

ANNALS

OF THE

AMERICAN PULPIT;

OR

COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES

OF

DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN

OF

VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.

WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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SAMUEL BUELL, D. D.*

1741—1798.

SAMUEL BUELL was born at Coventry, Conn., September 1, 1716. His father, who was a respectable and wealthy farmer, designed him for agricultural pursuits; but, at the age of seventeen, a change occurred in the views and feelings of the son in connection with the subject of religion, which gave a new complexion to his pursuits and prospects for life.

It does not appear that his childhood and youth had been marked by any particular moral delinquencies, or unusual tendencies to evil; but, at the time above referred to, (about the year 1733,) he became deeply impressed with a sense of his sinfulness, and of his absolute dependance for salvation on the sovereign mercy of God through Christ. His views of his own character were so deeply abasing, and his sense of ill desert so pungent, that, for a season, he was upon the borders of despair. But these exercises, having continued several months, at length gave place to a calm and humble trust in the merits of the Redeemer. From this time, the ruling passion of his soul was to serve God in the best manner he could; and if he could gain reasonable evidence that such was the Divine will, to serve Him in the ministry of reconciliation.

He felt, however, that the office of a minister of the Gospel was too important to be approached lightly; and he did not determine to enter upon it without taking much time for deliberation and prayer. For more than two years, he held the question of duty constantly before him, availing himself of the advice of judicious friends, and whatever other helps were within his reach, to enable him to form a conclusion that he could justify to his conscience. The result was a determination to spend his days in preaching the Gospel; and, with a view to this, he at length set about his preparation for entering College.

After devoting a little more than a year to his preparatory course, he entered Yale College in 1737. Notwithstanding the multiplied temptations incident to college life, he seems to have lived continually in the fear of God, and, for the most part, in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. From some written memoranda of his experience at that time, which have been preserved, it would appear that, sometimes, for months together, he had an uninterrupted and most delightful sense of the presence and grace of God. Here he formed an intimate acquaintance with that devoted Christian, and afterwards eminent missionary, David Brainerd;—an acquaintance which was mutually and gratefully cherished, till Brainerd was taken to his reward. Mr. Buell's application to his studies, while in College, was most exemplary,—as was evinced by his highly respectable improvement in the various branches of study. He was graduated in September, 1741.

It had been his intention, from the commencement of his literary course, to pass several years, before entering the ministry, under the theological instruction of Jonathan Edwards, at Northampton; but, in consequence of the peculiar state of things which existed at the time of his leaving Col-

* His Anniversary, Eucharistical, and Half Century Sermon.—Daggett's Fnn. Serm.—Conn. Evang. Mag., II.—Narrative of the remarkable Revival of religion.—Prime's Hist. L. I.—Thompson's do.

lege, involving a pressing demand for ministerial labour, he determined to apply immediately for license to preach. This peculiar state of things was nothing less than the extensive revival which prevailed at that time in various parts of the country, in which Whitefield had so prominent an agency. No doubt Mr. Buell had devoted himself much to theological reading, and especially to the study of the Scriptures, while he was in College; but, after all, he must have entered on his work with very imperfect qualifications, as he was licensed to preach, by the New Haven Association, within about a month from the time he was graduated.

Mr. Buell's ardent temperament, acting under the influence of an earnest piety, rendered him at once much at home in the scenes in which he was called to mingle. His first efforts in the pulpit showed that his whole heart was in his work; and they promised nothing which was not realized in his whole subsequent life. Whatever may have been the defects of his sermons, growing out of the want of mature preparation for the ministry, there was a deeply evangelical tone pervading them, and a fervour and impressiveness in the manner in which they were delivered, that rendered him at once one of the popular preachers of the day. Shortly after he was licensed, he journeyed to Northampton, preaching frequently and very effectively on the way. Here he spent several weeks,—with what acceptance, and with what effect, may be learned from the following extract of a letter from Mr. Edwards, to the Rev. Thomas Prince of Boston, dated Northampton, December, 1742:—

“About the beginning of February, 1741—42, Mr. Buell came to this town, I being then absent from home, and continued so till about a fortnight after. Mr. Buell preached from day to day, almost every day, in the meeting house, (I having left to him the free liberty of my pulpit, hearing of his designed visit before I went from home.) and spent almost the whole time in religious exercises with the people, either in public or private,—the people continually thronging him. There were very extraordinary effects of Mr. Buell's labours; the people were exceedingly moved, crying out in great numbers in the meeting house, and great part of the congregation commonly staying in the house of God for hours after the public service. Many also were exceedingly moved in private meetings where Mr. Buell was; and almost the whole town seemed to be in a great and continual commotion, day and night; and there was indeed a very great revival of religion. When I came home, I found the town in very extraordinary circumstances,—such, in some respects, as I never saw it in before. Mr. Buell continued here a fortnight or three weeks, after I returned, there being still great appearances attending his labours.”

