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"SAYING THE CATECHISM"

Seventy-Five Years Ago,

AND THE HISTORICAL RESULTS.

An Address

DELIVERED BEFORE THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC-
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY,, DEC. 4, 1878.

BY

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BOSTON.



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AT the regular monthly meeting of the New England Historic-Genealogical Society, held Wednesday, Dec. 4, 1878, a paper was read by the Rev. DORUS CLARKE, D.D., entitled "Saying the Catechism Seventy-five Years Ago, and the Historical Results." On motion of the Rev. WILLIAM M. CORNELL, D.D., the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be tendered to the Rev. Dr. CLARKE for the very able, earnest, and valuable Address delivered by him at this meeting."

Attest:

DAVID G. HASKINS, JUN.,
Recording Secretary.

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ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—
The town of Westhampton, in the county of Hampshire, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, presented, some three-quarters of a century since, certain traits of the Puritanical character which I desire to stereotype upon the memory of this body of learned men; and I hope that in that regard “history” will “repeat itself.” It is my intention to keep strictly within the limits of historical investigation, and to honor that department of our work, which searches out the underlying reasons for this and that line of conduct, and which traces events up to their causes; so that we may know what courses in life, unless counteracted, will eventuate in their legitimate results. And I am sure, that, if a somewhat graver cast than is usual be given to this address, it will not only be pardoned but gratefully accepted by gen-

tlemen, whose researches in history and genealogy naturally lead them to take serious views of life, and who are themselves now standing amid the shadows of another departing year, and which may be our last. The gravity of the occasion, so far as I am concerned, is also enhanced by the probability, that this is the last time I shall have the honor to address this Society from this rostrum, where in past years you have so often heard my voice, and with a degree of attention and respect which commands my most grateful acknowledgment. I know very well that anecdotes, and even very stale anecdotes about ministers and deacons, form the staple of some very popular papers; and, though no one relishes a good anecdote or a good joke more than myself, I have sometimes been led to question the refinement of that taste and the correctness of that judgment, which deal largely in such materials before such a Society as this. History has been defined to be "philosophy teaching by example." The "example" I am about to present is one which, I think, "philosophy teaches" must be imitated throughout the world, in spirit if not in

form, to save civilized society from being overthrown by radicalism.

LOCATION OF WESTHAMPTON.

The town of Northampton, as it was originally laid out, embraced the present towns of Northampton, Easthampton, Southampton, and Westhampton. Westhampton is the most picturesque of these four municipalities. It was incorporated in the year 1778. In its palmy days it numbered only about nine hundred souls, and now it contains only about six hundred. It lies partly in the valley of the Connecticut River, and partly upon the hills which form the eastern slope of the Green Mountain range, which extends from Canada to Long Island Sound. My eyes first saw the light of day upon the Alpine heights, one mile west of the centre; and, in the vast and beautiful valley below, lay Northampton, Easthampton, Amherst, Hadley, South Hadley, Mount Tom, Mount Holyoke, and the serpentine Connecticut, winding its way to the ocean,—all of which were photographed indelibly, in variegated mosaics, upon my youthful imagination. Often was my

taste regaled with the grandeur of that splendid panorama of hill and dale, of mountain and valley, of churches and hamlets. Some new and beautiful features have since been added to that magnificent spectacle, when viewed from the loftier eminences, such as the Williston Seminary, the Smith College, the Agricultural College, and Amherst College. Mount Washington presents sublimer scenery, but none so beautiful. It was a fine place, too, for the display of Heaven's pyrotechnics and artillery. Well do I recollect how sometimes the firmament gathered blackness, and "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew," and the lightnings gleamed and the thunders crashed along the mountains, and the earth reeked under the fury of the tempest as it swept sublimely along down into the vast valley beneath; and how the commingled elements raged and rolled and surged over Easthampton and Northampton, and sent back their deafening roar to my ears; while the setting sun came out in his brightness to look at the scene, lighted up the hills around me with his smiles, painted rainbows on the departing storm, and every twig and leaf

and flower glittered with tears of gratitude that the fearful tornado was overpast and gone.

The early settlers of that town were a godly generation. Divine Providence sifted Northampton, Easthampton, Southampton, and Dedham in Massachusetts, and Colchester, Lebanon, and Coventry in Connecticut, to find seed good enough wherewith to sow those hills and valleys. The names of the pioneers may not be found in the registers of heralds, but I verily believe that most of them will be found in the "Book of Life." Neither they nor their descendants there have been distinguished for wealth. There are no wealthy people in that town, and, what is better, there are no poor people there. As Defoe said of the Scotch, —

"They are rich compared to poor, and poor compared to rich."

But they are and were "rich towards God."

CHARACTER OF MR. HALE.

