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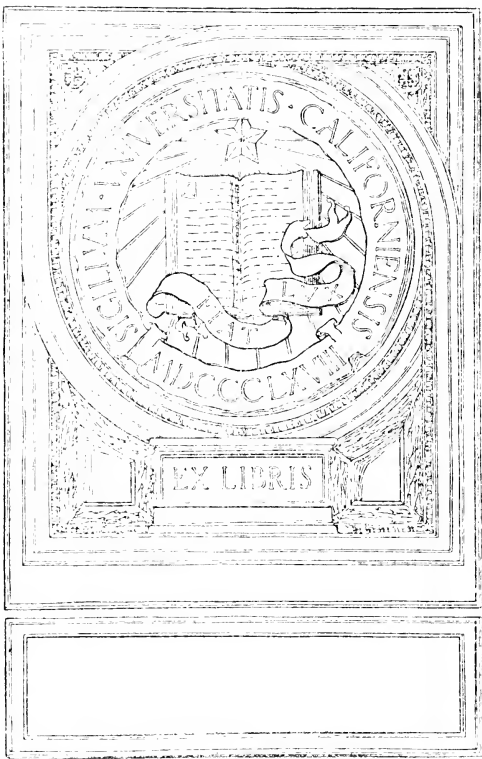


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The Rev. Jonas Clark, Pastor at
Lexington, Leader in
Revolutionary
Thought



"Steadfast for God and Country"

An Address by

THEODORE GILMAN

Governor of the New York Society

delivered before

The New York Society

of the

Order of the Founders and Patriots of America

at the

Hotel Manhattan, New York

October 19th, 1911

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“Steadfast for God and Country”

REV. JONAS CLARK, Pastor of the Church at Lexington during the Revolution, Leader of Revolutionary Thought.

BY

THEODORE GILMAN



HE flames of the Revolutionary War burst out quickly. There was rejoicing throughout the colonies when the French and Indian war was closed triumphantly and the French had lost all claims to territory east of the Mississippi. It was a proud boast of the colonists to be a part of the power which by the Treaty of Paris in 1763 had come to the front as the greatest nation of the world. They felt that they were as truly English as if they had been born in the home-land and they claimed that they possessed by birth right all the privileges which appertained to a loyal subject of the King.

The colonists always disclaimed any intention to turn the colonies over to the French or the Spanish or the Dutch. They joined eagerly with British soldiers in the wars to resist the encroachments of France. The French emissaries from Canada to New England met with no encouragement in their efforts to foment trouble with England.

The colonists aided in the capture of Louisburgh and Quebec. After a century of struggle with France they rejoiced when all that country west of the Alleghanies and east of the Mississippi River came under the rule of England. Then by the peace of 1763, at the close of the French and Indian War, England owned from the arctic circle to the gulf of Mexico and France was left with no remnant of the vast empire which for over one hundred years she had struggled and fought to retain. The French had claimed the entire continent and at last were left without a foothold thereon.

Hildreth says, in commenting on this war: "The present contest for territorial and commercial supremacy, had extended even to the East Indies, thus as it were encircling the globe. The twenty years' struggle in Hindoostan between French and

English East India Companies, had ended in the complete triumph of the English."

It was not only the two nations which were engaged in this world-wide warfare for the possession of the East India trade and for the ownership of this continent. It was two opposing civilizations, two antagonistic religions, two races. The contest was not only military, it was ethnic. Democracy confronted Feudalism; Protestantism, Romanism; Ministers, Priests; the Word of God, the Edicts of the Pope. Rev. Thomas Foxcroft who died in 1769, said: "We could hope for no lasting peace until Canada was conquered." N. Appleton of Cambridge at the same time hailed the peace as the dawn of a new era.

The skies were clear and invigorating, but the very joyousness of the times was a weather breeder. Soon a dark cloud of disagreement and discord overshadowed the land for when the conflict with the French and Indians ended, a struggle with the Mother Country began. In eleven short years, from 1764 to 1775, the words Mother Country were replaced by our tyrant oppressors who are seeking to enslave us. The feeling of affection for the homeland was changed to bitter indignation and anger.