One may form some idea of the usual effect of his preaching from the following entry in his diary, made some time after this, in reference to one of his sermons:—

“The first time I ever preached to an assembly, where tears of affection under the word were not to be seen; and almost the first, when the Lord was not manifestly present with the people.”

After having spent about a year in visiting different parts of New England, he was ordained in 1743, by an ecclesiastical council, as an evangelist, and in this capacity continued to prosecute his labours in various places, until he was obliged temporarily to suspend them on account of enfeebled health. It is due to his memory to say that, unlike some other evangelists, both of early and later times, he was always cheerfully subject to the will of the pastors in whose congregations he laboured; and while he was earnestly engaged in the promotion of what he fully believed to be a genuine revival of religion, he utterly disapproved of the rash and fanatical measures by which some of its friends attempted to sustain it.

The illness by which his labours were now interrupted, proved a somewhat serious one; and, for a considerable time, both he and his friends believed that his course was nearly finished. During this period of trial, his spiritual exercises were of the most satisfactory kind; and he was accustomed afterwards to recur to this stage of his Christian experience, as the ground of a subsequently increased confidence in the genuineness of his religious character. It pleased God graciously to interpose for his deliverance from expected death, and, after being taken off from his labours for the greater part of a year, he was permitted to return to them with renovated health, and to continue them with little interruption for more than half a century.

It was a somewhat noticeable providence that directed Mr. Buell to the field of labour which he was destined ultimately to occupy. The church at East Hampton, L. I., owing to the infirmities of their pastor, the Rev. Mr. Hunting,* had, for some time, been wishing to call to their service some young man, but had become divided by their ineffectual attempts to accomplish their purpose. A majority, however, at length agreed upon a candidate; and they went so far as to convoke an ecclesiastical council for the purpose of ordaining him. But, when the council convened, they found so formidable an opposition, that they did not feel justified in proceeding to the ordination. Many of the people complained of their decision, for this among other reasons,—that they could not afford to incur the additional expense of looking after another minister;—but to this objection it was answered by Mr. (afterwards President) Burr, and some other members of the council from New Jersey,—that they should be at no additional expense in the matter, as they would themselves undertake to furnish them a minister who should be acceptable. A short time after this, Mr. Buell, having set out on a preaching tour to the South, stopped at Newark, where he met Mr. Burr, who persuaded him to direct his course to East Hampton, and gave him an introduction to that vacant church. He had preached to them but a few Sabbaths, before they gave him a unanimous call, and on the 19th of September, 1746, they had the happiness of seeing him regularly installed as their pastor. The Sermon on the occasion was preached by Jonathan Edwards from Isaiah lxii. 4, 5, and was published.

Notwithstanding the great success which had attended Mr. Buell's early labours, he was himself quite aware that his intellectual preparation for his work had been too superficial; and was glad to avail himself of the opportunity furnished by a more settled mode of life, to engage more vigorously and systematically in the appropriate studies of a minister. Accordingly, he became at once a diligent student; and his profiting quickly appeared

* NATHANIEL HUNTING was a son of John and Elizabeth (Payne) Hunting, and a grandson of John Hunting who came from England in September, 1638, and settled at Dedham, Mass., where he died April 12, 1682. He (Nathaniel) was born at Dedham; November 15, 1675; was graduated at Harvard College in 1693; began to preach at East Hampton in September, 1696; was installed pastor of that church, September 13, 1699; was dismissed at his own request, on the settlement of his successor, September 19, 1746; and died September 21, 1753, in his seventy-eighth year. He was friendly to the great revival, but because he opposed the irregularities that attended it, he was unjustly charged with hostility to the revival itself. Dr. Beecher in his History of East Hampton, says,—“Mr. Hunting was a man of strong and distinguishing mind—firm and independent without rashness and obstinacy; an hard student, an accurate scholar, and of extensive theological reading.” He was married to Mary Green, and had ten children,—six sons who reached maturity—two of whom, *Nathaniel* and *Jonathan* entered the ministry, but were obliged to desist from preaching on account of ill health. The former was graduated at Harvard College in 1722, and died in 1770; the latter was graduated at Yale College in 1735, and died in 1750.

unto all. As a proof of the uniformity of his application, it is noted in his diary, at the close of a number of the first years of his ministry,—“This year have written all my sermons, and have preached them without notes.”