A Congregational church was early organized in that town, and the Rev. Enoch Hale of Coventry, Conn., was chosen their pastor. Mr. Hale

was an elder brother of Nathan Hale, of Revolutionary memory, who was arrested as a spy and executed by the British, Sept. 22, 1776, who then had possession of New York. President Sparks says, "No young man of his years put forth a fairer promise of future usefulness and celebrity." So profoundly was Enoch impressed by the tragic circumstances of his brother's death, that he was never known to allude to him unless he was led to do it by others. The Rev. Mr. Hale was the grandfather of the Rev. Edward Everett Hale.

Mr. Hale was ordained pastor of the infant church in Westhampton in my grandfather Lyman's barn. The council performed the service on the barn floor, and the audience occupied the scaffolds and the haymows, and extemporized seats upon the rocks and the logs outside of the unfinished building. The pastor and the church were firm believers in the Evangelical system of Faith, as it is set forth in the Westminster Confession and in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The inhabitants were united to a most unusual degree, both in politics and religion. In later years, at several gubernatorial elections, Caleb

Strong had all the votes of the town, with only one or two exceptions. In ecclesiastical polity, the people were as unitedly Congregationalists, as they were unitedly Evangelical in doctrine, and they are nearly as much so at the present day. No other church exists in the town, and, to present appearance, no other church ever will. The style of Mr. Hale's preaching was calm and judicious, but not eloquent or moving. His habits were systematic and exact to a proverb. Every family in the neighborhood could regulate its long kitchen clock, by the precise punctuality with which he would arrive to preach an appointed lecture. On the Sabbath, every man who was earlier or later than he at public worship, doubted the correctness of his own chronometer. *It must be wrong*, for Mr. Hale was in the pulpit sooner or later than they were in the pews. He was for many years the Scribe of the General Association of Congregational Ministers in this State. On one occasion, the meeting of that body was held seventy-five miles distant from his place of residence. Five minutes only were to elapse before the hour for opening the meeting would come.

Speculation was rife among the members already on the ground, as to the probability of his being there in season to call the meeting to order at the appointed moment, which was his official duty. One clergyman, who knew him better than the others, remarked, that the town clock may be wrong; that, if Mr. Hale should not be there when the clock struck, it would only prove that the clock was out of repair, for it was certain that he would be there precisely at the appointed moment. As minutes and half-minutes wore away, curiosity became intense and intenser; but, before the last minute expired, Mr. Hale drove up in his "one hoss shay," entered the church, and called the meeting to order.

With the exception of one excellent family which came from Dedham, all observed Saturday evening as a part of the Sabbath, and kept it with the most conscientious strictness. On the Sabbath, no work was done except "works of necessity and mercy," and no recreations were allowed. Family prayer, morning and evening, was universal; and the children were thoroughly instructed in the great articles of the Christian faith, as it was held

by their fathers. The first meeting-house was built soon after Mr. Hale's ordination; and though it exhibited many symptoms of decay, and though old Boreas often treated himself to the music of the clatter of its doors and windows and shingles, it was still standing within my own recollection. It was innocent of paint and bell and steeple, as well as of a thin congregation on the Sabbath. Rain or shine, snow or hail, lightning or thunder, the people were all there, including many of the small children, and even infants, who sometimes furnished music gratuitously, — solos, duets, and choruses. The other exercises of the church were conducted with the greatest reverence and decorum. Father Hale carried his systematic habits so far, that he used to read, and to request his brethren who occasionally preached for him to read, Watts's Psalms and Hymns *right straight through in course*, whatever might be their relevancy, or want of relevancy to the subject of the sermon. He always preached with his accurate watch lying on the pulpit before him, and, as he used to pray with his eyes wide open, he was careful to cut his sermons and prayers to the pre-

scribed length; and, if the moment for closing either arrived when he was in the middle of a sentence, the remaining part was sure to be despatched in short metre.

Father Hale was a laborious student, — a trait which has distinguished his descendants in this city. It was his rule, during his long ministry, to have twenty sermons on hand which he had not preached, so as to be prepared for any emergency which might befall him. If, by stress of business or ill health, he had made any innovations upon the twenty undelivered sermons, he redoubled his exertions to make that number good. In the year 1816 his house was destroyed by fire, and his library and three thousand sermons were burned up in it. Nothing daunted by that great calamity, he set himself, in his old age, to the work of preparing twenty extra sermons, so as to preserve his ideal of pulpit safety. I hold in my hand the seventy-third number of the new series, which was preached in Westhampton in 1817, — the year I graduated from college. These incidents may furnish a hint to my brethren who keep no sermons beforehand, and who, perhaps, do not

begin their preparations for the Sabbath till Saturday morning. But system and punctuality were, by no means, all the virtues which were conspicuous in Father Hale's character. The excellence of his *example* was proverbial. His whole life was modelled upon the principles of the Bible, which he did so much, by his preaching, his example, and his instructions in the Catechism, to spread among his people.

