethren, whose case we have had under consideration, seriously to inquire by what spirit they have been actuated, and to rectify whatever they may find to have been amiss, either in their temper or conduct, which may have contributed to bring them into their present melancholy situation; and in the exercise of christian candor towards those, who differ from them in speculative sentiments, to use all suitable means consistent with their rights, as private Christians, to bring about a reconciliation, with the church, that they may again

* "Here the council have informed us, in language, more explicit, perhaps, than before, that they consider the disciplinary proceedings of the church, as of no validity. Is not this a matter of very deep concernment, to all those churches, which wish to maintain any regular discipline? Where shall we find a law of Christ constituting a council, *an ex parte council*, a paramount judicatory, with authority thus to 'lord it over God's heritage?' And is it, then, 'reasonable' for other churches totally to disregard our decisions, respecting offenders; and in opposition to us, to admit our suspended and excommunicated members to the enjoyment of christian privileges? Is this no 'infringement of our rights as a particular church?'"

† "Perhaps the council, in this sentence, had not reference to *gospel* order, but merely to *civil*, or *social* order. But what would they think, should elders and messengers from Calvinistic churches, go into their societies, and take a number of malcontented people under their patronage, and without any more regularity or formality, than what has been observed here, express their readiness to admit them to their fellowship, and even recommend it to 'regular ministers, to administer sacred ordinances to them in their own town?' Would they 'not think it disorderly and a bad precedent?' What could have a greater, or more direct tendency, than such a procedure, to promote disorder, confusion, and every evil work in society?—**BUT WE ARE A CALVINISTIC CHURCH; AND, THEREFORE, NOTHING IS TO BE 'CONSIDERED AS DISORDERLY OR A BAD PRECEDENT,' WHICH TENDS TO WEAKEN OUR HANDS, TO INTERRUPT OUR PEACE, AND TO BEAR US DOWN!**"

know by joyful experience 'how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*'

May the God of love and peace bestow his benediction upon his church and people in this town, and inspire all parties with that charity, which displaying itself in actions, as well as words, is the distinguishing characteristic of the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus.

FRANCIS GARDNER, *Moderator.*

NATHL. THAYER, *Scribe.*"

By this Result, the Council may have satisfied themselves, about as little as they did their "*injured brethren,*" who anticipated so much more, than "good words and fair speeches" to "deceive the hearts of the simple." The church was unharmed and undismayed. When there the men, whose coming had been preceded by a great flourish of trumpets, had not found it so

* "In one sense, indeed, all religious sentiments are 'speculative.' But by 'speculative sentiments,' as the phrase is commonly used, we understand such sentiments as are of *no practical importance or influence.* This, we think, is undoubtedly the meaning, which the council intended should be affixed to the phrase.

It is then, in the view of the council, of no practical importance, what a man's sentiments be, respecting future punishment; whether he believe that all men will be saved, or that the wicked will be 'punished with everlasting destruction.' What sentiments, then, respecting things of a religious nature, and of the future world, are not merely 'speculative?' What sentiments are to be considered, as of any practical importance or influence? The different sentiments, respecting human depravity, regeneration, and the nature of true holiness, the Divinity of the Redeemer, atonement and justification, and the divine purposes, are often represented, as merely '*speculative sentiments,*' and '*METAPHYSICAL SUBLTILITIES.*' But this is the first time, we have heard the different sentiments, respecting future punishment, represented in this manner. If the different sentiments, respecting all these subjects, be merely 'speculative;' are not the different sentiments, respecting the divinity and truth of the Scriptures, also, merely 'speculative?' If it be of no practical importance, or influence, what our sentiments be, respecting any of the great subjects or doctrines of revelation; of what practical importance can it be, whether we believe in revelation, or not? Of what mighty importance can it be, merely to believe, that there is such a thing as revelation; when it is of no importance what we believe concerning the great points, on which it treats?—Does not this *modern 'catholicism,'* this boasted '*liberality of sentiment,*' so popular in the present age, *lead directly to DEISM?*—*Nay, is it not itself THE VERY ESSENCE OF INFIDELITY?*—No wonder, then, that *Deists* and *professed Christians,* of these *liberal sentiments,* can meet together, on harmonious ground, and unite in their opposition to experimental religion, and the truth as it is in Jesus!"

easy to achieve a triumph. Some were there, who cared not to be there again. The issue of the encounter of "Ario-Arminianism," Universalism, and Deism, with "the faith once delivered to the saints," as thus far visible,—inspired the persecuted church and aggrieved pastor with new confidence in the power of truth and the "armor of God," to enable them "to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to STAND." The pastor was never in his life more firm and unmoved. He was cheered by the best sympathies and the unceasing prayers of his devoted friends. His true and faithful brethren in the ministry, far and near, regarded him as an example and a spectacle, of which they could speak to one another, in no measured terms of cordial and grateful admiration.

Foiled in their purposes against the pastor of the church, and mortified that the Result of the ex parte council so palpably "profited nothing," the excommunicated and their coadjutors resolved to try the virtue of another expedient. As members of the "Fitchburg Universal Christian Society," the leaders among them could claim a right by vote of the town, to use the meeting-house, a certain number of Sabbaths in a year,—a vote which hitherto had been "a dead letter." Oct. 20th, they "unanimously rejected the propositions made by a number of persons from the Rev. Samuel Worcester's Society [church?], and offered the Rev. Samuel Worcester's Society the following resolutions, viz. Taking into consideration the unhappy situation of the town, and sincerely wishing, that a union may be brought about, we say, 1st. That unless you agree that the contract between the Rev. Samuel Worcester and the town shall be dissolved; after three Sabbaths next ensuing, we shall positively

assert our right in the meeting-house, and use it in future agreeable to the vote of the town.

2d. If you comply with the above, you may be assured that our compact will be dissolved, and that we will meet you on equal ground, in candidating for another Congregational minister.

Voted, to choose a committee, to present the above to the Rev. Samuel Worcester's Society, and to receive proposals, if there be any offered."

A copy of this vote, with the record of other proceedings of the meeting, was sent by the clerk, "to the Rev. Samuel Worcester, to be communicated." The notice which it received, will need no explanation or comment.

" *Fitchburg, Oct. 26, 1801.*

Gentlemen,—

The enclosed document, purporting to come from a Society of Universalists in Fitchburg, through the medium of their clerk, was forwarded to me under a sealed cover. It was directed to me, as you will perceive, '*to be communicated;*' and, if I understand it, was desired to be communicated to the '*Society,*' of which I am the minister or public teacher. If I comply with the request, therefore, I must communicate it to the *town of Fitchburg;* excepting those, however, who are in a regular and legal way, exempted from ministerial taxes. Accordingly, though I know not why it should have been committed to my hands, yet being willing to oblige, I beg leave to transmit it to you, as the proper medium, through which it should be 'communicated' to the town,—or '*Society,*' of which I am the minister; and you will be pleased to take such measures for its ultimate communication, as your wisdom shall dictate.

You will observe, that the Society from which this document purports to come, express a determination to 'assert their right in the meeting-house;' unless a

certain condition be complied with, on the part of the town. What their right in the meeting-house is, I shall not undertake to say; I have understood, indeed, that by virtue of a vote of the town, some who have assumed the name of the Fitchburg Universal Christian Society claim a right to the exclusive use of the meeting-house, for a certain proportion of the Sabbaths of every year. If this be the case, and the meeting-house be appropriated accordingly, I shall confide in the honor and good faith of the town, that they will either notify me in a regular manner, that I am discharged from ministerial services, or else provide some other proper and convenient place for worship, during the time that the meeting-house shall be occupied by Universalists, or Separatists, of any other denomination. As to a dissolution of the contract between me and the town, mention of which is made in the enclosed communication, I need not inform you, that, several months ago, the town signified to me their wish, that the contract might be dissolved. I was also myself, notwithstanding any thing which has been said to the contrary, *sincerely* desirous for the same. The matter was, however, according to contract, and mutual agreement, referred to a Council. But the Council did not advise to a dissolution, but to my continuance in my present ministerial relation. This result, though different from previous expectation, was, however, formally accepted, by all parties *properly* concerned. Hence, so far as I am informed, the last act of the town, relative to my dismissal, was an expression of their minds, that it was not best, that a dismissal should take place, but that I should still continue as their minister, according to contract. If the town have since altered their minds, and do not wish me to continue, they will regularly notify me accordingly. For myself, I hold myself, with all submission, entirely at disposal; ready to serve the town still longer, or to take a dismissal in a regular way, as shall be thought most expedient, by those whose proper business it is to act upon the question. It may not be unsuitable, however, for me to express it, as

my serious opinion, that excluding me from the meeting-house, for any part of the time, or any other irregular proceeding, will have no tendency to restore union and peace to the town, either by dismissal or otherwise.

With sincere assurances, that no one wishes for the good of this town, more ardently than myself, and that I am ready to make almost any personal sacrifices for this object,

I am, Gentlemen, with great respect,
your obedient, humble servant,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.

*The Gentlemen Selectmen of the Town of Fitchburg:
to be communicated, if they shall think it proper."*

Such a reference of their communication, the members of the "Universal Christian Society" had hardly expected. It was one of the incidents of the controversy, which occasioned more smiles than tears. And justice requires the suggestion, that the opposers of Dr. Worcester evidently felt themselves to be contending "at fearful odds;" and not uncharitably, it might have been said of them, as perhaps it was, that, "like the heath in the desert," they "shall not see when good cometh."*

It may well be supposed, that the father and brothers of Dr. Worcester would be deeply interested in the affairs of Fitchburg. They were "swift to hear" and not "slow to speak."

* So often were they ensnared by their own devices, that, as Dr. W. remarked to one of his theological students, some years afterwards,—“they were afraid to accept of the plainest proposition; imagining,” as he pleasantly added, “that *their minister was near about a witch.*”

Mr. Jesse Worcester.

“*Fitchburg, Nov. 21, 1801.*”

My dear Brother,—

The present prospect is, that peace will be *settled* between France and England, before it will be in this town. Another meeting has been holden this week, at which votes were passed relative to my dismissal, similar to those which were passed last April. There appears, however, to be a little more moderation of temper, and regularity of proceeding. People appear to be convinced, that as I came in by order, I must go out by order. At my recommendation, a committee has been appointed, selected from the different parties, to confer together upon the existing state of things, and to attempt some terms of agreement. What will be the issue of the business can hardly be conjectured. We must leave it with Him, who orders all things wisely. * * *

I have been for about a fortnight very deeply engaged, in preparing a statement of facts and documents, respecting our ecclesiastical affairs, together with some strictures on the result of the *ex parte* council. The whole will make a book of eighty or ninety pages. The manuscript is nearly completed. If we publish, it will make a smoke, and perhaps, *some fire*. But, *let it burn; there are proper combustibles in sufficient quantity.*

Frequent visits from you would be very comfortable for me, in these ‘troublous times.’ Our affectionate regards to our dear sister and love to your children. I have written so much of late, that I am attended with a considerable weakness at my stomach. Owing to that, and to the want of time, I am unable to write to my father, who will be pleased to excuse me, and accept our most dutiful respects. Let us all, my brother, be prepared to meet the events and scenes which await us.

Your very affectionate brother,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

Of the proceedings of the town, in November, the public were informed by "the book" of "facts and documents," a few months afterwards. It had become necessary to correct many false and calumnious reports; while a higher motive was that of imperative duty, in "the cause" which "is not of a private or local, but of a public and general nature," and "in the issue of which all the real friends of the Gospel" were "deeply concerned."

"In addition to the vote for dividing the meeting-house," said Dr. Worcester, in his statement to the public,—"it was voted, that all who would give in their names to the Town Clerk, as having separated themselves from me, and joined any other society or denomination, should be exempted from ministerial taxes. It is worthy, perhaps, of particular remark, that *in these, and all the subsequent votes respecting my dismissal, people, who had never been considered as belonging to my society, who had never attended upon my ministry, nor paid to my support, were allowed to vote.**

It appears to have been the expectation, that these measures, would have induced me, immediately and without formality, to quit this place. These, it is supposed, are the measures, to which the venerable council of the 22d of June allude, when they say, "The council cannot give any countenance to *those irregular and equivocal measures*, which appear to have been adopted to strip the church of its privileges, and to take from them a pastor apparently so dear to them." Those who withdrew were either Universal-

* "It is well understood, that, *whoever may be the minister in this place*, the people in the westerly part of the town are determined to bear no part in his support. And, though they have acted in confederacy with those, who have been pushing for my removal, in the other parts of the town, and by their numbers have given a superiority to the opposition, they have had their separate ends to accomplish." They asked for the use of the meeting-house, a part of the time, "with a design to bring the town to terms."

ists, or they were not. If they were really Universalists, and separated themselves upon principle, and for conscience sake, it might be supposed improper for them afterwards, to come forward, as they did, and act in town meeting upon ministerial concerns. If they were not Universalists, their conduct in joining a Universal Society, and solemnly obligating themselves to support and promote it, might be thought difficult to reconcile with a proper regard for good order in society, and any well established religious principle.

Although the measures now in view, instead of answering their expectations, proved a hindrance to the accomplishment of the designs of the opposition, yet the same, or similar, measures were afterwards renewed.

Some time after the vote for accepting the result of the council was obtained in the town, another town meeting was called, at which a vote for dividing the meeting-house, according to the former manner was passed. But as that did not answer their purposes, another meeting was called, on the 17th of November, at which a committee of the town was appointed to wait upon me, and with me to agree upon a council in order for a dismissal. It is particularly to be observed, *that it was the intention totally to exclude the church, in its proper capacity, from any part in the choice of the contemplated council*; and this intention was expressed in town meeting, in the most pointed manner.

In the interim, however, between the town meeting and my conference with the town's committee, a meeting of the church was holden, at which a committee was appointed to be with me, and assist in the conference. When we came together, we disagreed very much in our construction of the following article in the terms of my settlement.

‘If it should so happen in the course of his (Mr. Worcester’s) ministry in Fitchburg, that difficulty should arise on his part, which should prove a grievance to *this church and people*, which may give, *in their opinion*, just occasion for complaint against him, pre-

judicial to the peace and happiness of *this church and people*, they shall have a right to dismiss him from his pastoral relation to *this church and people*, with the advice of a mutual council.'

The difference arose respecting the meaning of the phrase, '*church and people*.' By the committee of the church and myself, this phrase was understood to mean the 'church,' *in its proper ecclesiastical capacity*, and the inhabitants of the town, in their civil capacity. This is the sense in which I always understood the terms of my settlement; and never, until the commencement of the present unhappy contest, did I suppose, that they either were, or could be, otherwise understood. But the committee of the town insisted, that the phrase in question should be understood to mean only the inhabitants of the town, including the members of the church, *in the capacity of mere citizens*. This, it will be seen, was a difference of very material consequence.

By the committee of the church and myself, it was supposed, that the state of things, contemplated in the terms of settlement, when a council should be called, had not yet arrived. For nothing, on my part, had taken place, which, by '*this church*,' was considered as '*a grievance*.' But, although I did not consider myself bound by the terms of settlement, to consent to a council, yet I was willing, and even desirous, that another council should be called, provided the church might be admitted to its right in the choice. But here was the grand difficulty. The town's committee would not recognize the right of the church, in its proper capacity, to any part in the business. This was, in my view, a matter of no small consequence. I considered my pastoral relation to this church as of a nature the most solemn and sacred; and did not hold myself at liberty to come to an agreement with the town, to the total and pointed exclusion of the church, and even in opposition to it, for a council, in order for a dissolution of that relation. I felt myself bound, indeed, firmly to resist the proposition: And this more especially, as there had been manifested, by the leaders in the oppo-

sition, a determined spirit to break down the distinction between the church and the town, and to strip the church totally of its privileges and rights. I could not consent to the establishment of a precedent of a tendency, in my view, so threatening to general religious order; but felt it incumbent on me, as a watchman on the walls of Zion, to stand in the breach, and maintain the rights and privileges of the church, to the last extremity.

After a great deal said on the subject, it was proposed, and, as I thought, established, as a preliminary, that one of the churches, of which the council might consist, should be agreed upon between the committee of the town, the committee of the church, and myself; that one half of the rest should be mutually agreed upon between the two committees; and that the other half should be left to my choice.* Upon this principle an attempt was made for the choice of a council. The odd church was agreed upon; and hence, *so far as depended upon me*, the business was settled. But the two committees could not come to an agreement, respecting their part of the council. The committee of the church consented, indeed, to one church nominated on the part of the town; † but the town's committee would not consent to any nominated on the part of the church. Hence, we failed of having a council; and the failure was wholly to be charged, as I think, upon the committee of the town. ‡ It will not be denied, that I manifested a strong desire, and labored long and earnestly to bring about an agreement between the two committees, and expressed great regret when I found it was not likely to obtain. When all hope of an

* "Although it was supposed by the church and me, that the right of calling a council resided properly in the church; yet as circumstances were, we thought there might be a propriety in giving the town a voice in the choice, and we wished to proceed on the most conciliatory grounds."

† "It was proposed that the council should consist of five churches; hence, one church only was now wanting."

‡ "I have since, indeed, been informed by some of the town's committee, that they had no intention to come to an agreement in a council, upon the proposed principle, *which allowed the church, in its proper capacity, a part in the choice*; and that they proceeded as far as they did in the business, only to make trial, as they expressed it, of the condescension of the church."

agreement was extinguished, with the consent of the committee of the church, I handed to the town's committee a paper, of which the following is a copy, presented to the town.

‘In consequence of an application from the town of Fitchburg, through the medium of a committee, appointed to confer with me relative to a council for my dismissal, I offer the following proposals.

1. A council shall be called in the regular ecclesiastical manner. If there can be such an understanding between the town and the church, as that the choice of the council may be satisfactory to the town, it will be a circumstance very agreeable to me.

2. To the council it shall be submitted, whether it be expedient for a dismissal to take place; and if it be, upon what terms, due regard being had to the contract.

3. If any allegations are to be brought against me before the council, they shall be fairly exhibited to me, in writing, at least fourteen days prior to the session of the council. It shall be particularly understood, that I shrink not from the fullest investigation both of my sentiments and conduct.’

Yet, notwithstanding all which had been said and done, at the very meeting at which these proposals were presented, the following vote was passed in the town:—‘That this town have used their endeavors to obtain a mutual council, agreeable to the true intent of the contract entered into between them and the Rev. Samuel Worcester, as expressed in the same contract, and being unable to obtain the same, *by reason of his declension or refusal*, they now declare, that they consider *the contract for his support* dissolved, and that they have no right to, nor occasion for his services, as a minister, teacher, or public instructor in this town, and that they have a right to employ any other preacher, or public instructor, whenever the town shall think it proper so to do.’

After the passing of this extraordinary vote, another

meeting was warned upon the spot, *but at least half an hour posterior to the time appointed for it to be holden*, at which votes were passed for debarring me from the meeting-house, and appointing a committee to supply the desk with candidates.

These transactions of the town, are in my view, so irregular and *invalid*, that I should have supposed it most suitable to let them pass away in silence, were it not that they appear to be seriously and zealously advocated, by people of some weight and influence. The gentlemen of the late ex-parte council, in particular, appear to be deeply interested in the support of these measures. Whether they were previously consulted respecting them, or not, it is a matter of notoriety, that, since their adoption, some of these gentlemen have taken a very decided and active part, with the promoters of the measures, and have been warmly engaged to assist them in procuring candidates. It is not without the deepest regret, that I find myself obliged to notice anything which has the appearance of irregularity, in the conduct of gentlemen, whose characters I have have been accustomed so highly to respect and revere; and the part which they have taken in this business, I would gladly impute to erroneous or defective information, rather than to the influence of strong prejudice, and a spirit of opposition to Calvinistic doctrine. However, by what they have done, they have given to a contest, which might otherwise have been merely local, and of no considerable interest to the public, a very unexpected and unhappy extent.

It will be seen, that the grand point, at present in dispute, between my opposers and me, is, *whether a church, in its proper ecclesiastical capacity*, have a right to a voice, in regard to the dismissal of a minister. It is upon the assumed principle, that a church has no such right, that my opposers have proceeded in their late transactions. Because I did not consent to join with them, to the exclusion of the church, and in opposition to it, in the choice of a council for my dismissal, they have proceeded to pass a vote, which they profess to consider, as amounting to a dismissal. But

the principle here assumed is so repugnant to long established usage, so hostile to all religious order, and so incompatible with the nature and solemnity of the pastoral relation, that barely stating it may be sufficient for its explosion.

If it be supposed, that, although as a general thing, a town cannot, without council or church, dismiss a regularly ordained minister; yet the terms of my settlement are such, that, in the present instance, they may; the supposition must be totally destitute of solid foundation. The terms of my settlement, instead of warranting such a procedure, are explicitly against it. I was called and ordained to the pastoral charge of this church and people, in the usual ecclesiastical manner. In my call and ordination, the church was allowed the exercise of its proper rights; and throughout the written terms of my settlement, the church is explicitly recognized.

Possibly it will be said, that the vote of the town was not intended to dismiss me from my pastoral relation, but only to dissolve the civil contract. While the business was in train, it was, indeed, the constant declaration of my opposers, that they cared nothing about the pastoral relation, and had nothing to do with it; a dissolution of the civil contract was all they wished to accomplish. It is, also, true, that the vote of the town makes no mention of *the pastoral relation*, but only of '*the contract for my support.*' And, therefore, were it even admitted, that the town has a right without the voice of church or council, to dismiss me from my pastoral office, the vote in question could hardly be considered as effecting such a dimission. My opposers, however, do, at present, pretend to consider me, as to all intents and purposes, dismissed by that vote. And if I be not dismissed from my pastoral relation, with what propriety can the gentlemen of the *ex-parte council* so earnestly recommend it to candidates to come into this place? Those gentlemen either consider me as *regularly dismissed*, or they do not. If they consider me as regularly dismissed, then they must admit the new and absurd doctrine, that a town,

exclusively of the church, can dismiss a regularly ordained minister, from his sacred office. If they do not consider me as regularly dismissed, I must leave it with them to reconcile their conduct with ecclesiastical propriety and order.

In regard to 'the contract for my support,' it cannot, as I conceive, be dissolved, by *any vote of the town*, so long as the pastoral relation continues; for it is on the basis of the pastoral relation, that the civil contract is explicitly grounded. It is noticeable, that the above cited article in my terms of settlement, about the meaning of which there is a disagreement between my opposers and me, and on the ground of which they pretend to justify their late proceedings, makes provision for a dismissal from my pastoral relation, *but none for a dissolution of the contract for my support*. But in regard to this contract, the first and last articles in the terms of my settlement are very explicit. The first article is this,—'That Mr. Worcester be settled upon a salary only for his support, while he continues with us in the work of the ministry, *in a pastoral relation*.' In the last article it is said,—'In case Mr. Worcester shall take his dismissal, or be dismissed from his ministerial relation to the church *and people of Fitchburg*, THEN *the civil contract shall be dissolved*,' &c.

Now, without further comment, I submit to the judgment of the candid and judicious, whether the proceedings of the town have been regular; whether the vote particularly under consideration, ought to be considered as effecting, either a dismissal from my pastoral office, or a dissolution of the contract for my support; and, finally, whether gentlemen can be justified in recommending candidates to this desk, *and even coming themselves to lead the way into it*.

Although it may be a given point, that I am not regularly dismissed, and that the contract for my support is still in force; there are people, I am sensible, who will nevertheless blame me, for continuing in this place; and impute my continuance here, to obstinacy, to a disposition for contention, or at least to imprudence. To this I feel deeply concerned to reply. Be

my character, in other respects what it may, those who have known me best, in the different scenes of my life, have never suspected me, I believe, of possessing a disposition for contention. Before I settled in the ministry, it was my fixed determination never to have a ministerial contest with any people, if it could possibly be avoided; but to take a dismissal, if they should desire it, as soon, as consistently with duty and order, it could be obtained. In that determination I have since remained stedfast. There are not wanting those, who can bear me witness, that some time anterior to anything done in this town, with a view to my removal, as there was very considerable uneasiness manifested, *and the spirit of party contention, which had for years been unhappily prevalent in this place, appeared to be concentrating its force against me*; I had it in serious contemplation, to ask for a dismissal, that I might avoid the storm, so evidently gathering. But from this I was earnestly dissuaded. To all my friends it is well known, that from the moment the town manifested an intention to remove me, I shrunk with horror from the thought of maintaining a contest, and was resolved to take a dismissal, as soon as it could be *regularly* obtained. This was so manifest to this church, and made so strong an impression on their minds, that they were ready to suspect me of not having a proper sense of the solemn and endearing relation to them, which I sustained, and in a measure to withdraw their confidence, if not their affection, from me. To the council of the 22d of June, I expressed in public, *and more especially in a private audience*, my desire for a dismissal, in the strongest terms. And from the result of that council it must be sufficiently evident, that they were deeply sensible, that, in recommending my continuance here, they made a sacrifice of my inclinations and personal interest, to the general, and infinitely higher, interests of truth, religion, and order.

Ignorant, indeed, of circumstances, must that person be, who can suppose that my situation in this place is desirable; or that I can have any inducements, of a private or worldly nature, to continue here. I have

not, however, felt myself at liberty to sacrifice the essential interests of religion and order, to personal ease, interest, or popularity: *and, as I have had no opportunity to leave this place, without such a sacrifice, I have felt myself bound to continue.* At present I hold myself entirely at disposal. If, by any personal sacrifices in my power to make, whether in going or staying, union, order, and peace might be restored to this people, on Christian principles, it would be a consummation of the most ardent wishes of my heart.

January 27, 1802."

The notes accompanying the Result of the Ex-parte Council of Sept. 15, 1801, as here published, will indicate the character of the "STRICTURES;" but the searching operation of the reviewer is but partially seen, in such abridgments and fragments of the original. In his "GENERAL OBSERVATIONS," he appears to great advantage. He begins with the remark:—"The whole of what has been exhibited shows, we think, in a strong light, the present lamentable state of the Congregational Churches, in this part of New England." This remark he enforces, with great vigor and pungency.

* * * * *

"If there be churches and ministers, who, symbolized completely with the world, and determined to reduce all others to their own level, are ready, upon every occasion, to combine influence and effort with those who are without and with the disaffected within, to suppress Gospel order and discipline; what can a single church do? Do?—It can stand. And if it hold fast and be faithful, it will stand; for God will hold it up. But its struggle must be arduous and painful, indeed. An open enemy, upon his own ground, is but little to be dreaded, in comparison with professed friends and allies, within the lines, who in the hour of battle will betray the cause, and join the hostile standard. And can it be, ought it to be dissembled, that,

that in the present state of things, a church, which wishes to maintain the purity and order, the doctrine and discipline of the Gospel, has infinitely more to fear from those, *who, according to profession*, ought to be more than common friends and allies, than from the whole host of openly avowed infidels, and all the rest of the world combined.

2. The nature and tendency of that charity, Catholicism, or liberality of sentiment, at the present so popular, are here made manifest.

The ancient story of Falsehood having stolen the attire of Truth, is more than a mere fable. It has ever been the artifice of error and corruption to palm themselves upon the too easily deceived world, under the cover of names of fair and flattering import. What more captivating names than charity, Catholicism, liberality? How melodious their accent to every ear? These are the favorite names of the day—the present boast of the world. Calvinists and Hopkinsians aside, the rest of the world, if credit be due to common fame, are all united in the bonds of sweetest charity. But what is this popular thing called charity? Shall we be charged with profanation, if we venture to lift the veil, and show it, naked, in its true form?

‘It is no matter what any one believes, or what he does not believe; if his religious opinions be such as to satisfy himself, others ought to be satisfied. If, ‘as a member of civil society, his character appear to be fair,’ that is sufficient; and he ought to be acknowledged and embraced, as a good man and a Christian, without further inquiry. This is the prevailing sentiment. This the popular charity. Any one who admits this, is a charitable and liberal man; any one who does not, is an uncharitable, illiberal bigot. But is this indeed—CHARITY? Is this the lovely thing described by the pen of an apostle, as the most ‘excellent’ of the Christian graces? Is it ‘the peculiar characteristic of the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus,’ is it the perfection of Christianity, to regard all religious sentiments, or doctrines, with indifferency, or equal complacency? If so, then the less we esteem

the Gospel, the less attachment we have to it, the better Christians we are. To esteem any other doctrine as good as the true doctrines of the Gospel; or, in other words, to feel totally indifferent, respecting Christianity, is the consummation of the Christian character! How much to be regretted it is, that the primitive confessors and martyrs did not better understand the genius of Christianity! What a pity that they were so illiberal and uncharitable, as to think no other way as good as their own; so bigoted as to seal the doctrines, in which *they* believed, with their blood? How emphatically just, though in a sense, different, perhaps, from what has generally been conceived, are the words of St. Paul?—‘*Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*’*

* * * * *

Is it not deeply to be lamented that this absurd and wicked thing, this first-born of infidelity and scepticism, should be allowed to bear off the name, and to occupy the place of the first of Christian graces? Among all the pernicious sentiments now prevailing in the world, is there one more preposterous in its nature, or more mischievous in its tendency, than the sentiment under consideration?”

On the subject of the “communion of the churches,” after a summary view of “the primitive churches of New England,” as having both their “platform of doctrine” and “their platform of discipline,” and a “general agreement in doctrine, as well as discipline,” for

* “It is a very common thing for people who, for certain reasons, choose to be thought friendly to Calvinism, to raise a loud and bitter cry against *Hopkinsians* and *Hopkinsianism*; when in truth, it is the *fundamental doctrines of the Calvinistic scheme* against which their enmity and their clamor is directed. This is, in some instances, the *mistake*, in others, the *artifice* of the age. The genuine doctrines of the Calvinian system are called by the frightful name of *Hopkinsianism*, and those who hold to these doctrines, are called *Hopkinsians*; while those who are totally opposed to the very *fundamentals* of Calvinism, assume and bear off the more popular name of Calvinists. They call themselves, indeed, *moderate* or *modern Calvinists*. But, as people should not be deceived by names, would they not do well carefully to consider, whether many, if not the most, of those, who now assume the name of *moderate*, or *modern Calvinists*, be not, in reality, *Arminians*,—or rather *Arians*, or *Socinians*, or even *Universalists*, in disguise?”