But, though he was careful to stir up the gift that was in him by a due degree of intellectual culture, his favourite maxim was “usefulness is life;” and his acquisitions were always turned to the best practical account. He could never content himself in his study, when he saw that there was a special demand for active labour in his congregation. Besides the stated services of the Sabbath, he preached once or twice in different parts of his parish during the week, and in seasons of special attention to religion, much more frequently. His sermons are represented as having often been of extraordinary length, insomuch that, not unfrequently, he found it difficult to detain his whole audience to the close of the service.

There are some amusing traditions in respect to the manner in which he sometimes contrived to prevent his hearers from leaving the church before the sermon was over. The two following I received from Dr. Miller. On one occasion, after preaching nearly two hours,—as long as he could feel secure of the presence of all his hearers,—he remarked that he had done preaching to sinners, and they were at liberty to go—the rest of his discourse would be addressed to good people. A gentleman, who once went to hear him, stated that, when the hour glass was nearly ready to be turned a second time from the commencement of his sermon, he said,—(much to the relief of the person who related it,) “*Once more*”—after going on some eight or ten minutes longer, he said—“*To conclude*”—and after another about equal interval, he said—“*Lastly:*” the gentleman added that he expected every moment to hear him say—“*Everlastingly.*”

The most striking characteristics of his preaching through life were solemnity and fervour; and one great secret of his power lay in the fact that he made his hearers feel that every word he uttered came from his inmost soul. His sermons were rich in scriptural instruction; but they were especially distinguished for the vigorous grasp with which they laid hold of the conscience. As a theologian he belonged to the same school with Edwards and Bellamy, and the former particularly he regarded as having spoken and written with almost superhuman wisdom.

As might be expected of a man so distinguished for his piety, he attached the highest importance to the efficacy of prayer; and, while his own prayers always showed that he was under the influence of a baptism of the Holy Ghost, he laboured earnestly to infuse the same spirit into the hearts of his people. It was part of the economy of his religious life to acknowledge God’s hand in every thing. In a sermon preached upon the death of his first wife, (but not published,) after alluding to the sad changes which had occurred in his family, he says,—“I hope your candour will not deem it ostentation for me to add that my comforts were received with prayer, praise, and the joy of trembling, and have been parted with, (however nature might oppose,) with prayer, submission, and, at last, praise.”

His success as a minister was fully answerable to his zeal and fidelity. He was privileged, at three different periods, to witness a remarkable attention to religion in his congregation. The first revival which occurred in 1764, was far the most extensive and powerful: ninety-nine were added to the church at one time, and many others subsequently, as the fruits of the same work. A similar state of things existed in 1785, and in 1791; and,

at various other periods, his congregation was pervaded, in a greater or less degree, by an awakening and quickening influence. The remoter effect of these several revivals was to promote the credit of religion, and to increase the stability and extend the influence of the church.

At no period of his ministry was Mr. Buell's situation at once so trying and so responsible as during the Revolutionary war. The taking possession of the Island by the British occasioned the utmost consternation among the inhabitants, and not a small portion of them fled for safety. But this excellent man remained firm and constant at his post, resolved that nothing but death should remove him from his field of labour. By his uniform urbanity, discretion, and conscientiousness, he acquired no inconsiderable influence with some of the British officers, which he was enabled to turn to good account for the interests of the town and the neighbourhood. In some cases, his life was in imminent danger; but every one saw that he counted not his life dear to him, if, in the discharge of his duty as a minister of Christ, he were called to surrender it.

His usefulness was far from being confined within the limits of his own congregation. Of the Presbytery to which he belonged he was an active and highly influential member; and, even in his old age, he was uniformly punctual in his attendance upon its meetings. His sound judgment and incorruptible integrity gave great value to his opinions and counsels. He was extensively known, not only by his general influence but by his writings, and particularly by a Narrative of the great revival of religion which occurred among his people in 1764. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Dartmouth College in 1791.

Dr. Buell was intent on promoting not only the spiritual but the intellectual interests of his people. A few years before his death, he was instrumental of establishing, at East Hampton, Clinton Academy,—an institution over which he exercised a parental supervision as long as he lived, and which has been, and still continues, a great public blessing. In this Academy he was accustomed to deliver a lecture, as long as his strength was adequate to the effort, once a week. It is still regarded in that neighbourhood with no small reverence, as a monument of his public spirit and philanthropy.