I thought it necessary to make these preliminary sketches, that you may be able to form an intelligent opinion of the factors—hereditary, æsthetic, and religious—which made up the character of the people of Westhampton; but, in doing it, I have perhaps detained you too long, Mr. President and gentlemen, from "Saying the Catechism." Not that I suppose that *you* can "say" it as well, if at all, as the youth in Westhampton in those olden times; but I wish to inform you how the heroes of my narrative "said" it, as the phrase then was.

SAYING THE CATECHISM.

I hold in my hand a very small book, which perhaps some of you, in all your researches

through the large libraries in this country and in Europe, have never discovered. I know not who compiled it, *but it has done more to form the New-England character* than any book except the Bible. Allow me, then, to introduce you to the "NEW-ENGLAND PRIMER." Here we have, among many other things, this important information :—

"In Adam's fall
We sinnèd all."

"The cat doth play,
And after slay."

"The dog doth bite
The thief at night ;"

and so on. Here is also a picture of John Rogers, burning at the stake in Smithfield, in 1554, and "his wife and nine small children, and one at the breast," looking on. Does that mean that he had nine children or ten? I have stumbled, then, upon two unsettled historical questions: one is, *Who compiled the New England Primer?* and the other is, *How many children did John Rogers have?* We are in the habit of settling such questions here, but we have not time to settle these now.

The "Primer" which was used in Westhampton was a square book. It was not in this oblong, modern form. This book, therefore, does not look to me quite orthodox outside; but I have no doubt it is orthodox *inside*, for it contains the Catechism. The Catechism, as we studied and recited it, was divided into three parts. The first part comprehended all between, "What is the chief end of man?" and "the First Commandment." The second embraced all the "Commandments," together with "What is required?" and "What is forbidden?" in them all, and "The reasons annexed for observing them." The third included all from the question, "Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?" to the end. The Catechism was required, by the public sentiment of the town, to be perfectly committed to memory, and recited in the meeting-house by all the children and youth between the ages of eight and fifteen. These public recitations were held on three different Sabbaths in the summer of every year, with perhaps a fortnight intervening between each of them, to allow sufficient time for the children to commit to memory the division assigned.

When the time arrived for commencing the exercise, the excitement was tremendous. As the great battle of Trafalgar was about to begin between the immense armadas of England and France, Lord Nelson displayed at the masthead of his flag-ship, "The Victory," the exciting proclamation, streaming in the wind, "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY!" That proclamation woke all the national enthusiasm of his officers and men, and strung every nerve for the awful conflict. Scarcely less imperative and exciting was the annual announcement by Father Hale: "*Sabbath after next, the first division of the Catechism will be recited here.*" It sent a thrill through the town.

There was "no discharge in that war." Public sentiment demanded the most implicit obedience by all concerned. The old Primers were looked up, new ones bought, and the parents set their children to the work at once and in earnest. Every question and every answer must be most thoroughly committed to memory, *verbatim et literatim et punctuatim*. The time for recitation was at the close of the afternoon service. All the

children in the town, dressed in their "Sabba-day clothes," were arranged shoulder to shoulder,—the boys on the one side, and the girls on the other of the broad aisle, beginning at the "deacon's seat" beneath the pulpit, and extending down that aisle, and round through the side aisles as far as was necessary. The parents—"children of a larger growth"—crowded the pews and galleries, tremblingly anxious that their little ones might acquit themselves well. Many a mother bent over that scene with solemn interest, handkerchief in hand, the tears of joy ready to fall if their children should succeed, and tears of sorrow if they should happen to fail. It was a spectacle worthy of a painter.

Father Hale, standing in the pulpit, put out the questions to the children in order; and each one, when the question came to him, was expected to wheel out of the line, *à la militaire*, into the broad aisle, and face the minister, and make his very best obeisance, and answer the question put to him without the slightest mistake. To be *told*, that is, to be prompted or corrected by the minister, was not a thing to be permitted by any child,

who expected thereafter to have any reputation in that town for good scholarship. In this manner the three divisions of the Catechism were successively recited, while many were the "knees which smote one against another;" and many are the persons who recollect, and will long recollect, the palpitating heart, the tremulous voice, the quivering frame, with which for several years they went through that terrible ordeal. But, if the nervous effects of that exercise were appalling, the moral influence was most salutary; and I desire, in this presence, to acknowledge my deep obligations to my parents, who long since, as I trust, "passed into the skies," for their fidelity in requiring me, much against my will, to commit to memory the Assembly's Catechism, and to "say" it six or seven years in succession in the old meeting-house in Westhampton, amid tremblings and agitations I can never cease to remember.