“the basis on which their communion was established,” it is affirmed to be “worthy of serious consideration, whether the present nominal fellowship of these churches, be not upon a footing totally unscriptural and indefensible!”

“If churches be at total disagreement with respect both to ecclesiastical order and discipline, and to the very fundamentals of Christian doctrine, is there any proper foundation for communion? And is there not such a disagreement, actually existing among Congregational churches?”

That the churches are widely diverse, in regard both to doctrine and discipline, is a fact no less notorious, than melancholy. It is equally notorious, that the grand line of distinction is between those churches, which hold to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, as understood by Calvinists, and those which deny them: Or, in other words, between churches fundamentally Calvinistic, and those upon the Ario-Arminian, or Socinian scheme. On each side of this line, there may be, and doubtless are, different shades of opinion, respecting points of less consequence, but not of a fundamental nature. But are not Calvinism, and Ario-Arminianism essentially diverse?

According to the Calvinian scheme, the doctrine of the total moral depravity of human nature, and of regeneration, by the sovereign agency of the Holy Spirit, *the doctrine of the real DEITY of the REDEEMER, and of justification on the ground, exclusively, of his atonement and righteousness*, and the doctrine of personal election to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, lie in the very foundation of the gospel scheme. But by Ario-Arminians and Socinians these Cardinal doctrines are all rejected. Throughout the fundamentals of the gospel, almost, if not totally, what we affirm, they deny. If, therefore, the doctrines, holden by Calvinists, be the true gospel; are not Arianism and Socinianism completely ‘another gospel?’—And are not the churches, on these two dif-

ferent schemes, almost as diverse, in regard to discipline, as in regard to doctrine ?

Where, then, is there any proper or solid basis for fellowship ? ‘ What communion hath light with darkness ?’ If *visible* communion be, indeed, maintained, between churches so totally diverse ; can there be the exercise of *true Christian fellowship* ? Is not this *visible* communion a mere shadow ? And if so ; what substantial good can there be in it ? Of what benefit can it be to maintain the *form* of communion, where there is no *reality* ?

That a strict and cordial union and communion might obtain among the churches of Christ, is certainly ‘ a consummation most devoutly to be wished.’ At all times, and especially, in times of abounding infidelity, like the present, it is of high importance, that all the friends of the gospel, waving their little differences, should draw together, into close and firm phalanx, in defence and support of the common cause. This was, unquestionably, one main design of the consociation and communion of the Congregational churches, originally established. It was intended that these churches should mutually strengthen each other’s hands, unite their efforts in the cause of truth and religion, *and assist each other in the maintenance of evangelical order and discipline.* But how are these important purposes to be answered, by the professed communion of Calvinistic, with Ario-Arminian and Socinian churches ? Do Arians and Socinians really strengthen our hands against the adversaries of the gospel ? Do they aid us in support of the cause of evangelical truth and religion ; and in the maintenance of ecclesiastical order and discipline ? Do they not rather hang as a dead weight upon our efforts ?

What can truth gain by an alliance with error ? Is it not manifest, that by such an alliance, the cause of truth is always weakened, and the cause of error strengthened ? In one word, is not the present, indiscriminate communion of these churches a snare and a trap ? Does it not bind Calvinistic churches, hand and foot, and give their adversaries the greatest possible

advantage against them? When ‘the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, *Let us build with you, for we seek your God, as ye do;*’ was not the answer magnanimous, and full of instruction, ‘*Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel?*’*

4. If such, as has been exhibited, be the state of things in the churches, is it not important, that some attempt be made for a reformation?

Is it not of the highest consequence to the great interests of Christ’s kingdom, that gospel order and discipline be maintained in the churches? Are not the churches ‘*a city set upon an hill?*’ Are they not designed to be ‘*the light of the world,—the salt of the earth,—the ground and pillar of the truth?*’ How extensively pernicious, then, must be the effects and consequences of their general laxity and corruption? If the city upon the hill be corrupt; what is to be expected, but that unbounded corruption will spread all around it? If the light of the world become darkness; ‘how great must be that darkness?’ If the salt of the earth lose its savor, ‘wherewithal shall it be salted;’ or what shall preserve it from total putrescence and dissolution? If the pillar and ground of the truth be overborne and carried down in the torrent of error; what shall withstand, or hold in check, the wide-spreading inundation? Is there any thing, in fine, which bears so threatening an aspect, on the general

* “Is it not worthy of serious consideration, that, in regard to communion, Calvinistic churches do not stand on even ground with Arian and Socinian churches? As Arians and Socinians totally deny *experimental religion*, and professedly regard it as a matter of indifferency what people’s religious opinions are; they may, with great propriety, extend their communion to Calvinistic churches, unless, indeed, the members of Calvinistic churches be scandalously immoral. But as Calvinists believe in *experimental religion*, and professedly make the visibility of it a term of admission to their churches; with what propriety can they extend communion to such churches as totally disown and discard it? If Calvinistic churches, in the admission of members, go on the principle of receiving such only as give evidence of being the subjects of a gracious renovation: with what consistency can they extend communion to churches, which not only do not profess to go on this principle, but even deny the necessity and reality of such a change?”

cause of Christianity, as the present supineness, and laxity of the churches? Infidelity, indeed, is spreading with awful rapidity, and errors of the most licentious tendency, together with their consequent depravation of morals, are extensively prevailing. Still, what should we have to fear from the abounding of infidelity and error, with all their hideous concomitants, did only the churches hold fast the faithful word, maintain the order and discipline of the gospel, display that evangelical purity, which ought to characterize the visible body of Christ, and stand together, as ‘an army with banners,’ in defence and support of the common cause? But if the professed churches of Christ, instead of making a firm stand, and maintaining their proper ground, treacherously, or pusillanimously, desert the cause, meet and shake hands with the enemy, and accommodate, in all respects, to their wishes, what have we not to fear?

But, even in this age of declension and corruption, are there not some, are there not many churches, which feel the importance of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and of maintaining the divinely prescribed order and discipline of Christ’s house? And, if there be such, is it not of high importance, that they ‘*come out, and be separate, and touch no more the unclean thing?*’ Is it not important, that a general understanding should take place among them, and that measures should be taken to consolidate their union, and to combine and animate their Christian exertions; that the whole body, being fitly joined together and compacted, may increase unto the edifying of itself in love, in faith and in gospel order?

It is not our business, doubtless, neither do we feel ourselves competent to prescribe what ought to be done; but that *something* ought to be done, we sensibly feel. We have assurance, also, that in this sentiment we are not alone. We, therefore, beg leave, with diffidence to suggest, whether the existing state of things does not require the convocation of a general synod of Calvinistic churches, to consult and determine upon such measures, as it may be suitable to recommend, for their common support and security, and for the

promotion, generally, of evangelical truth, order, and discipline."

Such was the state of the Calvinistic Churches "in this part of New England," at the beginning of the present century, that great benefits might have resulted from the "CONVOCATION," which was thus suggested, or recommended. But the main object was in a good measure accomplished. The appeal of the church and pastor of Fitchburg went out, far and wide, and, in many places, must have caused "great searchings of heart." And the day was hastened, by some years at least, when the churches, which "the fathers" would own, stood forth in their true position, and "*churches*" were "*gathered out of churches,*" to the glory 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."

Various, but ineffectual means were used by the church, to induce those of their brethren, who were repeatedly "dissatisfied," to unite in calling a mutual council, to be composed of members, who had not been in either of the councils of June and September previous, and who should take cognizance of every matter in dispute; those who had been cut off, or otherwise disciplined, being allowed a full representation of their complaints, *through* "the dissatisfied brethren." These were but very few. And they would not agree to any proposals for a mutual council, unless the excommunicants should have a voice in choosing the council, and be recognized in their own persons, precisely, or virtually, as if the church had not adjudicated upon their cases. It was, moreover, insisted, "that Mr. Worcester shall take a dismissal from his church." To this

last condition, he himself had not the slightest objection, except that which arose from the wishes of his friends.

Feb. 16, 1802, the Church voted to call a Council for advice. The Council met, during the month following, and spent ten days in deliberation.—A most thorough hearing was given to all persons, who had any statements or accusations to make. Such pastors as Emmons, of Franklin, Spring, of Newburyport, Sanford, of Medway, and Payson, of Rindge, were members of this Council. The Result, March 19th, entirely vindicated the pastor and the church, against all imputations and complaints, and with expressions of the most affectionate sympathy, ratified their doings. While they declined taking the responsibility of concurring in the proposal of the pastor to resign his charge, they were in favor of a reference of all matters in controversy to a mutual council, if by any means such a council could be had; it being understood, that at the time of the session of such a council, the pastoral relation would be dissolved.*

Another Ex parte Council, by request of "the dissatisfied," was in session at the same time. It was the same in leading members and spirit, as that of the previous September. And the Result, as in the former instance, was well devised to "make the hearts of the righteous sad," by "strengthening the hands of the wicked." "We offer them," i. e. *the excommunicated*, "the privilege of christian communion with us, and

* Some amusing, as well as painful incidents occurred. One of the most influential citizens and an active opposer of the church, was questioned by the Council respecting his motives in signing the "Universalian Compact." After disclaiming some motives, he said, that he "was for love and goodwill to all men."—"How happened it, then," inquired Rev. Mr. Sanford, "that you should overlook Mr. Worcester?"

recommend them to the fellowship of sister churches.”

March 26th, the Church made another and very special attempt, in terms the most kind and conciliatory, to effect, if possible, a settlement of all difficulties. A mutual council was again proposed, the dissatisfied brethren choosing the same number of members of it, as the Church, and both parties to unite in choosing, or in referring the choice of “the odd church,” by which a majority might be made for a Result.

After hearing the Report of their Committee of conference with the dissatisfied, the Church voted, April 21st,—“that there is no prospect of obtaining a mutual council with our dissatisfied brethren, on christian principles; that we have conceded as far as in duty we can do; and have no farther proposals to make in regard to a council.”—“The dissatisfied,” as they were assured most kindly and truly, could avail themselves of all the aid, which “the excommunicated” might afford them, in preparing business for the council. But to acknowledge “the excommunicated,” as if members in regular standing, was impossible.

It was now, as the pastor conceived, better for him and for the people, that, having thus far maintained the cause of the Church, and the rights and interests of the Congregational churches generally, he should close his ministry among them, and bid them farewell. But the Church, by a great majority, *would not consent* to part with a pastor, whom they so loved and revered. A numerous portion of the congregation also adhered to him, in a manner mutually honorable. Hence he was, at times, in a most distressing and harassing perplexity. But, in general, he was quietly

waiting the clear and decisive indications of the will of Providence.

Rev. Leonard Worcester.

“ Fitchburg, May 21, 1802.

My dear brother,—

I, this evening, received your very grateful favor of the 24th ult., and as I received at the same time information, that my father expects to set out on a tour to the northward next Monday morning, I cannot content myself without writing you a line, although at a late and weary hour. * * *

As to the result of our late council, my father will be able to give you full information. They left me still in the ‘*thorn hedge*,’ and whether I shall ever be extricated from it, until removed from this sublunary scene, is at present very doubtful. A plan is in progress for the support of the Gospel here, without an assessment on the town. It evidently strikes the opposition with dismay, and perplexes their councils. What will be the issue, I hardly dare to predict; but the hopes of my friends are high.—Is it owing, my brother, to insensibility, to a stoical apathy, that I can so easily reconcile myself to scenes and circumstances, which I once thought I could never endure? If it be not; if it be owing to a temper, disciplined in the school of Christ, O may I never lose this temper, nor cease to give praise to Him who gave it!

I regret, that I have not on hand one of my books, in full binding, to send you, but such as I can send, you will be pleased to accept. I have this day been informed, that Dr. Cumings is preparing an answer to it. The answer I wish to see. Shall I be able to maintain a controversy with the Dr.? The cause, I believe, is good; and standing on the ground I do, I have but little dread even of Dr. Cumings.*

* There was a pamphlet published, but Dr. W. never deemed it worthy of any reply. It is noticed in the Monthly Anthology, Dec. 1804.

Our most affectionate regards to our dear sister, and your lovely little children. When at the throne of mercy, you will not forget

Your very affectionate friend and brother,

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

The "plan" suggested in the foregoing, gave occasion for a formal offer by the pastor, to relinquish the contract for his support; with a request that a Committee of the town should be appointed, to arrange with him for a settlement of all arrearages. But the offer was not accepted, because, undoubtedly, his opposers could not be pacified, so long as he should retain a pastoral charge in the town.

Still another Ex parte Council, in opposition to the Church and pastor, was convened the 24th of June. In anticipation of proceedings to recognize "the excommunicated" and others, as a church, or rather as *the church of the town*,* a Committee was appointed to present a remonstrance. During the session of the Council, the Committee renewed the proposal of March 26th. It was now accepted. A mutual council was agreed upon, and the pastor was dismissed, Sept. 8th.

Thus, notwithstanding the votes of the town, dividing the house of worship between different societies, with the reiterated threats of the "Universal Christian Society," to take possession of his pulpit, for the number of Sabbaths allowed them; and notwithstanding

* The probable course would have been, to recognize those as the church of Fitchburg, however few in number, who would signify their adoption of the covenant, which had been superseded by "the new form." It was thus, substantially, that an extraordinary attempt was made, in 1817, to fabricate a church for the town of Princeton,—Drs. Bancroft and Thayer taking the lead in the movement. See "Review of the Result of an Ecclesiastical Council," &c. *Pan. and Miss. Mag.*, June 1817.

the vote, explicitly declaring “the contract for his support dissolved”—with other measures, of a corresponding character,—he *retained his pulpit to the last*, and received his salary, according to the terms of his settlement, until, in due order and form, and agreeably to his own wishes, he ceased to be the pastor of the church and the minister of the town of Fitchburg!

A very large assembly, composed of friends and foes of the Gospel and the preacher, from all parts of Fitchburg and the neighboring towns, was convened, to hear the FAREWELL, which was delivered, Aug. 29, 1802. Expectations were of course various, but they were intense in all. It has been represented as an indescribably solemn and sorrowful scene—especially in the afternoon,—when the different classes of his hearers were so directly and personally addressed. No faithful minister of the CRUCIFIED could ever have announced for his text, with a more significant and affectionate, godly sincerity,—those words, which he cited from the farewell address of Paul, at Miletus: For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Acts xx. 27.

After explaining, in his best manner,—“what is included in a full and faithful declaration of the Gospel,” he showed, that, “for the ministers of Christ to make” such a “declaration,” is “highly” and “infinitely important; *as it respects those, to whom they are sent—as it respects the divine kingdom and glory—and as it respects themselves.*” In the “Improvement,” he remarked, 1. “The preaching of the Gospel ought to be regarded by all, as a most solemn and important work.
* * * * 2. It is of very great importance for people cordially to embrace the true doctrines of the Gospel.
* * * *

We cannot, perhaps, conceive a greater absurdity, than to suppose that a man's religious opinions do not affect his religious character; or that he may be a good Christian, and yet not believe in the doctrines of Christ. A man's opinions will always, in a greater or less degree, influence his conduct, and shape his character; and, if his religious opinions be fundamentally erroneous, his religious character must be essentially defective. If a man believe, that he may place some dependence, for acceptance with God and eternal life, on his own merit or goodness, how can he have that exclusive dependence on the merits of the Redeemer, which the Gospel declares necessary to salvation? If a man disbelieve the depravity of the human heart, and the necessity of regeneration, will he not suppose an external reformation sufficient, and seek for nothing further? But if a real change of heart be necessary to salvation, must it not be dangerous, must it not be fatal, for a man to suppose his state to be good, and, accordingly, place himself at ease, while the subject only of an external reformation? If a man believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be only a mere creature, can he repose that ultimate, unlimited trust in him, and render him that homage and worship, which the Gospel requires? Is it, in a word, a matter of indifference, whether we believe the Savior of the world to be very God, or only a mere creature, and treat him accordingly?

Some people believe, that, without evangelical repentance, faith, and holiness of heart and life, we must die without hope, and be miserable for eternity. Others suppose, that, however irreligiously, or viciously, we may live in this world, we shall certainly be happy in the world to come. Now, is it of no consequence which of these opposite opinions we entertain? Is our belief of the one, or the other, likely to have no influence on our conduct or character?" * * * *

3. It is infinitely important, that people choose for themselves a minister, who will faithfully declare all the counsel of God.

In illustrating this topic, "two or three general characters for contemplation" were "presented," which were quite as *particular*, as general; and which may now be taken as veritable and life-like portraits of the Congregational clergy of Massachusetts, at the beginning of this 19th century.

"Catholicus has the charge of a people, in the professed character of a christian minister. But Catholicus has imbibed the liberal notions of the age. Regarding it as a matter of no consequence, what people believe, he inculcates no doctrines as important; but if he exhibit any doctrine, distinctly, he is careful to leave an impression on the minds of his people, that, if they believe it, it is well, if not, as well. Those, who contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, he represents as rigid and bigoted. Concealing, or disguising, his own religious sentiments, if, indeed, he have any, he uses no endeavors to indoctrinate his people. His public discourses are mere moral lectures, or popular harangues, in which the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel are either winked out of sight, or only brought into view to show, that they are either false, controvertible, or of no importance. Such is the ministerial character of Catholicus. He is a popular man, and the world loves and caresses him.

Cephas is, also, a minister of the Gospel; but of a character somewhat different from Catholicus. Believing truth to be important, he views with concern the prevalence of errors, subversive of the Gospel, and ruinous to the eternal interests of mankind. But, knowing the pure doctrines of Christ to be unpopular, and the faithful preaching of them, likely to incur odium and reproach, he excuses himself from the ungrateful task. If he preach particular doctrines, it is in a manner, so general and undistinguishing, that his people shall not clearly understand what he means; and some, which are more peculiarly offensive and unpopular, he keeps totally out of sight. Thus, aiming

to please men, and dreading the frowns and contumely of the world, he makes but a partial, and disguised, declaration of the counsel of God. Doctrines, in his view, of everlasting importance, he dares not distinctly to inculcate; and errors, of a tendency the most ruinous, he dares not openly and decidedly to impugn.

Eusebius is a minister of a still different character. He has a serious and settled belief in the doctrines of the Gospel; and views them of the highest importance to the everlasting interests of mankind. Though he knows them to be unpopular, and crossing to the feelings of the depraved heart, he cannot forbear to preach them. His ardent zeal for the cause of his divine Master, and his affectionate concern for his dear people, whose eternal interests are depending, raise him above the dread of popular opprobrium. He stands forth, courageously, in the cause of truth. He inculcates the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, in a clear and distinguishing manner; and labors, with all his ability, to impress, on the minds of his people, a conviction of their infinite and everlasting importance. In a word, he shuns not to declare all the counsel of God. Bearing his public testimony against prevalent errors, in his view, pernicious, he faithfully preaches what he believes to be the truth, and, in the most solemn and affectionate manner, warns his people of the danger of rejecting it.

These several characters are exhibited, my hearers, for your serious contemplation. Judge, for yourselves, which of them approaches nearest the apostolic model. Which of them resembles most the character of Paul? Should you choose, for your minister, such a character as Catholicus, would you not be guilty of trifling with a most sacred institution; and of entailing, upon yourselves and your children, the most fatal ignorance of the Gospel? Were not the people of Israel, who chose the false prophets, because they preached smooth things, and discarded the prophets of the Lord, who faithfully declared the truth, exceedingly unwise, and exceedingly criminal? And if people, under the Gospel, conduct in a similar manner, must not their folly

be more conspicuous, and their criminality rise higher, in proportion, as their light is greater ?

4. It is most unreasonable and criminal for people to be offended, and to reject a minister, because he is faithful, and does not shun to declare unto them all the counsel of God. * * * * 5. Ministers, and their people, will have a solemn meeting, at the bar of their common Judge, in the last great day."

In the design and plan of the speaker, all that had been said, and with overwhelming effect, was but preliminary and preparatory to this, the concluding part of the discourse. Standing, as if at the judgment-seat of Christ, he calls upon all in the crowded congregation before him, to contemplate the contrast of the revelations and the retributions of character, for "the faithful," and for "the unfaithful minister."

* * * "If it will be terrible for an unfaithful minister, to meet, at the bar of God, his people, who, through his unfaithfulness, are found on the left hand of their Judge, and whose blood will be required at his hands ; will it not also be terrible for people to meet, in that solemn and decisive day, a faithful minister, whom they have rejected ; whose warnings they have disregarded, whose counsels, reproofs, and affectionate entreaties, they have contumeliously slighted ? Their mouths will be completely stopped. The truth was placed before them, but they would not receive it ; the warnings of God were faithfully delivered, but they would not regard them : the terms of life were clearly stated, but they would not embrace them. Terrible, indeed, then, must be their doom. That will come upon them which is spoken of in the prophets ; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish !

The subject, my brethren, which we have been, this day, contemplating, must have a very pertinent, a very forcible, application, both to you and to me, on the present solemn occasion. For the space of about five

years, I have been among you in the professed character of a minister of Christ. But it appears to be the will of Him, in whose hands are all our times, that I should continue among you no longer. This is, probably, the last time, that I shall ever, as your pastor, address you on the momentous concerns of your souls. On this interesting occasion, if we be not totally destitute of sensibility, our hearts must be solemnly affected, and our minds must be occupied, with the most serious reflections. It behoves both you and me, solemnly to review the period of my ministry here, with reference to the present state of our souls, and to eternity. How have I preached? How have you heard? Have I faithfully declared unto you the truth; and have you cordially received it? These are interrogatories of infinite moment.

For myself, I cannot attend to this subject, my hearers, but with a trembling heart. I have been placed here as a watchman, to watch for your souls, as one who must give an account. Is the account, this day, to be closed, and sealed up for the judgment; then to be opened in the presence of the assembled universe? How solemn, how affecting, is the thought! Will the blood of any of your souls, perishing, forever, through my unfaithfulness, be required at my hands?—I have reason for deep humiliation before God, and before you, my dear people, for my numerous short comings, in the duties of the christian ministry among you. I have reason to be humbled, that I have not been more zealous, affectionate and faithful, in preaching and conversation, warning every man, and teaching every man; more abundant in labors, in watchings, in supplications; more exemplary, and more manifestly concerned, and engaged, for the kingdom of the Redeemer, and the salvation of your souls. Deeply sensible of this, wherein I have done wrong, or failed in duty, I sincerely ask forgiveness of you all. And while I bend the knee to the Father of all mercies, imploring his forgiveness; it is my earnest prayer, that no imprudencies, errors, or deficiencies of mine, may prove eventually injurious to your eternal interests.

But, on a serious and solemn review of my ministry, sensible as I am of many and great deficiencies, I cannot accuse myself of having knowingly concealed, or disguised, the truth, or shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. If not deceived, I have aimed to be plain and faithful, in my discourses, both public and private; not as many who corrupt the word of God, but, by demonstration of the truth, commending myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Are you not, my dear people, witnesses for me, that this has appeared to be the case? In the awful presence of the omniscient God, may I not make a solemn appeal to your consciences, whether, with all my imperfections, it have not appeared to be my aim, faithfully to declare unto you the truth, and to keep back nothing, which might be profitable unto you?

During the term of my ministry among you, have you not, my hearers, received many solemn and faithful warnings, and many earnest and affectionate calls? Have not the doctrines and precepts of the gospel been clearly set before you; and their infinite importance, as they respect your salvation, earnestly urged? Have you not, from time to time; been conducted to mount Sinai, that, solemnly impressed, with a view of the awful majesty of God, and the terrors of his law, you might be awakened from your security, and impelled earnestly to inquire, how you might escape from the wrath to come? And, thence conducted to Calvary, have you not been presented with a view of the Savior, bleeding and dying for you; that, beholding the love of God, thus affectingly manifested, your hearts might be melted into penitent tenderness, and turned to accept his tendered mercy? Assured, that now is the accepted time, the day of salvation, have you not been faithfully warned of the danger of delaying repentance, and of the aggravated condemnation, which awaits you, if, despising the terrors, and spurning the mercy, of the Lord, you die in your sins?—And how have you improved? Have you cordially obeyed the truth? Awakened by the terrors of the Lord, and moved and melted by his love, have you dutifully heard his warn-

ings, and penitently received the messages of his grace?

I am bound to give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, for the reason we have to believe, that you have not all received the grace of God in vain. A goodly number, it is hoped, have been brought to repentance, and to the acknowledgment of the truth; and others who were before in Christ, quickened and advanced in the Christian life. And with respect to such, my earnest and affectionate prayer to God is, that your love may abound, yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere, and without offence, till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God: That if, after having preached to others, I myself should not be a castaway, ye may be my joy, and crown of rejoicing, in that day.

But, alas! my hearers, are there not many of you, who have never yet obeyed the Gospel; never received the love of the truth; never become the subjects of evangelical repentance, faith, and new obedience? How affecting, how alarming, is your state! If you continue in your present state, if you persist in rejecting the counsel of God, must you not perish forever, and your final condemnation be tremendously aggravated? If the preached Gospel do not prove a savor of life unto life, will it not assuredly, prove a savor of death unto death, to your souls? What excuse will you plead, when you come to the bar of God? Can you plead, that the truth has not been declared unto you; or that you have not been faithfully and affectionately warned? Believe me, my dear fellow-candidates for eternity, I am pained, I am distressed, for you. After five years preaching to you, and watching for your souls, must I, can I, leave you in a state of unbelief, and instantly exposed to everlasting burnings! Must all the solemn truths, and warnings, which, in the name of the Lord, I have delivered unto you, serve only to augment your guilt and render more

terrible your final doom! Must I meet you in your present dreadful state, before the judgment-seat of Christ! O, will you not to-day, even now at the last, hearken to entreaty, become obedient to the Gospel, and live?

Some of you, it is believed, have a friendly regard for your minister, and are deeply afflicted in the prospect of his removal. Your friendship affects him, and has made an impression on his heart, which time shall never erase. But to see you submit to the Gospel, and, weeping, like Mary at the feet of Jesus, manifest unfeigned repentance and love to God, would give him infinitely higher satisfaction, than any testimonials, however dear, of your friendly affection, personally, to him. Will you not, then, yield to this, his last, his most earnest and most affectionate entreaty, and now, without delay, repent and give your hearts to God? This, be assured, would more than make up any supposed loss you may sustain by the removal of your minister. It would make your salvation, your eternal interests, secure. It would be an unfailing source of consolation to you, amidst all the trials of this chequered state, and fit you for a happy and joyful meeting in the last great day.

Others of you, instead of being afflicted, are rejoiced, no doubt, in the present immediate prospect. But, suffer it to be asked, why do you rejoice? Is it because your minister has not been faithful? Or is it because he has been more faithful, than you wished him to be? The question is to you, of infinite moment. If it be because your minister has been unfaithful, has handled the word of the Lord deceitfully, and daubed with untempered mortar, your rejoicing, no doubt, is on justifiable ground. But if it be, on the contrary, because he has been enabled to be, in a measure, faithful, declaring unto you the truth and the warnings of God, and teaching you the difference between the clean and the unclean, the precious and the vile, your present exultation will be of short continuance, and your joy will be turned into sorrow, in the latter end. Do not suffer yourselves to be deceived with the vain im-

agination, that, by the removal of you minister you will get rid of painful truth. The world is full of change, but truth is eternal, and not one of God's words shall ever fall to the ground. If it be a truth, that, except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God, this, whether you have it preached to you or not, will forever remain a truth; and unless you become the subjects of this all-important change, you will, forever, be excluded from God's kingdom and presence. If it be a truth, that, in the dispensations of his grace, God is a sovereign, having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardening whom he will, it will always remain a truth; and though you may not hear it preached, unless you become cordially reconciled to it, you never will obtain true happiness and peace, as long as God shall reign. If it be a truth, that all who die impenitent, will be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, this, also, will forever remain a truth; and whether you hear it preached or not, whether you believe it not, except you repent, you must soon lie down in sorrow, for eternity. You will, therefore, gain nothing in the end, by the removal of a minister, who preaches painful truth. If you imagine, that, having gotten your minister out of the way, you will then be able to crush the cause of truth and religion in this place, you are still deceived. God will enable his friends to maintain his cause. Wherefore, I beseech you, let the advice of Gamaliel be acceptable unto you: refrain from these men, and let them alone. For if this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. Will you not be entreated, at this interesting period, to pause, and give yourselves time for serious reflection? Are you sure, that, in opposing this church, and stripping them of their pastor, you are doing God service? Have you not, rather, reason to tremble, lest you be found guilty of cruelly grieving and oppressing his people? Has not God assured his people, that he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye? And

will he not avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long! O be warned, I entreat you; throw down your arms, and embrace the truth. Become the penitent, meek, and humble disciples of him who prayed upon the cross, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. You have been a part of my ministerial charge; your welfare is dear to me, your souls are precious; and believe me, I have a feeling for you, an affectionate yearning of heart, for your salvation, which words cannot express. Wherever I may go, whatever may be my lot in life, God forbid, that I should ever cease to bear you on my heart, and to pray for you.