The causes of this revulsion of feeling lie on the surface. George the Third came to the throne in 1760. Lord Bute as Prime Minister and Granville at first as Chancellor of the Exchequer and afterwards as Prime Minister, with the tories behind them, succeeded to the rule of Pitt, the representative of the people, and the whigs, both of whom were offensive to the king. Success had intoxicated the ruling powers. Peace was proclaimed February 11th, 1763, and on October 7th, 1763, only eight months afterwards, a royal proclamation was issued, beginning the new movement for the oppression of the colonies, the opening phrase of which said: "Whereas we have taken into our royal consideration the extensive and valuable acquisitions to our country by the Treaty of Paris," etc. In the next year all disguises were thrown aside and a resolution was adopted by Parliament containing in its preamble these epoch-making words: "Whereas it is expedient that new provisions and regulations should be established for improving the revenue of the kingdom and for extending and securing the navigation and commerce between Great Britain and your Majesty's dominions in America, which by the peace have been so happily enlarged, and whereas it is just and necessary that a revenue be

raised in our Majesty's said dominions in America, for defraying the expenses of defending the same," etc. After this plain announcement of the policy of parliament, there followed in quick succession the Acts designed to carry this purpose into effect. In a few months was passed the Sugar Act of April 5th, 1764, then the Stamp Act of March 22nd, 1765, then the Quartering Act of the same year, then the Revenue Act of June 29th, 1767. To complete the list of obnoxious parliamentary acts, there was the Massachusetts Government Act of May 20th, 1774, which repealed those parts of the Charter granted by William and Mary which empowered the colony to elect its Governor and other officers, which officers after the 1st of August, 1774, were to be appointed by his Majesty to hold office during his pleasure. Also the power was given to the Governor to appoint and remove all judges and it was provided that no meeting of electors should be called without the leave of the Governor.

For 160 years the colonies from Massachusetts to Virginia, by virtue of their original charters, had been free to call meetings of electors to consider matters of common interest, and had enjoyed many privileges which were taken away by these acts of Parliament passed in quick succession in a few short years. It was a rude awakening to the colonists to find all semblance of self-government taken from them and heavy taxes imposed for the benefit of the home government. James Otis who was described by Samuel Adams as "a flame of fire" declaimed against the injustice of these proceedings and in describing the situation said: "We cannot see the equity of our being obliged to pay off a score that had been so much enhanced by bribes and pensions to keep those to their duty who ought to have been bound by honor and conscience."

These parliamentary acts were born of cupidity. The theory on which they were supported was that Parliament had power to pass such laws as it pleased for the government of the colonies. The motive was, to the victors belong the spoils. All restraints on the Tory party had been removed by the favorable ending of the war. The prize of the continent of America was in the hands of England and there was no longer any danger of its loss or capture by another power. The ownership was undisputed, their control was absolute, parliament was supreme. The home government in the hands of the tories, refused to listen to the wise counsels of the Earl of Chatham, Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Col. Barre, Lord Camden, General Conway

and others, which, if they had been followed, would have saved the colonies to England.

When in Parliament. Townshend, one of the ministers, spoke of the colonists as "children planted by our care, nourished by our indulgence, and protected by our arms," Barre indignantly replied: "They planted by your care? No. Your oppressions planted them in America. They nourished by your indulgence? They grew up by your neglect of them. They protected by your arms? Those sons of liberty have nobly taken up arms in your defence."

The opportunity to extort a revenue from the colonies was irresistible to men like Granville, and they captured the public sentiment of England by their specious arguments. When Granville introduced the Stamp Act in Parliament, he rashly but truthfully said: "It was an experiment towards further aid."

To carry out the plans of Parliament General Gage was appointed Governor of Massachusetts, with headquarters at Boston and British troops were concentrated there to enforce his commands. When the soldiers of the King shot to kill at Lexington, April 19th, 1775, a responsive thrill of indignation and anger brought the colonies from Maine to Virginia to a realization that a contest was inevitable.

The sight of their brothers blood was sufficient cause for resistance. The appreciation that their rights were being invaded was a call to defend those rights. The sordid policy of the King and Parliament which sought to extort a revenue from colonists who were struggling for a bare existence in a land where Nature was first to be subdued before it could be made productive, exasperated the men who were already under the harrow. Taxation without representation was an insufferable affront to the manhood of the colonists. Oppression reaches at last the point where the explosive powers must have a vent. Violence at last revealed the stony heart of a power whose only thought was to strike down opposition and to conquer by main strength, without listening to appeals for justice or arguments on the merits of the controversy.