As he possessed great natural cheerfulness and vivacity, he was a most agreeable companion, and the young as well as the old were always glad to be in his society. He had an inexhaustible fund of anecdote, which, however, he dealt out with great discretion, and never at the expense of diminishing his own dignity, or forfeiting the respect of others. In his domestic relations, he was an example of whatever is tender, amiable and attractive. He was distinguished for his hospitality, and his visitors were sure to meet with a cordial and joyous welcome.

Dr. Buell was married three times. His first wife was Jerusha, daughter of the Rev. Joseph Meacham of Coventry, Conn., with whom he lived about twelve years. His second was Mary, daughter of Elisha Mulford of East Hampton, with whom he lived twenty-two years. And his third was Mary, daughter of Jeremiah Miller of East Hampton, whom he married but a short time before his death, and who survived him about forty years. He had ten children—only two of whom survived him.

Dr. Buell was distinguished for his patience and fortitude in suffering; and it was no common degree of suffering, especially in the way of domestic bereavement, that was allotted to him. During the time that he was the

head of a family, no less than fourteen deaths occurred in his house; eight of which were of his children. But, in times of the deepest sorrow, he stayed himself upon God the Comforter; and no personal affliction was ever suffered to interfere with the discharge of his public duties. He was accustomed to avail himself, in the pulpit, of these sad events, as furnishing matter of instruction and admonition to his people; and two of his sermons, preached on these occasions,—one after the death of a son, the other after the death of a daughter,—were published, and still remain to testify to the strength of his parental sensibility and of his religious affections.

His faculties, both physical and intellectual, retained their vigour, in an uncommon degree, to the last of his days;—a blessing for which he was no doubt much indebted to his rigid observance of the rules of temperance. On the day that completed his eightieth year, he rode fourteen miles, preached, and returned home in the evening. His last illness was short, and but a single Sabbath passed, after he left his pulpit, before he was in Heaven. But he had no painful misgivings,—not a chill of apprehension, in the prospect of encountering the king of terrors. He knew in whom he had believed, and felt assured that his Redeemer would keep what he had committed to Him against the day of his appearing. He died on the 19th of July, 1798. The following extract from the Sermon preached at his Funeral by the Rev. Herman Daggett, and afterwards published, will show more particularly what were his exercises in the immediate prospect of his departure:—

“He said that his mind was in perfect peace, and seemed never to have enjoyed a more triumphant faith. He appeared to have impressions upon his mind concerning the glory of the Church, as hastening on, which he wished to communicate, but could not for want of strength. He desired also to speak much to those about him upon the subject of having an interest in Christ, the importance of which, as it then appeared to him, he said, was unutterable. He had no desire to recover, but to depart and be with Christ. He viewed himself, he said, as now passing Jordan’s flood, and within a step, as it were, of the promised land, and the thought of returning again into the wilderness was painful to him. When asked, at one time, concerning the state of his mind, he requested his friends, in order to obtain it, to read the seventeenth chapter of John, repeating several times the twenty-fourth verse—‘Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me.’ Towards the last, he observed that he felt all earthly connections to be dissolved; and his soul appeared to be drawn with such strength and pleasure to the glorious world of light, that he could not bear to be interrupted by the assiduities of his friends, who were seeking to administer to his perishing dust, frequently putting them aside with one hand, whilst the other was raised to Heaven, where his eyes and his soul were fixed. And in this happy frame he continued, till the progress of his disorder wholly deprived him of the power of speech.”

The following is a list of Dr. Buell’s publications:—A Sermon preached at Brookhaven, at the ordination of Mr. Benjamin Tallmadge, 1754. A Sermon occasioned by the decease of Mrs. Esther Darbe, 1757. A Sermon preached at East Hampton at the ordination of Mr. Sampson Occum, a missionary among the Indians, 1759. A Sermon occasioned by the lamented death of the Rev. Mr. Charles Jeffrey Smith, 1770. A spiritual knowledge of God comprehensive of all good and blessedness: A Sermon preached at Enfield, 1771. A Sermon occasioned by the death of his daughter, Mrs. Jerusha Conkling, 1782. A Sermon occasioned by the death of his only son, 1787. A Sermon delivered at the ordination of the Rev. Aaron Woolworth, to the pastoral charge of the church in Bridgehampton, 1787. An Anniversary, Eucharistical, and Half-century Sermon, delivered at East Hampton, 1792. A Sermon delivered immediately after

the funeral of Samuel Buell Woolworth, 1794. A Sermon preached at the ordination of Joseph Hazard* at Southold, 1797.