Dear Youth,

Since I have been in this place, I trust I have not failed to impress your minds with a conviction, that I have had a tender concern, particularly, for you. I have frequently addressed you from this desk, and, from time to time, in a less public manner, on the concerns of your souls. And I have had the satisfaction to observe, that, generally, you have listened to my addresses with a pleasing and promising degree of serious attention. But what, dear youth, has been your improvement? Have you laid up instruction in your hearts? Have you dutifully hearkened to the Savior, who died for you? Have you repented of you sins, and given your hearts to God? Have you believed in Christ, and become the Lambs of his flock? Some of you, I trust, have. And, O, may you never forget the distinguishing kindness and mercy of God, who has made you to know, and to rejoice in his salvation. And may the great Shepherd of Israel gather you in his arms, and carry you in his bosom, through all the dangerous scenes of this tempting and hostile world, safe to his heavenly mansions. But are not many of you still in your sins; still impenitent, and estranged from God? Unhappy youth, how long will you refuse to hearken to Christ? How long will you give your hearts to vanity, and walk in the ways of death? Is it not time to repent, and return unto God? Will you

hate instruction and despise reproof? O, do you not know what the end of this must be? After this day, my young friends, you will, probably, hear me preach to you no more. Will you not, then, hearken to this last address of your minister, who loves you, and has earnestly sought your good? Recall to mind, I entreat you, the counsels, the warnings, and instructions, which you have received, and ponder them seriously in your hearts. Remember, that life is short and uncertain. Though young, you may suddenly die. Delay not religion; for a more convenient season than the present, will never come. Forsake the vanities of youth; shun the errors and the vices of the world. Cease to hear the instruction, which causeth to err from the ways of wisdom; and if sinners entice you, consent not. Remember, he that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. Dread, worse than the pestilence, the company of those who make a mock at religion. I leave you, dear youth, surrounded with snares and dangers; but I leave you in the hand of God. Make him your friend, and you will be safe, for time and for eternity.*

Beloved Brethren and Sisters of this Church,

The kingdom of our Lord, in this world, is, at present, a kingdom of patience; and every day's experience is suited to teach us, that we must, through much tribulation, enter into that rest, which remaineth for those, who inherit the promises. You have had a long and painful scene of trial and of conflict; you have sustained a great fight of affliction. But, beloved, count it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as if some strange thing had happened unto you. Have not your brethren, the faithful friends of the cross, and disciples of our Lord, who have gone before you, experienced similar trials? Did not the blessed company, who now surround the throne of God, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands, come

* In years afterwards, quite a number who came forward to profess their faith in Christ, referred back to the ministry of Dr. Worcester, for their first awakening.

out of great tribulation? And will you, then, indulge despondency, and let your hearts fail you? Ought you not, rather, to count it all joy, that you are found worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus? The present, you doubtless consider, as a cloudy and dark day. But, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Jehovah still reigns upon the holy hill of Zion. He will make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath, he will restrain. Fear not, he says, for I am with you; be not afraid, for I am your God. Only trust in him, and he will deliver you, and comfort your hearts. He, who could open to his ancient chosen tribes, a way through the sea, has, surely, power to save, and to relieve his people, in the most distressing circumstances. His church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.

Extraordinary trials, my brethren, call for extraordinary faith, and Christian exertion. It is in scenes of difficulty, of danger, of severe conflict, that the Christian character shines with the brightest lustre. You have, now, an opportunity to display all the amiable and heroic virtues of the soldiers of Christ. And will you not improve it? Will you give up the cause, for which you have so long and so ardently struggled? Is it not the cause of truth, the cause of religion, the cause of God? Have you suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain? No, my brethren, you must never be weary in well-doing, but must hold on, and hold out, and endure unto the end. On you, chiefly, it depends, whether the Gospel of Christ shall be supported in this place. In your fidelity, therefore, and persevering exertions, not only your own eternal interests, but the eternal interests of your children, your friends, and neighbors, and multitudes around you, are deeply concerned. And will you, then, consider any exertions, any sufferings, any sacrifices, too great? Does property ever appear so truly valuable, as when it may be used in promoting the everlasting salvation of immortal souls?

Beware, my brethren, that you be not removed from

the foundation of the Gospel. Cherish your present establishment, as, under God, the sheet anchor of your dearest hopes, in this world, for yourselves, and your children. Carefully maintain the order and discipline of Christ's house. Admonished by the perilous scenes through which you have passed, be careful in your examinations, before you admit to the sacred privileges of your body. See that ye fall not out by the way. Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. If it be possible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men. While you contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints, let nothing be done through strife and vain glory. Maintain a constant sense of your dependence on divine aid, and pray without ceasing. Take to yourselves the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Never, beloved, shall I forget your affectionate kindness to me. May the Lord reward you seven fold. Never shall I forget the solemn, happy days, when we took sweet counsel together, and went to the house, and to the table of the Lord, in company. May the God of all grace comfort your hearts, in all your tribulations; and in due time favor you with a pastor, who will care for you, and feed you in green pastures, by the side of still waters. But, by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the worth of immortal souls, I conjure you never to consent to the settlement of a minister over you, who, you have not good reason to think, will faithfully declare unto you all the counsel of God. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

My fellow-travellers to eternity, with what rapidity do days, and months, and years, roll off! How soon shall we have done with this world, and all its fluctu-

ating scenes! How soon shall we see the heavens on fire, the elements melting with fervent heat, and the Lord descending to judgment! How soon shall we stand together, before his awful and enlightened tribunal! Expecting to meet you there, and fervently praying, that, of his infinite mercy we may be found worthy to stand, in that day, on his right hand, I bid you all, my brethren and friends, an affectionate—Farewell.”

Such a “Farewell” was too much for those, whose mode of religious sentiment and sectarian or party interests had arrayed them as his enemies. They had little realized, that they were *his* enemies, because “the enemies of the cross of Christ.” And whether or not they now knew what they had been doing, they wept freely with all the multitude; so that a stranger would have found it impossible to distinguish them from the preacher’s sincerest friends.—But those who were indeed his *friends*, and most of all because in “charity” so pure, and with a life so irreproachable, he had been “bold,” as Paul, “to speak the Gospel of God,”—wept for themselves and their children, as if *never to be comforted*, when they took the parting hand of his manliness, and received the benediction of that warm and tender heart, upon which the memorials of their confidence and love were “set as a seal,” forever.

It was his *heart*, which, by the grace of God, made him the man that he was. “*I never knew a heart like his*, in all *my* experience of men,” is the living witness of one, who, for the last eighteen years of his life, knew him most intimately, as “a brother beloved” above all his brethren, and who now, in his venerable age, can never mention his name, but with an expression of unutterable esteem and reverence.

Some of Dr. Worcester’s friends at Fitchburg, could

not summon fortitude enough, to hear him preach, the last time, as their pastor. And among those, who did not agree with him in his doctrinal views, and even professed to have no faith in a revelation from God, there were some who had no sympathy with the movement of his opposers, and did not hesitate to condemn a course of proceedings, by which the town had been deprived of the influence of a man, whose interest in the education of the children and youth, was so promotive of the intelligence, industry, enterprise, good morals, and general respectability of the inhabitants.

It has been said, also, that some individuals who took an active part in those proceedings, afterwards deplored their conduct, with apparent penitence and contrition; as has not seldom been true of the adversaries and persecutors of Christ's ministers.*

The *clerical* opposers of Dr. Worcester persuaded themselves, doubtless, that they were contending against him and the church of Fitchburg, *in defence of Christian liberty*, and in rebuke of enthusiasm, bigotry, and intolerance! They were not the first, nor the last, who have done the like. In 1752, Rev. Thomas Gillespie, of Carnock, in Scotland, was deposed from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, by the General Assembly, because he had "declined to act in a forced settlement of a minister, over a congregation that had not chosen him as their pastor." In a letter of cheering sympathy, the great Edwards remarks:—

"This proceeding gives reason to suspect, that the

* See "Life of Edwards," pp. 421—7, the remarkable confession of Joseph Halley, Esq, who was one of the most distinguished men of Western Massachusetts, and who headed the opposition of the Northampton Church against Edwards, in his efforts to restore the usages of the church, which had been supplanted "by the lax method of admission," according to the doctrine of Stoddard.

Church of Scotland, which was once so famous, is not what it once was. It appears probable to me, at this distance, that there is something else at the bottom, besides a zeal to uphold the authority of the church. Perhaps some of the clergy of the Church of Scotland have their minds secretly infected with those lax principles of the new divinity, and have imbibed the *liberal* doctrines, as they are accounted, which are much in vogue at the present day, and so contrary to the strict, mysterious, spiritual, soul-humbling principles of our forefathers. I have observed that these modern fashionable opinions, however called noble and liberal, are commonly attended, not only with a haughty contempt, but an inward malignant bitterness of heart, towards all the zealous professors and defenders of the contrary principles, that do so nearly concern the vitals of religion, and the power of experimental godliness. This, be sure, has been the case in this land. I have known many gentlemen, (especially in the ministry) tainted with these principles; who, though none seem to be such warm advocates as they, for liberty and freedom of thought, or condemn a narrow and persecuting spirit so much as they; yet, in the course of things, have made it manifest that they themselves had no small share of a persecuting spirit. They were, indeed, against anybody's restraining *their* liberties, and pretending to control *them* in their thinking and professing as they please; and that is what they mean, truly, when they plead for liberty. But they bear that inward enmity of spirit towards those others mentioned, that, if they see an opportunity to persecute them under some good cloak, and with some false pretext, they will eagerly embrace it, and proceed with great severity and vehemence. Thus far, if the truth were known, it would appear, that some of your most strenuous persecutors hate you much more for something else, than they do for your not obeying the orders of the General Assembly. I do not pretend to know how the case is. I only speak from what I have seen and found, here in America, in cases somewhat similar. However, it is beyond doubt, that this proceeding will

stand on the records of future time, for the lasting reproach of your persecutors; and your conduct, for which you have suffered, will be to your lasting honor in the Church of God."*

Somewhat more than two years earlier, July 5, 1750, Edwards said, in a letter to Rev. Mr. Erskine,—“ The Scriptures often lead us to judge of true religion, and the gracious sincerity of professors, by the genius, the temper and spirit, of their religion: James iii. 17. Eph. v. 9. Gal. v. 19–25. &c. &c. *I have been greatly grieved at a spirit of censoriousness; but yet I heartily wish, that some sorts of charity were utterly abolished.*”

In the controversy between the church and town of Fitchburg, Dr. Worcester did far more than lay “ the foundation of all that pre-eminence, to which he afterwards attained on the subject of ecclesiastical government, and the order of the churches.” His reputation for theological learning, sound discretion, controversial power, and christian heroism, went forth “ as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds.”

His manner in this controversy was the exponent of his principles. He was too ingenuous and magnanimous, to have recourse to *management*; and “ none of his” was the misnamed *prudence*, which so easily lapses, on the one hand or the other, into duplicity and evasion, and so frequently, through fear or favor,

* Can it be doubted, that the Secession of the Free Church of Scotland, which, almost a century later, has filled the world with its renown, is to be traced directly back, for something more than antecedence, to the noble testimony of the martyr-like Thomas Gillespie? “ When called to the bar, to receive his sentence, he replied—‘ Moderator, I receive this sentence of the General Assembly, with reverence and awe. But I rejoice, that it is given to me, on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on his name, but to suffer for his sake.’”

seeks the refuges of non-committal. He made *straight paths for his feet*, and walked *right onward* in his integrity. Incapable of denying a truth as of affirming a falsehood, he allowed himself in no concealment of facts, and in no misstatements, whatever the opportunity or the temptation. But when compelled by irresistible conviction of duty, to meet an antagonist, he had the sagacity to perceive, with the strength to take and to hold, every honest and honorable advantage in his cause, his position, and his resources. He wrote with the unction of an earnest personal faith. When plain and pungent, he was neither uncourteous nor uncandid. If he was *severe*, he did not "dip his pen in gall." His severity was but the ardency of his love of the truth, and the just expression of his alarms for the consequences of error, to errorists themselves.

If he had chosen to remain at Fitchburg, he could have baffled all the machinations of his opposers, so far as these were aimed to effect his removal. His health alone would have been a sufficient reason for a change of his residence and sphere of labor. But he felt assured, from other signs and leadings of Providence, to which he hourly looked, that his Master was now directing him to some other part of the vineyard; and he could await the future, without solicitude, "rejoicing in the Lord always."

An eminent clergyman, who had been familiar with his arduous trials, testified of him, as he was about retiring from the scene: "I never knew a young man, that I believe could have managed such a controversy, with so much ability and propriety, and with so little of error."

"A few bold hearts joined with him," says one of

the ablest writers* of the present day,—after reviewing the facts of this controversy;—“ Dr. Morse, of Charlestown, Dr. Spring, of Newburyport, and others, all gone with him to the rewards of christian fidelity and heroism; and though the struggle was long, and fierce, the victory was complete. ‘No Union with Error’ was the watch-word; it was caught up and echoed from pulpit to pulpit through New England, till the separation was made, and the Gospel again had free course and was glorified. That was the GREAT CRISIS in the history of the Congregational churches, beyond any thing since they were planted on our shores; SAMUEL WORCESTER was raised up for the exigency; he struck out the true measures; he carried them forward to successful and glorious issue; and revered as he is, and should be, for his self-sacrificing life and premature death, in the cause of Foreign Missions, his true title should be, “THE LIBERATOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF NEW ENGLAND.”

Among the evangelical clergy, as well as laity of the passing generation, there are those, probably, who have been but little aware of the services, which, here at home and in the midst of the sepulchres of “the fathers,” the first Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M. was enabled to perform, for the purifying and “edifying of the body of Christ.”—Such may be surprised, and may somewhat demur, before they are prepared to respond a hearty concurrence in the foregoing eulogium. Perhaps, they may need a more enlightened acquaintance with the history of our churches in New England. And perhaps also they are themselves of the number—the thousands and thousands of thousands—who, in the results of the controversy, at Fitchburg, as in

* Rev. Henry Wood, Cong. Journal, Concord, N. H., April 30, 1846.

those of the controversy at Northampton, will forever
 "SING UNTO THE LORD, AND GIVE THANKS AT THE RE-
 MEMBRANCE OF HIS HOLINESS!"

CHAPTER VII.

Invited to preach at Salem. The Tabernacle Church. Movements at Rowley and Fitchburg. Embarrassed question of duty. First parental affliction. Installation at Salem. Mass. Miss. Magazine. Popular estimation of his preaching and devotional services. Appointment at Dartmouth College. Revival. Death of his eldest daughter. Committee of Advice. on the subject of Professorship. Regard for the Pulpit. Burning of Sermons. Solicitude for church members. Courses of Sermons and Lectures. Occasional Sermons. Models of prayers.

In Judah is God known ; his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. . . . In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

PREVIOUS to his dismissal from Fitchburg, Dr. Worcester had visited Salem, during the session of a council, in the case of the Rev. Joshua Spaulding,—that he might confer with members of the council, relative to his own affairs. He there became very favorably known to a few influential members of the Tabernacle Church, who secretly determined, that, if he and their own pastor should be dismissed, they would take prompt measures to obtain him for the Tabernacle.

In July, a rumor came to Salem, that the pastor of Fitchburg would soon be released. A messenger was dispatched, not without a studied concealment of his purpose, to forestall his services, as a candidate. Just after the messenger entered the town, he met one of

the inhabitants, and, apparently, a man of standing. He began a conversation with him, and intimated, that he was desirous of finding a suitable minister for the society with which he was connected. "Why," said he, "I don't like the doctrine of Mr. Worcester. But he is a man of talents, a good scholar, and a gentleman. And if you like his *doctrine*, you will like *him*. You can't do any better, if you like his doctrine. But *I don't*."

The inquirer was no less in earnest to effect his purpose. Highly gratified with his visit, he returned home without any pledges, yet not without hope, that his next pastor would be the man, who, at Salem, in a single conversation on the principles of church government, had completely won his confidence.

The founders of the Tabernacle Church were originally a part of the First Church in Salem,—the first in the Massachusetts Colony. The pastor, Rev. John Fisk, with a majority of the members, having been cut off from the fellowship of sister churches, by a process of discipline, admirably conducted according to the *Third Way of Communion*, a new society was constituted, and a house of worship erected. Not submitting to any new organization as a church, or being formally recognized, they called themselves, and, for twenty-seven years, claimed to be, the First Church in Salem. Suitable confession was ere long made, and the censure of the churches was regularly removed. And as history must now be written, those, who had been obliged to take a new ecclesiastical standing, became, in the providence of God, a church to "contend earnestly for the faith," when the original church could no longer endure the "sound doctrine" of the forefathers.

The dispute with Mr. Fisk, in which the minority of the church justly succeeded, is not known to have had any direct reference to his sentiments. His successor, Rev. Dudley Leavitt, participated in the spirit of the Great Awakening; and by many in the town and neighborhood, at his settlement in 1745, was reproached as a "New Light." He exerted a very salutary influence. Dr. Whitaker, a man of powerful talents, and an earnest advocate of Hopkinsian views, followed Rev. J. Huntington, whose brief ministry after that of Mr. Leavitt, had left a delightful impression of his loveliness and fervent piety. In 1784, Dr. Whitaker was deposed. Mr. Spaulding succeeded him, and the church rapidly recovered from a sad and melancholy depression.* And although there had been difficulties, which had resulted in his dismissal, such, on the whole, was the prospect of usefulness for *the right kind* of preacher and pastor, who should take his place, that the members of the church could make a very urgent appeal to the man of their choice.

There were, at this time, five Congregational churches in Salem. Beside the Tabernacle, the South Church only, which originated in a secession from it, during the ministry of Dr. Whitaker,—could be called Calvinistic. Of the pastors of the other churches, two would be thought more nearly to resemble "*Cephas*," than "*Eusebius*;" while the third had as much of "*Catholicus*," as had been claimed by any accredited

* The house of worship was burned down, in 1774. The present house is the oldest in the city, having been dedicated in 1777. It was built upon the model of Whitefield's Tabernacle in London, and received its name in honor of his memory. Whitefield preached for Dr. Whitaker, Sept. 5, 1770,—less than four weeks before his death.

The church took the name of Third Church, in 1763, which, after 1786, gave place to the name of the house of worship.

minister in the county of Essex, if not in the whole country.—There was a small Episcopal Church, and as yet no other religious organization, except a Society of Friends or Quakers.

Dr. Worcester was in no haste to be re-settled. He desired a part of the vineyard, in which he could spend and be spent, as a quiet and diligent husbandman, who could reap his harvests in peace, and not be obliged to be in full armor, and incessantly watching, as a soldier in an enemy's country. His heart yearned for repose.—And well aware, that the circumstances of difficulty, which occasioned the resignation of Mr. Spaulding,* were in no respect similar to those by which he himself had been oppressed and afflicted, he yet found it not very pleasant to think of connecting himself with a church and society, which had been so seriously involved in a controversy with their late minister.

His friends at Fitchburg did every thing in their power, to prevent his leaving them. They clung to him, as if the separation would be like tearing, not a limb, but the head from the body. And scarcely had he been dismissed, before the church in Rowley apprized him of their strong desires, that he would occupy their pulpit, at the earliest day; while similar expressions were communicated from other places. He was now entering new scenes, and those in which his character was shown in new forms of development.

* It was simply a difference between the pastor and the church, on the subject of church government. After a very happy union, for some fifteen years, the pastor claimed the right to *negative* the votes of the brethren. After his dismissal, he became openly a Presbyterian.

Mrs. Zervia Worcester.

“ Salem, Sept. 22, 1802.

My dear Zervia,—

By the kindness of Providence, my journey from Hollis to this place was prosperous. * * * Arrived at Mr. Barton's, about 11 o'clock; found their little daughter, a beautiful child, about two years old, very sick of the scarlet fever; parents very anxious and deeply afflicted; could not but take part in their sorrow, nor leave them without tender concern. May the Father of mercies comfort them.—Rode from Tewksbury about two o'clock, and made no considerable stop, until about seven in the evening, very much fatigued, I arrived at Mr. Pickard's, in Rowley. Found Rowley people in eager and anxious expectation. They were very sorry for my engagement at Salem; and would hardly forgive Mr. Punchard for stealing a march. They expressed a concern, lest I should prefer Salem to Rowley; appeared hospitable, kind, and affectionate, and lamented, that, owing to the shortness of my stay, and the fogginess of the weather, I could not see more of the parish, before I left it for this place. I engaged to supply them, four Sabbaths, after the expiration of my present term here.

Friday, about 10 o'clock, left Rowley, and passing through Ipswich, Hamilton, and Wenham, an exceedingly pleasant road, arrived between twelve and one, at my friend, Mr. Dow's, in Beverly. With him I passed very agreeably the afternoon, until about five o'clock; when I took my horse and rode into town. Here I was very cordially received; and have since been treated with great attention. I lodge with elder Safford, a very worthy, serious, and agreeable man; and have every accommodation which I could wish. On the Sabbath, I preached to a large and very attentive assembly; and, at particular request, gave a third sermon in the evening, to an assembly still larger than what met in the day time.—On Sabbath morning, I was called to visit a woman, a sister of this church, who was dying of the dysentery,—a disease

which is quite prevalent in the easterly part of the town. She was able to speak, and spoke very comfortably indeed. Monday, at five o'clock, P. M., I attended her funeral.

On Monday evening, attended a church-meeting. Most of the brethren and sisters were together, and their appearance was exceedingly agreeable. Last evening, I attended a conference. There is no special seriousness, but people are attentive.—Since I have been in town, I have visited at a good many places; and am very much pleased with the people. There is religion here; and a great field for usefulness. I have this morning been particularly requested by the Committee, to hold myself, *in a special sense*, as a candidate for settlement in this place; and to keep myself free from any further engagements elsewhere. I hesitated upon the subject. This is undoubtedly one of the most important stands in the Commonwealth. The Society is very large, and if they get a man of talents and popularity, is likely to be greatly increased. The labor will be great, and the probable influence very extensive. I feel myself unequal to the situation. However, I have consented to the request of the Committee, so far as not to enter myself under any further engagements, until my present term is expired.

How soon I shall see you, is uncertain, but probably as soon as I proposed. Write to me when you can, and let me know how it fares with yourself, and with the three dear little pledges of our mutual affection. Tell them that papa loves them, and will come and see them before long. Will you not have leisure to pay particular attention to the little girls, to teach them to read, and to commit some good things to memory? Their early education is infinitely important. My love to all friends.

Yours, most affectionately,

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

“ *Salem, Sept. 30, 1802.* ”

My dear Zervia,—

My last letter might awaken, perhaps, some concern, which I wish as soon as possible to dissipate. I have been indeed very unwell, and have had, as it is thought, a hard escape from a fever. * * * *

I am better; and as the weather is very fine, I propose to ride out this afternoon to Marblehead.

This moment Capt. Tenney called and handed your letter. It is a cordial, it is like balm. Oh, how good the Lord is! How can we forget his kindnesses! I am aware, that your situation must be attended with many disagreeable circumstances; but we must hope in that Providence we have always found kind, for better days.—Where our lot will be cast, is known to Him only, whose wisdom directs all events. Perhaps it may be well to cultivate, in the present interim, a taste for a style of living somewhat different from what we have been accustomed to heretofore.

My time is just gone. Mr. Punchard, who will ride with me this afternoon, will be waiting.

Tell Fidelia and Lucretia, papa loves them a great deal; says they must be good little girls; do as their mama bids them, and he will come and see them in a few days. Habituate them as much as possible to neatness and cleanliness; let no little girls go before them, in any thing which is pretty. Love and duty to all.

Yours, with sincere affection,
SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

There is a peculiarity in the usages of the Tabernacle Church, to which objections have been made, but which originated in a painful experience. In 1786, soon after Mr. Spaulding's settlement, the Church adopted their present “Articles” of government and discipline. The 16th is this:

“To prevent as much as possible any unconverted minister ever having charge of this church, we think

it necessary, that such persons as may be set over us in the Lord, should give the church a particular account of what God has done for them, by a work of grace upon their hearts, and sign the articles of the church, before ordination to the pastoral office over it."

Dr. Worcester was the first candidate who complied with the precautionary requisition. It was at a meeting, Nov. 22. "The church unanimously expressed their satisfaction with his relation of religious experience." At an adjourned meeting, on the 23d, they voted, one dissentient only, to give him a call to be their pastor. The proprietors of the house of worship concurred unanimously.

Rev. Leonard Worcester.

"Hollis, Dec. 9, 1802.

My dear Brother,—

I was called hither, last week, to attend to my family. Two of my children were very sick, Lucretia of a fever, and Samuel of a weakness brought on by various concurring causes. But a merciful Providence has vouchsafed relief, and they both appear, at present, to be in a hopeful way of recovery. Truly, the Lord is good, and his mercy endureth forever. The letter, giving information of the sickness of my children, found me at Newburyport, where I was on a visit with your sister.

Of my present situation and prospects I can give you but a sketch.—The church in Fitchburg have lately proceeded to give me a formal call to return to them.* As an encouragement they have voted to give

* The church thus "proceeded," on the 26th of October. The plan was to support the Gospel, by an association independent of the town. In the ensuing spring, it was voted to have a candidate with the town, as if no difficulty had occurred. But in November, 1803, it was voted by the church, and those who associated with them for the worship of God, to choose a commit-

me my former salary of \$333,33, with the addition of twenty-five cords of wood annually, and have procured subscriptions to the amount of seven or eight hundred dollars, as a settlement. This, considering circumstances, is certainly generous. They flatter themselves, that, should I return, opposition will, in a great measure, die away, and the town be restored to a tolerable state of peace; but should not their expectations in this regard be realized, they are determined to support the Gospel themselves, receiving only such assistance as may voluntarily be contributed.

At the Tabernacle, in Salem, I have met with unexpected acceptance. The week before last the church unanimously voted to present me an invitation to settle with them. The society was to meet yesterday; and it was expected that the unanimity would be as perfect in the society as it was in the church. Whether this expectation were well founded, the event has determined. After one Sabbath more at Salem, I am to *return* to Rowley, where a strong disposition is manifested to proceed to a call, any previous calls notwithstanding; but I think I shall prevail on them to desist from their purpose.

You will easily conceive that I am placed in a situation not a little perplexing, critical, and trying. The call from the church in Fitchburg is not to be treated

tee to provide a candidate. A new meeting-house was soon afterwards erected, amidst great opposition. Rev. T. T. Barton was settled, in 1804. In 1814, Mr. B. having been dismissed for sometime, a union was effected between the new and the old organization, at the request of the latter. When Dr. W. heard of this, he said to one of his tried friends,—“How *could* the brethren of the church have ever consented to such a measure? You can no more unite with those people, than light and darkness can be one!”

The Rev. William Eaton, was settled over both parties, in 1815; and the form of union continued until 1823, when he was dismissed, and a new separation took place, the consequences of which have been decidedly advantageous to the peace and general welfare of the town. The Calvinistic Congregational Church, of which Rev. E. W. Bullard is now pastor, contains the principal part of the families of the friends and adherents of Dr. Worcester. There have been no members of the church more stable than those, who, under his ministry, were “*established* in the truth.”

with lightness. There is certainly an interest there worthy of attention, and many things present themselves to my mind, as strong inducements to return. But there are obstacles, which, if not totally insurmountable, are at least exceedingly difficult to surmount. On the whole, it is a *tender* business.

Salem presents an important object. The society is now very large, and the number of those, belonging to others societies, who are disposed to hear, very considerable. It is supposed, that I have more than once preached to an assembly of two thousand people. For some unaccountable reason the town, generally, manifest a strong desire for my settlement there. Viewed in all respects, the Tabernacle is considered by those who are acquainted with it, as one of the most important stands in the Commonwealth. But there are obstacles to my settling. Not only will the requisite labor be immense, but what is of much higher consideration is, I doubt whether I am the proper person for a post so important and arduous. Though the odium and reproach drawn upon it by Mr. Spaulding, seem to be at present in a good measure done away; yet to maintain the great cause there, with any desirable share of respectability, will require the exertion of talents, and the exercise of virtues, which, I fear, I do not possess.

I speak after the manner of men. I know God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. But this, I think, will not warrant us confidently to advance to a post, to which we are not competent. Write to me, dear brother, as soon as you can. A letter directed to Salem will find me. Give your opinion and advice freely. But especially have me in constant remembrance in your addresses to the fountain of grace and of wisdom. Assure our dear sister of a share in our most affectionate remembrances. Accept my thanks for your *good sermon*. And believe me to be, yours in fraternal love.

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

Mrs. Zervia Worcester.

“Salem, Dec. 29, 1802.

My dearest Zervia,—

I have but a single moment; for Mr. M. is waiting in the rain. I came here yesterday. Expect to preach here the next Sabbath,—at Rowley, the Sabbath after. At Rowley, they seem determined to proceed to a call at all adventures. The greatest engagedness is manifested. You will easily conceive, that my mind is overwhelmed. Sleep has almost departed from my bed. Unite your prayers with mine for divine support, light, and direction, and especially for prudence and humility. My situation was never, perhaps, so critical and trying.

Possibly I may see you next week, but do not reckon much upon it, for it is very uncertain.

Embrace the dear children for me, and assure them of my love. You will spare no pains in their education.

Love and respects to all friends.

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

In a letter of January 7, 1803, he says,—“My mind is still fluctuating. May God dispose of me as he pleases.” A few weeks afterwards, he was called suddenly to Hollis, by intelligence of the dangerous sickness of his second daughter. She died in his arms, but never in his heart.

“Salem, Feb. 16, 1803.

My dear Zervia,—

At the earnest solicitation of Mr. Haywood, I tarried with him on the day I left Hollis, until after dinner. I arrived at Tewksbury, about sunset. At brother Barton’s, I found a strange satisfaction. They knew what it was to bury a child. They could weep with me, and administer the balm of sympathy to my

wounded heart. It was indeed a tender scene; my affliction seemed to call up their sorrow afresh. O, my dear, the wound now opened will never be closed; we shall carry it to the grave. I feel it more and more. I trust I am not without support and consolation. There is comfort in considering, that God has done it. There is unspeakable happiness in the feeling of submission to his holy will. It is all right. I know, I feel it to be so.