A side light is thrown on the situation by a letter quoted by Parkman, written by Pontchartrain to Vandreuil, in which the former says: "Mons. de Costabelle has informed me that the chief object of the armament last year by the English, was to establish their sovereignty at Boston and New York, the people of these provinces having always maintained a sort of republic governed

by their council, and being unwilling to receive absolute governors from the Kings of England."

These causes awakened the oratory of Patrick Henry, but something more than feeling, something more than indignation was needed to form the basis of a struggle which was to go on for years and be protracted with wearisome painfulness against superior forces and in the face of recurring defeats. That something more was to be imparted by the thinkers of the Revolution, by men whose conviction of the end to be attained by the struggle was founded not on effervescent feelings of anger or exasperation, but on the eternal and fundamental principles of the rights and duties of man.

To the ministers of the colonies must be accorded the first place among the leaders who guided and inspired the revolutionary thought of those times, and placed it on the enduring basis of truth, righteousness and justice. They upheld Washington's hands, they preached on battlefields and accompanied the troops on their long marches. There was David Jones, of Chester, Pennsylvania, for whose arrest Gen. Howe offered a reward, He was chaplain from Ticonderoga to Yorktown, was Chaplain again with Gen. Anthony Wayne in his campaign against the indians, and in the war of 1812, though he was then 76 years old, served as Chaplain till peace was declared. What shall I say of Dr. John Witherspoon, signer of the Declaration of Independence, the Muhlenburgs, father and three sons, Dr. Naphtali Daggett, President of Yale College, who went after the British on his old black mare with his fowling piece in his hands, or Archibald Scott, William Graham and John Brown, three Presbyterian clergymen, who when a raid by Tarleton was expected in the valley of the Shenandoah, Virginia, called the striplings and old men together, for all the other men were already at the front, and after prayers, marshalled them to defend their homes. Hearing of this exhibition of valor and patriotism, Washington used these memorable words: "If I should be beaten by the British, I will retreat with my broken army to the Blue Ridge, and call the boys of West Augusta around me and there I will plant the flag of my country."

It is an alluring task to recount the names of these patriots. But we must refrain, for we wish to restrict ourselves to honor here this evening, one who is pre-eminent among these leaders and thinkers, the Rev. Jonas Clark pastor of the church at Lexington, Massachusetts, for fifty years. His place was not

on the battlefield, but he nerved the arms of the fighters, he informed the minds of legislators and he unfolded the principles of equity and righteousness on which the contest for independence was based. Jonas Clark, the revolutionary pastor and thinker, was a man whose mental powers should place him in line with Locke, Rousseau and Jefferson, and whose influence on the destinies of the republic was felt by John Hancock Samuel Adams, and the Legislature and people of Massachusetts as well as by the men of Lexington who were the heroes of the 19th of April, 1775.

The printed record of Rev. Jonas Clark's thought begins with his draft of instructions in regard to the Stamp Act, addressed to William Reed, the representative of Lexington in the Council of the Colony of Massachusetts. These instructions were adopted at a town meeting the 21st of October, 1765. His thought reaches a higher level in his sermon before the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston, at their annual election, June 6th, 1768. It develops in the various state papers on the town records of Lexington, grows more intense as the combat deepens, and reaches its climax in his Election Sermon, delivered May 31st, 1781, before John Hancock, Governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Cushing, Lieutenant-Governor, and the Legislature at their first meeting under the new State Constitution.

The general form of Mr. Clark's papers is in the shape of instructions to the delegates of Lexington to the Council of Massachusetts. This gave a practical purpose to his writings. It required the discussion of principles followed by a suggestion as to the course of action required of patriots by the necessities of the crises. They were called forth by the exigencies of the times and by the succession of oppressive acts of parliament. They are therefore of historical as well as political interest and had a practical application at the time they were written.

The first of the series of Mr. Clark's papers as has been said, had the Stamp Act for its subject. It was written only seven months after its passage and is a calm presentation of the rights of the colonies. He rests his argument on British law from the Great Charter of June 15th, 1215 down to the charter rights as they existed before the parliamentary attempt to take them away. Mr. Clark's paper was entered on the minutes of the town of Lexington, as a permanent record, so, to use his words, "that the world may see and future generations know

that the present (generation) both know and value the rights they enjoyed and did not tamely resign them for chains and slavery." He urged "as far as consistent with allegiance and duty to our rightful sovereign, such measures should be promoted as would preserve the invaluable rights and liberties we at present possess."