But this was not all. The Catechism formed a part of the *curriculum* of all the common schools in that town for half a century, and was as thoroughly taught and as regularly recited there as Webster's Spelling-Book, or Murray's English

Grammar. It was as truly a classic as any other book. It was taught everywhere, — in the family, in the school, and in the church, — indeed, it was the principal intellectual and religious *pabulum* of the people. We had it for breakfast, and we had it for dinner, and we had it for supper. The entire town was *saturated* with its doctrines, and it is almost as much so at the present day. The people could not, of course, descend into the profound depths of the metaphysics of theology, but they thoroughly understood the *system* which was held by the fathers of New England. They were not indeed prepared to

“ Reason high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute ; ”

but they so clearly apprehended what they believed to be the truths of the Bible,

“ That to the height of this great argument
They could assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.”

The practice of instructing the children thoroughly in the Catechism, was very general through-

out New England for a century and a half after the arrival of "The Mayflower." Judge Sewall, in the first volume of his "Diary," just published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, speaks of a certain Sabbath, which, in the Old South Church in this city, was called "*The Catechising Day*," and of his wearing a new article of clothing in honor of that specially important custom. But I believe that that excellent practice was nowhere so thoroughly carried out, as it was in Western Massachusetts. That was largely owing to the transcendent influence of *Jonathan Edwards*, — *clarum et venerabile nomen*, — who was looked up to by the ministers in Boston and Scotland as the oracle in all metaphysical and theological matters. His influence in Northampton and Stockbridge, and in the regions round about, is visible to-day in the peculiar moral and religious *grain* of the people.

This, ladies and gentlemen, *was the way the New England character was formed*. Professor James Russell Lowell, in "The Biglow Papers," has given us a very seasonable caution in relation to this matter. He says, with only a slight altera-

tion, if his serio-comic style and orthography be admissible, —

“ Young folks are smart, but all ain’t good thet’s new;
I guess the gran’thers they knowed sunthin’, tu.
They toiled an’ prayed, built sure in the beginnin’,
An’ never let us tech the underpinnin’.”

THE GENERAL RESULTS.

But it is time to consider some of the *results*, — some of the mental and moral *effects*, of this system of thorough religious training upon the people of Westhampton. It was continued through the lifetime of nearly two generations, and therefore long enough fairly to test its real influence upon human character and life, — long enough to determine, historically, what were its legitimate effects upon individuals and upon society. I know it is difficult to ascertain precisely all the influences, open and secret, remote and proximate, which form the web and the woof of individual and municipal character; but in this case those formative factors were so immediate and so obvious, that there is little room to doubt what they were. Indeed, there is no more reason to doubt what they

were, than there is to question the veracity of the multiplication table, or the excellence of the Ten Commandments. The general *result* was, and still is, that sobriety, large intelligence, sound morality, and unfeigned piety, exist there to a wider extent than in any other community of equal size within the limits of my acquaintance. Revivals of religion have been of great frequency, purity, and power; and to-day more than *one-third* of the population, all told, are members of that Congregational Church. *Nine-tenths* of the inhabitants are regular attendants on public worship. *Thirty-eight* of the young men have graduated from college, have entered the learned professions, and especially the Christian ministry; and several of them have risen to positions of the highest usefulness and honor. These, I believe, are much larger percentages of educated men, of Christian men, of useful men, than can be found in any other town in this or any other commonwealth.

I have resided in that town sixteen years, in Williamstown four years, in Andover three years, in Blandford twelve years, in Springfield six years, and in Boston and its vicinity thirty-seven years,

and have therefore had some opportunities to form an intelligent judgment of the relative condition, moral and religious, of different parts of this Commonwealth; and I say it “without fear or favor, or hope of reward;” I say it with no invidious spirit whatever; I say it simply because historic verity peremptorily requires that it *should* be said, — that I have nowhere found, in these communities generally, such profound reverence for the name of JEHOVAH, the Infinite and Personal GOD; such unquestioning faith in the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures; such devout and conscientious observance of the Sabbath; such habitual practice of family prayer; such respect for an oath in a court of justice; such anxiety for revivals of religion; such serious determination to enter into the kingdom of heaven; and such deep conviction that it never can be reached, except by repentance for sin, and faith in a crucified Redeemer, as I have seen in that town. That the moral and religious condition of things there is not what it should be, is unquestionably true; but that it is, on the whole, better, yes, much better, than that in any other municipality on the face of