But the pleasant, the lovely Lucretia—my swimming eyes will hardly permit me to write her name,—her dear image is constantly present with me, whether waking or sleeping. How pleasant her looks,—with what endearing fondness does she pronounce *Papa!*—A thousand tender recollections overwhelm my heart, and ere I am aware, the flowing tear steals down my cheek. O, my dear, I think of you; I think of Fidelity and Samuel, with a feeling, a melancholy tenderness, till now unexperienced. How often does my heart rise to the Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, that he would surround you with his supporting and comforting presence,—that he would bless the dear children,—and that he would have my little, afflicted, *broken* family, from whom I am so painfully absent, in his holy and merciful keeping.

On Friday, the day after I left you, I attended the funeral of the Rev. Mr. Prentiss, of Reading. It was to me a solemn scene. On Friday, the week before, the remains of the Rev. Mr. Robie, of Lynn, were committed to the tomb. How many and how solemn are the admonitions we receive! God grant us grace wisely to improve them.

I arrived in town about seven o'clock on Friday evening, and met with a very welcome and sympathetic reception. The people here had been in a state of great solicitude. They got the first news of our affliction, on the Monday preceding my arrival. Had they not received it that day, some of them, it appears, would have set out on Tuesday, for Hollis. There is here no discoverable alteration, unless it be an increased attachment and an increased anxiety respect-

ing my final answer. O, why is it, that so unworthy a creature should experience so much kindness, and receive so many and so great testimonials of Christian affection and esteem? Surely I am nothing, and the praise is due to God. O, that he would make me humble and faithful in his service, and show me in what part of his vineyard he would have me labor. Mr. Smith, of Salem, N. H., came to see me on Monday, preached a lecture at the vestry in the evening, and tarried with me till the next morning. His company was a comfort. I received a letter from brother Leonard; all well. You are remembered with affection.

Absence from you at this period, is uncommonly painful. I hope, however, you are not without comfort. God grant his sanctifying influences to us both, that our present grievous affliction may do us good. We need correction; let us dutifully submit to it. Let us live nearer to God, and set our affections more on things above. Let us pray more fervently for one another, and for our dear little ones. Devoting them to God, enjoying them as his, let us bring them up for him, as long as he is pleased to lend them to us. But a little while more, and we shall have done with this vale of tears. O, let it be our daily business to prepare for a better world. May we not indulge the hope that Lucretia has gone before us, and if we be found worthy, will, ere long, welcome us to a participation of heavenly joys! Love to all friends.

Yours, most affectionately,

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

Lucretia, and not *Lydia*, was the name by which this little daughter was usually called in his family. It was the same with his second Lydia Lucretia, who also died at an early age. Another daughter, who, it has often been said, more resembles him, than any of his children, received the name of Elizabeth Lydia. But neither was ever called Lydia, as the common dis-

tinctive name; and for the reason, probably, that, while it was a grateful satisfaction to the father, to *think* of the name of Lydia, as borne by one of his own beloved children, there was so much of hallowed tenderness in the memory of his endeared sister, and revered mother, that he chose another name for the familiar sound of his own voice, and that of other members of the domestic circle. He was the more afflicted by the death of his first Lydia Lucretia, because of the exceeding beauty of "her innocent age," and the glowing expectations, which others as well as himself, had formed, of her character of mind and heart, in future years.

"*Salem, March 22, 1803.*"

My dear Zervia,—

On my way down, I stopped at Tewksbury,—wrote my answer there to the Tabernacle Church, and sending it forward by Mr. Barton, stayed and preached for him on the Sabbath. The Monday following, I arrived in town, and was received with great joy. * * *

March 24. Your letter has produced in my mind the mingled emotions of joy and grief. Blessed forever be the Father of mercies, for all his goodness to me and my family. O, may he who comforted Martha and Mary, in their affliction, comfort your heart, and sanctify unto us both, all our bereavements and trials. *He* knows how we mourn, and into his bosom let us pour our wounded hearts.

I shall see you before installation, if possible, but there is still an uncertainty about it.

Love and respects, as usual. In haste,

Yours.

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

His theological teacher and warm friend, Dr. Austin, preached the Sermon, at his installation, on the 20th of April. It was an able and characteristic exposition

of the sentiment, "*That it ought to be viewed, as an indispensable and primary duty of the preachers of the Gospel, to diffuse correct information respecting God.*" A very deep impression was made; not least of all by the address to the Pastor elect.*

"The greatest solemnity was observed in the audience, and the general wishes were for the union and peace of that numerous society,† of which Mr. Worcester has accepted the charge. The society did themselves honor in the generous preparations for the Council and strangers, and in all the services had the cheerful concurrence of the inhabitants."‡

* "You have, like your Master, borne the cross, and suffered the shame. You have passed through the ordeal of whispering satire, of the embittered machinations of false brethren, and the more open assaults of those, who had the fortitude to be more generously your enemies." &c.

Dr. Austin's text was in Acts xvii, 23. In a note to the Sermon, he says, "It is, in the author's view, an extraordinary phenomenon in the moral world, to see a learned man stand up in the pulpit, as one who is set for the defence of the gospel, and tell his auditory, that there are no essential truths to be believed in order to a man's becoming a good christian, but such as are acceded to by all parties; that all attempts to explain the capital doctrines of christianity, turn out to be a mere jumble of hard words, and unintelligible phrases; and that the wisest way in the world is to content ourselves with knowing what every heathen knows perfectly well already, that if we have done wrong we must be sorry for it. By this sort of preaching the intelligent hearer is reduced to these two alternatives, either he must abjure his understanding and take the gospel upon trust, or search into the interior structure of christianity and become an infidel. How long shall this severest satire upon the scheme of divine revelation continue to torture us from the pulpit? To place the doctrines of christianity in regard to their intelligibleness upon a level with the Eleusynian mysteries, is surely the worst of arguments to prove its inspiration."

† The population of Salem, in 1800, was 9457; in 1765, 4427; and 6700, in 1786. In 1771, Dr. Whitaker recorded this "numerous Society, as "350 families and 1905 souls;" or more than one third part of the inhabitants. At Dr. Worcester's settlement, there were probably three fourths as many, as in 1771. The Society has now, in 1851, about an eleventh part of a population, exceeding 20,000. Communicants, 413: 176, in 1771.

‡ Salem Gazette, April 22nd. "The introductory prayer was by the Rev. Samuel Spring, of Newburyport. An excellent sermon was delivered by

The brothers Leonard and Thomas added much to the interest of the installing services. The latter remarked to a member of the church, who was among the most pleased and elated,—“I should not feel, that I could go away in peace, and leave my brother with you, were it not for the trials which he has had at Fitchburg. He is a scholar, and I know he will be respected anywhere. But I should tremble for him, in such flattering circumstances, if I did not believe, that the influence of the trials which he has had to pass through, will serve to keep him humble.”

Thus was consummated, in the thirty-third year of his age, the second pastoral relation of Dr. Worcester; and thus commenced the most prosperous and happy administration of the Tabernacle Church, from its establishment in 1735. There was, indeed, “great joy among the people” of his own charge; and the “cheerful concurrence” of so many others, in their choice of a pastor, was marked, as highly auspicious. The feeling of satisfaction, it may be said, was universal.*

the Rev. Samuel Austin, of Worcester. The installing prayer was from Rev. Samuel Niles, of Abington, and the charge from Rev. Mr. Hopkins, of this town. A Brother of the Candidate installed, gave him the hand of fellowship, and his Father closed the solemnities with prayer.” His brother Leonard thus appears to have been taken by some, for the “*father!*”

* Notwithstanding what was written by a friend of Mr. Hazlitt and Mr. Belsham, respecting the state of religious opinions in Salem, at the time of Dr. Freeman’s avowal of Unitarianism, in 1757.—“Many other churches might be mentioned, [beside ‘Old Hingham’ &c.] from which the Calvinistic gloom is gradually dispersing. But I must particularly notice Salem. There was there one [?] thoroughdox [?] congregation, which was not in a very flourishing state. There were also three large congregations, where Unitarian ministers were generally [?] heard with acceptance. One of these, indeed, became wholly Unitarian in a little time, through the fearless and indefatigable labors of Mr. Bentley, a very learned man, and an unbiassed and strenuous advocate for what appeared to him to be the good word of truth, according to the Gospel. The two others were mostly [?] Arians. Mr. Barnard, an hospitable, open-hearted man, who readily entered into the circumstances of the stranger, was the minister of the second of these churches,

It was in this same month, as some may be pleased to know, that Jeremiah Evarts took charge of the Academy, in Peacham, Vt., and became an inmate of the family of Rev. Leonard Worcester. It was one of the ways in which Providence was preparing him, to be associated so fraternally with the brother at Salem, in the greatest benevolent enterprises of their times and our own.

And in this same year, 1803, Dr. Channing commenced his "brilliant ministry" in Boston, expecting, no doubt, an entire change in the predominant faith of New England, through the gradual progress of "liberal sentiments." But it is not very probable, that he had any idea of such an aggressive resistance of those sentiments, as that of 1815, when his "ardent sensibilities" were so much aroused by Mr. Evarts's "great plainness of speech," in the Panoplist "Review of American Unitarianism;" and when drawing his bow, somewhat violently, and not a little "at a venture," he suddenly found himself in the open field, face to face, with "no unequal antagonist," in the equally aroused pastor of the Tabernacle.

On the day after his installation, Dr. Worcester preached a sermon, at the dedication of a house of

and had so well instructed his flock, that nothing was offensive to them which appeared to flow from an honest mind. Mr. Darby, a rich merchant, rendered the third respectable, by his courteous and bountiful disposition. Our friend often preached to these congregations, and was treated with civility by them all."—*Monthly Rep'y*, vol. III, quoted in *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, vol. III, pp. 667-8.

By the same gossiping writer it was said,—“There is every reason to predict, that, in thirty or forty years more, the whole of Massachusetts will be Unitarian.” It is now “more” than *fifty*, or *sixty* years!

“1786. About this time Mr. Hazlitt, a stranger, supplies the pulpit of the First Church, the pastor being on a journey. In one of his sermons, before the North Parish, he openly disavowed his belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, much to the surprise of his hearers.”—*Felt's Annals*, &c., vol. II, p. 605.

worship, for the Third Congregational Church, in Rowley. It was from I Kings v : 27. He was heard with much favor, and, at the request of the society, the sermon was published.

The subject of his Inaugural Sermon, April 24th, was,—“ *The great importance, that the word preached by the ministers of Christ, be received in a proper manner by those to whom it is preached,*”—suggested by Acts xvii : 11, 12—“ These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word,” &c. The views which he presented, were a very appropriate introduction of the personal references, suited to the occasion.

“ Since last I addressed you from this sacred desk, we have passed through one of the most solemn and eventful scenes, which ever takes place on this side eternity. You have received from God, as we trust, a minister of the Gospel; and I, from the same God, have received the charge of a people. I have been made, by the Holy Ghost, an overseer of this flock in the Lord. This is to me an occurrence of infinite moment. I need not assure you, that the charge which I have received, lies heavy upon my heart. Experienced, as in some measure I am, in the afflictions of the Gospel, and in the difficulties attending a faithful discharge of the christian ministry; pleasant and agreeable as the present aspect of things is, I dare not allow myself to look forward into future life, with any raised expectations of temporal prosperity or happiness. But it is of little consequence what befalls *me*, provided that you, my dear friends, may but be saved. May I but be found faithful, and may you but be savingly benefitted by my ministry, I will rejoice in any event.

As you have received me, in the character of an ambassador from the Lord of life and glory, you will be pleased to bear it in constant remembrance, that in this

capacity I am to act, not in my own name, but in the name of Him by whom I am sent. In all my official transactions among you, I am to be considered as acting, not for myself, but for the Great Head of the Church, whose minister I am. You will be pleased to remember, moreover, that there is the most solemn responsibility attached to my office. It is written,—“Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully.” And perhaps there will not be a more awful reckoning, in the great and decisive day of the judgment, than that of an unfaithful minister of the Gospel!

You will ever bear it in mind, that as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, to treat with you on the most solemn and momentous concerns, I am furnished with my instructions, and these instructions are contained in the sacred Scriptures. The Bible *entire* is my only warrant, my only guide, in all my official transactions; in all the various business of my sacred mission. According to the Bible I am to live; according to the Bible I am to preach. According to the Bible I am to reprove, to rebuke, and to exhort, warning every man and teaching every man. According to the Bible I am to manage the holy discipline, and to administer the sacred ordinances of Christ's house. According to the Bible, in a word, I am to negotiate with you, in the name of the great King, my master, the all-important concerns of your eternal salvation.

You will, therefore, never require me, you will never indeed wish me, to deviate in the least, from my directions in this sacred volume. In preaching to you the Gospel, you will never require me to keep back anything which may be profitable unto you; or to shun to declare all the counsel of God. You will never require me to lower down the majesty of the divine character, nor to sacrifice the rights of the divine government, nor to promise you life upon other terms than what the Gospel proposes. You will allow me faithfully to delineate your characters, as they are represented in the Scriptures, and to declare to you freely the only and indispensable terms, on which you may obtain reconciliation and peace with God. You will allow me to

make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between him that feareth God and him that feareth him not; and to proclaim not only the acceptable year of the Lord, but also the day of vengeance of our God.

Upon my public ministrations, you will ever attend with seriousness and candor. Holding yourselves open to conviction, willing to be brought to the light that your deeds may be reprov'd, you will never reject any doctrine or sentiment I may deliver, or blame me for delivering it, until you are clearly convinced, on impartial and thorough investigation, that it is doctrine not warranted by the Scriptures. But if doctrines are delivered which contravene your preconceived opinions, or which grate upon your feelings, you will, like the noble Bereans, search the Scriptures daily whether they be so. And never on any occasion will you be so unjust to yourselves, as to speak against me or my preaching, until you have ingenuously waited upon me for free and friendly conversation, and given me a free opportunity, if possible, to satisfy your minds. My doors shall ever be open to receive you; and it will be my greatest pleasure to attend to your difficulties, to answer your inquiries, and to give you every satisfaction, when convinced of my error or fault.

On the whole, you will regard me when preaching the Gospel, as a steward of the mysteries of God, and as the Lord's watchman unto this his Israel. You will never wish me to cry peace, peace, when there is no peace, nor to daub with untemper'd mortar; but faithfully to warn the wicked, as well as to comfort the righteous; and so to divide the word of truth, as to give every one his portion in due season.

As pastor of this church, you will wish me to be faithful in the house of God; never relaxing the rules of evangelical discipline, out of compliance or partiality to any, nor administering the sacred ordinances in any other way, nor to any other subjects, than what the Gospel designates. For in this, as in everything else, I can act in the name, and by the authority only of my Lord and Master.

In my private walks and social intercourse with you, you will wish me to be blameless as becomes the minister of Christ; never prostituting my character, nor sacrificing the dignity of my office to customs of the world. And you will expect me also to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, as occasion may offer, with all meekness and mildness, long-suffering and doctrine.

My relation to you, my dear brethren and friends, is inconceivably solemn and interesting. It involves consequences infinitely momentous, and eternally lasting, both as it respects me, and as it respects you. The weight of duty and responsibility devolving on me is immense. Who is sufficient for these things? Brethren pray for me.

To you, my dear people, is my character and my happiness, for this life, in a great measure committed. I feel that I shall need your utmost candor, tenderness, and benevolence. And as my lot is now cast among you, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and by the love of the Spirit, to deal kindly and truly with my Master, and with me for his sake. Expect not perfection in a fellow-worm; but remember that you have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God.

Bear it in remembrance, that the great object of my mission to you is the salvation, the everlasting salvation of your souls. This is the object of my mission, and this, suffer me to assure you, is the most ardent desire of my heart. Take heed, therefore, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. Remember, that, if I am to watch as one who must give account, so also for the manner in which you receive and improve the preached Gospel, you must account at the last great day. And as you receive and improve it rightly or not, your eternal state will be determined. Let me then entreat you to give a strict and conscientious attendance in the house of God; and never suffer yourselves to fall into habits of negligence and sloth on the Lord's day. Never suffer me to *preach to these walls*; but let me, I entreat you, be favored with your attendance, and with your solemn attention,

whenever I declare in this place the messages of God. Lay feelingly to heart the aggravated guilt, which must attend an abuse of that exhibition of Almighty love, which is addressed to you in the Gospel. Remember, that he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned.

Welcome, then, I entreat you, the Gospel of the grace of God, dutifully receive its instructions, and submit to its terms, and let its holy doctrines and precepts have constant control over all your views, feelings, and conduct. Let your ears, your understandings, your hearts, be open to the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Need I tell you, that as your servant for Jesus' sake, I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more I may love you, the less I may be loved. If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Finally, brethren, pray for me, and pray for yourselves. For me, that a great door and effectual may be opened before me; that I may be filled with the Spirit of God; obtain grace to be faithful as the minister of Christ, and to come to you, from time to time, in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. And pray for yourselves, that the spirit of grace and supplication may be poured out abundantly upon you, and upon your children; that no root of bitterness springing up may trouble you; that nothing may hinder the success of the Gospel ministry in this place; and that this gracious dispensation may continually prove a savor of life unto life. And may God grant, that we all, both he who sows, and they who reap, may at last meet together, and rejoice together in his kingdom!"

On the Sabbath following, or May 1st, Dr. Worcester preached an animated missionary sermon,—it being the time for a collection in aid of the Mass. Mis-

sionary Society. It was made very evident, that he was aiming to be a missionary minister for the world, while not neglectful of any reasonable service, among the people of his immediate charge. After a vivid picture of the deplorable condition of the greater part of "the eight hundred millions of human inhabitants which the earth" was then "computed to contain,"—and which was not to be "regarded only as a subject for lamentable and unavailing tears,"—he proceeded, with a glowing spirit, to the encouragements afforded by recent exertions of Christians, and their increasing obligations, "to do good and to communicate," agreeably to the words of his text, (Heb. xiii : 16,) and the commandment of the Savior,—“GO, TEACH ALL NATIONS.”

The anniversary of the society was held on the 24th and 25th of the month, when he was appointed one of the editors of the magazine, which was about to be issued. *Thirteen* clergymen had been designated, the year previous, to publish a monthly periodical for the society ; but not a page had been seen, until Dr. Worcester was called to fill a vacancy in the editorial committee. In June, and at Salem, the first Number was printed,—the new member of the committee taking the heaviest share of the labor of preparation and circulation. A long article of "Missionary Intelligence," contains a portion of his missionary sermon, May 1st. From this time—through five volumes,—until the union of the Magazine with the Panoplist, June 1808, his editorial labors were continued ; and without them, it is questionable whether the work would have been sustained.*

* Dr. Austin, the first Secretary of the Society, and Dr. Spring, were among the most frequent contributors to the work.

Ardently engaged as he now was, in forwarding every part of the means and end of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, Dr. Worcester devoted himself chiefly to the duties of his pastoral office. The Tabernacle pulpit became such an attraction, that the value of seats in the house rose to a higher mark, than had ever been known. And, although there was a strong and confident effort, to draw off a portion of the congregation, to the former pastor, in a new enterprise—the establishment of the “Branch Church,”*—the people of the old society were conscious of no diminution of numbers or strength.

Mr. Spaulding could speak as boldly as any man, “disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.” His words had often been “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.” But for several years before his dismissal, he had entered largely into prophetic mysteries, and had preached his “Millenarian” expositions, with great enthusiasm, frequency, and vehemence. He also discoursed much of his “Divine Theory,” which as heard, and since published, he did not expect many to understand, until a future age; and which, it has been more than doubted, whether he understood any better himself, than if he had been thinking and speaking “in an unknown tongue.”

After such discussions, and particularly after the long and painful dispute, concerning his claim to negative the voice of the brethren,—far the more painful, because he had been so much beloved, and his sincerity and integrity were so unquestionable,—it

* Formed Dec. 29, 1803. Became Presbyterian, in 1815, and reassumed Congregationalism in 1828. It was called “The First Presbyterian Church, in Salem,” in 1824; but, in 1828, took the name of “Howard Street.”

was accounted a luxury to listen to discourses, so definite and timely in subject, so distinct and luminous in method, so logical and convincing in argument, so persuasive in application, as those of his successor.

All were struck with the modesty of Dr. Worcester's manner, as contrasted with the power of his thoughts; especially when he put forth his strength. Upon some subjects, he, of course, did not expend his best energies. He needed to be roused for the pulpit, as also for conversation; in which many might often have felt themselves his equal or superior, who very soon might see, that they had committed a grand mistake. One of his professional hearers compared his "reasoning to a large wheel, which revolved with prodigious power, and so put its adjunct machinery into operation, that every turn it made, it came nearer and nearer to the completion of its work,—with pleasure and admiration to the spectators."

While all his sermons were instructive, his great strength required a great pressure. He could summon it, as did the son of Manoah, when he smote the Philistines, after they had "come up and burnt his wife, and her father with fire."

It would have been strange, if at the beginning of his ministry in Salem, he had not aimed to do his best, and to make the most favorable impression upon those in the surrounding community, whose sympathies gave a decided preference to the Arminian, or "liberal" expositions of doctrine. Educated men and others, claiming to be in the highest ranks of social position and influence, were affected by the personal character and the ministrations of Dr. Worcester, as no other man in Salem, or elsewhere, had affected them. It was too obvious to escape notice, that the tone of

remark upon his distinctive sentiments was more moderate, kind, and respectful. It was seen and felt, that the "*orthodoxy*" of the Bible, as he preached it and exemplified it, is neither incompatible with good taste nor good sense, enlightened reason nor eminent scholarship; and that, in its true and legitimate fruits, it is not at all the "*gloomy*" Calvinism, which they had been accustomed to dread, as they would the contagion of a pestilence. And it was for the marked advantage of the cause of evangelical and experimental religion in Salem and the vicinity, from the very first months of Dr. Worcester's labors at the Tabernacle, *as it has been ever since*, that "the doctrine according to godliness," as held by our New England forefathers, was commended to every man's conscience, from the Scriptures both of the New and the Old Testament; without the least measure of rant or rhapsody, declamation or denunciation, but with indisputable power of argument, and universally acknowledged delicacy and refinement of taste.

In his first ministrations in Salem, and certainly no less afterwards, strangers and casual hearers were as much arrested by his mode of prayer, as by his style of preaching. His addresses to the Throne of Grace were always solemn and fervent, abounding in the richest scriptural expression or allusion, and impressively adapted to the particular scenes, situations, and circumstances of those, for whom with the "giving of thanks," he "made supplications, prayers, intercessions." But he was generally slow, and his utterance hesitating, rather than fluent; sometimes seemingly waiting for the right word to come to its place. It was more than once or thrice suggested to him, that he might not be aware how long he was engaged in

what is usually called "*the long prayer.*" He was grieved. His patience was disquieted. It was a thought that distressed him greatly, that any of his people should be wearied by his devotional services; such was his own habitual conception of the privilege and efficacy of prayer, and its exalted dignity and grandeur, as a part of the solemnities of public worship. He could not have been conscious, that thirty-five, or even forty minutes had *sometimes* passed away, when not more than half the number would have been prescribed by himself, as a reasonable or appropriate limit.*—While never otherwise than elevated, copious, and earnest, there were many seasons when all would say in their hearts,—“How dreadful is this place!” And not unfrequently did he seem to ascend like Moses, to the very summit of the Mount, and commune with the Holy One of Israel, as did that man of God, when he had left all the children of Israel in the plain below.

Somewhat less than half a year from the time of his installation, he was considerably disturbed, while his people were greatly excited—many of them *irritated*,—by his appointment to the Professorship of Divinity, at Dartmouth College. He had been consulted earlier than they had known; and had treated the subject with his wonted carefulness. His impressions and feelings were freely spoken to his brother at Peacham,

* His brother Noah was more free in his utterance. He once prayed, at an ordination, *for a whole hour*; and yet never repeated a sentiment or an expression!—In those days, it was more common to see a person *standing* in the time of sermon, than to see one sitting *in prayer*. The posture of sitting, at such a time, would have been taken at once, as a token of sudden illness, except in cases of very aged people, and those of known chronic infirmity; or would have been considered an inexcusable indecorum, as well as a sin of gross irreverence. Hence, some would *stand*, lest they should excite alarm by sitting!

who was the first to communicate the wishes of a part of the Trustees, among whom there was not an entire concurrence of theological predilections.

Rev. Leonard Worcester.

“ Salem, July 20, 1803.

My dear Brother,—

Your favor, written at the instance of Judge Niles, I received this morning. But what shall I say, in regard to the object in question? In the first place, I will say, that, in my mind, there is not the least probability, should an attempt be made, such as Judge Niles proposes, that it would succeed. I am known, *or supposed*, to have too much decision about me, on certain theological ground, for the views of the Trustees of Dartmouth University. In the second place, I never feel myself prepared to determine with respect to any object, and especially one of such magnitude as that now presented, until it be placed in full view. In determining what is duty, in cases of this nature, many circumstances are to be taken into consideration.

Questions, relative to settling as a minister in any particular place, or relative to accepting an appointment to any important office, are almost always placed in a very different light, after the call is given, or the election declared, from any in which they can be previously contemplated. This I have found by experience. I cannot, therefore, feel myself at liberty to say positively, either yes, or no, to the question indirectly proposed, in the present case. Leaving the question of personal qualification out of the account, in the improbable event of my election to the important office in view, I conceive, that I should be placed in a very embarrassed state of mind. My present situation, is, in many respects, very agreeable and very important. The least suggestion of my removal would be, in their present state of feeling, like a thunder-clap to this people; and, if it would not savor too much of vanity, I might say, to *this vicinity*.

But, it will not always be, as it is now. You know, my brother, and I know, that the public opinion respecting my talents and acquirements has always been a great deal too high; a circumstance, which has been to me a most fruitful source of solicitude. But not to digress: I am free to acknowledge to you, that, were there no circumstances to render my acceptance of it inconsistent, the office of Theological Professor would not be very repugnant to my personal inclinations. I am fond of retirement and study; and, if I do not misjudge, am, by nature or by habit, better fitted to excel, as a theological lecturer, than as the pastor of a parish. On the whole, I can only say, that, in my present view, an attempt to secure my election would be totally abortive; and, in the event of an election, my acceptance would be very doubtful, perhaps I should say improbable.

Please to inform Judge Niles, that I have a grateful sense of his respectful sentiments. * * *

No news, unless it be that Mr. Emerson's ordination at Beverly is appointed to be on the 21st September. All well at Hollis. * * *

Our best love to yourself and friends.

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

After the election, one of the Trustees of the College came to urge his acceptance of the office. A few of the members of the church were invited to a consultation with him, at the pastor's study. They could ill keep their patience, so as to speak peaceably.—“You must consider,” said one of them to Rev. Mr. Merrill, (of Middlebury, Vt.) “that it is no easy thing for us, to obtain such a minister, as we need in this place.”—“*Easier much,*” he replied, “than for us to find a suitable man for Professor of Divinity, at Dartmouth College.”

The question, as now submitted to Dr. Worcester, was in truth the most perplexing, which he had ever

been called to decide. He stipulated for the largest allowance of time, before deciding; not by any means sure, that he should not be constrained to answer affirmatively. His friends almost insisted, that he should decline the appointment forthwith. But he felt, that they were not disinterested judges in the case. He gave them to understand, that he had no desire to leave Salem; wished only to know what God would direct; and, meanwhile, preferred that they should labor together, and make the most of the promising appearances of spiritual ingathering.

Rev. Leonard Worcester.

“*Salem, Dec. 14, 1803.*”

Dear Brother,—

The product of your ‘dull epistolary pen,’ of the 8th ultimo, has at length come to hand. You have some reason, I acknowledge, to suppose my pen to be in a condition not very good. I will not undertake a justification of my neglect; for it is not to be justified. In what follows, however, you may possibly find some apology for me. It has pleased Him, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, and who is a Sovereign in all his dispensations, to favor my society with a *sprinkling*, (perhaps I ought not to use so diminutive a word,)—of gracious influences. It is now three or four months, since the first instances of awakening appeared. The work has been spreading rather slowly; but at present appears to be on a more rapid increase. We have between twenty and thirty very hopeful cases; and about as many more are known to be now under pretty pungent convictions. Our meetings are very full and very solemn, and both in fulness and solemnity are weekly increasing.

My labors are great. Besides a lecture pretty constantly on Sabbath evening, I have a weekly lecture and three other weekly meetings. In addition to these,

as we are visited with a fever, which is very prevalent, I have from ten to fifteen notes on a Sabbath, which require visits; and, to close the account, the attention which I am obliged to give to the Magazine is not inconsiderable. You will judge for yourself, whether I have much leisure to use my 'epistolary pen,' even though called upon by the best of brothers.

With this I shall forward, according to direction, two copies of each of the first seven numbers of the M. M. Magazine. We have lately, however, made a deposit for the Magazines with Mr. Lang, at Hanover, near the College. Perhaps you will find it less expensive to get them there in future; as the price at Hanover will be no higher, than it is here. Please to communicate this intelligence in your region. The Magazine succeeds beyond expectation; but you will be pleased to receive it as *general orders*, that the '*corps de reserve*' come forward to action, immediately!

Should I tell you how my mind stands in regard to my late appointment, you would know more than I deem it proper for any of my friends at present to know. My answer will probably not be given before spring.

Our most affectionate remembrances.

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

As intimated in the letter above, he visited much among his people. He was gladdened by their joys, and made sad by their sorrows. If they respected and revered him, as he stood in the sanctuary, they loved him as a man and a friend, the more they saw of him, at their fire-sides, and in the chamber of sickness and bereavement. His interest in their trials was gratefully reciprocated; and never more than when himself called into special affliction. The hand of God touched him again, and with a still heavier weight, than when he first, and so recently, mourned as a father.

His family attachments were very strong. It was his practice to write to some of his near relatives, in their respective places of residence, whenever he was thus afflicted. But no one so carefully preserved all his letters, as the brother whose files have been found so serviceable.

Rev. Leonard Worcester.

