

A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

NEWBURYPORT, MASS., NOVEMBER 28, 1856.

ON OCCASION OF THE

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUILDING

OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

BY THE PASTOR,

delivered
REV. A. G. VERMILYE.



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NEWBURYPORT, DEC. 3, 1856.

REV. A. G. VERMILYE :—Dear Sir :

The interesting and very acceptable discourse delivered by you at the late Centennial re-dedication of the First Presbyterian Church, combines so much of its early and important history, that in behalf of the Church and Society, we would respectfully request a copy for publication.

Very truly, your obedient servants,

ISAAC H. BOARDMAN,
BENJAMIN HARROD,
WILLIAM PRITCHARD,
JOHN N. CUSHING,
WILLIAM GRAVES,

P R E F A C E.

In 1826 Rev. S. P. Williams published an excellent historical discourse upon this church, with such material as he had. At the centennial to commemorate the organization of the *church* in 1846, Rev. Mr. Stearns, my predecessor, carefully digested and published the history of that act ; tracing the steps minutely along to this point, but passing rapidly over the subsequent history. The present discourse was delivered at the centennial re-dedication of the house of worship ; which has been somewhat modernized and repaired throughout, to begin another century. In some portions the discourse, as a history, is necessarily interlinear and supplementary ; with only such repetitions upon my predecessors, as was required to carry along the narrative.

Sometimes the authorities are given, sometimes the very language used ; and the statements have been verified throughout, so far as was possible. To JOSHUA COFFIN, Esq., Town Clerk of Newbury, and author of "History of Newburyport," I am particularly indebted for many manuscripts and much information. My thanks are due, also, to others, for needful items.

DISCOURSE.

WHO IS LEFT AMONG YOU THAT SAW THIS HOUSE IN HER FIRST GLORY ?” [HAGGAI, 2 : 3.

Xerxes wept, we are told, as he looked down from the hill of Abydos, to think that in one hundred years, of all his vast army, not one would be alive. Over this church the century has rolled. From the summit of these years, to which time has brought us, we look down the vale through which they travelled, and ask, “the fathers where are they ?” If all had been godly, we need not weep to think they are gone ; but many, who can doubt it, went from these seats, even from under the sound of Whitefield’s voice, whose tongue dropped manna which they gathered not, to the place of weeping.

“Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory ?” Mrs. Lucy Pearson, (of Pearson’s Mills,) died four years since,* aged 98, and was the oldest in the parish. She had seen and heard Whitefield ; but now there is none, to my knowledge, who remembers Parsons. Of that generation not one has come down to us. Time’s unwearying scythe has swept the last lingerer into eternity. The dead of this parish are already

*There were then five generations under one roof, and twenty-five years before there were five.

a multitude. More than eleven hundred died during the twenty-six years of Dr. Dana's ministry alone ; and in all, probably, over four thousand have passed away—twice as many as the *town* contained when this church was built. But it is to revive the past, that we have met to-day. "The glory of children are their fathers;" and to recall the "times that went over" them, may be alike pleasant and instructive. Why is "Old Mortality" such a favorite character, as we read of him, visiting the grave-yards of many an old kirk ; with pious care repairing the monuments, rubbing off the moss, and cutting anew the inscriptions of the covenanters and other venerable dead ? 'Tis a strong feeling of our nature, implanted for our good.

This church has a noble ancestry, whose memory we would "not willingly let die." In gathering material for some account of them and their times, I find myself in part forestalled by two preceding histories ; but, without enlarging upon matters already well handled, I may, perhaps, add something to the general history. My object is, to give a bird's-eye view of this church, its ministers, struggles, customs, &c., during the last hundred years.

(1.) THE HOUSE.

This house, it is known, was not the first occupied by the congregation. In the incipency of their enterprise, being "a feeble folk," only twelve families, they built a much smaller edifice on High street, near Federal, and remained there about thirteen years. But the place becoming too strait, especially after the great earthquake of November, 18, 1755, which was followed by a revival in the church and an increased public attendance, in 1756, difficult as the times were with them, they erected the present building. The nails, all wrought, were imported from England. Its timbers they took from their

farms ; good white oak, fitted to resist decay and defy the Eastern storms. On the 5th of July they began the raising, and finished the 7th ; “ and not one oath was heard, and nobody hurt.” Rev. John Morehead, of Boston, the leading member of Presbytery, then preached a sermon from II Chronicles, 7 : 12 : “And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.” On the 15th of August, Mr. Parsons preached the first sermon in it, the people sitting on the joiners’ benches. Thenceforward for nearly forty years, a congregation assembled here which was estimated at over two thousand ; the largest, probably, in America. They came from Rowley, Byfield and other adjacent towns ; one member, during Mr. Murray’s ministry, even from Methuen, thirty miles distant. At one time, the people in town waited to see whom this Society supported for office ; for having a majority of the votes, their candidate was sure to be elected. And doubtless, though such an attendance shows the extent and power of the “great awakening,” they needed Whitefield’s warning against the insidious influence of prosperity :—“ When I was here before, he told them, you were a small people in a small house ; but then you had salt. Now I find you in a great house, and everything prosperous ; but *where is your salt ?*”

The “first glory” of this house was certainly not in its architectural finish ; though our pious fathers perhaps thought it, in Scripture phrase, “exceeding magnificent.” As there are few, if any of the kind now left, I will describe it. Immense galleries, containing one hundred pews, besides free seats for strangers, covered three sides of the building. Opposite, on the long side, (East,) was the pulpit ; under which Whitefield was first buried. In the pulpit, at the end, sat the sexton. Immediately in front below, was the Elders’ seat—a large square pew, elevated three or four steps, with a table. Behind,

and a little below them, sat the Deacons. And over all was the sounding board, hung by rods from the ceiling. An aisle ran from the pulpit, or rather the deacons' seat, to the door opposite ; and one all around in front of the wall pews, which were elevated two steps. One hundred and thirty-eight square pews were ranged upon the floor, with a chair in the centre. The seats were hung on hinges, to be raised during prayer ; and the older people still speak of the noise they made in falling, which, if nervous complaints were as common then as now, must have frightened away the spirit of devotion, and indeed caused many a deprecatory request from the pulpit. Nor was it till 1801 that they thought to list them. They had no stoves till 1819 ; but there was a fire of vigorous, weather-defying piety, and that was better. Of the outside, the old clapboards and small windows have remained to the present. For some years they had no bell ; and Mr. Parsons wrote to England to enquire if some Lord or wealthy gentleman would not furnish one. The steeple was built in 1759.* Such was this house in "her first glory." Its high pulpit, square pews and lofty ceiling, with other peculiarities of the past, are long since gone ; and with the alterations just made, the frame-work of 1756 alone remains. But within these oaken ribs, the same spirit lives, the church is the same.

(2.) FORMATION OF THE CHURCH.