There are other pre-revolutionary documents with which Mr. Clark's argument may be compared. There is James Otis' pamphlet "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved," a popular presentation of the case which strengthened the desire for liberty and independence greatly among a class which would not have been able to comprehend the learning and logic of Mr. Clark. Oxenbridge Thatcher's pamphlet, "The Sentiments of a British American," was also exceedingly useful in promoting the popular support of the cause of the colonies, but it is light weight as we read and compare it with Mr. Clark's after the lapse of years. "The Declaration and Resolution of the First Continental Congress, October 14th, 1774," was a rehearsal of historical events without an argument based on principles. "The late Regulation respecting the British Colonies," by John Dickenson, December 7th, 1765, was a good specimen of the writings of this voluminous writer, who is classed high among pre-revolutionary thinkers. It contains sentences which must have been powerful at the time, as when he said: "The reflections of the colonies on these melancholy subjects are not a little embittered by a firm persuasion that they never would have been treated as they are if Canada still continued in the hands of the French. Thus their hearts, glowing with every sentiment of duty and affection towards their Mother Country, and expecting, not unreasonably perhaps, some mark of tenderness in return, are pierced by a fatal discovery that the vigorous assistance that they faithfully afforded her in extending her domain, has only proved the glorious but destructive cause of the calamities they now deplore and resent."

Benjamin Franklin's writings are in a class by themselves. His literary style is a model and it is easy to mark in his Memoirs where the pen falls from his hand and is taken up by another. His shrewdness in writing for a British audience was incomparable and most effective. In 1760 he wrote, "It is said that the development of the strength of the colonies may make them more dangerous and bring them to declare their independence. But such fears are chimerical. So many causes are against this union

that I do not hesitate to declare it is not only improbable but impossible—without the most provoking tyranny and oppression.” The few words after the dash, show the keenness of his vision, and we can imagine a slight twinkle in his eye as he penned these words, for the oppressive acts had not as yet entered into the minds of Parliament.

In this comparison of the writings of Jonas Clark with those of others which have come down to us, it may be seen that he took a deeper look into the heart of the questions before the colonies than did others. As a minister instructs his flock, so he was thinking of the men of Lexington, and of their world record and was preparing them for scenes which were soon to be enacted.

Rev. Jonas Clark's loyalty to the Crown was consistent with his sentiments when he wrote his protest against the Stamp Act. These two feelings of loyalty and criticism found expression again in his sermon before the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, delivered June 6th, 1768, being the 131st anniversary of their election of officers. Those anniversary sermons have been continued down to the present day, but it is doubtful if Phillips Brooks or any of the other illustrious sermonisers who have addressed that body, ever stated more clearly or in better terms the Christian Doctrine which justifies the preparation for war than did Mr. Clark. His argument was intended to show the necessity for preparation for the armed defence of the liberties and rights of a nation. His loyal attitude towards England was that which generally prevailed throughout the colonies at that time, and was shown when, after a glowing description of a virtuous and happy people he said: "Such were the character and state of God's people in the kindgom of Judah, and such was Judah's king, (Jehoshaphat) such in later times has Britain been, such is Britain still, and such is Britain's king, (George the Third) and such God grant they may ever continue to be,—a terror to their enemies, an asylum to the injured and distressed, a sure protection for liberty, a lasting defence to the natural and common rights of mankind. To these purposes and for these important ends the Honorable Artillery Company was formed soon after the settlement of the country. After a long series of hardships, toils, dangers and distresses of cruel wars with the common enemy who were our rivals in America, and the barbarous, merciless savages whose thirst for blood and revenge

has always been insatiable, through the smiles of heaven we see this happy land in a state of peace and rest."

Again on the 21st of March, 1768, in another of Mr. Clark's papers which was adopted by the people of Lexington, the same union of conflicting sentiments is to be noticed. This paper protested against the acts which invaded their liberties, and at the same time publicly and solemnly acknowledged "their firm and unshaken allegiance to their only rightful sovereign, King George the Third, the lawful successor of William and Mary to the throne." Therefore it was resolved in the words of Mr. Clark that "the freeholders and other inhabitants of Lexington, will at the utmost peril of their lives and fortunes, take all legal and constitutional methods to defend and maintain the person, family, crown and dignity of our said Sovereign Lord, King George the Third, and all and singular the rights, privileges and immunities granted in said (our) royal charter, as well as those which are declared to be belonging to us as British subjects by birthright, as all others therein specially mentioned." These deliberations were followed by a day of prayer and fasting. This was evidently an attempt to serve two masters, with a decided leaning towards fighting for their charter rights, It was evident that the time was soon coming when a choice of masters would have to be made.