“ Salem, Jan. 31, 1804.

My dear brother,—

The Sovereign Dispenser of mercies and afflictions, all whose counsels and works are perfect, has seen it needful, that we should experience still further correction. He has smitten us again. He has smitten us with a sudden and most grievous stroke. He has taken away from us our only daughter, our dear Zervia Fidelia! For several days she had been unwell; but she had gotten relief, and, on Friday last, was lively and brisk at her play. On the evening of the same day, we perceived that she had renewed her cold, and during the night were attentive to her, administering such things, as we supposed suitable. On Saturday morning, she appeared to be better, and during the forenoon sat up and amused herself with her little things. About noon, we discovered an alteration for the worse; our physician came in and confirmed our apprehensions of the quinsy.

In the evening, he thought her symptoms less threatening. She continued with very little alteration, until some time past midnight, when we perceived her breathing to grow worse. Two physicians were called in. She was put into a warm bath, was bled, and had every means used which the skill of the physicians could suggest. But her bounds were set; her disorder hastened with amazing rapidity to its fatal crisis; and about six o'clock on Sabbath morning, she expired! Thus were all our fond hopes and expectations, respecting the dear object of our first parental affections, cut off in a moment! Thus transient and delusory

are all our hopes of earthly bliss! Our poor little Samuel is now left alone. How long the sovereign Giver of all our blessings has determined, that we should enjoy him, we know not. But sure I am, I feel at present, that no dependence is to be placed on any thing here below. It is right it should be so; I think I feel it to be right. My only ground of support and consolation is, that all things are in the hands of infinite Wisdom, who knows better what is good for us, than we ourselves do. Had I not this confidence, the shock, I have now sustained, would be insupportable.

Pray for us, my dear brother, and accept for yourself, our dear sister and your children, the assurances of our most affectionate love.

Your afflicted brother,
SAMUEL WORCESTER."

In his preaching, during this period, as in other seasons of revival, he was careful to exhibit in bold relief, the perfections and law of God, and the utter guilt and hopelessness of the condition of the impenitent, except as they should humble themselves at the cross of Christ. Before giving counsel to the anxious, he sought to know their precise state of mind; for example, *why* they were troubled and what they desired to obtain. Though faithful and searching, he was always gentle and affectionate. He ventured upon no experiments of harshness; believing that sinners are more likely to be *drawn*, than *driven*, into the kingdom of Christ. Such was his uniform manner. As he began, at Fitchburg; so he finished, at Salem.

"I wish so to preach," he remarked to a friend, "that my impenitent hearers shall at least be convinced, that I have a sincere love for their souls, and that my greatest desire is for their salvation." And alluding to some church-members, who were quite too forward

in conversation with awakened persons,—“ I wonder how they can be so! It appears to me a most solemn responsibility for any one to take, when he attempts to guide a soul, that is under the operation of the Spirit. For my part, I never so feel my incompetency and my dependence, as in such circumstances.—I tremble, lest I should, in some way, come between the work of the Spirit and the designed effect.”* And those who claimed to be teachers and leaders, he could not always trust. In 1816, he brought many tears from the eyes of a certain evangelist, one of the forerunners, in the use of what have since been called “ new measures ;” and whom, he kindly but thoroughly admonished, because in his zeal for revivals, he had disparaged the regular means of grace, and could see no signs of promise, but in passionate emotion and commotion.

While a most ardent co-worker, in God’s method of reviving his work, he was peculiarly anxious, in the revival of 1803-4, that no enthusiasm or extravagance of any kind should give the enemy an occasion to blaspheme. And, perhaps, in the beginning of the present century, there was no community in New England, in which it was more important, that a genuine revival of religion should be seen in its legitimate “ power of God unto salvation.” Nearly one hundred were, at this time, added to the church.

The minds of the people had been somewhat quiet-

* “ I can think of no responsibility out of the pulpit, so great, as that of guiding anxious souls to Christ. What a fearful thing to direct them wrong! And what deep knowledge of the plan of salvation and the windings of the human heart, does it require, to direct them right; to silence their objections; to drive them from their false refuges, and to bring them, despairing of help from every other quarter, to the foot of the cross?”—*Dr. Humphrey’s Pastoral Letters.*

ed, in regard to the appointment by the Trustees of Dartmouth College ; yet were kept in suspense, so long as their pastor withheld his formal decision. He at last obtained the consent of the church to unite with him, in calling a meeting of ministerial brethren, as a committee of advice, to whom the whole subject might be referred, with the understanding, that he would abide the result of their consultations.

The Committee met in June. Rev. Noah Worcester appeared before them, on behalf of the College, and urgently pressed the claims of the Trustees and the numerous friends of the institution. He was conscientiously of the opinion, that the Church ought to release his brother,—great as might be the sacrifice of feeling and expectation. It was argued, mainly,—that it was very difficult to find a competent man, to fill the office of Professor of Divinity ; that the office was of paramount importance to that of pastor of a church ; that the appointment of Mr. Worcester had given great satisfaction ; and that the guardians of the College would be much discouraged, while great numbers in the community would exceedingly regret a failure to secure his services. It should also be known, that there was a confidential intimation, that, if the office were accepted, he might expect, at no distant day, to be elevated to the presidency of the College.

It was answered by the Committee of the Church, that their pastor's present sphere of usefulness was most ample ; that the evident smiles of Providence rested upon his labors ; that his removal would be severely felt in the town and the region, as well as among his own people ; and that, after so short a settlement, and after so long a period of previous trials in the Church and Society, it was far too much, even for

the guardians of so important an institution of learning and religion, to expect a relinquishment of their claims.

The Committee of ministerial brethren unanimously decided, that it was not expedient for him to accept the appointment. In this decision, he acquiesced, as if the plain intimation of the divine will.

After he had rested from all his labors, it was said of him, in respect to this part of his life ;—“ Never did a man act with a more conscientious regard to the will of God, than your pastor, in declining this invitation. In a conversation held with him, but a few weeks previous to his final departure from us, the speaker well recollects his referring to this instance in his history, as illustrating a principle, which, he said, had ever been the rule of his conduct. ‘ I cast myself,’ said he, ‘ upon Providence, leaving it to the Committee, who were called upon the occasion, to say, after receiving all the light which could be thrown upon the subject, whether I should go, or whether I should remain. And having left it there,’ he added, ‘ I know not that I felt the least anxiety for the result, either before, or after it was made known.’ ”*

He was afterwards repeatedly solicited to accept of the highest office in our literary institutions ; but declined every offer of appointment. He hardly thought it necessary to inquire concerning his duty, in any other circumstances like those just reviewed.

In each succeeding year, it was still more evident, that Dr. Worcester loved the Tabernacle pulpit as his very life. Whatever was the state of his health or the pressure of his engagements, he could not allow himself to enter it, with a merely impulsive or unfinished

* Rev. E. Cornelius' Sermons, &c.

preparation. At Salem, as before in Fitchburg, he never permitted any duties as a pastor, to take precedence of his labors as a preacher. He considered it a breach of trust, and disrespectful to a congregation, to claim their attention to hasty and undigested discussions, expositions, or exhortations. He magnified his office, as commissioned from above, to elevate the mass of mind around him, and contribute, in a pre-eminent degree, to the development of that symmetrical and finished mode of character, by which the world has the most perfect demonstration, that

“The Christian is the highest style of man.”

In a Sermon, at the ordination of Rev. David Jewett, Oct. 30, 1805, he remarked, “that a people must be very unwise, if they be unwilling that their minister should study, and write his public discourses.”

“If divine knowledge be of such vast importance, it is certainly very important, that the discourses from the desk be as clear, coherent, and instructive, as possible. But it will be conceded on all hands, that almost any minister may, by study and writing, prepare more instructive discourses, than he has any right to expect he shall be able to deliver, without this preparation. It is also worthy of consideration, that there is no other way, in which a minister can make so great progress in divine knowledge, or enrich his own mind so fast, as by that kind of study and exercise, which he must use in writing his discourses.

Almost any man, no doubt, of tolerable abilities, and acquaintance with the Scriptures, may stand forth, and without any previous study, utter for half an hour, or an hour, very good things. But could he not, probably, have delivered a more instructive and useful discourse, had he prepared, by previous study, and writing, for the occasion? It is a further question of still higher consideration, whether any man, if he neglect study and writing, and Sabbath after Sabbath,

depend upon his thoughts at the moment, for his public discourses, will be likely, for a course of months and years, *to bring forth from his treasures things new and old*, and communicate as much instruction to his people, as if he had accustomed himself studiously to write his discourses. The question is not, whether a man can preach without writing, for almost any one may do this; but can he preach as well, and for a course of months and years, be as useful to his people, without writing as with it?

Some, who are in the practice of writing their sermons and some who are not, we have reason to hope and believe, are true ministers of Christ, and as such are owned by him and blest. On the other hand, there is reason to fear and believe, that some, who are in the practice of writing, and some who are not, have never been sent by Christ, and will never be acknowledged by him. Certain it is, that some of the most zealous and popular preachers without writing, have turned out in the end the most notorious impostors. Writing, therefore, is no evidence, that the preacher is not a true minister of Christ; nor is preaching without writing, any evidence that he is.

In reply to those mistaken people, who suppose that if a minister preach without writing, he can only deliver what is immediately dictated to him by the Spirit of God; not to mention again that the days of special inspiration are past; it may suffice to ask, Why may not a minister have the assistance of the Divine Spirit when deliberately, and prayerfully, preparing his sermons in his study, as well as when delivering them extemporaneously from the desk?

It is even pretended, indeed, by some, that delivering sermons by note is not preaching. But what is preaching, but publishing, or publicly declaring, the gospel? And is not he the best preacher, whether with, or without notes, who declares the Gospel in the most clear, instructive, forcible, and impressive manner? I remember but one place in the Scriptures, where preaching is mentioned, in such a manner as certainly to determine, whether it were done by reading, or without

book : that is in the fifteenth of Acts, where we are told, that *Moses hath of old time, in every city, them that PREACH him, being read every sabbath day in the synagogue.*

If the minister will commit what he has written to his memory, or prepare himself well by previous study without writing, it must be acknowledged, that, in respect to the delivery of his discourses, he may find an advantage. Every minister, however, ought so far to know himself, and his gifts, as to judge, with some correctness, in what way he is likely to be on the whole, the most useful to his people ; and that way, without conferring with flesh and blood, he ought conscientiously to pursue. And though at times he may find it necessary to perform his public services, without much previous study ; yet he ought never to forget, that the Lord hath required beaten oil for the use of his sanctuary."

His Sermons, at Fitchburg, were about four hundred. As before stated, he wrote them with much attention to every quality, both of matter and of style. Great as was his temptation to draw upon them, seven or eight years had passed away, before the temptation had become very troublesome. At length, however, he saw, as he thought, that he was in serious danger from this source. He gathered all those Sermons together, and reserving but a small parcel, he committed the rest to the flames !

When interrogated upon the wisdom of this sacrifice, he answered very seriously : " I found, that I was making *crutches* of them." It was said to him, " I am afraid that you have put out a great deal of light ;"—to which he facetiously responded ; " I suspect that the illumination of the kitchen was as great, as would have been given to others."

Like the apostles, he was no less solicitous, that

church-members should grow in grace, and adorn their profession, than that the impenitent should be awakened. Many of his best sermons were composed, as if in prayer upon his knees in their especial behalf. There were times when his "rod" was felt; but it was ever applied "in love."—It was not in him ever to address church-members, with upbraiding and censure, as if deserving to be scourged, to the great pleasure of the rest of the congregation. He felt at liberty to speak to them, when in their own regular meeting, as he would not in a promiscuous assembly. Keenly sensitive to every injury inflicted upon the Church as a body, by the reproachful conduct of individuals, he exhorted and warned with all long-suffering. But "to *feed* the church of God" was his delight.

His private admonitions were not withheld, in appropriate circumstances. Much was done for "reproof" and for "correction," as well as "doctrine" and "instruction in righteousness," at the regular lectures, preparatory to the Lord's Supper, which was administered on the first Sabbath of each month.* In these, in sermons immediately preceding the administration of the ordinance, and in his extemporaneous addresses at the table of communion, there was usually an unction of solemn tenderness, as if he had just been baptized afresh, into the spirit of the dying Redeemer.

Let the subject of his discourse, however, be what it might, he seldom preached, without a word in season for every one, whether of the Church or the Congregation. And it is worthy of particular remark, that he was accustomed to watch his people, in regard

* This custom in the Salem churches began, doubtless, in the First Church. "1660, Sept. 10. It is agreed that the Lord's Supper be observed once a month."—*Annals of Salem*, Vol. II. p. 583.

to attentiveness; and his hopes of the conversion of the impenitent were much affected by his observation of their habits in this respect. He anticipated a stable and consistent piety, from those who had been wakeful and serious hearers, before professing to have passed from death unto life. And he placed more reliance upon tokens of uniform, habitual interest in the services of the sanctuary, as affording evidence of a heart "sound in the faith," than upon any of the most fluent and confident professions

"Of inward joys and sins forgiven."

Beside miscellaneous preaching, he delivered courses of sermons, so as to present important subjects in their mutual connections. He also delivered several series of lectures, chiefly historical and expository, but doctrinal, preceptive, or otherwise, as seemed most pertinent to the passage of Scripture, which came before him in the order of his plan.

At the opening of the year 1806, he commenced a course of such lectures, upon Genesis. He had sustained a lecture on Sabbath evenings, preaching as often as he could; not for his own people, but for others, as the circumstances then were. It was his decided judgment, and often expressed, that two sermons on the Sabbath are as much as any person can ordinarily hear to good profit. He, therefore, rather discouraged his own people from attending his "Third Services."

His lectures on Genesis drew crowds to the Tabernacle. The aisles of the commodious edifice were often filled by persons, who stood quietly and patiently to the end of the service. These were of every rank in society, and of all varieties of religious belief. In every part of Salem, the aged can now be found, whose

remembrances of "Dr. Worcester's Sabbath evening Lectures on Genesis" are fresh and bright as the morning. The hearer was often surprised or amazed, at what was disclosed to him from the chapters, which he had read again and again, without imagining, that any such instruction was there. The effect was very happy upon all classes, in drawing attention to the Scriptures; enhancing the value of the "things written aforetime;" inspiring reverence for every message, in the name of the Lord; awakening the anxious concern of the careless and thoughtless; and assisting believers more effectually to vindicate the ways of God, and "hold forth the word of life."

Accompanying the lectures on Genesis, was a course on Matthew, extending to eighty and upwards, and commonly preached on Sabbath morning. The substance of the four Gospels in harmony, was embraced in the plan of this series. Prepared with much labor, these lectures were very profitable. They were the more valued, perhaps, because commentaries and other works illustrative of the Scriptures were comparatively few, and were found but in a small number of families.

Twenty lectures upon the Acts of the Apostles, or "the principal Facts in the Apostolic History," succeeded those upon the Gospel by Matthew. This course was more elaborate and finished, than either of the others. In the volume of sermons published after the preacher's decease, there is an example, from the words,—And a cloud received him out of their sight. This same lecture or sermon he preached at the chapel of the Theological Seminary, Andover, in one of the last years of his life, and when his health was greatly impaired. To many of the young men of the semina-

ry, it was the first time, that they had ever heard his voice. There are some whose eye may fall upon these sketches. If so, they will recall the impressions of the scene, as one in which they never looked upon a man of God with more reverence, nor realized more deeply the sublime anticipations of the Christian faith.

In one of the lectures of this course, in 1812,—that upon “the martyrdom of Stephen,”—the opportunity was seized, to portray the spirit of that kind of democracy, which had just been exemplified by the murderers of General Lingan, at Baltimore. The audience were electrified by the impassioned tones of his righteous condemnation, hurled like thunderbolts, upon the atrocious assassins, and their instigating or sympathizing accomplices.

Several years after he was installed, he introduced the custom of an invocation, with reading of the Scriptures,* at the morning exercises of public worship. He so read the Scriptures, that an unexpected emphasis, or a significant modulation of his voice would uncover a mine of “hid treasure!” “How much he makes out of the Bible!”

“I thought,” said one, “that the minister who preached *the most Bible*, was the best minister for me. I had attended meeting in several places, both in Boston and Salem. When I heard your father, I used

* The present pastor, immediately after his settlement, in 1834, introduced the reading of the Scriptures, at the Tabernacle, as an invariable part of every public service. And he is of opinion, that no exercise of public worship is more important, or more instructive and impressive, when so performed, that the hearer is not tempted to say,—“*Understandest thou what thou readest?*”

“Our fathers long abstained from the commendable practice of reading the Scriptures at public worship, to be, in this respect as in others, as different as possible from the Church of England, which *requires the Scriptures to be read, and prescribes the portions for every service.*”—*History of Old South*, pp. 105, 6.

to go home, and what I could recollect of the passages quoted in the sermon, I would compare with the Bible, myself, to see if they had been quoted correctly. I became fully convinced, that he preached more exactly according to the Scriptures, than any other minister, whom I had the opportunity to hear. And I never heard any sermons, which I can now so well remember. *There is a thread between him and me*, that will not be severed while I am in this world. I do not know how it may be, at the judgment."

The apparent effect of his ministrations, in leading to the conversion of his hearers, was at no time greater, than in the period, when he was most employed in searching and expounding the Scriptures. There were several seasons of revival, with but short intervals, the most memorable of which, after 1804, were from 1807 to 1808, and from 1810 to 1811;—during which he was eminently blessed in his personal exertions. Of those who became members of the Tabernacle Church, were some from families of other congregations, and from fashionable circles,—who had found it "a cross" indeed, even to number themselves among the transient hearers of an orthodox minister!

The frequent use of his pen in the *Missionary Magazine*, and afterwards in the *Magazine and Panoplist* united, was no detriment to his preaching. In his "Occasional Sermons," as on Fast or Thanksgiving days, or at ordinations, and meetings of benevolent societies, he always tasked himself cheerfully, and thus recruited his intellectual vigor. He could not have endured the constant and often intense exertions of his powers, but for the pleasure from the excitement.

In a review by Mr. Evarts, in 1814, it was said:—"The author of this sermon has published several occasional discourses, within a few years past. All,

which have come to our hands, (and we believe that we have read all that have been published,) abound in good sense, in seriousness, and in a happy combination of doctrinal and practical instruction. They are evidently the production of a vigorous mind, which is deeply and habitually impressed with the responsibility of the ministerial office, and solemnly intent upon the discharge of its duties."

This critique of a writer, who weighed his words, and who never indulged his pen in a flourish of compliment, even for his best friends, is as correct a description as could be given, of Dr. Worcester's general character in sermonizing, whether upon common or special occasions.

At conference meetings, his extemporaneous powers were freely trusted. In expository discourses, he relied, in part, upon brief notes; but seldom, at other times. In one instance, having inadvertently left his sermon in his study, he apprized his congregation of the awkward predicament in which he found himself. He asked their indulgence, while he should offer some remarks upon a passage of Scripture, which he would make the theme of their present meditations. In the afternoon, he repeated the experiment; suggesting as an apology, that the sermon which he had forgotten to take in the morning, was designed for both parts of the day.

His hearers were not very cautious in saying to himself, that they should not be troubled, if the like accident of inadvertence should more frequently occur.*

* At Newburyport, Dr. Spring was about to omit a Preparatory Lecture, on account of illness. Rev. Philip Melancthon Whelpley, from New York, reached his house, just before the hour appointed for the service. "I cannot preach," he replied, when told that his coming was peculiarly providential. "I have left all my sermons at Charlestown." "What!" exclaimed Dr. S.

No one knew better than himself, that he who can do well, extemporaneously, can do better by premeditation, *provided* he is a man of really respectable resources, natural and acquired. In seizing the spirit of an occasion, he excelled; yet was always glad of time to "bring forth out of his treasure things new and old." When other men, far inferior, would have relied upon the suggestions and feelings of the hour or the moment, and when he himself, if constrained thus to do, could perform his part to entire acceptance,—it seems to have been his uniform practice, to anticipate by reflection, with pen in hand, all public efforts of addresses, and even services of devotion in which the happiest effect would depend upon pertinency of thought and expression. He may be said to have had a "liturgy" of his own, which, however, he could use without any danger of promoting "*lethargy* of piety," in himself or any one else.

Take as an example, the original of a prayer at a town-meeting, in the highest excitement of the federal and democratic parties, previous to the second war with Great Britain.

"Almighty God and everlasting Father, we acknowledge and adore Thee as the Maker, and the rightful Sovereign of all worlds; the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hast immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto. We render unto Thee devout homage and praise for the infinitude and glory of thy nature, thy perfections, and thy works. Thou hast made of one blood all the nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hast determin-

"And did you leave your *brains* there?" It was soon proved, that he had a sermon with him.—Dr. Worcester would never excuse himself from doing what he could, when taken by surprise in a call for a sermon or address.

ed the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. Dominion and fear are with Thee, and Thou art Governor among the nations. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. Both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

We bless Thee, O Lord, for the infinite clemency and mercy, which Thou hast so gloriously displayed in the administration of thy government over this revolted and rebellious world; that, through the gracious mediation of thine own Son, Thou hast caused proclamation to be made from heaven, of peace on earth and good will towards men; and that in him Thou art reconciling the world unto Thyself, and conferring upon those who penitently accept thine offered peace, all the privileges and blessings of thine eternal kingdom. We thank Thee that the light of the glorious Gospel of thy grace has been so extensively diffused; that under its benign influence the condition of mankind has been in so high a degree meliorated; and that assurance is given us in thine holy oracles, that this heavenly light shall continue to spread, until all the nations shall be blest with its healing beams.

We bless Thee, O thou Preserver of men, for the peculiar favor which Thou hast shown unto our nation; for the good and pleasant land which thou hast so kindly allotted unto us; for the many signal interpositions of thy providence in our behalf, in the times that have passed over us; for the rank which Thou hast given us among the sovereign and independent nations of the earth; for the happy constitutions of government, which under thy merciful auspices, have been established for the security and preservation of our liberties and rights; for the institutions of religion and literature, with which we are so eminently favored; and for all the various and multiplied blessings with which, as a nation and as individuals, we are so richly endowed.

We thank Thee, Father of mercies, for the favorable

circumstances under which we are assembled before Thee, on this important occasion ; and for the numerous testimonials of thine infinite goodness, with which we are here surrounded. From thy glorious high throne in the heavens, look down upon us, we beseech Thee, with infinite benignity and mercy. For the sake of our gracious Redeemer pardon our manifold offences, deeply penetrate our hearts with the sentiments of genuine contrition, and animate our minds with those glorious hopes and those elevated views, which the Gospel alone can inspire.

Vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, thy gracious benediction on the citizens of this town, this day called together, for the purpose of transacting their annual municipal concerns. Duly appreciating their high privileges as freemen, and gratefully sensible of their obligations to Thee for their invaluable inheritance, may they exercise their rights with calm discretion and with magnanimous integrity, unmindful of party, uninfluenced by passion, unswayed by any sinister bias. May all their suffrages be impartially and worthily bestowed ; may all their measures be well advised, and conducive to the promotion of their common interests ; and, in all their proceedings this day, may they act in thy fear, and as a band of brothers united for the public good. May those to whom shall be intrusted the civil and financial concerns of the town ; those to whom shall be committed the oversight of the public charities ; those who shall be superintendents of the means of education ; and all who may this day be elected to offices or places of trust and responsibility, from the highest to the lowest, be men fearing God and hating covetousness, competent to their stations, and benevolent to their fellow-men ; and may they fulfill their respective duties, with honor to themselves, with advantage to the community, and with due regard to the glory of thy great Name.

Bless, we beseech Thee, this favored town at large. May it be a city of peace, and a dwelling-place of righteousness and truth. Under thy fostering care, it has enjoyed a long period of prosperity, and has in-

creased in population, in wealth, and in the various accommodations of life. May it still continue to enjoy thy beneficent smiles upon all its interests and concerns. May the churches be blest with the dews of celestial influence, and flourish as the garden of God. May the ministers be richly endowed with all the graces of thy Spirit, and be pastors according to thine heart, who shall feed their respective flocks with knowledge and understanding. May the magistracy be wise and faithful, a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well; and may the people lead quiet and peaceable and industrious lives in all godliness and honesty,—the rich not oppressing the poor, and the poor not envying the rich,—but all, as members of one common family, harmoniously and cheerfully fulfilling the duties of their respective conditions and callings.

May our general health be precious in thy sight. May our commerce be relieved from its embarrassments. May our hands be sufficient for us and find sufficient employment in our various useful occupations, and may our dwellings be crowned with plenty, and with all the pure enjoyments of social and domestic life, and there be no complaining in our streets. May our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace; and may all our precious means of education, of morality, of religion, and of happiness, be thankfully improved and beneficently prospered.

Bless the Governor, the Lieutenant-Governor, and the Council, the two houses of the General Court, and all the judges and magistrates of this Commonwealth. May they all be endued with true wisdom and benevolence, and, in their respective offices and stations, execute their various trusts, and fulfill their various duties, with fidelity and ability. And may the citizens at large be well informed in the duties of their situations; use their liberties and privileges both civil and religious, as not abusing them; and enjoy thy blessing upon all their true interests and laudable pursuits.

Bless the President, and Vice-President of these United States, the heads of the executive departments,

the Judges of our national Courts, the members of our national Legislature, and all subordinate officers, under our general government. May they all enjoy thy special favor, and all be competent and faithful to the trusts reposed in them. In this day of alarm and rebuke, in this awfully eventful crisis of the world, may those who have the management of our national affairs, have a good understanding of our national interests. Feeling all the weight of their high responsibility, surveying the aspects of the times with a clear and comprehensive view, and discerning where the safety and the welfare of the nation lie, may they be in all respects equal to the momentous conjuncture; and magnanimously uniting for the public good, may all their deliberations and measures be guided by a just and liberal and enlightened policy."

The preparation for a prayer in the Supreme Judicial Court, during the same period, has a conclusion very similar to the preceding. The introduction is considerably varied, but analogous. The other parts are, as follows:—

"Vouchsafe thy presence, O God, with the court of civil and criminal judicature here convened. As it has been instituted for the maintenance and distribution of justice, and for the security and promotion of the rights and interests of individuals, and of the community; may it evermore be so favored with thy protection, guidance and blessing, as fully to answer the great purposes of its institution.

Bless, we beseech Thee, thy servants, who hold in this court the high and sacred seat of justice. Inspire them with the true spirit of their station, and hold them in the right hand of thy faithfulness and mercy. Remembering that Thou standest in the congregation of the mighty, and judgest among the gods, may they hold the scales of justice with an even hand, and always be disposed to sustain the righteous cause. Fearing God and hating covetousness, may they be a ter-

ror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. May their lives and health be precious in thy sight; and having served thee and this generation, according to thy will, may they sit hereafter in high seats of glory in thine everlasting kingdom.

Bless thy servants, who occupy here the bar of legal counsel. Impressed with a religious veneration of thy great and holy name, and with a profound respect for the sacred principles of truth and right, may they acquit themselves in all their professional duties, with fidelity to their clients, with equity towards all concerned, with credit to themselves, and with advantage to the cause of justice.

May those who here represent their country, in the capacity of jurors, be favored with thy especial blessing. Duly considering the high estimation in which the privilege of trial by jury is justly holden by their fellow-creatures, may they fear the oath of God which is upon them, and in no instance betray the just confidence, which is reposed in them. To every question which may come before them, may they attend with diligence and impartiality, and upon every cause which shall go to them, may they give a firm and righteous verdict.

May all who may appear before this court as witnesses and suitors, have it in constant and solemn remembrance, that the false witness, and he that doeth wrong to his neighbor, is an utter abhorrence in thine holy sight; and that the day is at hand, when Thou wilt bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. And of the solemnities of that august and awful day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest; when all our thoughts and actions shall be disclosed in their true light, to the view of assembled worlds; and when we shall receive from the Judge of all the earth a just and irrevocable sentence of retribution, according to our works,—may we all, O God, be solemnly reminded by the occasion on which we are now convened! In view of that solemn scene, may we all, in our several stations, ever live, and ever act, that when it shall ar-

rive, we may be so happy as to meet our Judge, and receive, though grace, the rewards of the righteous in thine heavenly kingdom." &c.

Another example was occasioned by the public examination of a classical school.

"O Thou, in whom all goodness dwells, from whom all beings derive their existence, and on whom the whole universe depends for life and light, for improvement and happiness: we adore Thee as the Father of our spirits, the fountain of our mercies, and the rock of our hopes. We bless thy name, that among the unnumbered orders of beings, which Thou hast created for thy glory and thy praise, Thou hast been pleased to allot to mankind so high and distinguished a rank; that Thou hast endowed us with rational and moral and social powers, and made us capable of endless improvement in knowledge, in worth, and in happiness. We would gratefully rejoice before Thee in all thy glorious works, and in all the displays which Thou hast made before us, of thine unbounded goodness. We would render Thee praise in the highest, that, notwithstanding the guilt of our fallen state, there is peace on earth and good will towards men; that Thou hast sent thy Son into the world, to redeem and save us from wrath, to recover us from the ruins of the apostacy, and to raise us to glory, to honor, and immortality. We thank Thee, O Lord, for the numerous and various blessings, spiritual and temporal, which, through the divine Mediator Thou hast so graciously conferred upon the world of mankind at large; and particularly for those of which we and our children are the favored partakers. We thank Thee for thy distinguishing beneficence and mercy to our forefathers, of which we have so many precious memorials; and for the fair and rich inheritance, which, from them under thy gracious Providence, has been transmitted to us their posterity; for the abundant supply which Thou hast furnished to us of the primary supports and comforts of life; for the invaluable institutions and

privileges, civil, literary, and religious, with which we are blessed; and for all the advantages granted to us for the best enjoyments, and the best attainments, of which our natures are capable. Verily, O God, the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage: and our obligations of gratitude to Thee, the Fountain of all good, are high and everlasting. O may we be gratefully sensible to all our obligations; may we duly estimate, and wisely improve the various and numberless blessings which we enjoy; and, in our lives and our character, may we show forth the praises of thy goodness and thy grace.