The century preceding the "great awakening" in 1740, was, perhaps, the darkest period in the religious history of our country. This was true of the Presbyterian church. There was, indeed, among the ministry, no open unsoundness in doctrine, nor immorality. But as to the life of godliness, among

*Mr. Samuel Pettengill, ancestor of some of our present members, fell from it during the work and was instantly killed.

both ministers and people, there was a serious and prevalent declension. They retained their confession and creed, but lapsed into a cold formality. In New England things were even worse. Here the early colonists, with the best of motives, had set up what was in effect a church establishment; and its tyranny was sometimes scarcely less than that from which they had fled. Such is human nature. They gave occasion for Blackstone's* remark, that "he left England because of his dislike to the Lord Bishops, but he liked the Lord Brethren no better." Dissenters might freely go elsewhere, but here no man could enjoy civil privileges, unless he was a member of the established Congregational church. Numbers therefore sought its fellowship hypocritically, without piety and from selfish motives. But in time this law disfranchised many of the children of pious parents, who could not conscientiously make a profession of religion; and what to them was even more painful than the loss of civil rights, their children remained unbaptized. Hence the convenient "half-way covenant;" under which baptized parents of sober life, though not themselves communicants, by "owning the covenant" might have their children baptised; who would then participate in "the honors and privileges of church members." Thus the church itself was secularized; the consciences of the impenitent were quieted; many owned the covenant, but of members in full communion, the number was small and diminishing. To remedy this, the doctrine gained currency of admitting unconverted persons to the communion as a means of regeneration. This done, what was to hinder such men from entering the ministry? And in that day it was a position to be coveted, for other reasons than spiritual. It was for life, an office greatly respected, a secure support; for the minister could pledge all the estate, real and personal, within certain boundaries, for the fulfilment of his obligations

*William Blackstone, an Episcopalian, the first settler of Boston.

and contracts. The results are evident. A speculative, unspiritual and unfruitful ministry. The searching, soul-stirring, quickening and peculiar themes of Revelation withheld, questioned, denied ; a slumbering church, whose religion was but "a spectre of the ancient," godless households, depravity and vice. Such, writers of the period tell us, was too widely the condition of things in New England ; and from it Mather in his day predicted those subsequent convulsions, "in which churches would be gathered out of churches." Arminianism and other heresies were rife. Like the virgin daughter of Zion in her captivity, religion "sat in the dust, drooping and disconsolate, at the foot of the palm trees ;" or, like a pilgrim with staff in hand, seemed about to retire altogether from the land of the Puritans.

When churches are asleep and piety over wide regions almost extinct, God sometimes sends peculiar men to revive them ; men adapted to the times and places, men in whom there is such power of reproof, that listening audiences tremble or melt in tears before them. Such a man was Whitefield ; such was Gilbert Tennent. To the preaching of the former, this church owes its origin, during the great revival of 1740. There had been a previous awakening in 1727 ; following the earthquake of that year, which excited general terror in the region. One hundred and forty-one persons united with Mr. Lowell's church, (now the Pleasant street.) A "Monthly Society" was likewise formed, having for its object the reform of irregularities, public and private ; among families and in the town. One man's wife, for instance, was "discoursed" with for disturbing her husband at family prayer. One person was prosecuted for sailing on the Sabbath. Sabbath breaking, profanity and other immoralities and violations of law, were attended to "according as the good and wholesome laws of the province had provided." But though good may have been done, in the way of

suppressing vice and inciting the church to greater diligence, attention was directed, apparently, more to things outward than inward. The work lacked the radical characteristics of the "great awakening." Before the arrival of the first itinerant, however, by whatever cause excited, an unusual religious interest was apparent, at least in Mr. Lowell's church. Forty-four were admitted to its communion in one year.

When Whitefield came, the flame burst forth with before unknown fervor. Every church and every parish around was more or less affected, and in some places to a degree of which the present generation can form but a faint idea. Mr. Lowell for a time favored the work, and his church became a resort for the awakened; Dr. Tappan and Mr. Tucker of the first parish, (Newbury,) not approving the "new scheme." The result was, the addition of one hundred and forty-three to his church, in about eighteen months from the date of Whitefield's arrival. Upon the subsequent divisions in both parishes, which have been carefully reviewed in a previous history, I need not dwell. They issued in the formation of this church. On the 3d of January, 1746, nineteen persons formally withdrew from the first parish, (Newbury,) and organized themselves anew. In February, (26th,) their platform and covenant was signed by twenty-four males, and twenty-two females. The following October, (16th,) the dissentients from the third parish were received into their number. Thus the scattered bands, comprising the most zealous for the revival and its doctrines in both parishes, became henceforth "one fold" under "one shepherd."

In the formation of this, well as that of all the separatist churches founded by Whitefield, there was involved a protest, not alone against the spiritual deadness of the old churches, but also their doctrinal errors. The old Arminianism of the pulpits no longer fed them; it left out of sight, explained away, esteemed absurd or merely speculative, truths which they had

come to see were vital. They regarded it as "a warping off from the pure and important doctrines originally adhered to in the churches ;"* and just so far opposed to Scripture. This view the records abundantly substantiate. In the creed of the church, adopted 1746, they renounced Arminianism on the one hand and Antinomianism on the other, as dangerous to the soul ; and planted themselves upon the Westminster Catechism. In a petition to General Court in 1748, to be set off as a separate parish, they state the difficulty to be "doctrinal points, binding their consciences." Against the ministers of the parishes from which they seceded, at least till opposition and injustice had embittered them, they had no personal objections. They were, indeed, excellent men.† Their charge against Mr. Tucker of the first parish was, that he had denied original sin ; that where Paul says, "who were by *nature* children of wrath," he explained it to mean such by practice or custom ; that he did not enforce the doctrines of justification by Christ's imputed righteousness, nor of efficacious grace ; but rather laid the stress of conversion on the endeavors of mere natural men ;—and that he openly preached and printed against all creeds and confessions, as summaries and standards by which the principles of men might be examined.‡ This church, then, was founded on a doctrinal basis ; as the assertor of a pure Calvinism, and the faith originally received in the New England churches. This faith neither its members nor its first pastor had previously held. They had sat contentedly under different ministrations "in a time of great deadness," and

*Creed of Church.

†Dr. Tucker was considered the champion of Arminianism in this region. Mr. Lowell was undoubtedly a serious, excellent and devoted minister,—although not in zeal and doctrine quite up to the revival sentiment of the day.

‡One of the "New lights" meeting Dr. Tucker, said to him, "Ah, Dr. Tucker, all your good works will never carry you to heaven." "Well, sir," was the reply, "you will never go there without them." So between them, they got both sides of the truth.