FROM THE REV. HENRY DAVIS, D. D.
PRESIDENT OF MIDDLEBURY AND HAMILTON COLLEGES.

CLINTON, N. Y., July 12, 1848.

Rev. and dear Sir: I cheerfully comply with your request to furnish you, as far as my very infirm health will admit, my reminiscences of the late Dr. Samuel Buell. He was pastor of the church in East Hampton, my native place, at the time of my birth. By him I was baptized; and though absent subsequently for a number of years, yet, when still a youth, I returned, and became one of his parishioners. My recollections of him, and of many scenes that I witnessed during his ministry, have scarcely begun to fade, even after the lapse of more than half a century.

Some of the most interesting events of Dr. Buell's ministry were anterior to my recollection, and in connection with the Revolutionary war. The struggle for independence had but recently commenced, when Long Island fell into the possession of the British, and so it remained till its termination. Many families fled for refuge to the Continent; and among them several from East Hampton, who were the Doctor's most cordial and able supporters. Such, at this time, was his reputation, that there was scarcely a vacant church in New England, of his denomination, but would gladly have opened its doors to him. He could not but foresee the dangers and sufferings which awaited him and his people who remained behind, but still he deemed it his bounden duty to stay at his post. During the entire period of the war, he continued to exercise his ministry among them,—not only preaching to them regularly on the Sabbath, but doing his utmost to alleviate their sufferings, and guard them against the multiplied temptations to which their circumstances necessarily exposed them. The situation of East Hampton was somewhat peculiar: it was not only the constant residence of a portion of the British land forces, but a large squadron of the navy was, during a considerable part of the time, stationed in Gardiner's Bay, which is but a short distance from the North shore of that town. This rendered the intercourse of the British with the inhabitants constant and unavoidable, and subjected the latter to very serious evils. But though the Doctor took no pains to conceal from the enemy his entire sympathy with the Colonies in their struggle, he was greatly respected by the officers for his gentlemanly deportment and general intelligence; and, while they actually sought his society, he was always ready to meet them with every suitable expression of good will. Some anecdotes are told that strikingly illustrate the high estimation in which he was held by them, as well as the fearlessness of his spirit and the quickness of his wit. The Commander-in-chief of the land forces remarked to him that he had commanded some of his farmers to appear on a certain day, (I believe on the Sabbath,) with their teams, at Southampton, twelve miles distant. "So I have understood," said the Doctor; "but I have countermanded your orders;" and, in consequence of this countermand, the project was relinquished. A young British officer, recently arrived, rode to his door and said, "I wish to see Mr. Buell." The Doctor soon appeared. "Are you Mr. Buell?"—was the question. "My name is Buell, Sir," "Then," said the officer, bowing with great respect,—“I have seen the god of East Hampton.” On one occasion he was invited by the officers to accompany them on a deer-hunt. The invitation was accepted. But the Doctor, perceiving that one of the company was dissatisfied on account of some delay, at the commencement of the excursion, pleasantly asked him—“And what portion of his majesty's troops, Sir, have you the honour to command?”

* JOSEPH HAZARD was ordained and installed the seventh minister of Southold, June 7, 1797; was dismissed in April, 1806; and died at Brooklyn, L. I., in 1817.

“A legion of devils direct from hell,” was the answer. The Doctor, assuming an attitude of profound respect, replied, “Then I presume, Sir, I have the honour of addressing Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.” The officer, as if about to revenge what he considered an insult, drew his sword. But, at the smile and nod of his superior, he instantly sheathed it again. Before the excursion was ended, however, he became greatly interested in the Doctor, and it was evident that whatever unpleasant impression the occurrence had occasioned, was entirely removed. There can be no doubt that Dr. Buell possessed, in an extraordinary degree, the qualities, both natural and acquired, that were fitted to give him influence in the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, during this stormy period; and it may reasonably be doubted whether his usefulness as a minister was, on the whole, ever greater, during a period of equal length.

In the year 1785, and not long after my return to East Hampton, it was my privilege to witness a powerful revival of religion under Dr. Buell’s ministry. Within six or eight months, more than one hundred, who were hopeful subjects of the work, made a public profession of religion. Many more were thought by some to give evidence of having experienced a radical change, and were not entirely without hope for themselves. But, in the judgment of the pastor, the prosperity and efficiency of a church are not in exact proportion to its numbers; and he deemed it of vital importance that there should be much opportunity for reflection and self-communion, before so important a step should be taken as coming into the visible Church. On this subject, as indeed on every other in connection with his ministry, he uniformly observed the most exemplary caution. His whole course, not only during that revival, but throughout his subsequent ministry, impressed me deeply with the conviction that he was eminently a man of God, and devoted unreservedly to his service. His church had large experience of his wisdom and faithfulness. They walked together in the love and fellowship of the Gospel, and were seldom called to the painful duty of disciplining offenders.