We thank Thee, Father of mercies, for the agreeable circumstances of this pleasant occasion: an occasion, so deeply interesting to parental affections, and the best feelings and hopes of humanity. We have seen with high satisfaction, the specimens now exhibited of youthful improvement, so creditable to the youths themselves, and to their instructors; and would notice with devout gratitude the fair promise which they give, of future character and usefulness. We would thankfully rejoice before Thee, O God, that under thy beneficent Providence our rising offspring are allowed the enjoyment of advantages of education, even greater than those with which their parents were favored; and that we have opportunity, from time to time, to witness the pleasing fruits of the advantages they enjoy.

And now, O Lord our God, our eyes and our desires are still unto Thee, in behalf of ourselves and of our children; for upon Thee are we still dependent for every good and perfect gift. Most humbly and fervently would we commend unto Thee, this school for the instruction of youth. Let it ever, we beseech Thee, be under thy gracious direction, and thy fostering care. May the choicest of thy blessings rest upon it, and may it abundantly answer the highest hopes and expectations of its founders and patrons. May it long be continued a fruitful seminary, not only of the rudiments of useful knowledge, but also of the principles of virtue, of religion, and of everything amiable

and excellent in the human character. Bless thy servant, the present instructor of this school. May his life, and his continued and increasing usefulness, be precious in thy sight. May he find great satisfaction in the faithful discharge of the cares and duties of his interesting station, and in the good conduct and improvement of the youths committed to his direction and tuition. And may he enjoy the best of all rewards, in the approbation of his employers, his conscience, and his God.

Bless, we humbly beseech Thee, the dear youths, the members of this school; and have them evermore in thy holy and parental keeping. Secure them from the numberless evils to which they are exposed in this evil world; and may their lives, their health, their characters, and their best interests, be objects of thy most gracious attention and care. May they duly appreciate the precious advantages for education with which they are favored; and learn to be thankful for them to their parents and to Thee. May they be diligent and successful in their studies, modest and respectful in their manners, and regular and amiable in all their conduct. May they early be impressed with the great principles of the Gospel; and, instructed that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, may they remember Thee their Creator, in the days of their youth; give their hearts to Thee; and so walk in thy commandments, as to know that the ways of wisdom are pleasantness and all her paths peace. As they increase in stature, may they increase also in wisdom and knowledge, in virtue and piety, and in favor with God and man; and under the cultivation bestowed upon them, may they in all respects so improve, as to be prepared to come forward into life, with great honor to themselves, great credit to their families, and great usefulness to society. May their lives be long and happy; and, all their days on earth, may they love their God and Savior, be prepared for all duties, and for immortality and glory.

May the parents of these youths be remembered of Thee for good. May their houses be established on

the sure foundations of thine everlasting covenant, and be endowed with every blessing.

We ask thy needful benediction, O God, upon all the schools, both public and private, in this town. Well regulated and instructed, and abundantly endowed with thy grace, may they prove the richest blessings to all our children and youth, and to the community at large; and may the rising generations of this people be kept in thy fear, and grow up before Thee for praise and honor and glory.*

Having been called upon to express thanks at a public dinner, a stranger of distinction was much struck with the manner of the service; and at the close whispered, in a quick under-tone to Judge P. of the Supreme Court,—“*Very correct! Very correct!*”—“ALWAYS so,” was the instant and hearty reply. It is not improbable, that, in anticipation of that very service, the “pen” had some share in the “correctness” of the “tongue.” For some occasion of the kind, a model like this had been fashioned:

“Beneficent Parent of the universe, we bless thy name for the riches of thine infinite goodness, so graciously and abundantly shown to mankind; and, particularly, for the distinguished privileges and blessings which we enjoy, under the glorious Gospel of thy Son, and under those invaluable institutions, civil and religious, which in thy merciful providence Thou hast granted unto us. We thank Thee for the favorable circumstances, under which we have now been permitted to sit down to this table of thy bounty, so richly furnished for our refreshment and repast. By these fruits of thy goodness, of which we daily partake,

* A beautiful form of “Prayer for Sabbath Schools” was furnished by Dr. Worcester for the American Edition of Jay’s Family Prayers. It was at the request of his friend and parishioner, Mr. Henry Whipple, who had his cordial approval in publishing that valuable work. See pp. 293-4, of the edition by M. W. Dodd, 1850.

may we be led up in gratitude and love to the glorious Fountain of all good, that we may seek and obtain the infinitely higher enjoyments of an immortal life. Bless, we beseech Thee, thy servants present, entrusted with the important concerns of this town; and let theirs be the satisfaction and the reward of good and faithful servants," &c.

No such models or castings of preparation, for the ordinary exercises of public worship, or for any other occasions than such as were more or less *extraordinary*, were found among the private papers of Dr. Worcester. It is most likely that he had some, in his earlier ministrations; or that, at different times, he gave his attention specially to the responsibilities of prayer in public. It was by diligent and devout premeditation, or by "making the proper subjects of prayer, a business of serious reflection," that he acquired his pre-eminent ability in conducting services of devotion, of whatever kind and in whatever place.* And lest, from examining the *models* here presented, any should suppose, that he would sometimes seem *artificial*, or *mechanical*, it may be affirmed in the most unqualified terms, that there was no such appearance.

* "I advise you to make the proper subjects of prayer, a business of serious reflection. Go, first of all, to the Bible, the great store-house of devotional thoughts; and next, to such spiritual writers as Flavel, Owen, Baxter, Watts, and, (instar omnium, for this purpose,) Henry." * * * "Orton says, that while he thinks premeditation to be proper as to general drift of prayer, he had for many years left off the exact attention to method, which he used to practise; endeavoring only to have his mind, before engaging in the exercise, deeply impressed with the solemn truths of religion. The same course, he says, was adopted by Dr. Scott, one of the wisest and devoutest men of his acquaintance."—*Dr. Porter's Lectures, on Homiletics*, &c. pp. 304-5. To the admirable counsels of the devout Dr. Porter to the students at Andover, his warm friend Dr. W., would have given his heartiest approval.

In using such preparations, while his strong memory would retain very much, both of sentiments and sentences, he probably *condensed* some parts, and otherwise freely deviated from the written formula or model, which might have been found among the papers of his "closet." Every word was so uttered, that his "heart" would appear to be most fervently engaged, "inditing a good matter;" and not a suspicion be awakened, that he himself might have responded: "I speak of the things which I have made touching the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." (Ps. xlv. 1.)

One eminent advantage of such habits of preparation, was, that, with or without time, he was *semper paratus*, always in readiness. He could *extemporize*, at any moment, to the edification of any assembly, where there was a call for his voice. When at an examination of a school, a clergyman had failed of being present to address the scholars and their friends, he promptly came forward and filled the vacant place. A gentleman, who was bitterly opposed to his religious sentiments, was so moved that he could not contain himself. "I do not believe," said he, "that there is another man in the community, who, when called upon in like manner, could have made such an appropriate and admirable address."*

* A similar effect was produced by what was called an *off-hand* speech, at a Masonic celebration; and which, it is supposed, was purely an unpremeditated effort.

The most renowned orators, it is well known, have prepared their best passages, in private study. Some sallies even of wit or repartee, which were thought, at the time, to be the instantaneous scintillations of genius, have been afterwards traced to *memoranda*, which must have been made, for at least half a score of years, and perhaps longer. Thus was it with Sheridan's reply to Dundas, in the House of Commons: "The Right Honorable gentleman is indebted to his memory for his jests, and to his imagination for his facts."—*Moore's Life of Sheridan*, vol. II. pp. 275-6.

In any place of discussion or debate, he was never silent, where he ought to speak." As a debater, he showed himself in greater strength, than as a preacher. It was truly written of him, that, before some councils, "he delivered speeches of several hours' length, which astonished his hearers. They were specimens of connected thought, force of argument, and command of language, which are seldom rivalled even in courts of judicature and legislative assemblies."*

Sometimes he re-wrote; but not generally. At Salem, he did not often do much in making sermons, until the last two days of the week, the *nights* included; and he then, under a pressure, could prepare for three services. He had many plans of sermons, which at some period of his ministry he had constructed,—very much after the manner of "Simeon's Skeletons." These were a great assistance to him. But he could not have accomplished a tithe of what he did, as a preacher, if he had not habituated himself to an industry, which no man could prosecute, and have "length of days." As a natural consequence of studies, *late at night*, "the number of his months" was "cut off in the midst," and "cut off with pining sickness."

All his reading and observation, he turned to account, as a public teacher. Nothing escaped him, in the events of national or local, general or private interest. He attempted no journal of his feelings; but he kept brief memoranda of whatever might be of advantage, in his preaching, his conference-meetings, his catechetical exercises, or his visits. Thus, if a little boy was drowned, whether or not of his own congregation, he made a record of the fact, with nearly the

* Rev. S. Farley, in "The Dartmouth," Sept, 1843.

same particularity, as he noted the astounding duel and self-destruction of ALEXANDER HAMILTON,—a statesman, for whose political character he had great admiration.

His diligence and discrimination, from his youth upward, as an observer of manners, habits, and the varied characteristics of his fellow-men, will explain much of his success in adapting his instructions to the wants of his own people, and of the community. There was no stereotyped repetition or sameness, in his preaching, prayers, or exhortations. He sought and secured variety, without affecting to be original; or condescending to any device, for a momentary or ephemeral impression. He dealt sparingly in common-places, and never in “impalpable generalities.” For every paragraph, or line, or word, in his mature writings, he could have assigned a motive, or purpose, of solid, substantial utility.

It may be said with assurance, that he wrote nothing and spoke nothing, for the display of his abilities, like an aspirant of honor, whose end is gained, when the applause is won. His unremitted aim to *do well* in his sacred calling, was that of a faithful servant of Christ,—not proud of the livery of his station, or of the “marks” that he “bore,”—but always mindful, that “every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

Knowing “the offence of the cross,” he was studious in all things, that through him this “offence” should not be aggravated in the “carnal mind” of the “wise of the world,” by his actual or apparent disregard of the laws of good taste, or of any of those attractions of style, in which the original Scriptures so far transcend the literature of all nations. Whatever he may

have cultivated of “excellency of speech,” therefore, was in his own aims and ends, for “the furtherance of the Gospel;”—and from his just conceptions of the beauty of its holiness and love, as infinitely worthy of the richest and the purest offerings of human genius, learning, and refinement.

CHAPTER VIII.

Weekly meetings. Church discipline. Report on “disorderly walk.” Answer to questions of order and usage. Declaratory Articles, and Correspondence respecting dismissions to Baptist churches. Illustrations of Christian fellowship. Catholic and noble spirit. Discourses on the Abrahamic Covenant. Failure of health. Southern tour. Letters to Dr. Baldwin, in vindication of Discourses, &c. Reflections on his birth-day, Nov. 1, 1807.

Let all things be done decently and in order. * * Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you. * * Is Christ divided? * * I baptized Crispus and Gaius. * * I baptized also the household of Stephanus. * * Christ sent me not to *baptize*, but to PREACH THE GOSPEL.

IN addition to the regular services of the sanctuary, with an evening Lecture on alternate Sabbaths, Dr. Worcester usually attended two meetings during the week. One was for the church exclusively. In this he spent much time in expounding the Scriptures; calling upon the brethren for remarks or inquiries. They also assisted him by taking part in prayer and exhortation. After the opening of a meeting, he would often say,—“Brethren, have you any subject?” It was a great pleasure to him, to see the working of their various minds upon passages of the Bible, and

upon questions of christian duty. If they propounded inquiries for his more special determination, he usually contrived to ascertain their own views, before he gave a definitive answer. "I have been often indebted to my brethren," he said, "for some of my best thoughts."

Much time was given to familiar and practical remark upon portions of the Scriptures, at the other meetings. If there was more than common attention among the unconverted, familiar discourses would be preached, or such other mode of instruction adopted, as the circumstances would seem to require.

These meetings were sometimes attended by transient visiters in Salem, and by persons of other religious societies. Among them were those, who afterwards gave thanks to God, that they were ever led into the vestry of the Tabernacle. Influenced by curiosity, or courtesy to a friend, they had placed themselves, where most unexpectedly they had become interested, as never before, in the great question of personal salvation. Of many more than one, it may be said,—“The Lord shall count when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.”

In the business of the Church, as in cases of discipline, which would, of course, change the character of the regular church-meeting, Dr. Worcester often surprised his most intimate friends by his felicitous applications of principles and rules, and excited their wonder by his patience and forbearance, when brethren were slow to see “eye to eye.”—Upon no part of church action did he insist more inflexibly, than the observance of the rule in the 18th of Matthew, in all preliminary proceedings of discipline, whether the offence was of a private or public nature. He did not allow, that a public offence could be settled by indi-

viduals in private, but thought that there is more hope of reclaiming an offender, although he may know, that the brethren who take "the first steps," are intending to "tell the church" the whole case, and submit it to their adjudication, even when in their judgment he is truly penitent. In thus rigidly applying the rule of our Savior, which certainly relates to cases of private offence, Dr. Worcester was doubtless governed by his characteristic desire of adhering, as much as possible, to scriptural directions and examples. And he had never met with a case, in actual experience, where, if the rule should be required, there could be no proper action of the church, to wipe off a great reproach,—for instance, if a flagrant offender had fled the country; not to mention other cases, in which a recourse to the private "steps" could be little else than idle and nugatory.*

He was well supported by the church, in all the measures which he deliberately recommended. But he was no stranger to severe trials of opposition. Some who opposed him, were quite as much in favor

* At a meeting of the Church, Nov. 22, 1850, it was voted to amend the 3d article, as follows:—That in case the offence is of a public nature, and no one member more than any other has reason to consider himself offended or aggrieved,—the pastor or any of the brethren may call the attention of the church to the case, and it shall not be deemed necessary, that the complainant shall have previously proceeded according to the direction in the 18th of Matthew. But in cases of public offence, no less than of personal, the *spirit* of that direction is to be sacredly regarded.

The offending member shall also, when it is practicable, have notice of the intention of the church to adjudicate upon his case, at least two weeks before the time appointed for the adjudication. If, however, the offence be notorious, and such as to do evident injury to the cause of truth and righteousness by delay of discipline, and if, also, by reason of distance or any other cause, the offending member is not accessible to the church.—then is it to be understood, that the action of the church shall not be hindered by the absence of such member, or by his not receiving such notice, as is otherwise to be required.

of their own personal consequence, as they were distrustful of his judgment. There were a few, who affected to feel very serious apprehension, that the pastor would acquire too much power, as the "ruler" of the body. And though he never yet had abridged any one's liberties, or encroached upon any one's rights, they took a course of general procedure, as if he ought to be *watched* very carefully, and often resisted, lest at some time he should abuse his great influence, and attempt to "lord it over God's heritage."

No pastor ever presided in a church, with a better combination of dignity and of unaffected condescension to infirmities or perversities. He allowed every brother his place, his title to be heard fully, and his utmost right of individual preference, whether in the minority or the majority. But the fact, that, in all instances, in which he deemed the action of the church to be of material consequence, he succeeded in the end, mainly according to his wishes, was one very palpable occasion of the fear in some minds, that his sway over the body might eventually savor more of the monarchical than the democratic. The members, who discovered the most of this fear, were of the democratic party; while their pastor was a federalist of the strictest sect.

In some circumstances, members of the church exposed themselves to his very pointed admonition, for their violations of order, and their personal allusions to the moderator. He claimed, that the chair should ever be treated with respect. He would not, therefore, silently pass unnoticed and unrebuked any marked trespass upon the rules of order or the courtesies of strict decorum, either as to himself or to any of the brethren.

He was never precipitate in any of his recommendations, always desiring to have every measure thoroughly, but candidly, examined. One secret of his success, as the Moderator of the Church was his *patience*. When he could have had a strong vote upon a question, agreeably to his wishes, he often suggested a postponement of final action. His purposes were thus most effectually and happily accomplished *by delay*.

When questions of church polity seemed to be of more than usual interest or importance, they were made the subject of careful and elaborate discussion in the pulpit. In this manner, the pastor enlightened the minds of his people generally, relative to the fundamental principles of ecclesiastical order. Some of his most able and interesting discourses, were occasioned by the administration of church discipline. And so steadfastly did the pastor pursue his design of establishing the church, upon the soundest principles and most exact procedure of an efficient Congregationalism; so powerful were the arguments by which he enforced the measures, which he deemed expedient or necessary for the welfare of a church, as an organized body; so judicious was the method, by which individuals were led to contemplate some old usages as abuses, and new modes as a "more excellent way;"—that, in a comparatively brief period, he had the satisfaction of seeing such a provision made, for ordinary and extraordinary liabilities of action, as to render it altogether improbable, that in any contingency, there would be occasion for a new rule or precedent.

In course of his ministry in Salem, there were some processes of discipline, in which his decisions were distinguished by all those characteristics, which have

given renown to the ablest judges on the bench of law and justice. But for obvious reasons, it would be inadmissible to cite the cases, by which these remarks could be fully verified. Instead of such illustrations, a document from his pen on the subject of "disorderly walk," may here be presented.

"The Committee, to whom was referred the question, 'What is the duty of the church in regard to members who break the church covenant?'—submit the following as their report.

In order to a clear view of this subject, it seems requisite to recur to first principles.

Covenants are never to be lightly regarded. A covenant is a compact, contract, or agreement, in which a proposition held out by one party is accepted by another, and both are sacredly bound, on the pledge of mutual good faith, to the performance of the respective stipulations. 'Brethren,' says the apostle to the Galatians, 'though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth therunto.' A simple promise is to be held sacred; a covenant is still more sacred: the breach of a simple promise is an immorality—is falsehood, is perfidy; the breach of a covenant is a greater immorality—is falsehood, is perfidy of a more heinous character, in proportion as the faith violated by it was more solemnly pledged, and the injury done is greater. Accordingly, when the apostle would give a strong view of the great wickedness of the perilous times of the last days, he mentions, among other enormities, that men will be 'truce,' or covenant 'breakers.'

If covenants merely temporal or secular are to be held inviolable; how much more covenants of a spiritual or religious nature? Of all the covenants into which men can enter, none can have a higher degree of sacredness than the covenant of a church.

The church state is an institution of Christ, designed for most important ends. It is designed for the regular administration of his holy ordinances, for the

benefit in many important respects of his people, for light and conviction to the world, and for the maintenance and advancement of his cause. The church is 'the pillar and ground of the truth.' It is not enough that men be Christians; Christ requires that his people should associate in a church state, and in that state so deport themselves, that the body, being fitly joined together and compacted, may increase, unto the edifying of itself in love. There can be no church, however, without a covenant; the very existence of a church supposes a covenant; it is, indeed, by a covenant or sacred agreement, in which persons professing godliness solemnly give themselves first to the Lord, and then to one another, for the observance of the ordinances of Christ in the same society, that a church is constituted. In the church covenant, avouching the Lord Jehovah to be our God, and ourselves to be his people, we solemnly give up ourselves to him, and engage to walk together before him in the faith and order of the Gospel, according to the directions of his Word; and we also give up ourselves to one another in the Lord, solemnly engaging to walk with each other in holy fellowship, to watch over each other in the spirit of christian charity, meekness, and faithfulness, and humbly to submit ourselves to the discipline and government of Christ in his church, for our mutual benefit and for the glory of Christ. All this is either distinctly expressed or clearly implied, in every church covenant; the obligations thus induced are certainly of the most sacred kind; and these obligations every person, on joining a church, takes upon himself in the presence of God, angels, and men, with all the solemnity of an oath. This covenant, with all its solemnities, the church propounds to individuals; to this covenant all who become members consent, and in regard to the obligations of it, swear fidelity to God, to the church, and to every member of the church.

Every breach of this covenant, therefore, must be viewed in a very serious light; for it is of the nature

of perjury ; it is a violation of sworn faith to God, to the church, and to every individual member. This surely is sin ; sin against God and men ; sin, the evil and guilt of which, though of different degrees, according to the extent of the breach committed, and the aggravations attending it, yet in no case can be small.

Such being the nature and character of a breach of the church covenant, a person chargeable with this sin is most clearly amenable, not only to God, but also to the church. If the breach be of such a kind as to be manifest, the church is bound to take serious notice of it ;—bound in fidelity to Christ, the head, in fidelity to herself as a body, in fidelity to each individual member, and in fidelity particularly to the offender. If a manifest breach of covenant be suffered to pass without due notice, the tendency of it must be to bring the covenant into disesteem and contempt as an unholy thing, to weaken and dissolve the sacred ties by which the church is bound together and compacted, to frustrate the holy and important ends for which the church state was divinely instituted, and to produce darkness, confusion, and every evil work.

Offences, however, which are properly cognizable by the church, may be of different degrees of flagrancy and guilt, and accordingly require to be differently treated ; and though every such offence, if rightly treated, and satisfaction be not made, must ultimately issue in the separation of the offender from the communion of the church ; yet the entire process of the church should doubtless be more strongly expressive of disapprobation in one case, than in another less strongly marked with guilt. Though an offence committed by a true Christian is not less sinful, nor less censurable, than a similar offence committed by a false professor ; and though an offender, who, notwithstanding his offence, may on the whole be supposed by the church to be a subject of grace, if he do not make satisfaction, must be separated from the church ; yet the process of the church may be expressive of different feelings towards such an one, from what should

be expressed towards one who makes it flagrantly manifest, that he is utterly graceless. A difference of this kind seems to be clearly indicated, in different apostolical directions. According to these directions, some are to be delivered unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, others are to be pointedly rejected, as subverted and self-condemned; while from others, the church is simply to withdraw.

This general principle is applicable, no doubt, to breaches of covenant. As every kind of sin, committed by a church member, is in some sense a violation of the church covenant, some breaches of the covenant may require the highest expressions of the church's disapprobation and abhorrence, while others should be treated with expressions of a milder character.

Those from whom the church are commanded only to withdraw, are characterized as persons who walk *disorderly*. The original word rendered *disorderly* is a military term, and is primarily applicable to soldiers who quit their ranks, desert their posts, or will not submit to the rules and orders of the army; and hence, in the church, it seems to be particularly applicable to such as walk in violation of the rules and covenant of the church, but whose characters in other respects are not manifestly immoral or reprehensible. If, indeed, a member renounce the church, its communion and ordinances, he walks disorderly to a very great extent. He breaks and casts off the whole church covenant at once; quits his ranks and deserts his post entirely; and utterly withdraws himself from all the solemn obligations of membership. This cannot be a light offence against the church; nor can it, unless the church is manifestly removed from the foundation of the apostles and prophets, or so corrupt as not to be a church of Christ, be a small sin against God. Yet, even in regard to such a person, the circumstances of the case may be such as to render a simple, though solemn, withdrawal from him, on the part of the church, the proper procedure.

These views of the subject at large, the committee

would respectfully recommend to the serious consideration of the church; and particularly submit it as their opinion, that in regard to members who manifestly break the church covenant, but with no special offensiveness of temper or deportment, it is the duty of the church, after proper admonition and due long-suffering, solemnly to withdraw from them, according to the injunction in 2 Thess. iii. 6, and the exhortation in Rom. xvi. 17.

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

At different periods of his ministry in Salem, Dr. Worcester wrote many letters in answer to questions of church order and congregational usage. He kept no copies of such letters; but a few have been furnished for these pages.

"Should baptism always be administered in public?" Answer:

"I know of nothing in the divine word, which requires baptism to be administered publicly rather than privately. Still, there are obvious reasons, why it should generally be administered publicly. It is an ordinance belonging to the church, in which the whole body has an interest and a fellowship, and in which they should unitedly act in the way of faith and prayer; the public administration also gives solemnity and importance to the transaction, tending to impress the minds of the parents, to edify and quicken the church, and to arrest the attention and convince the minds of others. These are no light reasons for a public administration. Still it is lawful, and, in some instances, no doubt, expedient to administer privately.

I have done it in a few instances: in cases of sickness or feeble health; of inconvenience on account of poverty in fitting a *family* of children for a decent public appearance; of difficulty on account of turbulence of disposition; in one instance in which the churlish unbelieving husband was willing to allow the child to be baptized at home, but not to be carried to

meeting; and in one instance of an illegitimate child, in which the circumstances might occasion reproach, or scandal, if the administration were public, though the duty of baptizing was clear in the judgment of *christian* charity. I do not recollect an instance, which does not fall under one or other of these peculiarities of circumstance. From your statement of your case, I think I should converse kindly on the subject, and let my views of the desirableness and importance of a public administration be understood. But if the parents plead the ill health, or turbulence of the child, and are urgent for a private administration, I should comply."

A member of a church, being suspected of a trespass, and much reproached by "common fame," refused to say to his brethren, whether he was guilty or not guilty. The pastor anxiously inquired, "What is the duty of the Church?" Answer :

"Your case must be a very trying one. From your statement, I should suppose it was certainly incumbent on the church to attend to the case, and do what they could, to wipe off the reproach. The rule of law, that no one shall be required to give evidence against himself, does not, I suppose, hold in all its extent, at the bar of the church. Christians are to confess their faults one to another. When one member of the church suffers, all the members suffer. When a member has incurred the reproach of having fallen into scandalous sin, he owes it to himself, to the church, to the cause of religion, to wipe off the reproach, by a penitent confession, if he is guilty; or, by doing what he can, to clear himself to the satisfaction of his brethren and to the conviction of the world, if he is innocent.

If your suspected brother should 'declare his innocence,' and there be not proof to convict him of guilt, I do not see that you would be justified, in refusing to restore him to fellowship. If he perseveres in saying nothing, neither pleading guilty, nor not guilty, neither

confessing nor denying, and you have not evidence to convict him, but circumstances still continue suspicious and reproachful, I think it would be right and expedient to place him in a state of suspension, and hold the case open to further investigation and review. Probably, it will ere long be made manifest, whether he ought to be restored, or to be put away."

On "Admonition."

"In regard to 'admonition' the practice of the New England Churches is extremely various. I take it for granted, that the 'offending brother,' is supposed to have been brought to the bar of the church, and found to be an offender. If he immediately show true penitence, and make satisfactory confession, formal admonition is superseded. If he do not, what is the church to do? Some say, proceed directly to excommunication; this being the most solemn and impressive, and therefore the best and kindest *admonition*. Others say, not so: but show forbearance, and use admonition of a gentle kind. Of these last, some admonish by a letter, written and signed by the pastor, or by a committee of the Church. Some send a committee to admonish *viva voce*; and others require the admonition to be administered in the presence of the Church. I cannot say, which of these forms is the most general. We have used them all, according to circumstances, or as in our judgment one of them would be likely to have a better effect than another.

In my opinion it is best, that a Church should not be tied up to any precise form of admonition.—'If he neglect to *hear* the Church, let him be' &c. This evidently purports, that the Church, after finding the person guilty, is to use means to convince him, and bring him to repentance: but the manner and form are left to discretion. It should be the aim of the Church to proceed in the way, which is the most likely to have the best effect; and in different cases, circumstances will indicate different modes of treatment. The

Church, I think, should use its wise and faithful discretion in every case.

It *is*, in my opinion, ‘desirable that the members of the Church should be acquainted with what is done in the way of discipline.’ Admonition, in either of the specified forms, is properly a *church act*; and if it be so administered, that the Church do not generally know of it at the time, yet it will be easily communicated, and an understanding will be very much a matter of course.

With us an offender, while under admonition, is in a state of suspension; and if he do not give satisfaction, after a season of probation, longer or shorter according to circumstances, he is formally and in a solemn manner put away. We never admonish, or perform any act of discipline, in the presence of the *Congregation*.”

In some orthodox churches, the “Half-way Covenant” was continued, long after Dr. Worcester’s settlement in Salem.* A case of difficulty arose in the mind of a pastor, respecting a man who had owned the covenant and confession of the Church, so as to have his children baptized. He had some doubts, upon points of doctrine, but manifested a good spirit. After Dr. Worcester had been consulted, he was admitted to full communion. And it is pleasant to add, that “he proved to be a very excellent christian.”

Answer to inquiries, relative to *the qualification of candidates for admission to the Lord’s table* :

“I do not wonder, that you and your church are somewhat perplexed with *the case*. To my own mind, it presents itself in rather a dubious light. From the short consideration, however, which I have given it,

* In 1771, there were eighty-six members of the Tabernacle Church, who were not in full communion; and were recorded, as “*having renewed their covenant only*.”

my impression on the whole is favorable to the applicant and to his admission. Unquestionably, 'evidence of a new heart ought' in all cases to be 'required.' This evidence, however, is, in different cases, exceedingly various in its degrees, forms, and aspects. The observation, which I have made during nineteen years ministry, and upon the results of four considerable revivals, has taught me to lay much less stress upon a *relation of striking experiences*, than formerly I did. I have had occasion to weep over the apostacy of individuals, who could utter themselves to the astonishment of all who heard them, on the subject of the depravity of their hearts, the greatness of their sins, the terrors of the Lord,—of a sense of his justice, of their repentance, submission, and joy. I have found, on the other hand, cause of great thankfulness to God, on account of individuals, who could give no such relation of experiences; who seemed, indeed, at the time of examination, to have known but little of their hearts, to have felt but little of conviction, and to have been scarcely able to tell how or when they became religious; and concerning whom I had many and great fears, for want of clearer and more decided evidence of their gracious renewal. Several of the most exemplary, decided, zealous, and valuable members of my church, were of this description; and what is remarkable, I have had no case of this kind which has turned out badly. It may be to the purpose also to remark, that most of these cases have been of persons, whose religious education had been lax,—who had not been accustomed to distinguishing instruction in the doctrines of the Gospel!