[Withington's Sermon.]

would have so continued but for the "great awakening," "after which (they write to Mr. Lowell,) your doctrine grew grievous to us." Mr. Parsons, for the first two years of his ministry at Lyme, Conn., had preached Arminian principles. But it pleased God to carry him through a severe mental conflict, in which his religious views were greatly changed, and his heart, as he ever afterwards believed, created anew in Christ Jesus. "In my natural state, (he writes,) I preached those doctrines which an unsanctified heart could put up with, agreeably to the refined scheme of the Arminians; but afterwards I taught the humbling doctrines of St. Paul, which we commonly call Calvinistic; these being opposite the one to the other." From these circumstances, the church and its pastor were always strong and decided for the truth. It had been to them as "life from the dead." In the second church records at Exeter, is the following:—Voted, to fellowship with no church that is not on the platform of the Westminster Catechism; with a note, inserted at the suggestion of Mr. Parsons. Mr. Murray, his successor, was equally decided in the same views. When Dr. Spring and others were zealously advocating Hopkinsism, he preached three sermons on the doctrine of original sin, "at the importunity of a number of pious and respectable members of the society," and to meet, as he says, "the late extraordinary efforts of those who are zealous for its overthrow." On the same platform, the Bible as "the only rule of faith and practice"—the Westminster Catechism as a faithful synopsis of Bible truth, all the pastors have stood, in a spirit generally unpolemic and catholic, yet firmly adhesive. And should the day unfortunately come, in a degenerate age, when pastor or people shall be "otherwise minded," shall leave their ancient faith, then may it be said, Israel is not what she was "in her first glory." If so, however, may they have the grace to remove the bones of Whitefield and

Parsons from under the pulpit to a more congenial resting place.

An interesting item of history, not generally known in connection with this town, may here be noticed; and for the reason named, I give the narrative in full.

A century previous, viz : in February, 1634, when Archbishop Laud, his willing pupil Charles I, and the malignant Earl of Strafford, were making the lives of God's ministers in Ireland wearisome, a number of them determined to emigrate to New England.* And in this intention Gov. Winthrop's son, being then in England, greatly encouraged them. They resolved, however, first to send a minister and a gentleman to the governor, to try the condition of the country, and to agree for a place to settle in. These were Rev. John Livingstone and William Wallace. But providence did not favor their voyage, and they both returned to port. Livingstone then wrote to the governor, who received the letter in July, 1634; and in September the court assigned them this very spot to establish a Presbyterian colony. The suggestor of the project was Dr. Robert Blair; a name famous among the godly of that day.† In the winter of 1635, having meanwhile received letters from the Governor and Council "full of kind invitations and large promises of good accommodation," and perceiving no appearance of liberty from the bondage of the prelates, the ministers, with a number from the north of Ireland and a few from Scotland, fixedly resolved to complete their design. A ship was built, (Dr. Blair being part owner,) of about 115 tons, and called the "Eagle Wing;" in allusion to that passage in Exodus, "I bare you on *eagles' wings*, and brought you unto myself." After much toil and delay, on the 9th of September, 1636, they loosed from Loch Fergus, "purposing, (if God

*McCrie's life of Blair.

†Grandfather of the poet.

pleased) to pitch their tents in the plantations of New England." In all they numbered about one-hundred and forty ; among whom were Blair and Livingstone, the most eminent ministers of Ireland, and others of note both lay and clerical. The voyage was remarkable. First the master was faint-hearted and put them over to Scotland for cordage ; he also pretended a leak, and grounded the ship. Much of the bread, not being well baked, had to be thrown overboard. When nearing Newfoundland, they "foregathered with a mighty hurricane," which damaged their rigging. "Then fell I sick, (writes Blair) being troubled with a great thirst, so that I could eat nothing but wasted apples." Then they sprung a leak, which gave them seven hundred strokes the half hour, and was at last stopped with wedges of beef ; they lying to, meanwhile, to beat out the storm. In the height of the storm, the rudder broke, and the men gave up for lost ; but Mr. Blair, like another Paul, confidently told them that rather than such a company should perish, the Lord would put wings to their shoulders, and carry them "as on eagles' wings" safe ashore. And now they began to think of returning, all but Mr. Blair. Whereupon they laid it upon him to pray over the matter ; agreeing that if afterwards he continued resolute, they would go forward. But hearing this he immediately fainted in a swoon ; and after lying as dead for awhile, arose and consented to return. Thus, as Mather says, after "meeting with manifold crosses, being half seas through, they gave over their intendments," concluding that it was not the Lord's will they should come to New England. During all this danger, the passengers were mostly cheerful and confident, and never in all their lives. they said, had found the day so short. For in the morning they prayed awhile alone, then in their several societies, then had public prayer in the ship, till dinner ;—then they visited, and had public prayer till supper ; and after that family exercises, and

prayer through most of the night. And God was with them of a truth. There was one family of five, which had crept in privily, for their own by-ends, all but one of whom died. Whilst of the rest, the same number that went in, came out, one child dying and another being born to the same mother. Had this godly company been permitted to arrive, what a blessing to New England, in a day of lamentable declension, they might have been. But God had other work in hand for them. It was to rear a race who *should* come hither; the noble Scotch Irish Presbyterians of Pennsylvania and the South; from whom issued the famous "Mechlenburg Declaration of Independence." "The first public voice in America for dissolving all connection with Great Britain, (says Bancroft,) came not from the Puritans of New England, the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, but from Scotch Irish Presbyterians."

It was a singular providence, that one hundred years later, circumstances should have made this a Presbyterian church on the spot they were, in vain, trying to reach.

(3:) MINISTERS.

The first great name connected with the history of this church, is that of Whitefield. By his advice it was, that the separatists whom his preaching had gathered, formed themselves into a congregation, when they could no longer, in conscience, sit under the defective Arminian preaching of Lowell and Tucker. Through his means, also, Mr. Parsons became the first pastor. Here his honored remains repose—a circumstance which invests the church with a peculiar interest, and causes it to be extensively visited. Something of the peculiar characteristics of this people, may also be attributed, I think, to this circumstance. The earlier members ever remembered him with affectionate veneration. Mrs. Lucy Pearson at 98, would kindle when she spoke of him into youthful enthusiasm,

though but 16 when she heard him. They had listened to his matchless eloquence, and witnessed his glowing zeal. They were his spiritual children, they were the custodians of his body. They felt that it became them to be, like him, zealous in every good word and work. And in the tone of their piety, they were remarkable. Nor has it ceased to have an influence, that here are the bones of Whitefield. As they have successively stood over his venerable remains, the pastors have felt it; at the thought have "kindled with new fire," have tried like him, in the words of his own maxim, "to preach as Apelles painted, for eternity."

So much has been written of Whitefield, that little can now be added. In person of a middle stature, a slender body in youth, fair complexion and a comely appearance, he was in temper sprightly and cheerful, and moved with great agility and life. In speaking he used much gesture, but with great propriety: every accent of his voice, every motion of his body, spoke.† His imagination was lively, and sometimes (as Dr. Samuel Spring remarked of him,) "he touched the smiles, that he might afterwards draw the tears." He had, too, a habit of standing up and looking about, whilst the people were assembling; alert from beginning to the end, indeed as he always was, for any incident which might give point to his discourse, or "prove an arrow shot at a venture."‡ But his preaching was not always equal. Garrick's remark was doubtless true, that his sermons, as specimens of oratorical art, never reached their fullest power till the fiftieth repetition.