In his stature the Doctor was of the medium height. His frame was somewhat slender, but possessed great strength and elasticity. He was unusually quick in all his movements. In his natural temper he was ardent, yet amiable, frank, and uncommonly cheerful. Few men were more discreet and circumspect: he perceived intuitively what was fitting on every occasion, and in his intercourse with men of all classes and conditions. I cannot call to mind that, in relation to pecuniary or other secular concerns, there was ever the least difficulty or misunderstanding between him and any one of his parishioners, or that he was ever complained of by any for neglecting them, or for bestowing too much attention upon others, or for being too much or too little occupied in his worldly concerns. He possessed great power of voice as well as physical vigour, and was favoured with uniformly excellent health. His sermons were never less than an hour, and not unfrequently from an hour and a half to two hours, in length. They were, for the most part, unwritten, and were delivered without notes, and with great force and animation. Yet he never complained of being fatigued by speaking, or, in any other way, as far as I know, gave the least indication of it. He was much in the habit of taking out his watch, and would often remark, “Brethren, time fails me,” and excuse himself for not saying all on the subject that he had intended. He remarked to me, not long before his death, that, for a period of fifty years, he had not been prevented by ill health from preaching on a single Sabbath; and added that he had preached ten thousand times—a greater number he presumed than any other man in America.

In his intellectual habits he was remarkable for industry; and he was especially diligent in the discharge of all his professional duties. He studied the subjects of his discourses with great care, and I doubt not bestowed more time upon them than many clergymen do who write out every word. He had, for

those times, an extensive and valuable library; and few men used their books more thoroughly or to better purpose. He was conversant, in no small degree, with the writings of the early fathers, and especially was a close student of Church History. From the former he was in the habit of quoting much in his public discourses. He once told me that he had devoted about twelve of the best years of his ministry to the study of the prophecies, and had prepared an extended treatise on the subject for the press; but he added, "as I was about putting my manuscript into the hands of the printer, Bishop Newton's work on the same subject appeared, and finding his plan and general views to coincide with my own, I was induced to abandon the idea of publishing what I had prepared."

Though social and hospitable in his feelings, and courteous and affable in his manners, he seldom visited his people, and had but little personal intercourse with them, except in seasons of revival. In his study, however, he always welcomed those who wished for religious instruction; and, in cases of sickness, he was ever at hand to administer needed counsel and consolation.

In spending the most of his time in his study, preparing for the services of the sanctuary, he thought he could do most to accomplish the great ends of his ministry. He was regarded as eminently a man of prayer. The intimate fellow-labourer with Edwards, Whitefield, and Brainerd, he imbibed a large measure of their spirit. He had little action in the pulpit, and yet he preached with great power and directness, and kept back nothing which he believed to be the counsel of God. His usual services in the church were two sermons on the Sabbath. He preached much, however, during the week, in the three neighbouring villages within the town, and spent no little time in regular catechetical instruction. But he seldom preached himself, or attended any religious meeting in the evening, except when there was an unusual attention to religion. His people, however, were in the habit of holding, regularly, meetings for prayer and religious conference, and they were favoured with much preaching in the church besides the sermons on the Sabbath. Few ministers of his day, I imagine, were visited by so many of his brethren from abroad, either from curiosity or other motives, as Dr. Buell. His visitors were principally from New England. To his clerical brethren he always gave a most cordial welcome; but one or more sermons to his people was the tax which each one had to pay for his hospitable reception. From this tax no minister, of regular standing, and of sufficient strength to preach, was exempt. But there was this amusing difference—Baptists and Methodists must address his people from the deacons' seat, while those of his own denomination only were admitted to the pulpit—the "sanctum sanctorum," as he was wont to call it. The ringing of the bell, at one or two o'clock in the afternoon, or a little before sunset, was the signal that a minister was in town, and that public worship would commence in about one hour; and in due season a respectable audience was always collected. He was once visited by two licentiates of the names of Cramm and More. Cramm preached in the afternoon. At the close of the exercises, the Doctor informed the congregation that there would be preaching in the evening. He then turned to the young men in the pulpit, and said, with his characteristic pleasantry, though certainly with questionable propriety,—“My people have been *Cramm'd* but they want *More*.”