the earth, which has not been similarly educated, is my honest belief. And, if this be true, this superior Christian tone of society must have had an *adequate cause*; and it is our duty, as members of this Historical Society, to ascertain that cause, and let it be known for the information and imitation of the world. That cause, — so far as I am able to trace effects back to their causes, — can be found, not in the local position of that town, not in its scenery, not in its peculiarly favorable situation for the prosecution of any of the arts of life, not in the wealth created by great manufacturing industries, for all the manufactories of which it can boast, I believe, are a gristmill and a sawmill; but that cause is its more thorough indoctrination, from its settlement down to the present day, in the great truths of the Bible, creating public sentiment, permeating domestic life, giving vigor to conscience, converting men to Christ, and impregnating society, through all its ramifications, with a profounder sense of moral obligation. During my boyhood and youth, I never knew my father's house locked by any mechanical contrivance by day or night; but it was locked with a lock of very

peculiar construction and strength. The Bible and the Catechism were the "combination lock," which thoroughly protected every man's house. And let me tell you, gentlemen, exposed as we all are in these days of tramps and outlaws to deprivations by day and by night, that the Bible and the Catechism form a "combination lock" of which no man holds a patent, and therefore you can use it without paying a royalty to anybody; and a lock, too, which no burglar can pick, and no powder blow up. Put this lock, then, upon all your doors, upon all your safes, upon all your banks, and then you and your cashiers can sleep quietly at night; and let me say that neither you nor they can sleep with *perfect* quietness under any other protection.

EDUCATIONAL RESULTS.

The *educational* results of that method of learning and "Saying the Catechism" were also of the greatest importance. Committing so thoroughly to memory such a long series of questions and answers, and doing it for so many years, could not fail to exert a most marked influence upon the intellectual powers. It has long been a question

among educators how much the memory should be taxed. Some hold that it cannot be overloaded; and others say that to charge it highly weakens its ability, and injures mental discipline. What is the memory? It is the power of storing up for future use the knowledge we have already acquired, and of recalling it at pleasure. Direct efforts to do this are doubtless unwise; but it can be sufficiently done in the ordinary processes of education without direct effort. To form a good memory, an idea must be deeply impressed upon the mind, and sometimes it must be repeated again and again to make a deep impression. That remarkable practice of committing to memory the Catechism, through so many years and with such punctilious accuracy, met precisely these requirements, and was observed to be a most important factor in the education of the people.

Archbishop Whately says that "*the knowledge of man's ignorance* is the much neglected friend of human knowledge." But that practice of "Saying the Catechism" made the children of Westhampton *pay special attention* to that "friend of human knowledge," — "the knowledge of man's

ignorance." If any thing can teach us our "ignorance," it is a "knowledge" of the great truths taught in the Catechism. Those truths have depths which the longest finite line can never sound, and heights to which the boldest angelic wing can never soar. They teach us, too, that, though men may be highly intelligent on other subjects, they may be profoundly unacquainted with their relations to their Creator, Redeemer, and Judge.

And, besides, the sharp definitions in the Catechism had the same educating effect. A good definition is said to be more than half the argument. Daniel Webster had the remarkable faculty of stating his case so clearly to the court, the jury, and the senate, that the statement virtually argued the case. It is very much so with the definitions in the Catechism. The statement is the argument. For instance, take the following:—

"What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever." This definition is so obviously accurate, and is so thoroughly corroborated by all our moral instincts,

that it has been the inspiration of many a noble life.

“What is God? God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.” Can any thing be more comprehensive and exact?

“What is sin? Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.” Here we have both the negative and the positive sides of sin, — *the not doing, and the doing*. There is nothing deficient, and nothing redundant. The definition covers the whole ground, and no more.

“What are the decrees of God? The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His own will, whereby, for His glory, He hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.” Against this rock of truth the waves of criticism have dashed for more than two centuries, and have made no impression.

“Did all mankind fall in Adam’s first transgression? The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first

transgression." That the fall of Adam somehow or other affects "his posterity," all history affirms; the *modus* is infinitesimally unimportant, but the representative or corporate theory of the Catechism has been, historically, more generally accepted than any other.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines were men of great intelligence, breadth of mind, and comprehensive knowledge of the Scriptures; and their definitions are wonderful specimens of clear and exact thought,—as nearly mathematical as the case would admit. And then, too, such was their high sense of responsibility, that they took ample time to complete their work with the most scrupulous care. In the formation of their Confession of Faith, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, they sat more than five years, and held one thousand one hundred and sixty-three sessions. They considered, reconsidered, and considered over and over again every point, so as to reproduce the very mind and will of the Great Inspirer of the Scriptures, and make their work echo what they believed to be the real meaning of that Book. Now, such thorough drilling in the