†Prince's account.

‡As an instance, Mrs. Pearson said, that once a young woman came in dressed gaily; and as the fashion was, with black patches all over the face. Whitefield immediately addressed her, "Young woman, did you pray before you came hither? You enter the house of God in the attire of the harlot." She at once crouched down and began to tear the patches off; and however rude the speech, it was the means of her conversion. Mrs. P.'s mother told him she was very fond of dancing; his reply pierced her conscience. "My dear friend, do you not know that every step you dance is on the brink of hell?"

Mr. Parsons first heard him at New Haven before the ministers, scholars and rector ; and notes the address as having little manners and no connection, the most undigested piece he ever heard. So with his manner. Of another sermon Parsons writes, "in most of his gesture and generally in his voice he gave his discourse life ; but not through the whole of it—it was a mixture of apt similitudes, with sentences that perhaps could not be justified ; yet full of warm affection." Where lay his wonderful power ? Here even women walked twenty miles to hear him. It was his incomparable voice and whole manner ; every air so natural, every expression so easy, careless, and full of compassion and feeling, so moving, earnest, winning, melting—together with his vivid fancy, which heated every truth he uttered and sent it glowing into the conscience and heart.*

"He followed Paul—his zeal a kindred flame,
 ‡ His apostolic charity the same."

Dr. Smalley, who heard him when a boy, thus describes his impressions : "I was altogether absorbed in the services of this bold preacher, his stern look, his great voice, his earnest words ; and as I thought of my soul, and of Christ, and salvation, I was so carried away in my feelings, as not to know where I was. I could not keep my eyes off from him. I saw him in his prayer, his eyes wide open, looking on high ; and I certainly thought that he saw that Great Being up there, with whom he was talking and pleading so earnestly, and I looked up to the same place that I might see him too."

The question has frequently been asked, were the results of his preaching permanent and happy ? Here they were eminently so. In Northampton, where, under the ministry of

*When a cast was taken of Whitefield's skull, the artist remarked that by drawing a line from the orifice of the ear to the top of the head, what was rarely found in the head of a great and good man, the larger part of the brain fell behind the ear—indicating more feeling than intellect. A cast was sent, without name, to London ; to try the skill of the phrenologists. We speak of Webster's logical powers ; but was it not his imagination fully as much, that made him the pre-eminent orator ?

Edwards, three hundred were added to the church whom he regarded as "savingly brought home to Christ," in a few years almost the whole church turned against and drove him away, for holding that none ought to be admitted to the Lord's supper, but such as gave satisfactory evidence of conversion.* There was no such falling away here. True, there were minds that staggered under the mighty vision of gospel verities, long withheld, and now so vividly presented. No revival the church has ever seen was without its faults. From extreme deadness and doctrinal error of one kind, many would naturally rush to an opposite extreme. And where God's spirit was so evidently moving, it was not to be expected but Satan should be abroad, deceiving some and inciting others to "more ungodliness."†

"Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
The devil always builds a chapel there."

But of the reputed converts in 1740, about one hundred and forty, Parsons writes in 1754, that but 4 or 5 had fallen away openly. In 1767 he again writes favorably of the most in the church as solid and steady; though an Antinomian preacher near by was very zealous, and had perverted some who twenty-six years before were accounted converts. Many of his spiritual children were alive when Dr. Dana came, and he speaks of them as among the "most distinguishing, judicious and tender hearted Christians he ever knew." Whitefield died, as you know, in 1770, at the house of Rev. Mr. Parsons. Portsmouth desired his body, and gentlemen from Boston, in a "manner

*Dr. Hodge's History of Presbyterian Church.

†Mr. Parsons writes, (1754,) "Some among us who seemed for a time to run well, have since fallen away, some into gross wickedness, and others into wild enthusiasm, and have embraced several strange doctrines; some affirm they have undergone something equivalent to death, and therefore are now immortal without any remains of sin; yea, beyond the possibility of sinning; others ramble about, and when they can get admittance, creep into houses and teach the audience that human learning is the cause of driving away the spirit of God from the churches; one of this sort has lately been among my people, inculcating these principles. The principle seems to be taking with a few weak people, but I trust God will not suffer Satan to go on in this way."

pretty sovereign, made a sort of demand for it, and seemed to claim as their right to do as they pleased." But Mr. Parsons, though he "would not contend about his body," refused consent to any removal from the place where he had desired to be laid. Therefore he is with us to this day ; and

"Thou, tomb, shalt safe retain thy sacred trust,
Till life divine reanimates his dust."*

REV. JONATHAN PARSONS.

Born at West Springfield, November 30, 1705 ; graduated at Yale College, 1729 ; studied theology partly under direction of Rev. Elisha Williams, the President, and for a short time under Rev. Jonathan Edwards, at Northampton ; ordained and settled at Lyme, Conn., March 1731 ; installed at Newburyport, March 19, 1746, by the following form. After a sermon, Mr. Parsons proposed that the church should vote anew upon his settlement. The vote was taken by the clerk, and passed unanimously in the affirmative. The pastor elect then said, "In presence of God and these witnesses, I take this people to be my people ;" and the clerk replied for the rest, "In the presence of God and these witnesses, we take this man to be our minister."

Mr. Parsons, the first settled minister, ought ever to be held in respectful remembrance by this church. He was the nurse of its infancy in troublous times. Amid many breakers, the wild surges of fanaticism and the shoals of Arminianism now

*Whitefield was buried in his gown, cassock, bands and wig ; and as late as 1784 the body seems to have been but little impaired, although the skin was "discolored and blackish." In the same vault lie Rev. Mr. Parsons and Rev. Mr. Prince ; the latter a blind preacher, whose life was marked by many striking interpositions of a kind Providence. He died in town at the house of his son in 1791 ; and out of respect for him as a man of God, he was laid in the vault with Whitefield. Sometime anterior to 1827, a part of Whitefield's right arm was abstracted by a visitor, as a present to a friend in England. Philip in his life of W. mentions that he had known who had it for ten years ; p. 519. In September 1849, Rev. Mr. Stearns, the pastor, received a box from England with the bone enclosed. It was replaced, and the remains have since been more carefully guarded against such antiquarian depredators.