There are few papers of greater importance among Mr. Clark's writings, in the formation of public opinion, than that called "Declarations and Resolves," which were adopted by the people of Lexington on the 21st of September, 1768.

His argument is based on the acts of Parliament in past centuries, which gave indefeasible rights to subjects and he claimed full rights to colonists as if born in England. He proved that the recent acts of Parliament in levying money for the use of the crown and in maintaining a standing army in time of peace, were illegal. There is little said of loyalty in this paper. It is to be noticed that Samuel Adams dated his first thought of independence to the year 1768.

In a paper dated December 31st, 1772, he again describes the rights of colonists and declares they were greatly injured by measures of government lately adopted.

At a town meeting held January 5th, 1773, a document framed by Mr. Clark containing instructions to Mr. Jonas Stone, representative of the Town of Lexington, was submitted and adopted, which closes with these words, "that thus, whether

successful or not, succeeding generations might know that we understood our rights and liberties and were neither afraid or ashamed to assert and maintain them, and that we ourselves may have at least the consolation in our chains, that it was not through our neglect that this people were enslaved." The submissive spirit of this document shows how hard the colonists tried to preserve their loyal attachment to Great Britain. It could not long endure under the exasperating acts of Parliament.

In December, 1773, Mr. Clark prepared an elaborate paper which opposed the tax on tea as a matter of gross partiality to the East India Company, "to support task masters, pensioners and others in idleness and luxury," and as a direct violation of our Charter rights and liberties. Therein the people of Lexington pledged themselves not to receive, buy, sell or use any of the teas sent out by the East India Company.

On the 26th of September, 1774, a vote was passed and entered on the town records, "to favor nothing done in conformity with the late acts of Parliament." The break here with the Mother Country was definite and emphatic, just seven months before the day at Lexington.

These papers so full of learning and patriotism, were an education to the men of Lexington. The citizens of no other town were so well instructed in their rights and duties for God and Country. They were like trained gladiators and when the hour of trial came, they knew their duty and did it. It was Jonas Clark who had trained and instructed them.

Pastor Clark had good material to work on. The men of Lexington were of English stock. All but one of the nineteen on the list of killed and wounded at Lexington had emigrant ancestors who arrived in this country on or before 1697 and the emigrant ancestors of all but three came over within the Founder period as fixed by our Order of Founders and Partiotis.

It must be remembered that the influx of English during the Founder period was chiefly of men who came into this wilderness to worship God after the dictates of their own conscience. In the time between 1630, when King Charles the First dissolved his Third Parliament and 1640, when under compulsion he assembled the Long Parliament, some three hundred ships arrived here with over 21,000 men, women and children. "Dissolution" says Blackstone, "is the civil death of Parliament," and the dissolution of the Third Parliament by the King was taken by the Protestant party as the death of their hopes and the triumph

of the absolute personal government of Charles the First and the Romanists whom he favored. He had made it known that he would never call another Parliament until he felt certain it would do his pleasure.

The apparent hopelessness of the contest with the King and Romanism, was the cause of the Protestant emigration to New England. The contest in England, however, went on under the leadership of John Pym, the first parliamentary leader in England, John Hampden, Oliver Cromwell and others. As the contest progressed in that interval of ten years, the autocratic, personal government of King Charles broke hopelessly down under the opposition of the Puritans and the strain of his necessities. He was compelled to reconvene a parliament, which was called the Long or Free Parliament. This confession of weakness on the part of King Charles, revived the hopes of the Puritans, who regarded the calling of the Long Parliament as the triumph of liberty and law over absolutism. When the Solemn Remonstrance was adopted by Parliament, Oliver Cromwell said: "Had it been rejected, I would have sold tomorrow all I possess and have left England forever."

Reanimated by repeated parliamentary victories, the Protestant emigration to New England ceased and a return flow commenced. The reason for the emigration to this country no longer existed. "The change" said Governor John Winthrop, "made all men stay in England, in expectation of a new world."