Does the man assent and consent to the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and to your views of the necessity and nature of experimental religion? Does he appear to be sincerely humble and devout? Does he manifest love to God; faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, even in his blood; love to his people and his cause, and a desire to walk in his ordinances and to adorn his doctrine? In a word, does he on the whole appear to be sincerely 'for Christ?' If so, though neither

you nor he can tell how he came to be so, I think you would do right to receive him : *and more especially as he is already in covenant.* This I should certainly regard as a reason for admitting to full communion, on less evidence than should be required in another case ; not because the person is more likely to be sincerely pious ; but because great caution should be used, not to hinder him from fulfilling his covenant engagements.”

As a Congregationalist, well instructed and far better than he would have been, if such a necessity had not been laid upon him, at Fitchburg, Dr. Worcester had very successfully begun a course of measures, which were suited to make the Tabernacle Church a light to all around, by its order and purity. He had introduced such rules of procedure, as gave the business of the church all the regularity of a court of law. But after the gathering of the First Baptist Church, in Salem, during the year 1804, a question arose, relative to the propriety of granting letters of dismission, to two or three members who wished to join that church. Hence the “*DECLARATORY ARTICLES,*” adopted by the Tabernacle Church, Jan. 7, 1805.

“ As some unhappy irregularities have lately been committed, on the part of members of this church, in relation to the Baptist Communion ; in order to prevent the occurrence in future of any such or similar irregularities, and to provide, as far as possible, against any misunderstanding, or collision with our Baptist brethren :—We, the Tabernacle Church of Christ, in Salem, after due deliberation, think it proper to adopt the following *Declaratory Articles*, as formal expressions of our views, respecting our Baptist brethren, and as standing regulations to be, by us as a body, and as individual members, sacredly observed.

I. Although, in the opinion of this church, our

Baptist brethren, in denying baptism to the infant seed of believers, and in holding immersion to be the mode, and the only mode of Christian baptism, are really in an error of very serious consequences, and against which it is our duty to bear our solemn and decided testimony; yet we charitably view it to be an error of such a nature, as is not altogether incompatible, either with Christian sincerity, or with a Christian church state.

II. We wish to be understood, that on our part we are perfectly disposed to meet regular Baptist Churches, and we cordially invite them, their elders, and members, to meet us, on the ingenuous and brotherly ground, not only of Christian charity, but of reciprocal Christian communion, such as obtains between churches of the same order and denomination. And if they refuse to meet us on this desirable ground; though faithful to ourselves, to our sentiments, and general connection, yet we deem it incumbent on us, as the part of charity and duty, to refrain from all unbrotherly interference, whether open or covert, with them; and as much as in us lies, to cultivate with them the relations of Christian affection, harmony, and peace.

III. As true Christian believers *are all baptized by one Spirit into one body*, those of our Baptist brethren, who renounce the communion of regular Pedobaptist churches and professors, merely on account of a difference acknowledgedly conscientious, respecting external or symbolical baptism, we are constrained to consider, as acting a part wholly repugnant to the spirit of that charity, which is the bond of perfectness, and grievously wounding to Christ in the house of his friends.

IV. As any and every attempt, on the part of Baptists, to seduce the members of this church from their fidelity to us, or by any means to persuade or induce them, to withdraw from our communion; and thus not only perjuringly to violate, but also to renounce their solemn covenant with us, is in our view in a high degree disorderly and unchristian; so, for any of our

members to invite or encourage such seduction or persuasion, we view to be altogether unjustifiable, and incompatible with their sacred vows.

V. If at any time any member of this church have serious doubts, or conscientious scruples respecting baptism, as practised by us, we hold it to be the sacred covenant duty of such member, in a free and christian manner to communicate such doubts and scruples to us; and to give us fair opportunity to use our brotherly endeavors to remove them,—previously to any application, or even intimation to Baptists, on the subject.

VI. If any member of this church, after free communication with us, as specified in the preceding article, and proper time taken deliberately and prayerfully to consider the subject, shall still be dissatisfied respecting his or her baptism, and believe it to be a duty to be baptized in the Baptist way,—it does not become us to bind or restrain the consciences of any. We think ourselves in charity bound, in such a case, to indulge a brother, or sister, in a regular application for baptism to any regular administrator: provided, such a brother or sister will either continue in particular relation to us, or not utterly renounce our covenant and communion. But we conceive it to be utterly incompatible with the sacred nature of our solemn vows, and with the fidelity which we owe to the Great Head of the Church, to sanction, by any formal act of our own, a renunciation on the part of any of our members, of our covenant and special communion.”

Jan. 9. The first pastor of the new church,—since so extensively known as the Rev. Lucius Bolles, D. D., Cor. Sec. of the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions,—was ordained, and the services were held in the Tabernacle. Soon afterwards, Dr. Worcester addressed him a friendly note, enclosing a copy of the Articles.

Rev. Lucius Bolles.

“Salem, Jan. 17, 1805.

Rev. and dear Sir,—

I take leave to transmit to you the enclosed ‘*Articles*, lately adopted by the Tabernacle Church. In taking the ground we have thus formally marked out, we have been deliberate, and have been influenced, I trust, by the spirit of Christian fidelity and candor.—M. M., a sister of this church, has had the offer of a letter of dismissal, in conformity with these Articles; and you will readily perceive how difficult it would be for us, to justify our act to our own consciences, should we grant her a letter upon any other principle. Should one of your sisters, dear Sir, come forward and declare to you, that she could no longer consider you as a Church of Christ, that she regarded the covenant vows, which, *in* connection with you, she had publicly made to God, as a mere nullity; and, accordingly, should go out from you, renouncing and declaring her intention utterly to renounce your communion and worship; would you not find some difficulty in the way of granting her a letter of dismissal, as a member of your body in regular standing? Would you not immediately perceive, that, in granting a dismissal in such a case, you would not only pass over, as no irregularity or offence, an utter renunciation of the most sacred and solemn vows; but even testify your approval of such a renunciation, and by a formal act of your own, ratify and confirm it?—Our covenant we hold sacred; and we frankly confess, that we believe it to be altogether a mistaken idea, that, in order to be a consistent Baptist, a person must nullify the covenants, and refuse the communion of Pedobaptist churches.

I embrace this opportunity to give you assurance of my high satisfaction in the choice made of a pastor, by the Baptist Church in this place; and of my sincere disposition to cultivate with you the most perfect harmony and friendship. With sentiments of respect,

I am, Reverend and dear Sir,

Yours, in the hope of the Gospel,
SAMUEL WORCESTER, Pastor,” &c.

The answer, acknowledging the reception of the Articles, &c., was really controversial, although the writer disclaimed the intention of controversy, and “reciprocated all the affectionate feelings expressed towards” him by the pastor of the Tabernacle;—“wishing,” also, that his “labors might be abundantly blessed in winning souls to the Redeemer’s interest.” A reply was made, which, while unexceptionable in manner and spirit, was “weighty and powerful” in defence of the Articles, and in refutation of the objections, both general and particular, which had been urged against them.*

Note from Rev. Mr. Bolles.

“Mr. Bolles presents his compliments to the Rev. Mr. Worcester, and thanks him for his letter of the second instant; but feels indisposed, at present, to depart from the original intention expressed in his *first*, and become an epistolary disputant.

Mr. B. will cheerfully receive Mr. Worcester, at his lodgings, or will wait upon him, at his own house, (if requested for that purpose,) and converse upon the subject of the correspondence.

Salem, March 30, 1805.”

Answer to the preceding Note.

“Mr. Worcester returns his compliments to the Rev. Mr. Bolles, thanks him for his politeness, and assures him, that there is not the least disposition, on Mr. W.’s part, to engage in an epistolary dispute. It has been with equal regret and surprise, that Mr. W. has learned that his communications to Mr. Bolles have been unkindly received, and unfavorably spoken of; if not by

* But the *reply* should be read in connection with the “answer,” which occasioned it; and to publish this might be thought a matter of doubtful propriety.

Mr. Bolles himself, at least by some of his friends. Nothing was less intended or less expected. No communications would have been made, had there not been special occasion for them; and the communications which were made, were intended not to create misunderstandings and animosities, but to remove and prevent them. Mr. W. has no idea, that an open, ingenuous expression of sentiments and views is in the least incompatible with the most friendly disposition, or with the maintenance of the most friendly intercourse, and the most peaceable state. He believes, that wherein Christian brethren sentimentally disagree, it is desirable, that they should understand each other perfectly; and with this perfect understanding, mutually display the amiable spirit of Christian candor, and forbearance, and charity. And he hopes, that however frank he may be in expressing his sentiments, or firm in maintaining them, he shall never be found to manifest towards his Baptist brethren a contemptuous, unfriendly, or unbrotherly disposition.

Mr. Worcester has no particular wish, and no unwillingness to converse with Mr. Bolles 'on the subject of the correspondence;' but he will be happy to wait on Mr. Bolles, whenever Mr. Bolles shall make it convenient to give him the pleasure.

Salem, April 1, 1805."

This "Note" is conceived to be of some importance, as showing the spirit and principles of the writer, in his public course, not only on the subject of baptism, in its varied relations, but other subjects, in regard to which he was constrained to oppose the doctrines or statements of others. It was in his judgment, the "more excellent way" for Christian brethren, when they "sentimentally disagree," or when any collision whatever occurs,—to have "an open, ingenuous expression of sentiments and views." He could not allow, that such an expression "is in the least incom-

patible with the most friendly disposition, or with the maintenance of the most friendly intercourse, and the most peaceable state." Was he not correct? And how lamentable, then, it is, that brethren of the same denomination, as well as those of different denominations, are so often ready to consider the kindest efforts to adjust differences, as if the undoubted work of a lover of controversy for its own sake, and a destroyer of peace, for no imaginable end, but his own pleasure in "stirring up strife." And the more decisive the witness of his facts, and the more unanswerable the logic of his arguments, the greater, it would seem, is the offence which he commits!

The new Congregational "Branch Church" originated in a disagreement of brethren, upon certain questions, before Dr. Worcester came to Salem. Honestly sustaining the views of the Tabernacle Church, yet most anxious to have the best understanding with the pastor and brethren of the other church, he was, for years, personally odious to some of those brethren; and was the object of imputations, for which there really was no more foundation in truth, and no more warrant in Christian love, than Diotrephes had for "prating with malicious words against" the beloved disciple. And it would not be right to conceal the fact, that, at several periods more particularly, there were those in Salem and other places, who accused him of a spirit, which had not the least place in his heart, and ascribed to him intentions and motives, which were the very opposite of the true.

It affords the purest gratification to be able to state, that, although for a time the occasions of excited feeling between the Tabernacle and First Baptist Churches, rather increased than diminished; yet, ultimately,

the pastors could exchange with each other, as brethren in the Lord, without any apprehension of being unwelcome in each other's pulpits respectively. It may be further said, that the same friendly intercourse has been continued; and all the good results, which Dr. Worcester anticipated from the formation of the First Baptist Church, have been more than realized.

Rev. Leonard Worcester.

"Salem, Feb. 25, 1805.

My dear Brother,—

Yours of the 21st ult. came duly to hand. It is always with the most lively interest and pleasure that I hear of your welfare, and of the welfare of your dear family. Since you were at Salem, my health has been so much impaired, that I have been obliged to discontinue some of my *extra* services, and even my ordinary services I have been in some instances unable to perform. At present, however, I enjoy in common with my family, a very comfortable state. On the 5th of November we received from the Fountain of blessings another daughter. Her name is *Zervia Fidelia*. At present she is a lovely, promising babe; but we have painful reasons not to forget, that she is not our own!

We heard from Hollis last week—all well. As for news of an interesting nature, I have none. We have a Baptist minister settled in this town—a very promising young man. Mr. Spaulding is here, but not yet installed. Mr. Emerson has answered the call of Mr. Hopkins' church, in the affirmative. You will perhaps wish to know, whether the changes and new things which have taken place have emptied the Tabernacle. Not quite. About half a dozen families, of little consequence to the society, have gone to the Baptists; and two or three to Mr. Spaulding's "*Branch*." Their places, however, were immediately supplied; and several families, who have been waiting for room, in the

expectation that more would go away, seem at present likely to be disappointed. In a word, the stability of the Tabernacle Society has been hitherto not less astonishing than pleasing. How Mr. Spaulding will succeed, I dare not conjecture. The general remark, is, that his prospects are beyond all expectation, dark and discouraging. He says himself, that he came here to die.

He who gave to the ocean his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment, will say to the tempestuous sea of democracy,—“Hitherto shalt thou come, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” In this confidence it becomes us to remain unmoved, and await the awful crisis! In this Commonwealth every exertion is making to prevent the re-election of our worthy Governor; what will be the issue time must disclose. You have doubtless seen by the papers, what a figure Mr. Jefferson has made in our State Legislature.

Give our love to our dear sister, and to the children; and accept a generous share of it for yourself.

Yours, in the bonds of fraternal affection,

SAMUEL WORCESTER.”

On the 24th of April, Dr. Worcester, in giving the right hand of fellowship, at the ordination of the present senior pastor of the South Church,—Rev. Dr. Emerson,—began with observations upon “true fellowship,” as “founded in true benevolence,” and as being “the bond and perfection of the universe.”—In a direct address to the colleague pastor elect, he inquired:—

“Is it possible, my brother, that the friends and disciples of the meek and benevolent Redeemer, should ever be at variance among themselves? Is it possible, that there should be animosities and feuds among the ministers and subjects of the “Prince of Peace?”—Alas! we have the most melancholy proofs, that it is

possible. Look around upon the Christian world. How many different parties, and names, and interests, every where prevail! By a bigoted zeal for modes and forms, by a misplaced stress upon points of but small comparative importance, by partial attachments and ardent competitions,—brother is separated from brother, minister from minister, church from church. The bonds of fellowship are broken, and the blood of the Redeemer is violated; peace is driven from her proper dwelling, charity weeps over the affecting scene, and the enemy rejoices. Is it thus, that Christians are to convince the world of the excellency of the Gospel? Is it thus, that they are to promote the honor and the kingdom of their common Savior and Lord?

My dear Sir, let there be no strife between me and thee, and between my people and thy people; for we are brethren. Let us never forget, that there is one body and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling. Let it be our care to heal, as far as possible, the bleeding wounds in the body of Christ. Let it be our endeavor, to display the true spirit of the Gospel, to cultivate Christian affection, harmony, and peace, and to promote among all who love our Lord Jesus, that charity which suffereth long and is kind, and which is the bond of perfectness.

God Almighty bless thee, my brother. May your ministry be long, successful, and happy. As your labors and your trials abound, so may your consolations also abound. May you obtain grace of the Lord to be faithful unto death; and then may you receive the crown of life.”*

With the “Branch Church,” the Tabernacle declined “a free interchange of offices of fellowship;” and the pastor, of course, could not preach in “a free interchange of pulpits,” so long as certain “obstacles” were “in the way,” which, as he and the brethren “re-

* Some historic incidents and circumstances, which would be suggested to many, probably gave additional effect to this high-minded expression of unfeigned brotherly kindness.

peatedly expressed," "might be in the true spirit of the Gospel removed." In a communication to the Branch Church, it was said:

"While according to an Article of our Church Code, referring to 15th ch. of the Cambridge Platform, we are ready to hold communion with all the churches of Christ, in all things in which we are mutually agreed, so far as there shall be opportunity; yet we do not feel ourselves bound, without any discretion in the case, to exercise acts of fellowship, of all kinds, with every body of professed Christians, which has been recognized by a council, as a church of Christ, or even as a Congregational Church. As we are confident, that such an extension of the principle of fellowship, was not within the contemplation of the framers of the Cambridge Platform, and has never been practically recognized by the generality of Congregational churches; so we believe it is not warranted by the word of God; but is obviously incompatible with the power, which Christ has delegated to the churches, and with the sacred obligations on them severally, to let their light shine, to prove all things, to hold fast that which is good, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and generally to maintain the purity of the christian profession.

The grand distinctive principle of Congregationalism is, that, according to the law of Christ, each particular church is vested with power in itself to admit members to its communion and to exclude them from it, and to exercise all the functions of discipline requisite for the preservation of its order and purity. But this principle might be subverted, or rendered a mere nullity, were the rule which is set up in the communication from the Branch Church, to be carried into general practice. For according to this rule,* Councils

* It was contended, that the Branch Church had "a *formal standing*," by the recognition of a Council; and that this was sufficient as a claim of fellowship, "in common with all or any one of the churches of our congregational order, however great the differences, either in belief or practice!" Such a

must have a paramount control of the churches, and power to determine not only with what churches, but also with what individuals a particular church shall have communion. According to this rule, if a person excommunicated from this Church, were, by advice of Council, to be received into the Branch Church, we should be obliged still to hold communion with the Branch Church, and of course, *with the person whom we had excommunicated*; and, therefore, should that same person be commended back to us by the Branch Church, we should be obliged to receive him, although we might have the fullest evidence, that our censure upon him was just, and that he is not a proper subject of our christian communion.

We have known an instance, indeed, in which a body, composed principally of persons excommunicated from a particular church, has been recognized by a council, as a church of Christ; but with that corrupt body and all its members according to the rule set up by the Branch Church, the Church from whose communion those persons were cut off, and all the churches in the vicinity, must now hold communion. This, we say, is subversive of the fundamental principle of Congregationalism; and therefore utterly incompatible with Platform and Scripture. We can by no means admit, that genuine congregationalism involves principles, so obviously destructive of each other; and from which the state of things deplored by the Branch Church must necessarily result.

While, therefore, we admit, and wish to maintain the Scriptural principle of communion among churches; we also hold, that this principle allows to each particular church the exercise of a prudent and faithful discretion, in regard to its communion with others. We believe, also, that withholding fellowship from a

claim as this, Dr. W. utterly denied.—Other points of variance need not here be introduced. It was ten or twelve years, before there was even the form of an adjustment of existing differences, so that the usual “interchange of fellowship” of Congregational churches could begin. Dr. W.’s efforts to accomplish a full and cordial adjustment, were, for a long time, entirely without success.

new church is a very different thing, from actually withdrawing from an old one; the latter carries in it a positive censure, while the former may impart no more than a mere want of information or explanation." * * *

In this connexion, it may be mentioned, that, from a very early day after his settlement in Salem, Dr. Worcester had manifested towards Congregational churches and pastors, the utmost liberality of fellowship, which would be consistent with fundamental principles of Christian doctrine and practice. He exchanged with the pastors of the First and the North Churches, although these were known to be more Arminian than Calvinistic. But as at Fitchburg, he could occasionally interchange labors with clergymen of the class of "Cephas," so he did at Salem; until the time came, when few were to be found, except in the class of "Eusebius," or in that of "Catholicus."

And as he felt that there was an urgent need of combining all the available strength of those, who were "one in Christ Jesus," he sincerely rejoiced in any accession to the cause of vital piety, under whatever denominational name. Any indications of increasing spirituality in the Episcopal churches, he hailed with very special pleasure. And in demonstration of his truly Catholic spirit—heaven-wide from all bigotry and bitterness of sect or party,—he gave the aid of his sympathy and services to a small company of Baptists, who were endeavoring to establish public worship and the ordinances of the Gospel, in a neighboring locality, where Christians were few and these nearly all Baptists. It was shortly after his controversial Letters to Dr. Baldwin. And such was his solicitude for the success of the little band of Baptists, at Danvers, New Mills, that, when feeble, or weary and worn, he went

and held evening meetings, for their encouragement and enlargement. He would not have been willing to countenance any Congregational interference. What he there did, was gratefully appreciated and never forgotten by those, who lived to rejoice in the success of their self-denying exertions.

In the summer of 1805, different circumstances having contributed to make the subject of baptism a topic of incessant inquiry and dispute, he thought it best to exhibit to his own people his views of all the points at issue, in one connected, complete, and conclusive presentation. He preached "Two Discourses, on the Perpetuity and Provision of God's gracious Covenant with Abraham and his Seed." These were unanimously and earnestly requested for the press, by a vote of the church; and were printed, with some enlargement* probably, and with the addition of notes, which were found, by those who differed from the doctrine of the Discourses, to be quite as unmanageable, as any part of the regular and elaborate argument from the word of God, the voice of history, and the counsels of enlightened reason.

It would be a vain attempt to do justice to these Discourses, by extracts for which space can here be afforded. The substance was very faithfully represented in a synopsis of the argument and inferences,—prepared, it is supposed, by Dr. Austin,—and published in the Mass. Miss. Magazine, April, 1808.

"The subject of the discourses is the ancient covenant of Jehovah with his church. A subject, so important at all times, in a peculiar manner calls the attention of good men at the present time.

* They made a pamphlet of 79 full pages Svo., and were each longer than two of his common sermons.

The text selected by Mr. Worcester, is Gal. iii. 29. *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs, according to the promise.* After a pertinent introduction, in which the connection of the text is carefully explained and elucidated, this very natural and important doctrine is deduced, viz. In God's covenant of promise with Abraham, provision was made for the continuance of the church formed by it, and thus for the transmission of the privileges and blessings contained in it, from generation to generation, down to the close of time.

This doctrine is considered under two general heads.

I. That the covenant, which was made with Abraham, and by which the church was formed in his family, was intended to be perpetual, or to continue throughout all generations.

II. To show more particularly what provision was made in the covenant for the continuance of the church, and the transmission of the blessings contained in it.

The perpetuity of God's gracious covenant, its continuance under successive dispensations, through all ages, is undoubtedly a doctrine of the first importance. On this depend the blessings and privileges, the comforts and hopes of the church. With this truth, Mr. Worcester seems deeply impressed, and upon it has bestowed most serious attention.

The arguments by which he establishes his first general head, he has arranged under five distinct topics.

1. 'By the covenant made with Abraham, he was constituted the father of all them that believe.' If by virtue of the covenant Abraham is the father of all believers in every age and country, then the covenant must continue through every age.

2. 'The covenant established with Abraham and his seed, comprised all the blessings and privileges ever promised to believers, and to the church.'

To abrogate this covenant, therefore, would be to abrogate the grand charter of all the blessings, privi-

leges and hopes of God's people. To abolish the church formed in the house of Abraham, would be to abolish the kingdom of the Messiah.

3. 'The covenant made with Abraham and his seed, is the covenant of which, in the New Testament, Christ is said to be the Mediator, and which is designated as the covenant to be established with the church in the days of the Gospel.' This covenant with Abraham must, therefore, be as permanent as the Gospel church.

4. 'The church under the Gospel, is uniformly in the Scriptures represented as being the same church, or a continuance of the same, which was formed in the family of Abraham. As a tree grafted is the same as before; the roots, the trunk, the tree, are the same; so the church of God is the same under every dispensation. The covenant, therefore, is perpetual.

5. 'The covenant made with Abraham is expressly declared to be an everlasting and perpetual covenant, a covenant to continue throughout all generations.' These arguments are handled at considerable length, with a perspicuity, a force, and persuasiveness, not common in subjects of this nature.

Under his second general head, Mr. W. undertakes to show 'what was the provision made in the Abrahamic covenant for the continuance of the church formed by it, and the transmission of the blessings contained in it.' This provision is found, he supposes, in the two grand promises variously expressed and at different times unfolded, 'I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.' And, 'in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.'

'The promise or proposal of God to Abraham was, to be a God, not only to *him*, but to his *seed*. The same was his promise to Isaac, the same to Jacob, and so down from generation to generation. In this line of natural descent were the blessings of the covenant to be transmitted.' Not that *all*, who were children according to the flesh, were certainly heirs of *all* covenant blessings; but the children of the *promise*, those who should truly in faith be given to God, and

brought up for him, were to be counted for the seed. Grace should be given, so that a holy seed should be preserved, from generation to generation, in the church. While the promise of the covenant had *primary* respect to Abraham's natural posterity, yet Abraham was made the father of *many* nations. 'In him and in his seed all the families of the *earth* should be blessed.' Though the church was to be continued in the line of natural descent, yet provision was made for the adoption, incorporation, or ingrafting of other individuals, families, and nations. Under the former dispensation, 'strangers' of different nations were admitted to the privileges of Israelites; on the introduction of the gospel dispensation, Gentile believers by hundreds, and thousands, and myriads, were admitted to the same covenant, and became fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the same promise in Christ by the Gospel.' Guests, before invited, were excluded from the society, and new ones were admitted. Old branches were broken off, and new ones grafted in. Such has been, such is the church, and so it will continue.

Such is a brief view of what Mr. W. has given as 'the provision of the covenant.'

In the 'Improvement,' Mr. Worcester first leads us 'to a grateful and devout contemplation of the great designs, the gradual progress, and the ultimate extension and glory of the church of God.' He next shows that the gracious covenant of God is never in reality *established* with any but true believers; in the *third* place, he infers the 'high and everlasting importance of a cordial and obedient belief in all which God has promised' in this covenant.

Having thus prepared the way, Mr. W. infers fourthly, 'that for believing parents to give up their children to God in baptism is a great and important duty.'

Under this inference it is shown, that, as the ancient covenant and church of God were continued under the present dispensation, and as baptism has now by

divine appointment taken the place of circumcision, it therefore follows, conclusively, that as children were anciently admitted to the seal of the covenant in the form of circumcision, so they are now to be admitted to the same seal in the form of baptism. This inference, so evident and conclusive, Mr. W. strengthens by collateral proofs from the New Testament, and by a historical view of the practice in the first ages of the church. With earnestness and christian zeal he thus enforces the duty.

Next follows a reflection concerning the *mode* of baptism, in which by arguments irresistible he shows, that sprinkling is valid and scriptural.

In the remaining part of the Improvement, he strongly enforces the serious duty of every church respecting their baptized children. He gives an impressive view of God's infinite wisdom and grace, manifested in his covenant with the Church, and forcibly urges all, who are set for the defence of the Gospel, to maintain the spirit and principles of this gracious covenant."

The scriptural doctrine of the covenant with Abraham, as illustrated in the first of these Discourses, would seem to be decisive of the whole matter in controversy.* In the second, all the practical questions of any importance are stated and fairly considered. And they are answered, as irrefutably, as from the nature of the subject and the laws of moral evidence, it could justly be expected, that any such questions should ever be answered. More recent investigations have brought additional proofs in confirmation of Dr. Worcester's positions; and the idea of baptism, as an emblem of *purification*, has recently been so exhibited, as to make "assurance doubly sure," with those who

* There is a similar view of God's covenant with Abraham, in an excellent Sermon by the late Rev. Henry White, D. D. Prof. Union Theol. Sem. New York. Am. National Preacher, Nov. 1846.

wholly deny the popular assumptions and assertions of Baptists, respecting the meaning of baptism in the New Testament.

In regard to the duty "of believing parents to give their children to God, in baptism," the argument is conducted with great ability. Baptism is shown to have taken the place of circumcision. And "as the outward seal of the covenant was originally required to be administered to the infant seed; so, *unless it has been expressly prohibited*, it is still to be administered to them." Such a prohibition is no where to be found. "As there was under the former dispensation an express precept for administering the seal of the covenant to the infant seed of the church; that precept, varying only as the seal is varied, still remains in force, unless it have been expressly repealed. It is arrogance, therefore, to demand, for we have no right to expect, an explicit renewal of this precept to be found in the New Testament, any more than the precept for the observance of the Sabbath." "Whatever distinctions were formerly made, we are assured by the apostle, that, in respect to the privileges of the covenant, there is to be no longer any distinction; *for in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female.*"

"It is not incumbent on us to show, that the precept for administering the appointed seal of the covenant to the infant seed of the church *has not* been repealed; but it is indispensably incumbent on those who deny infant baptism, to show in the clearest manner, that it *has* been repealed. For a precept, once in force, and not limited to any certain period, is ever afterwards to be considered as in force, unless known to have been repealed, by the same authority by which it was given.

There is not, however, in the whole word of God,

the least intimation, that this precept has ever been repealed; there is not in the whole word of God the least intimation, that the seal of the covenant is not, under the present dispensation, as it was under the former, to be applied to the children of the church.

Neither the commission, given to the apostles, *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them*, nor the exhortation addressed by them to the people, *Repent and be baptized*, comes near to touch the point in question. Neither the one nor the other goes to prove any thing further, than that those, who have not received baptism, must not only believe, but be baptized, in order to a regular standing in the visible church of God. It was precisely thus under the former dispensation. Those who had never been circumcised were required to be circumcised, in order to their regular standing in the church. But whenever parents who had never been circumcised, were admitted to the church, they were not only circumcised themselves, but were afterwards required to offer their children in the same sealing ordinance.

Had the seal of the covenant never been altered, the commission, given to the apostles, would have been, *Go and teach all nations, CIRCUMCISING them*; and their exhortation to those who had never received circumcision, would have been, *Repent and be CIRCUMCISED; for the promise is to you and to your children*. But had the case been thus, who would ever have imagined, that there was any thing, either in the commission, or exhortation, like an intimation that children were no longer to receive the seal of the covenant. The real case, however, is substantially the same. Those who have never received baptism, are required not only to believe, but also be baptized, in order to their regular standing in the church; but having been regularly admitted, they are to offer their children also in baptism, as formerly they were required to offer them in circumcision. For the promise is now the same that it formerly was, to be a God not only to them, but also to their seed after them; and on the ground of this promise, parents are still required, as formerly

they were, believingly to give up, not only themselves, but their children also, to the Lord.”*

From the manner in which Christ received and blessed “little children,” from the baptism of “whole households” by the apostles; and from the proofs of infant baptism, as “the universal practice of the Church, in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles,”—in connexion with the fact, that, “for more than three thousand years, the seal of the covenant [either circumcision or baptism] was universally applied to the children of the church, no one forbidding it,”—the just inference is, that the great and important duty of believers, to give their children to God in baptism, is not in the least invalidated, although “during the last three hundred years, there have been some in the different parts of Christendom, who have forbidden little children to be brought to Christ, and denied the application of the seal of the covenant to them.”

In an extended note on this part of the second Discourse, the Author adduces “testimony” which is “impregnable,” in regard to the practice of “infant baptism.”