crested with angry and opposing waves, with a sometimes timid and distracted crew, he safely piloted the church's way. And if, in the legacy the fathers left you, of a gospel faith and gospel hopes, there is anything you value ; if, reared in this heritage, the church's soundness and the fathers' piety, have been any blessing to you or shall yet be to your children, you owe much to him, as, under God, the instrument. Previous to his settlement, (March 1746,) the congregation had for three years been under a young preacher from Byfield, Mr. Joseph Adams, a man of piety and gifts, but inexperienced and somewhat indiscreet in his zeal. When Parsons came, he found among them "a number of serious Christians who appeared to be understanding, solid, and in some measure established in the main points of Christian doctrine. But many others appeared of an Antinomian turn, full of vain confidence, self-conceit and false affections ; and some that were the greatest Christians in their own esteem, were worldly and covetous." His work was, therefore, before him ; to build up the doctrines of Christ in a community and part of the land where they were evidently "run down." And for the duties of his position he was by nature and grace remarkably qualified. In person he was of middle stature, light complexion, with blue eyes and a somewhat prominent chin. His countenance was commanding and strongly marked with character, his voice clear, rich and flexible ; so that his elocution became solemn and majestic, alarming or persuasive and melting, as occasion required. As a sermonizer he was correct, natural, easy and clear in method, with a rich and lively imagination, in matter weighty and pungent, combining usually both doctrinal and practical in the same sermon. His favorite themes were those of the cross, human depravity, the new birth, justification by faith, sanctification and the like, upon which he reflected the light of a clear and sober mind, mellowed by a most happy experience. Add

to this, unusual gifts in prayer, in extempore utterance, also, when he resorted to it, a fine and varied scholarship, and we have no reason to doubt the description of him, as both a popular and eminently successful preacher. Whilst as a pastor, his own experimental knowledge of truth and of error, his faithfulness and caution, acquired from large observation of revivals, made him a blessing indeed.* And if his naturally choleric and rather unlovely temper sometimes made him enemies, the ready amend, his sensibility, open liberality and kindness, won the constant respect and affection of his people. Nor was his influence unfelt abroad. He corresponded extensively with leading men here and in England; with Dr. Gillies, Dr. John Erskine, Dr. Thomas Gibbons, Dr. Finley, Dr. J. Rogers, Dr. Sprout, Dr. Eleazer Wheelock of Lebanon, Conn., and others. He was one of those who gave inception to Dartmouth College; and visited the governor concerning it. And being a warm revivalist and friend of Whitefield's, he was much consulted by the friends of the revival.

Such was the man whom Providence raised up to mould the character of the infant church. But good Mr. Parsons dwelt all his days in the tents of Kedar. His change of opinion at Lyme, made him bitter enemies who followed him even here with their slanders. The surrounding clergy were mostly disaffected towards him. For several years at the beginning he lived in jeopardy of his life; the low and vulgar sometimes even reviling and pelting him with stones in the street. How bitter the state of feeling must have been, and how unexpected was kindness from those of other societies, one entry in his diary plainly shows; in

*At his ordination Mr. Parsons, too hastily discarding the views of his learned teachers publicly rejected the platform of the Connecticut churches. For two years he was an Arminian. After his conversion he became a zealous revivalist, and strayed, it would seem, to the brink of the precipice, over which many others fell. But grace reclaimed him; and having by itinerating some, enlarged his observation of the wildness and errors that were springing up, his whole influence was thrown against the fanaticism of the times.

1746 he writes : "made some business with Deacon Nathaniel Coffin, the town clerk. He treated me kindly, and kept me much longer than I expected. Blessed be God that he gave me favor with man, though he never came to hear me preach." Nor was he ever more comfortable. In 1754 his constitution, which was delicate, for the time sank under his perils and labors ; and a nervous rheumatism, with little prospect of recovery, induced him to ask for a colleague or a dismission. Subsequently the spread of Anabaptism, Antinomianism, and Pelagianism in the neighborhood greatly troubled him, he being almost alone among them in the opposition. One of the former sort invaded his own congregation in his absence, and had nearly made a breach among them. Whilst those ministers even who were Calvinistic in doctrine, seemed steadfastly bent to destroy Presbyterianism. These things led him in 1768 and again in 1771, notwithstanding his age, to think of a removal ; being tired, he said, of living among Independants, who were responsible to nobody. But in 1772 his public labors were suspended by sickness. He died July 19, 1776, aged 71, after a ministry here of thirty years ; and now lies beside his beloved friend Whitefield.

REV. JOHN MURRAY.

Born in Ireland, May 22, 1742—educated at the University of Edinburgh—settled at Philadelphia, at Boothbay, Me., and finally at Newburyport, June 4, 1781.

After the death of Parsons, for several years the condition of the church was gloomy and critical. Their Elijah was taken away, and where was an Elisha? Delay and candidates led to dissension. Some were for changing the government. The original members, who had carried the church through so much opposition and persecution, were old and passing away. That virulent crop of error, which succeeded the great revival, was

rapidly spreading. Whilst, in so large a congregation, many were of course to be found who knew and cared little concerning doctrine or government, and might easily be led or imposed upon. The wisdom and diligence of the session, however, saved the church. And after repeated disappointments and a five years actual vacancy, Mr. Murray became pastor in 1781, notwithstanding the strenuous opposition of a few.

There has never been a more devoted minister in this town, nor, except Whitefield, a greater preacher; one who attracted larger audiences or held them in more fixed attention through discourses, which were ordinarily an hour, and often two and more in length; yet some preferred Mr. Parsons. It is related of Murray, that one of his early opposers gave him a text at the church door, as a test of his qualifications. He laid aside his intended sermon, and discoursed with such ability as disarmed prejudice, and called forth the extravagant saying of Mr. Parsons, that he had not been surpassed since the days of the apostles. There were others in town of eminence and reputation, but as a pulpit orator he far excelled. Of the most distinguished among them, a stranger remarked that "he was a planet too near the sun to give much light." When Mr. Murray preached his thanksgiving sermon* of two hours length for the peace, a gentleman from another society, being meanwhile under great concern of mind over a spoiling dinner, frequently and resolutely took his hat to leave. But Mr. Murray's eloquence as often arrested him, till at last he whispered, "let the dinner go, I must hear it out." As another illustration of his oratorical power it is related, that during the war, at a crisis in our affairs, Newburyport was called upon to furnish a full company for actual service. But owing to discouragement, arising from a depreciated currency and

*Entitled "Jerubbaal, or tyranny's grove destroyed and the altar of liberty finished." A distinguished lawyer of Boston recently proposed to have it re-published.

the state of the army, the officers labored three days in vain. On the fourth it was moved that Mr. Murray be invited to address the regiment then under arms. Having accepted the invitation, he was escorted to the parade, and thence by the whole regiment to the church. There he pronounced an address so spirited and animating, that the audience were wrapt in attention, and tears fell from many eyes. Soon after the assembly was dismissed, a member of the church came forward to take the command, and in two hours the company was filled. In manner, I am told, he was slightly pompous, but dignified in presence, courteous, sincerely kind, and by his people enthusiastically beloved. In various labors abundant, he had often the pleasure, also, under the divine favor, of seeing abundant results. Dr. Green mentions that during his brief sojourn at Philadelphia, of a few months only, more were added to the church than during the whole of Gilbert Tennent's ministry. When he went to Boothbay there was no organized church, and a general inattention to religion. Under his ministry a powerful revival commenced, which continued through two years, and extended into the adjoining towns; his own lodgings being often crowded with enquirers, even till three o'clock in the morning. His private diary of this period indicates a man of deep piety and uncommon ministerial devotedness.* And to his prayerfulness, meekness, good will and patient endurance of injuries, as well as faithfulness in his vocation in subsequent life, biographers and those who remember him bear ample testimony.