Catechism, in its clear definitions and exact statements,—in the family, in the school, in the church,—could not but exert a most potent influence upon the susceptible minds of the children and youth. It strengthened their memories; it enlarged their views; it gave power to conscience; it awakened deep solicitude about the Eternal Future; it formed the habit of clear thought, of close reasoning, and of logical deduction; and if I may be forgiven the egotism of referring for a moment to my own experience, by way of illustration, I would say, that I have been through the process of calculating eclipses of the sun which required the most sustained attention for several days in succession; I have followed Butler in his profound discussions in “The Analogy;” and Leibnitz in his herculean effort to wrestle, in his “Theodicaea,” with the tremendous problem of moral evil, and sought to settle that vexed question, yes, that *vexatissima quæstio* of theologians, *How could a Holy God permit sin to enter the universe?*—but I have never discovered that all these calculations and discussions exerted a better influence upon my own mind, than my early fa-

miliarity with the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. That is indeed nearly as much a treatise on logic as it is on theology; and it is a very martinet in mental discipline.

RESULTS UPON THE WORLD.

But what have been the *results* of this system of thorough religious training *upon the world*, through the influence of the children of Westhampton? "*Conduct*," says Matthew Arnold, "is at least three-quarters of human life." What, then, has been the "conduct" of the children of Westhampton? Let history answer; and I wish to hold your minds to a true historical perspective.

As already stated, *thirty-eight* of her young men have obtained a liberal education, and several others have gone into professional life, and into other useful vocations, without the benefit of a collegiate course of study. But let me be more specific. Twenty-three of these young men have become *clergymen*. One of them has been pastor of an important church in this city, and President of the Andover Theological Seminary. Others have been settled in churches of other cities and

towns in this Commonwealth; and others still, in Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and California. One has lived eighteen years in the kraals of Southern Africa, teaching the benighted Hottentots the way to heaven; and another, for twenty-eight years, has performed missionary labor in Western Asia, through the exactions of the Turkish Government and the horrors of the recent war with Russia. One of them devised the famous "pledge" which is working out the temperance reformation; and published a volume of statistics, collected from experience in Europe and America, showing that men, in the long run, can perform more labor and contribute more to the material prosperity of the country, by resting one day in seven and keeping the Sabbath holy, than by laboring continuously seven days in the week. Two farmers in Westhampton had two sons each who went to college, graduated with honor, became clergymen, and rose to such eminence that the colleges made them all Doctors of Divinity, — whether that title be worth little or much.

Take next the *legal* profession. Westhampton

has raised but few lawyers. When Peter the Great was in London, he saw the law Lords with their bag wigs coming out of Westminster Hall; and he asked, "Who are those fellows yonder?" He was told that they were lawyers. "What!" he exclaimed, — "lawyers, lawyers; what do they want so many lawyers here for? There are only two of them in Russia, and those I intend to hang as soon as I get home." I do not know that Westhampton people ever hung a lawyer, but I know that they have starved them all out of that town. Though Westhampton has only about as much use for lawyers as Russia had in the days of that autocrat, — who was himself the maker, the expounder, and the executor of all the laws, — she has sent two to this city who have risen to distinction, and a few others to Ohio and other parts of the country; and the mantles of Coke and Webster set gracefully on her sons.

Take the *medical* profession. Westhampton has sent one physician to Boston, and one of the most eminent this city ever had; another, of equal eminence, to the city of Cambridge; another, to Pawtucket, R. I., who became so distinguished

that he was made the President of the Rhode Island Medical Society; and another still to Cincinnati, O., who is in a most successful practice.

Take, now, a few cases *outside* of the learned professions. In the dark days of 1776, that town was a wilderness; but, at the call of patriotism, one of her sons left his young wife and infant child in a small house he had built in the woods, to struggle along as best they might, and hastened to Crown Point and Ticonderoga to defend his imperilled country, lost his health, and yet did much to effect the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga. In the war of 1812, another came here, as a member of a company of militia, to defend Boston against an expected attack by the British. When the civil war broke out in the spring of 1861, several of the young men, at the call of the government, left their ploughs in the furrows, joined the army, and aspired to the very van of the conflict with the hosts of rebellion; and those who were not killed or wounded in battle, stood manfully by their colors till the surrender of Lee at Appomattox.