Alluding to the sterling character of these Founders. Rev. William Stoughton, afterwards Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts Province, said in his Election Sermon, preached in 1668: "God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice grain over into this wilderness." These emigrants left the Mother Country with their principles for liberty and religion fixed in their minds. Their descendants were not brought into contact with the cavalier revival and the corruptions of the court of Charles the Second, or the continued attempts at aggression and usurpation of power by the throne and parliament. The two periods of English history which stood out clearly in their minds, were the wresting of the Great Charter from King John in 1215 and the accession of William and Mary. The one established the rights of the people and the other confirmed Protestantism as the religion of England.

The descendants of these Founders were the men the

British soldiers met when they set out from Boston on the night of the 18th of April, 1775, to destroy the military stores accumulated at Concord. The young pastor at Concord, Rev. William Emerson, the grandfather of Ralph Waldo Emerson was like many other New England pastors, firm for liberty and an inspiration for courage.

Lexington was a subordinate point on the route of the British troops. There was no call to make a stand at Lexington. There on the green, the British soldiers met the devoted band of Lexington men. At Thermopylae a few Greeks stood their ground against the advancing hosts of the Persians, and a reverent world has paid homage to their fortitude ever since. There was no reference to Thermopylae in the writings of Mr. Clark, but the spirit he invoked was the same as ruled the hearts of those heroic Greeks. These "embattled farmers" were trained by Mr. Clark "to maintain and defend their rights, privileges and immunities at the utmost peril of their lives and fortunes." The part filled by Mr. Clark in the day of fasting and prayer which followed the adoption of the resolutions which contain these words, is not recorded. But it may well be questioned whether without the keen intellect, the thorough mastery of the principles of liberty, the faithful instruction, the high moral character, the personal influence and the ardent temperament of Jonas Clark, there would have been a glorious 19th day of April, 1775, at Lexington.

This closes the series of papers written by Mr. Clark before the 19th of April, 1775. Their tone is progressively positive and is indicative of the waning of the spirit of loyalty to the Crown and the growth of the spirit of liberty and independence, a change which characterized the popular sentiment of the colonies.

Charles Hudson, the faithful, accurate and eloquent historian of Lexington, truly says: "So fully and clearly are the grievances under which our fathers labored and the causes which gave rise to the American Revolution set forth (in Mr. Clark's writings) that if all other records were destroyed and all recollections blotted from the memory, the faithful historian could from the instructions given to the representatives of Lexington and other papers found on our records emanating from the pen of Mr. Clark, trace the developments of oppression from year to year, and state the true causes of that struggle."

It fell to Mr. Clark, as the pastor of the Church of Lexington to preach a sermon on the first anniversary of the battle of

Lexington, the 19th of April, 1776. In that sermon he uses these pathetic words: "At the close of the last war, we arrived at that happy period to which our ancestors looked with earnest anticipations as the utmost of their wishes, as the answer of their prayers and the reward of all their toils and sufferings. The savages were subdued, those restless neighbors, the French, were subjected, and the wide extended continent seemed to be given us for a possession and we were ready to say, 'there was none to make us afraid.' But how uncertain the most blooming prospects—How vain—how disappointing the most rational as well as raised expectations in this imperfect state. Scarcely emerged from the dangers and fatigues of a long and distressing war, we are unexpectedly involved in perplexities and anxieties of a different kind, which by degrees have increased, till they have become more serious, dangerous and depressing than any ever yet felt by God's people in this once happy land" "New acts are passed to enslave us. The lust of domination appears no longer in disguise, but with open face the starving Port Bill comes forth. Gage arrives with his forces by sea and land to carry it into execution with vigor and severity. And to complete the scene, and to make thorough work of oppression and tyranny, immediately follow THE BILLS that subvert the Constitution, vacate our charter, abridge us of the right of trial by juries of the vicinity, in diverse specified capital cases, and expose us to be seized, contrary to the law of the land, and carried to England to be tried for our lives. Also the bill for establishing the popish religion in Canada, contrary to the faith of the crown and the statutes of the Kingdom."

This sermon was preached under the powerful impressions which the opening of the war entailed. It was a cry of the human soul, trusting in the over-ruling providence of a merciful and loving God, and seeking to nerve his hearers and wider circle of readers, to bear up bravely under their burdens. It is still appropriate and comforting reading to anyone in anguish under almost overwhelming calamities.