Mr. Murray's usefulness, however, was circumscribed, and his

*Greenleaf's Ecclesiastical Sketches. Mr. Murray's plan of visiting, as noted in his diary, deserves allusion. First, salute the house. Second, compare the list with the family, mark them who can read—catechisables—covenanters—church members. Third, address—1. Children to engage in early religion; 2. Young ones to reading, secret prayer, the Sabbath, good company, good houses, good tongues, conversion. Fourth, address parents; 1. About their spiritual state; 2. Secret devotion; 3. Family worship, government, catechising; 4. Sabbath, &c. If church members, see what profit—if in error or vice reclaim, in divisions heal, if poor help. Lastly, exhortation to all—pray.

life embittered by a prejudice and odium which clung to him till death. In this town and the vicinity, the pulpits were generally closed against him, and some of the pastors would not even speak to him. Some of this prejudice lay equally against the church, in which he shared as their minister ; for the old enmities still existed. Even to his day, the Presbyterians were contemptuously styled the "Joppa people"—a very honorable name, however, which first became local through a prayer meeting (one of the many which characterized the church,) "in the house of one Simon, (Pierce) by the sea-side." But it resulted mostly from an early difficulty in Ireland, to be presently mentioned. So decided were Dr. Spring's feelings towards him on this account, that he would put his hand behind his back, when Mr. Murray offered his ; and at a funeral where both officiated, he left the room during Mr. Murray's prayer.* His last days, too, were farther embittered by a breach in his congregation. During the long sickness which confined him, with heart-broken sadness, he saw from his window crowds of his former admirers rushing after Rev. Mr. Milton, a new star whom he had himself invited to town. And when one said something to him of his friends, he answered, "My dear child, I do not know that I have a friend in the world." But still he was an example of patience, resignation, and piety in his adversity. It was his wish that he might have a long sickness ; that he might show to all his firm and continued belief in the doctrines he had preached—and during it he asked to have the children and all who would, call on him for this purpose. Thus he continued to the end ; and died in peace, repeating the

*Dr. Spring was very decided and strong in all his feelings. He fully believed the statements against Mr. Murray, and hence his course. He would have been as decided a friend, as an anecdote which has been mentioned to me may show. At New York he expressed a desire to call upon Aaron Burr. His son told him that Burr had fallen so low that any acquaintance with him was undesirable. But he said, "I have stood side by side with him in the same battle—in the hottest of it, I saw that little man carrying off the body of his commander on his shoulder—I must go ;"—and he did.

assurance that his enemies had but increased the frequency of his errands to the throne of grace. His closing hours were indeed a triumph, full of Christian aspiration and hope; when he repeated the lines of that hymn :—

“Death may dissolve my body now,
And bear my spirit home!
Why do my minutes move so slow,
Nor my salvation come?”

and gave up the ghost, March 13, 1793, aged 51.

I now approach that stain upon his memory, which, also, darkened and saddened his life—as yet unrelieved by any connected statement, but to which, as I believe, a milder coloring may truthfully be given. He was charged with “forging his license,” or rather a certificate relating to the license.*

Mr. Murray was from Ireland; where he united with the church at fifteen, and began the ministry at eighteen; having received license, as he claimed, at Alnwich, Northumberland, (Eng.), from the “class of Woollers—Isaac Wood, Moderator; Robert Treat, Clerk.” The offense, therefore, with which he was charged, occurred at the age of 18; and the other acts alleged against him in connection with the matter, before he was 23. His license having been questioned in the Irish Presbytery of Ballymena, he sent it to some in Edinburgh to have it attested by such as knew the hands that signed it. Instead of taking better steps, they wrote on the back of the same sheet a certificate attesting that “he had indeed gone to Northumberland; had certainly been licensed there—had preached several times in Scotland, in consequence thereof—and was well approved by them;” and then sent it to him signed by themselves, with the words Moderator and Clerk of Presbytery,

*My authorities are—Parsons’ MSS letters; Minutes of Philadelphia Presbytery; Memoranda of my grandfather, Ebenezer Hazard, Esq.; Murray’s “Appeal to an impartial public;” a letter to a writer in the *Spy* of 1774; Confessions before Presbytery at Salem; Protest of members thereof; his will.

annexed to their names, which they were not. This certificate caused the trouble of his whole life. For being shown in the Synod of Ulster at Londonderry, (although by another in his absence, he always said,) it immediately became an object of attention. He was now accused of forgery. Meanwhile his Scottish friends had written to him, owning the fraud but beseeching him not to ruin them, as their prospects were good in the church. And rather than ruin them, and give his own enemies a triumph, which at that age he was too proud to endure, he defended the paper as genuine. From Ireland he came to New York, when hardly 21; and was in May, 1765, ordained and settled for several months as Gilbert Tennent's successor in Philadelphia. The charge followed him. The Presbytery of Philadelphia appear to have proceeded with great wisdom and delicacy in the matter. But the first wrong step had plunged him in the mire, and each succeeding one sunk him deeper. "The frown of a holy God was on the thing, he writes, and every measure of defence either promised or actually taken *by the authors of the paper* only increased the embarrassment of him whom they meant to defend." His whole character now became suspicious. Other things were alleged, but never judicially investigated, although influencing the result. And finally, as he did not appear to defend himself* and the case seemed conclusive, Presbytery deposed him. The Presbytery of the Eastward, however, afterwards judicially annulled the sentence, on several grounds; his humiliation and confessions not only, but informalities and as they believed injustice in the proceedings of his case.†

I have given Mr. Murray's own statement as to the offense

*On coming to New England he had dismissed himself from them, as he thought, and regarded their action as an attempted assumption of authority which he disclaimed.

†The Presbyterian Church at that date had not assumed its present form. The Synods of New York and Philadelphia alone existed. The two Presbyteries of New England were independent of each other and of the Synods. Hence some things were done, which would now be irregular.

itself. To this he always adhered. His confessions concerning it were repeated, public, and most humble—none could be more so. But the forgery, and other misdemeanors alleged but never proven, he firmly denied. And now, with his whole after life and his death before us, what shall we say? are we not warranted in believing him? His acknowledged fault was committed at 18. Was there a radical defect? From the age of 23 his life was public and unimpeached; a life of great devotedness, and in what unextenuating penitence passed, a letter will show. In 1774 he writes: “The daily views I have had of the multiplied enormities it occasioned me, all of which, with the unhappy consequences to the church of Christ, have been continually before my eyes, have made me wish my name blotted out of remembrance by all mankind, and even regret the day of my birth, times without number. The Searcher of all hearts does know my agonies of mind on every review; and that no restoration to the favor of men can ever give me ease—and that but for the application of Gilead’s heavenly balm, I had perished of my wound years ago not a few. I find my comfort in my obscurity;—there I hope I find my God;—and there I see less danger of being a stumbling-block in Zion, the very idea of which to me is worse than death. I have not a wish to be drawn from my retirement, (Boothbay) there will I remain, in secret places looking to him whom I pierced, and mourning as for an only son; and striving to wear out the remainder of my cumbrous life, in the best endeavors I can in his service,” &c.