He was distinguished for self-control; seldom, if ever, thrown off his balance, on occasions which furnished strong ground for provocation, and seemed to invite to high excitement. Even in seasons of deep affliction, he was enabled to sustain himself with wonderful composure, not merely from natural self-command, but from the perfect confidence which he felt in the rectitude of the Divine administration. A striking illustration of this occurred in connection with the death of his only son,—a youth of uncommon promise, and greatly beloved, who died of the small-pox at the age of sixteen or seventeen. Though he was

but a short distance from the town, the Doctor was not able to be with him during his sickness, or at his death. The Rev. Mr. Woolworth of Bridgehampton, (subsequently Dr. Woolworth, and son-in-law of Dr. Buell,) was present to preach at the funeral. After the remains were interred by the few who could attend to the painful duty without exposure, the people collected for worship.—The Doctor arose, and, with uplifted hands,—a gesture very common with him,—and eyes directed to Heaven, broke the profound silence of the great congregation in the language of Job—“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand in the latter day on the earth.” With deep emotion, but perfect self-command, he addressed the audience for fifteen or twenty minutes. The effect cannot be described: his own were the only tearless eyes in the assembly.

Dr. Buell once remarked to me that there was not, to his knowledge, a single individual in the town, professing to be of any other denomination than the Presbyterian. It would have been strange indeed, considering the great age to which he lived, had he experienced no abatement of his influence before his death. At my last interview with him,—I believe when he was eighty-two or three,—he remarked, alluding to the change in the times,—“There was a time when, if a question arose touching the boundary between this town and Southampton, I could go and tell them where I thought it ought to be, and the matter was settled; but,” he added, not without some degree of feeling, “it is not so now.”

Without endorsing the opinion entertained of him by President Stiles, who remarked to a young gentleman, after reading a letter which he had handed him from Dr. Buell, “This man has done more good than any other man that has ever stood on this Continent,”—I think it cannot be doubted that his character and labours present many striking points of interest, and that he was, on the whole, among the most remarkable and useful men of his generation. If he may not be regarded as, in all respects, a proper and safe model for ministers of the present day, yet they may find much in his history that furnishes admonition and encouragement to unwearied diligence and fidelity in the performance of their duties.

I remain, my dear Sir,

With unfeigned affection and respect,

Your friend and brother,

HENRY DAVIS.

FROM THE HON. ALFRED CONKLING,

JUDGE OF THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND AMBASSADOR TO MEXICO.

MELROSE, near Auburn, September 6, 1848.

Rev. and dear Sir: In acceding to your request, some months ago, that I would communicate to you my recollections of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Buell, who, for more than half a century, was the sole minister of the Gospel in my native town, I was not altogether unaware that I was acting with more complaisance than prudence. You will, I am sure, do me the justice to remember, however, that I took special care to warn you against indulging any other than very moderate expectations touching the fulfilment of my promise. But, along with my misgivings, I did, I confess, entertain the hope that when I came, as I have this morning for the first time done, to tax my memory on the subject, I should be somewhat more successful than my letter will show me to have been, in recalling something concerning this remarkable man, which it might interest you to know. The result, nevertheless, with regard to my own personal reminiscences, has been exactly what I ought to have foreseen it would be; for, at the time of his death, I was less than nine years old, and the residence of my parents

was three miles from his, and from the church where he officiated. I do not remember, therefore, ever to have heard him preach more than two or three times. But I heard much of him, both before and after his decease, especially from my mother, who regarded him, while he was living, with the liveliest sentiments of esteem and veneration, and cherished his memory with affectionate and reverential regard. I have heard her speak also still more frequently and affectionately of his deceased daughter, *Jerusha*, whose rare intellectual and moral endowments and glowing piety justly entitle her name to be associated with that of her distinguished father. She was, at the time of her death, the wife of one of my paternal uncles, and I have in my possession an affectionate but apparently a very impartial tribute to her memory, entitled "Memoirs of the life and death of Mrs. Jerusha Conkling," written by her father. Judging from all I have heard and read of her, she seems indeed to have been one of the very noblest specimens of female character.