It is a dangerous thing to prophesy, but in this sermon Mr. Clark uttered a prophecy which has been fulfilled. His prophecy is in these words, uttered on the 19th day of April, 1776: "But it is not by us alone that this day is to be noticed. From this ever memorable day will an important era begin both for America and Britain. And from the 19th day of April, 1775, we may venture to predict, will be dated in future history the liberty or

slavery of the American world, according as a Sovereign God shall see fit to smile or frown upon the interesting cause in which we are engaged." The sentiment of these words contains a foregleam of Lincoln's address at Gettysburg and is not unworthy to be compared with that master-piece of eloquence.

Mr. Clark rendered another service to American history by adding to his sermon the most complete and detailed account of the occurrences on the 19th of April, 1775, which was written by an eye witness.

On October 21st, 1776, a few months after the Declaration of Independence, Mr. Clark submitted to the people of Lexington, a report on the proposal to form a new Constitution for the State of Massachusetts, as the old colonial charter was then at an end. This report is an able examination of the question and ends with a recommendation for a longer and further discussion by the people of the State, "as all government originates from the people." This reveals the definite determination of the people of Massachusetts never to return again to the old order of things.

In 1778, a tentative Constitution was framed and submitted to the people of the State, which drew from Mr. Clark a learned paper on civil government, which after a calm and full consideration, ended with a recommendation that the matter be waived for the present to give the people more time and opportunity to express themselves.

In 1779 the people of Lexington, with great wisdom and propriety, chose Mr. Clark to be their delegate to a convention to complete the work on the Constitution. Mr. Clark, though modest and retiring, was forced to the front as the most suitable man to occupy that office and render that service. When the Constitution in completed form was finally submitted to the people of the State, an amendment was proposed from Lexington, written by Mr. Clark, to add the word Protestant to the words Christian religion, as the religion of the State.

After the Constitution was adopted and the State Government organized, Mr. Clark was invited to preach the Election Sermon, which according to its title page was preached before John Hancock, Governor; Thomas Cushing, Lieutenant-Governor; the Honorable the Council and the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, May 31st, 1781, being the first day of General Election after the Commencement of the present Constitution

and the Inauguration of the New Government. Mr. Clark's writings reached their culmination in this sermon.

Those were dark days for the colonists. That assemblage little thought that the surrender of Lord Cornwallis was so near and that in a few months the war would be ended in triumph. In that sermon all the fire, invective, eloquence, learning, patriotism and religious emotion of a heart that had borne the burden from the day at Lexington, six long weary years, and was ready to burst, received its intensest expression. His dignity and seriousness of presence, which he never laid aside, and his emphatic delivery in manner and voice, found their fullest exercise in the burning words of this sermon. He laid the foundation of his argument in the principles of the rights of man, he illustrated his position by graphic references to ancient history, sacred and profane, and closed with an impassioned appeal to continue the struggle.

"O my fathers and brethren, all, all is yet at stake All may yet be lost, if we rise not as one man to the noble cause. How inglorious must it be to fail at the last. Where then the pleasing scenes of liberty and independence, where the glorious foundations of safety and freedom which our civil constitution has laid? They vanish—they are gone—they are lost forever. Is this possible? Can it be? Forbid it righteous Heaven, forbid it O my country."

Soon after the delivery of this sermon Washington began his last campaign, that against Lord Cornwallis His movements eluded the British at New York and by the timely aid of the French fleet, he mustered an overpowering force at Yorktown, against which Lord Cornwallis struggled in vain, and to which he finally capitulated on the 19th day of October, 1781, just one hundred and thirty years ago today. Then the prayer of the parson at Lexington was answered.

In 1783, after the close of the war, Mr. Clark wrote the instructions to Benjamin Brown, representative of Lexington, in the General Court. This paper contained a full, careful and fair statement of principles at issue in that critical period, and recommends the forfeiture of the estates of tories who had fled from the country in its time of greatest need. It recommends action to restore and establish the credit of state notes and securities and the raising a fund to pay punctually the interest thereon. It recommends economy in public expenditures and

the encouragement of the University at Cambridge and public schools and seminaries.

This ends the record of Mr. Clark's writings on subjects connected with the war. "Few towns", says Charles Hudson, "are able to furnish from their records, papers as numerous, elaborate and able as Lexington, and if she has whereof to boast, nothing, save the heroic part she acted on the 19th day of April, 1775, can stand in preference to the able state papers which emanated from her village clergyman, Rev. Jonas Clark."