Again: several of them, by their editorial labors,

have moulded the religious and the political opinions of the times, and the multitude did not know where the influence came from which moulded them. One of them founded "The Boston Daily Advertiser," and conducted it several years with distinguished ability. The same gentleman, by his skill as an engineer, did more than any other man to effect the construction of the Boston and Worcester Railroad, and was the first President of that important corporation. It was principally, too, through his agency that the Cochituate water—that great public necessity and luxury—was brought into this city. Another has been a member of the Common Council, and another a member of the School Committee of Boston. Another wrote "Margaret," and other works of fiction, of great popularity. Another has written several volumes upon denominational and theological science, which have commanded the attention of some of the best thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic. Another accumulated materials for a history of several towns in Hampshire County, and the MSS. he left behind him ought to be in the hands of this Society. I see before me a

Westhampton boy — whose head, by the way, is very white for a boy — who was for many years a collector of the revenues of the United States in this city; and an honest publican he was, for none of the revenues “stuck to his fingers.” That gentleman has also been quite largely connected with the civil and the eleemosynary concerns of Boston. And I observe here another Westhampton boy, — whose head is equally venerable, — an eminent member of the Boston bar, and, besides, he holds an important relation to the Boston and Maine Railroad. I also see a Westhampton girl, only eighty-one years of age, — the youngest daughter of the Rev. Enoch Hale. That lady and myself were classmates in the centre school in that town, and we had many a friendly contest to see which would be at “the head.” Being the minister’s daughter, she was, of course, thought to be a little better than anybody else, and a better scholar than anybody else; and if any boys or girls intended to beat her in reading or spelling, or in any other exercise, they would be obliged to “get up early in the morning.” I am profoundly thankful that the

good Providence of God has spared her useful life so long, and has permitted her to come from her residence in the Hotel Berkeley, and honor us by her presence here to-day. One of the sons of Westhampton is now the Treasurer of the Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York, has the management of the large endowments of that Institution, resides in a splendid mansion on the heights of Sing Sing, which overlook the beautiful scenery of the Hudson River; and I will guarantee that he will never be sent to the State Prison at Sing Sing as a defaulter. Another has done business in Ohio, at the rate of five hundred thousand dollars a year, and the orders of her merchants have been sought for in London. Many of her sons and daughters have gone East, West, North, and South, as school-teachers. One of them penetrated into the wilds of Ohio,—her last day's journey of forty miles was performed on horseback, though she was quite unused to that mode of travelling,—established a school under almost every possible discouragement, which, nevertheless, she taught several years with much success; married a lawyer,

who afterwards became a member of Congress; and with his aid collected the means to build two churches, — one of wood, which was soon outgrown, and another of brick, which was an ornament of the place. At her solicitation, her friends in Massachusetts gave her a bell for the church; and finally she died, and was followed to her tomb by a weeping village she had done so much to bless. I have sat in her seat in the church which she labored so indefatigably to erect, and where she ripened for heaven. And, last and not least, one of the sons of Westhampton has within fifteen years done something for this Society, as its Historiographer, by writing and reading here one hundred and twenty-seven Memoirs of its departed members.

Now, *per contra*. You, gentlemen, are all well versed in history, and therefore let me ask you, —

Have you ever read of any man who was made a *blatant politician* by the Catechism? I fancy I hear you all answer, No.

Did you ever read of a *wily demagogue* who was made such by the Catechism? No.

Did you ever know any man who was brought

up on the Catechism, who *did not vote on rainy days, and vote right, too?* No.

Did you ever know a *defaulter*, or a *communist*, or a *profane swearer*, or a *bull-dogger*, who was brought up on the Catechism? No.

Have you ever heard that the Catechism has made men *mean*, or *trickish*, or *given to low cunning?* No.

But does not all history affirm, that such teaching tends to make men *honorable*, and *large-hearted*, and *magnanimous*, and *patriotic*, as well as *Christian?* Yes, yes.

And what Christianity did for Westhampton, it can do for Boston and New York, for Paris and Peking, for Timbuctoo and Louisiana.

THE SUMMARY.

All this, ladies and gentlemen, is not rhetorical embellishment, but a plain statement of facts. That the inhabitants of this small town, — retired among the hills and valleys of Hampshire County, with no literary advantages save those of the family, the church, the common school, and the Catechism; with none of the aids of wealth, or

high social position, or extraordinary inherited talent, — that they have done all this, and more than this, *I hold to be a marvel*. You may as well attempt to “enact the play of Hamlet with Hamlet all left out,” as to account for the intelligence, the good sense, the energy, the heroism, the piety, the self-sacrifice, and the success of the sons and daughters of Westhampton, *in their diversified forms of usefulness all over the world*, by proposing any other solution of the problem than the great truths of the Catechism, wrought into the very texture of society there, and working out their legitimate results upon the intellects, the hearts, and the life of that community.

This thorough instruction of the children in the Catechism in New England was superseded by the Sabbath School. The present system traverses a much wider area of study; but it is a serious question, whether what is gained in extent is not more than lost in depth. The Sabbath School, with all its excellences, does not by any means so strengthen the memory, or discipline the mind, or alarm the conscience, or effect, instrumentally, such satisfactory conversions, or make such indoc-

trinated and stable Christians. If an union of the two systems could be formed, and the Catechism could be made every year a part of the *curriculum* of the Sabbath School instruction, we might have all the advantages of the present system, and all the "historical benefits of 'Saying the Catechism' seventy-five years ago."