* “It is no small infelicity, attending the arguments of the antipedobaptists, that they go wide of the point, to which they are professedly directed. When they would prove that the Abrahamic covenant has ceased, the arguments advanced only go to show, that the Mosaic law, or Sinai covenant, is abolished; which we, as well as they, admit and believe. And when they would prove, that the infant seed of the church ought not to be baptized, the arguments adduced only go to shew, that believers, who have never received baptism, ought to be baptized; which we, as well as they, admit and believe. But, as when it is shown that the Mosaic law, or Sinai covenant, is abolished, nothing is done towards proving that the Abrahamic covenant has ceased; so when it is shown that believers, who have never received baptism, ought to be baptized, nothing is done towards proving that the infant seed of the church ought not to be baptized. Nothing more is done, in either case, towards proving the point in question, than would be done towards proving that female members of the church are not to be admitted to the Lord’s Supper, should it only be shown that male members are to be admitted. Yet wide as these arguments go of the points to be proved, they are urged and repeated with as much assurance, as if they were pertinent and conclusive; and with weak, unstable, and undiscerning minds, they have but too often their intended effect.”

“ As there was no dispute about baptism in the first ages of Christianity, it should not be expected that much would be found, particularly on the subject, in the writings of those ages. But because there is nothing *directly* on the subject, either for or against infant baptism, in the fragments which have come down to us, of the writings of the first century, the antipedobaptists, with an assurance peculiar to themselves, have undertaken to *assert*, not to *prove*, that during the first century, infant baptism *was not* practised in the church. With equal propriety we might assert, even had we no proof to support our assertion, that it *was* practised universally. But we are not reduced to this extremity. The sacred truth is, there is as much evidence, as, from the state of the case, could reasonably be expected, that during the first century, and for several succeeding ages, infant baptism was practised in the church, universally, and without contradiction or question.

In the writings of Clemens Romanus and Hermes Pastor, both contemporaries with the apostles, and both mentioned by Paul, the former in his epistle to the Phillipians, and the latter in his epistle to the Romans, passages are extant, which by fair implication prove the practice of infant baptism in their day. Justin Martyr and Irenæus, the former of whom was born within three or four years after the death of the apostle John, and the latter of whom was the disciple of Polycarp, the bishop or angel of the church of Smyrna, to whom John, in the Revelation, addressed his epistle, are more particular and clear, to the same purpose. Tertullian, who was about eleven years old when Polycarp died, and was many years contemporary with Irenæus; and Origen, who was contemporary with Tertullian, are direct and explicit on the subject. Speaking of the moral pollution of infants, Origen says, ‘ What is the reason, that, whereas the baptism of the church is given for forgiveness, INFANTS also, by the usage of the church, are baptized; when if there were nothing in infants, which wanted forgiveness or mercy, baptism would be needless to them.’

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, who suffered martyrdom for the Christian faith, only about five years after the death of Origen, was president of a council, which consisted of sixty-six bishops, or pastors of churches, and which delivered an unanimous opinion, 'that the baptism of infants was not to be deferred,' as some supposed it should be, 'to the eighth day, but might be given to them any time before.' Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Jerome, all of whom flourished within about a hundred years of Origen and Cyprian, are all explicit on the subject; explain the design of infant baptism, mention it as coming in the place of circumcision, and speak of it as the universal and undisputed practice of the church.

Austin, who was contemporary with some of these last, and who flourished only about two hundred and eighty years after the apostles, in a controversy with Pelagius, alleged the practice of infant baptism, in proof of the doctrine of original sin. 'Why are infants,' says he, 'baptized for the remission of sin, if they have none? Infant baptism *the whole church* practices; it was not instituted by councils, but was EVER IN USE.' Pelagius, whose interest it was to set this argument aside, was so far from denying the alleged fact, that, in reply to the suggestion of some that by denying original sin, he denied the right of infants to baptism, he utterly discards the idea, and affirms, 'that he never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, who denied baptism to infants.' 'This testimony is impregnable. Pelagius was a man of great reading, and had travelled extensively. He was born in Britain, resided some time at Rome, and made the tour of the Christianized parts of Africa and Asia, by the way of Egypt and Jerusalem. Yet in the whole of his reading and of his travels, he never read or heard of any, who denied the divine institution of infant baptism.'

From this period, the matter is clear beyond dispute. Dr. Gill, himself, one of the most learned of the antipedobaptist writers, acknowledges that 'infant baptism was the practice of the church, universally, from the third to the eleventh century.'

‘FOR THE FIRST FOUR HUNDRED YEARS,’ says Dr. Wall, in his History of infant Baptism, ‘there appears only one man, Tertullian, that advised the delay of infant baptism, in some cases; and one Gregory, who did perhaps practice such delay, in the case of his own children; but no society, so thinking or so practising, nor one man so saying, that it was unlawful to baptize infants. In the next SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS, there is not so much as one man to be found, that either spoke or practised such delay, but all the contrary. And when about the year ELEVEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY, *one sect* among the Waldenses declared against the baptizing of infants, as being *incapable of salvation*; the *main body* of that people rejected their opinion. *And the sect that still held to it, quickly dwindled away and disappeared. And there was nothing more heard of holding that tenet, TILL THE YEAR FIFTEEN HUNDRED AND TWENTY-TWO.*’ In confirmation of this statement it may be proper to observe, that Mr. Whiston, a man eminent in literature, who for certain reasons left the communion of the established church of England, and went over to the antipædobaptists, frankly declares, that Dr. Wall’s History of Infant Baptism, as to the facts, appeared to him most accurately done, and might be depended upon by the Baptists themselves.

The unprejudiced reader will now judge with how much candor and truth, an attempt has been made in some late publications, to make the *unlearned and unstable* believe, that the practice of infant baptism had its rise in the dark ages, under the influence of popery. To give countenance to this attempt, some passages have been quoted from Walafrid Strabo, in which he has represented the doctrine of original sin, and the doctrine of infant baptism, as having their origin about the time of St. Austin. But the representations of Strabo, a man of but little reading, but of great affectation to say something new, who wrote, about the middle of the eighth century, in the very midst of the Gothic darkness, as they go directly in the face of the primitive fathers of the church, are surely entitled to very little regard.

As to the assertion in 'A Miniature History of the Baptists,' that 'the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Hussites were Baptists,' it may suffice to say, there is sufficient evidence that it has no foundation in truth. The sentiments holden by them with respect to the church, as stated by Dr. Mosheim, are also holden by many of the *pedobaptist* churches of the present day. And the same reasoning, if reasoning it must be called, by which it was supposed to be proved, that the Waldenses, Wickliffites, Hussites, and other witnesses for the truth in the dark ages, were antipedobaptists, would equally prove that the Tabernacle Church are antipedobaptists. This the writer of "A Miniature History" has himself been brought to acknowledge."

After what had been shown, relative to the mode of baptism, the preacher might well be allowed to say, that "the fair and invincible conclusion is, that sprinkling or affusion is Scriptural and valid." "We have no evidence in the Scriptures, that, in the days of Christ and his apostles, any person was baptized, by dipping or immersion."

With some remarks upon the word *baptizo*, which of itself "determines nothing, in respect to the particular mode, in which water is to be applied in baptism;" with remarks also upon "going down *into* the water and coming up *out of* the water," in which expressions "the original particles are as properly, and much more commonly rendered *to* and *from*," "I think it will appear," he says, "upon a candid and attentive consideration of the several accounts of baptisms, recorded in the Scriptures, that those baptisms were performed *in the most easy and convenient mode.*" *

* On the meaning of the word *baptizo*, see the invaluable Lexicon of Dr. Robinson, ed. 1850. See also Articles of Prof. Stuart, E. Beecher, D. D., &c., Am. Bib. Repository.—In a note by Dr. W., a reference is made to *immersions* in early times, of persons *naked*, &c., to *trine* immersions, &c. It

“ To accommodate the people, who flocked by hundreds and by thousands to his baptism, which, however, was not the Christian baptism, John chose for the scene of his ministry, a situation at Enon, and another by the river Jordan, where the multitude and their beasts might find water for their refreshment; and, when assembled upon the banks of the Jordan, the most convenient way would be for them to go down to the brink of the water, and there be baptized by affusion or sprinkling. But on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were baptized in a very short time, they were at the temple, in the midst of Jerusalem; where the most convenient, if not the only way would be, to have water brought in a basin, or some other vessel, and baptize them in the same mode. As Philip and the Eunuch were travelling on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, where, as travellers assure us, there was no river, or body of water, sufficient for the purpose of immersion; the way most convenient for them was to alight from the chariot, and step down to the small rivulet which presented, and there solemnize the ordinance. But as Paul was at the house of Judas, in Damascus, and as Cornelius and the jailor, were at home; the most convenient way for them, and indeed, the only way for Paul and the jailor, was, to have water brought, and to be baptized in their respective houses.

In no single instance, is there the least intimation of leaving the place of worship, wherever it might be, and going away to a river, or a pond, for the purpose of baptism; and, therefore, for such a practice there is no Scripture warrant.

The two passages of the apostle, in which the term *buried*, is used in connection with the term *baptism*, determine nothing, as I have heretofore shown at

is asked,—“ How can the anabaptists be sure, that *their* manner of baptizing is scriptural and valid? Why do they not baptize in the manner of those who baptized by immersion in former times?” * * “ But is it not a cross to go into the water? A serious question. But in reply, with the most perfect candor we ask, was it a cross to the Judaizing Christians to be circumcised? Is it a cross in the Christian sense, to do anything, which will help to *make a fair show in the flesh?*—Gal. vi: 12.”

large,* and as has often been shown, in respect to the mode of baptism. They offer no more reason why, at the time of our baptism, we should be *buried*, than why we should be *planted*, and *circumcised*, and *crucified*. They describe the effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but have no respect to the mode of the external ordinance.

As baptism is not designed to commemorate the death of Christ, which is the special design of the holy supper; but to represent the application of his blood for our justification, or the renovation of the heart, by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit; is it not plain, that sprinkling is a mode, much more properly significant, than dipping? In reference to the application of the blood of Christ, we never read of dipping, or immersing; but constantly of sprinkling or pouring. *Ye are come to the blood of SPRINKLING. And SPRINKLING of the blood of Christ. I will POUR OUT my Spirit upon all flesh. I will SPRINKLE clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. So shall he (Christ) SPRINKLE, not dip, many nations.* Such are the uniform representations of Scripture.

And, my brethren, is it not more congenial with the simplicity of the Gospel, is it not more compatible with every idea of propriety and decency, is it not more conducive to religious order and solemnity, to perform the sacred rite of baptism in the house of God, where he has appointed in a more special manner to meet his church, and where the most solemn rites of his worship are performed; than to leave these hallowed courts, and this impressive scene of silent solemnity and devotion, and with great inconvenience, great parade, and perhaps, great tumult, go abroad for the administration of the ordinance, to a river or pond?"

* "See Mass. Miss. Magazine, Vol. II, No. 8, p. 315." The reference here is to an exposition of Rom. vi: 3, 4, and an exposure of the fallacy of the argument of Baptists, from the words, "*buried with him by baptism into death.*" It is noticeable, that the article was published, the very month in which the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Salem was ordained in the Tabernacle.—In the same volume may be found answers to questions of church order, under Dr. W.'s signature of Silvanus.

These Discourses produced a great sensation. They were lauded in the strongest terms, by those who received the doctrine of the author, as the truth of God. They were regarded as perfectly conclusive, upon every point involved in the main issue. And it is the opinion of many competent judges, that there has not since been published any treatise on the subject, which in the same space embodies so much, and on the whole is so well calculated to satisfy reasonable and candid minds, in all classes of the community.

But there were those who felt very differently, both as respects the merits of the discourses and the intentions of the preacher. Many in the Baptist denomination could not be persuaded, that his exposition and defence of the Abrahamic Covenant, in such point-blank opposition to their sentiments, had been prompted by his desire of instructing his own people, and fortifying them against errors to which they were then peculiarly exposed. They could not have understood his feelings, as a Christian parent, as well as a pastor and a watchman, to whom the doctrine for which he contended, was one of the most precious to his personal hopes, in public and private life.

There had been, during about twenty years previous, quite a number of Controversial Sermons, or treatises, on the subject of Baptism. But until these discourses by Dr. Worcester, nothing appears to have so aroused the leading advocates of "immersion" as the only baptism,—warranted only upon a profession of Christian experience,—and of Baptist Churches, as being the only regular Churches of Christ, according to the New Testament. While an edition of a thousand copies was rapidly passing off, it was ruinored, that more than one stringent review was in preparation. Remarks

were not uncommon, as if the pastor of the Tabernacle might better have been asleep, than to have exposed himself to the castigation and the mortification in store for him.

In a letter to his brother Leonard, Oct. 13, 1806, he says:—"My sermons are now all gone, and have been gone for six months. Not less than two or three hundred have been called for, since I had not one to spare. I propose to reprint; and have only been waiting to see what M*****, or Dr. Baldwin, or both would have to say, as I have been informed, that both were about to say something. But I shall not wait for them much longer; but commit the sermons to press very soon, and when they are out, will send you some, unless you forbid me."

To his brother, at Hollis, he wrote, Dec. 29th:—"Dr. Baldwin's Book is out. He has honored me with a large share of his notice, which will require from me a *grateful return*. My obligations to him, I hope soon to discharge."

Early in 1807, as is evident from his daily *memoranda*, he had begun a Series of "Letters to the Rev. Thomas Baldwin, D. D., of Boston, on his Book, entitled the Baptism of Believers only, and the Particular Communion of the Baptist Churches, explained and vindicated." His health now required so much of his care, that the plan of "Letters" was very wisely adopted. He could write them, from time to time, and the pleasant freedom of the epistolary style, while alleviating the labor of composition, was better fitted to interest and profit the majority of readers. There is in each of the "Twenty-Four," an apparent consciousness of entire mastery of the subject; and an air of ease and unconcern, with perfect self-control and good

humor ;—albeit there are somewhat frequent passages, which not very obscurely, or vaguely, express “the faithful severity of truth,” and admonish his assailants, that a more “prudent husbandry” of their “resources” would have been wise.

His labors, for three years, had been too exciting and arduous. His friends took alarm. Before he had finished his reply to Dr. Baldwin, the *bronchitis* had overpowered his voice, and he was compelled to intermit his labors, much oftener than was agreeable. At last, leaving all behind, that he well could, he sought respite and relief in a Southern tour. He now formed the personal acquaintance of Pres. Dwight, and other distinguished men, south of Massachusetts, with whom he afterwards interchanged hospitalities, and was associated in important public operations. In his letters to his family, he speaks of the situations and scenes through which he was passing, as if freely yielding himself to the impressions of novelty and high gratification, and as if describing them at his own fire-side, when walking the floor, with his youngest child in his arms. Little did he know what he was afterwards to enjoy, in the society of “a Mr. Evarts, an excellent young gentleman!”

In his first letter, he speaks of “attempting to make *one* prayer at the Communion-table,” in Providence. “But I spoke with so much difficulty, as to be painful to those who heard me, and distressing to myself.”

Mrs. Zervia Worcester.

“*New York, Saturday noon, June 13, 1807.*”

My dear Zervia,—

From my arrival at New Haven, until nine o'clock on Thursday evening, I passed my time there with

great satisfaction. My lodgings were at Ogden's Coffee House, but I kept there but little. Dr. Dwight, to whom I had letters of introduction, received me with great cordiality, and showed me much politeness. Besides giving me his company and conversation for two or three hours, and inviting me to tea, he introduced me to the Professors of the University, and along with them showed the college buildings, library, philosophical apparatus, chemical laboratory, &c., with which, and the accompanying, I was highly entertained. I found also a good Mr. Austin, brother of Mr. Austin of Worcester, who abounded with kindness; and a Mr. Evarts, an excellent young gentleman, now an attorney at law, with whom I formed a very pleasing acquaintance, three years ago, at Peacham, where he then resided, as Preceptor of the Academy in that place, and boarded in my brother's family. In company with Mr. Evarts, I viewed the city, and rode about two miles out to a gun factory, which Dr. Dwight recommended to me to see, and in viewing which I was gratified with a most admirable display of mechanical ingenuity.

New Haven is very pleasantly situated at the head of a bay, which opens into Long Island Sound. The site of the city is sufficiently level, rising however, by a very gentle ascent from the water. It is laid out into regular squares; the streets straight and wide, and almost all of them ornamented with rows of trees; the houses, though mostly but two stories, are neat, and some of them elegant; and the public buildings, the colleges, court-house, and churches well situated and handsome. The new burying-ground, a description of which I hope to have opportunity to give you with living voice, exceeds anything of the kind, probably, in the world. New Haven, in fine, take it all in all, is a beautiful little city. With the character and manners of the people, I have yet had opportunity to become but little acquainted; but so far as I could observe, I was agreeably impressed. In the city, there are two Congregational societies, one Episcopal and one Methodist society. No special attention to religion is manifest-

ed either at New Haven, or any place in my route, excepting New London, where there have been lately from twenty to thirty added to the church, within a short time past, and several are at present under very solemn impressions.

At nine o'clock on Thursday evening, I embarked on board the *Cornelia* packet for this port; but the tide would not admit of leaving the harbor until about eleven; and then the wind, during the rest of the night and the forenoon of Friday, was so light and unfavorable, that we made head but very slowly. About noon, the wind became more fresh and fair, and we came on within about nine miles of this city, by nine o'clock last evening; but as it was not then safe to pass the celebrated narrows, called *Hell Gate*, anchor was cast, and we slept again on board. At six o'clock this morning, we landed in this city.

I had here no acquaintances, excepting Captain Clough, and a Mr. Dodge, who has repeatedly attended our meeting at Salem. The captain is very obliging, but much engaged in preparing for sea. Mr. Dodge, who is a very respectable merchant, a most amiable man, and a warm-hearted Christian, and on very intimate terms with some of the first ministers of the city, is all cordiality and attention. Of the clergymen, I have yet seen only Dr. Miller, and I propose to form an acquaintance with them as far as my stay here will permit. How long I shall stay here is somewhat uncertain, but probably not more than four or five days. On the passage, I was not at all sea-sick, but by the sudden change of the weather I took some cold, and the cold easterly winds affected my lungs considerably; I yet hope, however, that my tour will ultimately prove beneficial; but the Lord will order all things well. With complaints similar to mine, many ministers are at present afflicted; not less than ten or twelve instances have come to my knowledge, since I left Salem. The cry this way is, 'What is to become of the ministers? Are they all to lose their voices?' But he who walks in the midst of the golden candle-

sticks, and holds the stars in his right hand, knows best what to do with them!

At present, I can only add my most affectionate remembrances of Salem, offer my most fervent prayers for my family and my people, and subscribe myself,

Yours, with great tenderness,

SAMUEL WORCESTER."

Returning home, he entered with great zest into the plans of the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, D. D., of Tennessee, who visited him in reference to his schools among the Cherokees, and of whom more is hereafter to be said. In a letter to his brother, at Hollis, on the 9th of July, he remarks: "My health is yet so feeble, that I can write but little. How it will turn with me, in the season of dog days, is quite uncertain. I am not without my concern: but my times are in God's hands, and my prayer is, that I may be prepared for his will."

His heart learned new lessons of life, by the trying experience of his bodily infirmities; and the anxieties and afflictions occasioned by sickness and death, in the circle of near relatives.

Mrs. Zervia Worcester.

"*Hollis, Aug. 3, 1807.*

My dear Zervia,—

Every day's experience is calculated to teach us, that our present state is a vale of tears. As we pass along in life, afflictions multiply upon us; and as we know not what a day may bring forth, so we often meet with unexpected strokes. Our solicitude has of late been so much awake for our brother, in his severe sickness, that we have hardly, perhaps, thought, that any of the rest of our friends were in danger. But alas! how little do we at any time know, who of our friends is first to be taken from us. On my arrival here on Thurs-

day evening, I found Deacon Conant* to be very unwell. * * * * * On Saturday morning he took medicine, which operated very freely, and nothing more unfavorable appeared in his case, until about two o'clock in the afternoon. At that time he was taken in great distress. * * * He breathed with great difficulty, and lay in a cold and death-like sweat, until about two o'clock next morning, *when he expired, and, as we would hope, breathed out his soul into the bosom of the Savior.*

* * * O that these trials may be sanctified to us all! The Lord is wise and good, and all his judgments are right. Our brother is at present in a very favorable and hopeful way. Jesse has just arrived, and I am concerned to hear by him, that you were more unwell, when he came away, than you were the morning I left home. I wish to stay with our bereaved friends here, a day or two longer, but, if Providence permit, shall return to Salem in the course of this week. My love to the children, and all friends. Poor Samuel will mourn the loss of his grand-pa' Conant!

Most affectionately, Yours,
SAMUEL WORCESTER."

Sept. 8th, he made a minute of his letters to Dr. Baldwin, as "completed."†

In the article of the Mass. Miss. Magazine, from which citations have already been made, is a synopsis of the "Letters," in the same manner as that of the "Discourses."

"After the first publication of Mr. Worcester's sermons, Dr. Baldwin published a book in which he was pretty free with his remarks on Mr. Worcester's sermons. This led Mr. W. to reply in a number of Letters. The most material things which have the name or semblance of argument in the Dr.'s book, Mr. W. has arranged under their proper heads; he has ex-

* Father-in-law of Mrs. W., and very fond of her children.

† They were issued separately, Svo. pp. 154, and also in a volume with a revised edition of the Discourses.

amined them with patience, and confuted them by sound arguments. By this he has also strengthened, and if possible more completely established the doctrine of his two discourses.

In his strictures upon the two discourses, Dr. B. attempts to set up a distinction between a covenant supposed to be made with Abraham, 'when he was called to leave his country and kindred, to go and sojourn in a strange land,' and what he chooses to call 'the covenant of circumcision.' He fully admits that the great promise made to Abraham at the time of his call was the gospel, as then preached, and comprised the Messiah and all the blessings of his kingdom; but he denies, that that promise was comprised in the covenant afterwards made with Abraham and his seed, and sealed with the sign of circumcision. Hence he concludes, that Mr. W. had totally mistaken the promise contained in his text, that his text does not support his doctrine, and that his discourses are without foundation. He might as well have said, that, because the top of the spire is not *gold*, therefore the foundation of the temple is *sand*. It shows that a man is not a good composer of sermons, if his text does not contain his doctrine; but it does not prove the doctrine may not be *true*: but even this ground on which Dr. Baldwin erects his citadel is found untenable. Mr. Worcester fairly secures his text, shows there is no such distinction of covenants, but that all the gracious promises made to Abraham were included in the covenant, established with him and his seed, when he received the sign of circumcision. Mr. W. has done this by again considering the connection of the text; by a luminous recurrence to the first promise of grace in Paradise, supposed to be for substance the same with the great promise made to Abraham, and the sure foundation of the church; by a solemn and impressive review of God's covenant transactions with Abraham; by a close and particular survey of the covenant itself, comparing it with many important passages in the Old and New Testament, and by a victorious exposure of the anti-pedobaptist construction of the *one seed*,

which is Christ. These, in their order, make the subjects of his ‘Letters,’ from the second to the seventh, inclusive.”

After describing the course of argument in the succeeding letters, in which it is “shown, that, according to Dr. B.’s own concession the anti-pedobaptist theory must fall;” that “the idea of two churches, a Hebrew and Christian, is absurd, and highly injurious to the honor of religion and the cause of God;” “that children now hold the same covenant relation to the church, which they anciently held,” &c.; it is further said:

“The 23d letter repels the charges of Dr. B. in a manly and dispassionate style, which, if arguments or facts could avail, we should think, would go far towards making the Doctor repent that he is an author. The last letter, which considers the high claims and pretensions of the Baptists, is a series of pathetic expostulations, in a strain of impressive eloquence.—Concerning the *manner* in which Mr. Worcester has executed his work, we have little to add. His style is correct, perspicuous, forcible, and harmonious. The spirit of the work is serious. He never wanders from his subject, is never dull; but often is animated, and like a mighty wind bears down all before him. A tender concern for divine truth, and deep solicitude for the welfare of true religion, is manifested through the whole work, which must recommend it to every candid reader.”

The writer of this notice was more careful of terms of commendation, than he probably would have been, if the author of the Discourses and Letters had not been known to be one of the associated editors of the Magazine. As the reader would infer, Dr. Worcester maintained the positions and conclusions of his Discourses, without the smallest retraction, or modifica-

tion. If any should now think, that he might have spared some measure of his searching and probing operation, they might think otherwise, if they better knew the circumstances, and, more especially, if they had ever been obliged to have part in a controversial discussion, in which they had been grossly misrepresented, and otherwise maltreated. And every one would concede, that, in some of his closer and more caustic strictures upon Dr. Baldwin's book,* and in the mingled pleasantry and sense of loathing, with which another writer is handled, no ordinary talents are indicated, for the *argumentum ad hominem* and the *reductio ad absurdum*. It is certain, that "his reputation was advanced by the part, which he took in the discussion." And some at least, who are now in the Congregational ministry, feel themselves under great obligations for the aid, which they have received from his Discourses and Letters on Baptism.†

"Truth, indeed, must be exhibited; misrepresentation must be corrected; argument must be applied; fallacy must be exposed; and error must be exploded. But a wide difference there certainly is, though but too often unobserved, between the faithful severity of truth, and the passionate asperity of prejudice; between serious animadversion, and opprobrious invective; between a solemn representation of fact, and railing accusation. And if mild and dignified irony, or satire, be occasionally admissible; it certainly but ill becomes the Christian disputant to descend to low and indiscriminate ridicule.

* "I can use the *whip*, upon occasion," he remarked, in reply to the comments of a friend upon some passages in the Letters. Some thought, that he could make a *feather*, if he pleased, *cut* like a two-edged sword.

† "Do you remember," said a worthy clergyman, in Maine, a few weeks since,—“what your father said of the Covenant of God with Abraham? ‘It is the GRAND CHARTER of all our blessings in the Gospel!’ I should have been a Baptist, if it had not been for those Discourses and Letters.”

These, Sir, are my present impressions; and under these impressions, I hope, undeviatingly, to conduct my part of this serious dispute. But I exceedingly regret, that in the course of these Letters, some things will unavoidably fall in my way, which cannot, I am afraid, be justly noticed, without offence. I ask it, however, as a piece of justice, not to be blamed, or charged with undue severity, for any *fair* and *necessary* representation, however disagreeable, or unpleasant, the thing represented may be. * * *

To 'invite you to the contest,' as you have been pleased to intimate, was certainly far from my intention. To instruct and establish the people of my charge, in what I then believed, and still believe, to be important truth, and to fortify their minds against the influence of what I then believed, and still believe, to be hurtful error, was the honest design of my Discourses; which were written and delivered, without any view to a publication from the press.

That great exertions have been made to raise a prejudice against me, for the part which I have felt it my duty to take, in this common cause, I am fully apprized; and I certainly have no pretensions to a stoical indifference, either to the displeasure of opponents, or to the uncomfortable feelings of honest, but unstable, or misjudging friends. My duty, however, I must fulfill; and if any thing is to be done for the cause of truth, and for the kingdom of the Redeemer, no considerations, of a nature personal to myself, are to deter me from the attempt."

The last Letter relates particularly to the assertion of one of his assailants,—“that Mr. Worcester, from beginning to end of his Sermons, has been pleading the *cause, and for the church and ordinance of Antichrist;*” that “he is within the limits of Antichrist’s Church,” &c.; and that “anti-pedobaptists have ALWAYS DENIED, *that the pedobaptist church is the true gospel church,*” &c. A single paragraph will denote the character of the answer.

“ Where, Sir, was your denomination, where your anti-pedobaptist church, during the four thousand years, which preceded the coming of the Messiah? By your own confession, it was not in existence.—Where was your anti-pedobaptist church, in the primitive ages after Christ, when no one was ever known, or heard of, who denied Infant Baptism? By the testimony of the fathers, it is plain, it was not in existence. Where was your anti-pedobaptist church, from the fourth to the eleventh century, when according to the confession of your own Dr. Gill, ‘ not a single instance was to be found of an opposer of Infant Baptism?’ Evidently it was not in existence.—Where was your anti-pedobaptist church, in the days of the Reformation, when Luther and Melancthon, Calvin and Zuinglius, with their faithful and intrepid coadjutors, beat down the bulwarks of Antichrist, and carried terror and dismay to the very seat of the Beast? Alas! it began to make its appearance a few years after the Reformation commenced, and immediately arrayed itself in the most troublesome opposition to the great body of the Reformers.—Where was your anti-pedobaptist church, in the times of the bloody persecutions, succeeding the Reformation, when millions of faithful confessors, in different parts of Europe, laid down their lives, *for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ?* But little, indeed, was known of it, to its credit; but little did it share in the distinguished honors of the Cross.—Where, in fine, was your anti-pedobaptist church, when our pious and venerable ancestors abandoned their native country, and surmounting all the difficulties of the ocean, and of the wilderness, heroically planted the standard of the Cross in this new world? In that glorious enterprise it had no share.”

In the autumn, he went upon a northern tour, visiting his brothers and other relatives, in New Hampshire and Vermont. As is too common in such circumstances, he was continually beset with applica-

tions to preach, or perform some other service. His love for his calling would not allow him to say No, if he had any strength left, to say Yes.

Of himself personally he said little, in any place or situation. A few words sometimes escaped him. It was seldom, that he wrote any reflection upon his own life or purposes, although living very fast. Among many hundreds of brief records, from day to day, one prominent and significant exception appears, Nov. 1, 1807.—“Expounded Mat. vii. 13, 14. Afternoon, Mat. vii. 15–20. Funeral.—This day, 37 years old! My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle!”

With the Savior’s words, expounded on that Sabbath and that anniversary of tender and admonitory recollections and emotions, this volume of the Memoir of his Life will now be closed. “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life: and few there be that find it.—Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them!”

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