Mr. Clark continued to preach, being still in the prime of life, as he was born December 11th, 1730. That his sermons were esteemed is evidenced by their publication down to 1798. His thoughts in the last years of his life were occupied with his parish work and his sermons, the number of which was over two thousand. At the same time he eked out his scanty salary by the care of his farm, which by industry and prudence he left to his family at his death free of encumbrance. Mr. Clark died November 15th, 1805, in the seventy-fifth year of his age and the fifty-first of his continuous ministry at Lexington.

It is interesting to endeavor to trace the sources of the information and theories which inspired our pre-revolutionary writers. Roman and English history were familiar to them. The Bible and especially the Old Testament was a repository from which they derived divine support and practical precedents. Texts unfamiliar to us, were used by them with great effect and frequency. We meet often the quotation from Jeremiah, 30th chapter and 21st verse, "Their nobles shall be of themselves and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them." Their model of government was the Jewish theocracy, which involved a government by judges elected by the people. A system by which judges not only administer laws but pass on the constitutionality of laws, which we have inherited from the Jews, is an enthronement of the national conscience in its right place as the highest power of the government.

Their knowledge of law was increased by the appearance of Blackstone's Commentaries in 1764, at the time when it could be of the greatest assistance in the discussions which were then going on. The book was said to have sold as largely in America as in England.

The influence on pre-revolutionary thought of Locke's Essay on Government, cannot be overestimated. At a Conference of Delegates from the colonies held in Philadelphia,

October 13th, 1774, James Manning, President of what is now Brown University, invoked the great authority of Locke in advocating freedom and equality. Hallam in his *Literature in Europe during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries*, after giving a full analysis of Locke's *Treatise on Government*, adds that the treatise became the creed of a numerous party at home, "while silently spreading the fibres of its roots over Europe and America, it prepared the way for the theories of political society hardly bolder in announcement, but expressed with more passionate ardor, from which the great revolutions of this and the last age have sprung."

Some words and phrases used by Locke are found in Mr. Clark's sermon of 1781. For example; Original compact, State of nature, Free, equal and independent. Parallel passages from Mr. Clark's sermon and Locke's *Essay* regarding the original compact of society, express the same thought though not in the same language.

Locke's words regarding the spirit of resistance to constituted authority describes well the attitude of the colonists. Discussing resistance, Locke answers the monarchists who say the people must not attack the Prince. They must not for any provocation exceed the bounds of due reverence and respect. For an inferior to punish a superior is against nature. "How to resist force", Locke says, "without striking again, or how to strike with reverence, will need some skill to make intelligible. He that opposes assault only with a shield to receive blows, or in any more respectful posture, without a sword in his hand to abate the confidence and force of his assailant, will quickly be at an end of his resistance and will find such a defence to serve only to draw on himself a worse usage. This is a ridiculous way of resisting. He therefore who may resist, must be allowed to strike. And let anyone joyn (sic) a knock on the head or a cut in the face with as much reverence and respect as he sees fit. He that can reconcile blows and reverence, may for aught I know, deserve for his pains a civil, respectful cudgeling whenever he can meet with it." The colonists profited by these caustic remarks. They attempted for years to maintain loyalty while suffering from the acts of Parliament, but at last they found that if they resisted at all, they must strike.

It is to be remarked that no trace of Rousseau is to be found in the writings of Mr. Clark, and perhaps not in the writings of any of the pre-revolutionary thinkers. Clark and Rousseau

both drew their inspiration from Locke's Essay on Government, and what general similarity there may appear between them is due to their common source. It is impossible to conceive of Clark or Rousseau, independent of Locke, their great predecessor

It is profitable for us in this day and generation to attempt to reproduce in our mind's eye the scenes and events which led up to the formation of our republic, as we have done in this discussion. Are we not impressed with one thought, that these Founders and Patriots had but one purpose, and it should actuate us as completely as it did them in the revolutionary days, that perversions of government, whether by kings and parliaments or machines and bosses, or demagogues and false social leaders, must be withstood and overcome "at the utmost peril of our lives and fortunes."

THEODORE GILMAN.

New York, September 21st, 1911.

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31. **"Rev. Jonas Clark, Pastor of the Church at Lexington during the Revolution, Leader of Revolutionary Thought,"** by Theodore Gilman, October 19, 1911.

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