It is proper to say that Mr. Parsons took special pains to enquire into the reports against him. He wrote to England; and the result was a decided conviction, that the faults committed, in connection with his own humble acknowledgement, should not debar him from Christian charity.

REV. DANIEL DANA, D. D.

Born at Ipswich, July 24, 1771—a graduate of Dartmouth in 1788—Teacher at the Moore School, near Dartmouth, and at Exeter Academy, four and a half years—Ordained November 19, 1794.

Mr. Dana's settlement was preceded and succeeded by disruption. The pulpit had been supplied during the winter of 1792, at Mr. Murray's invitation, by Rev. Mr. Milton, a young missionary from Lady Huntingdon's school at Trevecca; an earnest, eloquent and original preacher, although eccentric as a man. Many were delighted with him, and would have retained him as colleague pastor. But the majority being unwilling, his friends withdrew, and under the plea of "better edification" established worship in a private house. After Mr. Murray's death, and while under suspension for breach of covenant, they renounced the government, built a house of worship, and organized an "independent Calvinistic" church. Six males and nine females signed the covenant; a session was appointed, and Mr. Milton became pastor. The forms of installation were quite anomalous; for after sermon Dea. Solomon Haskell put the call to vote, and declared him their minister. Having delivered the Bible to him, and told him what system of doctrines he was to present, he informed him that "so long as he did this and behaved well, they should acknowledge him as their teacher and no longer"—and then proceeded to give him a charge how to preach. Thus originated the Prospect street church. In 1798 some concessions were made as to the manner of withdrawal, and the session removed their censure; and twice since, when needful repairs have closed our own house, we have worshipped pleasantly together for long periods.

This division and Mr. Murray's death threw the congregation into much confusion. Mr. Samuel Tomb, a licentiate in the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, was called once and

again by small majorities, but declined ; a third attempt failed, amid strong feeling, and with small prospect of speedy union upon any other. Mr. Dana, however, was called in June, 1794, and installed in November ; but with a decided opposition, and after a remonstrance to Presbytery.

The dissentients then, in their turn, withdrew ; including most of the session, and many of the most substantial and godly members of the church. The clerk and treasurer being one, also took the funds, files and records of the church ; the latter of which were not restored for many years. In July 1795, they proposed as a peace measure that Rev. Mr. Boddily should become colleague with Mr. Dana. This failed, and in October the Presbytery of Londonderry organized them as the second Presbyterian church, with thirty-three members.

This opposition to Mr. Dana was principally owing to a misunderstanding as to his doctrinal views. Mr. Tomb was an old fashioned and doctrinal preacher ; without Mr. Murray's richness, indeed, but in the style of his sermons such as they were accustomed to—Mr. Dana a young man fresh from literary pursuits, with a different style, the graces of which at that time, probably, exceeded the doctrine, about which they were strenuous ;* it was, therefore, supposed they differed equally in doctrine. Certain it is, however, from a synopsis of his earlier sermons, that he was no less sound than now. And of the dissentients themselves many afterwards returned and honored him as he deserved ; whilst at a later day a twenty years pastorate in the second church, upon their own call, gave the survivors “ full proof of his ministry.”

Of Dr. Dana delicacy and taste would prompt me to say but

*An anecdote will show how they regarded preaching at that day, and what they principally looked for. After a sermon from a young man which, perhaps, had the defects of youth, a free spoken member grumbled the remark, “ Peas in a bladder, peas in a bladder, no *food* for my soul to-day.” The remark, it is said, was overheard and led to a new experience in the young preacher.

little, as he is still among us ; but other considerations invite a reference, at least to his public and official life. He is one of whom no ill *can* be said ; he will pardon a brief report of the good. He has been called the Addison of New England ; and his style as a preacher and writer is distinguished for its purity, ease, and propriety ; with sometimes a keenness in the use of words, when he takes the controversial pen, which, like Saladin's scimitar, cuts and kills without a visible wound. I should say his marked peculiarity was appropriateness. He would be sure to read the best hymn, to select the best chapter, and make the most suitable prayer for every occasion ; escaping difficulties, while pertinently alluding to them, with exquisite tact and smoothness. An instance I find in a funeral sermon of his. The subject of it was a man of strong traits and a posthumous fame as a liberal donor, but equally known infirmities ; upon some features of whose character, his audience would have wished an opinion. But the delicate allusion, which could not be omitted, was rounded, and farther curiosity diverted by the apt lines (with many of which his memory is stored) :—

“ No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Nor draw his frailties from their dread abode ;
There they alike in trembling hope repose,
The bosom of his Father, and his God.”

In pastoral visitations, at the sick bed, and with the sorrowing, the same trait made him most happy. Poetry and reading were laid alike under contribution, and skilfully made use of as ministrants of the gospel medicine. And thus he became a pastor beloved, who “ did his spiriting gently.” Of this method I may mention an instance. At Londonderry was an old man of eighty odd years, lame, deaf, defective in sight, and still impenitent. As a last hope, his pastor related to him the story, by Mrs. Thrale, of Death and “ The Three Warnings ;” in substance this. Death having called, most unseasonably, upon

a man's wedding day, and told him he must quit his sweet bride and go with him, Dobson remonstrated—and death consented to retire, and promised him three warnings before he called again. At length he reached his eightieth year ; when suddenly death stood before him. “ What, so soon returned, angry Dobson cried, and where are my three warnings ? ” “ I little thought,” said death, “ you'd still be able to stump about your farm and stable.” Hold, said the farmer, I have been lame these four years past. “ However, death replied, you still keep your eyes ? ” “ No, said the man, latterly I've lost my sight.” “ But still you hear all the news,” said death—

“ There's none, cries he ; and if there were,
I've grown so deaf, I could not hear.
Nay, then ! the spectre stern rejoin'd,
These are unjustifiable yearnings ;
If you are lame, and deaf, and blind,
You've had your three sufficient warnings.”

The tale seemed at the time to make no impression upon the old man ; but when he died he left a note, saying, that the first thing which led him to think seriously about his condition, was the story of death and the three warnings.

Among you who have so long known him, I need but allude to another item of Dr. Dana's pastoral life—but for not mentioning which, multitudes of God's poor would blame me, could they rise. “ When the eye saw him, it gave witness to him : because he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.”

In his preaching Dr. Dana was lucid, scriptural and practical ; in arrangement a model for accuracy, simplicity and beauty, in doctrine clear as the day, in matter edifying. Happily for the people to whom he ministered so long, he had been trained to regard the Bible as text-book not only, but the very marrow of

sermons. He early, therefore, adopted the plan of expounding, half the day, with such acceptance that many would attend them, if detained the other half ; and with this manifest advantage, that sins could often be pointedly reprov'd in the exposition, without such odium to the preacher as a voluntary choice of the subject might have caused.