And why not? The Presidents of Williams and Amherst College drill their pupils systematically and thoroughly in the Catechism, as one of the classics in the college course; and the Professors in the Theological Seminary at Andover are required, by the statutes of that Institution, upon their induction into office, publicly to avow and subscribe their cordial belief in the Catechism, and to renew their allegiance to it, in the presence of the Trustees, every five years. If these distinguished official educators of our young men give themselves to this work with such cordiality and zeal, why cannot all our Sabbath School superintendents and teachers follow their lead with the best possible grace, and with the assurance of the highest success? Here, then, I rest my historical argument for the re-introduction of the Catechism

into the system of public education in New England.

THE PERORATION.

We live in a day, ladies and gentlemen, which presages unusual changes in the country and the world. We are beginning to see "distress of nations with perplexity." "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." The unsettled relations between capital and labor, all over the civilized world, is the most portentous social problem of the present day, and is likely to be so, I think, for some time to come. Fear on the side of capital, and hate on the side of labor, — two of the most powerful forces in human nature, — threaten to come into the fiercest collision. It is a question which comes home to "every man's business and bosom." It is a question, too, which we cannot evade, and which the world does not seem to have wisdom enough to settle. The question is becoming more and more pressing, as political power is every day passing more and more into the hands of the ignorant and the unprincipled.

In the United States, "universal suffrage" seems likely to be an universal danger. Communism, which has already given France a taste of its quality, is threatening the stability of the governments in Germany, Russia, and Italy, is menacing the property holders in England, and is spreading anxiety among all thoughtful men in this country. The more intelligent and far-seeing among us frequently refer to the subject, but with bated breath. We feel beneath our feet the initial heavings of the earthquake. The sacking of the Tuileries; the attempts to assassinate the Emperor of Germany, the King of Italy, and high officials in Russia; the Pittsburg riots; the formation of *secret* communistic and socialistic societies all over Europe and the United States; all of them atheistic and destructive, and already claiming a membership of millions, and holding that they will soon have a majority of the voters in this country, and are now biding their time for their intended attack upon the government, and social order, and the rights of property, — are all boding more serious evils than have yet befallen our beloved land. Where is the power that can neutralize and destroy

them? Can education do it? It can do it in part, but only in part, and in a very small part, too. Can wealth do it, when wealth itself is on trial? Another influence, far more powerful than both wealth and intelligence, must be associated with them to insure success. That factor is CHRISTIANITY, which Washington, in his Farewell Address, declared to be "*indispensable*" to the maintenance of free institutions. And the Christianity which is so "*indispensable*" is not a weak, æsthetic, fashionable sentimentalism. Our distinguished Monday lecturer would tell us, that a "lavender" religion is not the stuff to make martyrs of. It is said by those who are the most profoundly versed in religious psychology, that the Bible, when it is the most thoroughly studied, and its spirit is the most thoroughly incorporated into the lives of men, produces a *peculiar type of thought and character*, and that this *peculiar type* has effected all the reforms of much importance which have taken place in the world. It originated and now sustains the great missionary and philanthropic movements of the day. We need, then, that *peculiar type* of thought and character, which can grapple with the

gigantic evils of the times. We need a strong, hearty, sturdy, transforming, conscientious religion, — such as made Luther intrepid, and Knox fearless, and William of Orange patriotic; the religion of Pym, and Hampden, and Vane; the religion which brought the Pilgrims to Plymouth and the Puritans to Boston; which made Scotland what it is in distinction from Dahomey, and New England what it is in distinction from Mexico, and Westhampton what it is in distinction from Hamburg in South Carolina. To the high endeavor of spreading this conserving, self-governing religion through all the unwashed and turbulent masses of society, and through all the rich and intelligent masses too, every Christian and every patriot is now imperatively summoned, — summoned in self-defence, as well as by higher motives. Rufus Choate said, that the days of our fathers were “the heroic age of New England.” We need now another “heroic age.” The preservation of our country from domestic violence; of our property from communistic confiscation; of our cities and towns from riots and incendiaries; of our persons from assassination; of our remains, after we are gone,

from being exhumed by night and carried away to extort money from our children to recover them, and, if recovered, only perhaps to go round through the same process again, — our safety, I say, from all these perils lies primarily and principally in the *Christianity of the Bible*.

“ Spread it then, and let it circulate,” —

East, West, North, South, — till it envelops, sanctifies, and governs the world; and do it, too, with a firm and joyful trust in the Supreme Ruler, “ whose is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the VICTORY.”

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