I remember Dr. Buell only as a venerable looking old man, wearing a large, remarkably neat white wig, rather small of stature and of slight frame, but of dignified mien and serene aspect. The portraits I have seen of him are expressive of great firmness and decision; and he was unquestionably a man of uncommon energy and boldness as well as of uncommon sagacity. I have often heard it related of him that while, during the Revolutionary war, Long Island was in possession of the British forces, he was unwearied and eminently successful in efforts to protect the inhabitants against those oppressive exactions and injuries of every sort, to which their situation exposed them. He was, at that time, upwards of sixty years old; and his ability to render these important services to the inhabitants of that part of the Island, (where a considerable body of troops were long stationed,) arose chiefly from the great respect and esteem in which, though an unflinching Whig, he was held by the better class of the British officers. His sprightliness, wit, and gentlemanly manners, are said to have made him a favourite with them, notwithstanding the independence of his spirit, and his firm adherence to his political as well as religious principles. I have heard my father speak with lively interest of a conversation of a religious cast at which he was present in a village church-yard, at a funeral, between Dr. Buell and an English officer, who, I am nearly certain, was the celebrated Major Andre, whose romantic character and unhappy fate awakened so painful a sympathy on both sides of the Atlantic. Dr. Buell seems indeed to have been hardly less attentive to the temporal than to the spiritual welfare of his people. He may, with unusual propriety, be said to have been a father to them; and the patriarchal character of his intercourse shows that he regarded himself in that light.

Soon after the conversation I had the pleasure of having with you respecting Dr. Buell, meeting my friend Sylvanus Miller, Esq., also a native of East Hampton, I made some inquiries of him concerning the Doctor. Among other things, he mentioned an incident which occurred at the time of the removal of his father from that town. Mr. Miller was then, as I think he told me, eleven years old. After all the arrangements for the removal had been completed, and the family were about to depart, Dr. Buell came to take a final leave of them; and, after bidding adieu to the senior members, he caused my informant and his little brother to kneel down before him, and laying his hands upon their heads, he "blessed" them. That blessing must have sunk deep into the young heart of my old friend, unless I misinterpreted the visible emotion with which, after the lapse of seventy years, he narrated the incident; and it may not have been without its fruits, in enhancing the moral beauty of his blameless and highly useful life. He related also several other anecdotes of Dr. Buell, illustrative of the extraordinary versatility of his talents, of his enterprising spirit, and of the healthful and buoyant tone of his mind.

It was these qualities, added to his ardent piety, that inspired his people with the almost unbounded confidence they appear to have reposed in him, and made him what he undoubtedly was in his day and generation,—a distinguished public benefactor.

Believe me, dear Sir,

With high respect and regard,

Faithfully yours,

A. CONKLING.

DAVID BRAINERD.*

1742—1747.

DAVID BRAINERD was born at Haddam, Conn., April 20, 1718. His father was Hezekiah Brainerd, a man of considerable note in the Colony. His mother was a daughter of the Rev. Jeremiah Hobart, who, in the latter part of his life, was a settled minister in Brainerd's native place.

While he was quite a child, he was the subject of strong religious impressions, and was accustomed to meet with several others of about his own age, for purposes of devotion and Christian improvement. But, though he evidently imagined himself, at the time, the subject of a radical spiritual change, he was subsequently convinced that this was but a delusive experience. And this conviction was accompanied with the most humbling sense of his own sinfulness, and of the justice and holiness of God. After a protracted season of mental agony, which he describes as arising from inward resistance to the terms of the Gospel, he found peace and joy in believing. As he was walking in a retired place, on a summer evening, in 1739, for purposes of serious meditation, fully convinced of his absolute ruin and entire dependance on God's grace, a great and wonderful change came over his mind, which he considered as marking, at least, the first perceptible operation of the renovated nature. His views of the character of God, of the character and mediation of Christ, and of the office of the Holy Spirit, became clear, elevating and rapturous; he breathed a new atmosphere; he lived for new objects; in every action that he performed he desired to hide himself, that God might be all in all.

In September, 1739, shortly after this stage of his experience, he was admitted a member of Yale College. The extravagance which prevailed in connection with the great revival of that period, had the effect, as was to be expected, of driving a portion of the religious community to the opposite extreme; and Yale College, with President Clap at its head, seems to have been thrown into somewhat of an opposing attitude. Hence the religious atmosphere about the College was cold; and the government even went so far as to enact severe penalties against those students who should be heard of at a "New-Light" meeting. Brainerd, from the natural fervour of his spirit, as well as from his deep sense of the importance of eternal things, was inclined to sympathize with the more zealous party, and looked upon this procedure of the government as an unreasonable and tyrannical infringement.

* Brainerd's Journal.—Edwards' Fun. Sermon.—Life by Edwards.—Do., by S. E. Dwight.—Do., by W. B. O. Peabody.—Assemb. Miss. Mag. II.—Bacon's Historical Discourses.