At the beginning of this century, great theological differences existed in town ; and in this the town was an epitome of New England. Controversy was rife, and alienations existed. "My memory takes me back, (writes Dr. Dana,) to seasons very different from the present." Scarcely any two churches maintained communion with each other, and of six ministers, of near denominational complexion, scarce two agreed in theology ; although the allusion to it in Dr. Alexander's life is not precisely correct. There was no Antinomian. Some private causes there were contributing to this state of things, which was once a reproach : jealousies, perhaps, such as will occasionally arise among churches closely located in a limited territory—some, too, there always are under such circumstances, of whom Rev. Mr. Chandler of Rowley writes in 1766 : "Sometimes I hear two or three religious persons spending their opportunity together in crying down one minister and crying up another ; and they seem to think they are honoring God and doing him service." Far be it from us to defend or even countenance any such things. Politics, also, at times led to dissension. But other causes operated. The New England mind is active, independent, inquisitive ; a trait which, within the field of religion, has produced speculations, isms and heresies in abundance, but which also makes very intelligent Christians.

In this town the people were religious in thought and habit. When the British fleet was off the coast and fears of a landing were entertained, a physician remarked, "for what should they

land here, unless they wish to go to church ?” They were intelligently religious, and strong in their belief as in character. Doctrinal points were just then prominent topics of discussion ; and sometimes the clash of opinion kept apart those who should have walked together, and differed without acrimony. These walls of unnatural separation it was Dr. Dana’s steady endeavor to break down ; and in these efforts he had the cordial concurrence of his people. Neither to him nor his predecessors could be charged anything of “that narrow, contentious, censorious spirit, which has done such infinite mischief in this place.”* Indeed, I know of no period when this kindly feeling has not animated the pastors of this church, and been exercised when circumstances allowed.

Of those who were his fellow laborers, Dr. Samuel Spring is most extensively known ; and in preaching and upon some points in Theology differed much from Dr. Dana, although this brought them into no collision. For several years, indeed, Dr. Dana was paving the way for an exchange, which past circumstances for a long time rendered inexpedient. Dr. Spring was large in frame, with a stern blue eye and a look of command, “fitted to be a general and achieve great things,” as one said to me ; dignified in bearing, but somewhat distant in intercourse with his people, although greatly respected by them—not strictly logical, I am told, yet a great logician ; fond of reasoning and with a strong polemic relish. Dr. Emmons, who was his brother-in-law, was about the only man to whom he looked up, or would call “Rabbi.”

His system and preaching partook of his personal traits. The creed of his church was minutely drawn out in logical sequence, to suit his favorite views. When, however, an aged negro wished to be received, as he would not have understood it, another was used. Once a hearer who was particular about

*Dr. Dana’s Sermon—funeral of Mr. Moody.

the text, asked him, "Dr. where was your text this morning, I did not hear it;" (the Dr. had named none)—"Sir," he replied, "it was in the title page of the book of nature and the connexion of things." To the last he was consistent with his views, which were Hopkinsian—to a brother minister at his bedside he said, "I have laid the foundation of Andover Seminary, I have been instrumental in forming the American board, and have preached the gospel for more than forty years—but what was my motive; I have my doubts, but I commit myself to God to dispose of me as he pleases." As a preacher Dr. Dana was affectionate, Dr. Spring pungent; for he said "sinners were willing to be pitied, but could not bear to be blamed." Dr. Dana would urge the use of gospel means—Dr. Spring would say to the sinner, "You have no right to draw another breath till you repent." One of these reverend men, so deeply interested in the same Seminary, is gone. And if in more recent times, the other has felt himself constrained to utter his "remonstrance" against apparent doctrinal defection, it has been, I am well assured, from no mere itch for disputation; he loves the olden truth as the fathers held it, and having seen the rise of many errors, fears all seeming departures from "the form of sound words."

Brethren, look well at the venerable man, for soon he will have passed away. As a sere and yellow leaf, which in autumn still lingers on the bough, sole relict of spring and summer, so he remains—a memento mori—and time has left him, with a very few more, to remind us of generations once as numerous and as busy as ours, now dead and gone. Already he has outlived any minister ever settled in town. You may see him less and less in the streets. And when God calls him, a wide chasm will separate you from the founders and venerated forefathers of your church.

When Dr. Dana's opponents withdrew in 1795, they left

him with an affectionate and united people, although for a time they were reduced in numbers. The period of his ministry was a flourishing but uneventful one. Many solid stones were laid in the Spiritual temple, but without noise ; it was rather a continual dew, than a season of rains filling the pools. The revival of 1801, which is still spoken of, affected this church but little ; only ten having united during that year. It had its origin in a young men's prayer meeting, and was principally in Mr. Milton's church, where some disturbances occurred. After preaching, young men would rise in the galleries and exhort. Once, amid much confusion Dr. Dana arose, and by his dignified utterance of the words, " God is a God of order and not of confusion," quelled the noise.

One event, however, of pleasing and solemn and at that time novel interest occurred in 1815, June 21, at the ordination of the second band of missionaries, Samuel J. Mills, James Richards, Jun., Edward Warren, Benjamin C. Meigs, Horatio Bardwell, and Daniel Poor. Dr. Worcester preached an admirable sermon in the morning, and in the afternoon the Lord's supper was celebrated by nearly seven hundred communicants from *various and distant churches*—the first instance of the kind, I am told, in New England and probably in the country. " The scene was novel in this country," says Evarts, with whom the happy idea originated, and it dwelt long in his recollections: How a spirit of Missions enlarges the sympathies and breaks down separating walls ! Mills would, probably, have led the mission to the Sandwich Islands, had he lived ; but " one soweth, another reapeth."

In the autumn of 1820, Dr. Dana exchanged his labors here for the Presidency of Dartmouth College ; since when, till his retirement in a green old age, his history has been with other churches.*

*Londonderry, N. H., and the second Presbyterian of this city.

REV. S. P. WILLIAMS.

Born at Wethersfield, Conn., Feb. 22, 1779—graduated at Yale, 1796—Studied theology with Dr. Dwight and at Springfield with Dr. Howard—licensed at West Springfield,* April 10, 1805,—Settled at Mansfield, Conn., 1807—at Newburyport February 8, 1821.

It would have been hard to find a man to succeed Dr. Dana, with anything like his peculiar excellencies. Comparison could only be annoying. Besides, after long and prosperous culture churches, like fields, sometimes need the plough. Providence, therefore, in 1821 sent as his successor, a man the most unlike ; but one who, in a brief ministry of six years, left his mark upon the affections and consciences of the people. If Dr. Dana was a model of that politeness which graced the manners of ministers in his day, Mr. Williams was, perhaps, too blunt, and needed more suavity of manner. Whereas the one would say, perhaps, "may we not reasonably suppose you to be intemperate"—the other would have pounced upon the offender with a swoop, and said, "Sir, you are a drunkard." An old lady once asked him, "Mr. Williams, why do you never give me your hand ; Dr. Dana always did, and sometimes the t'other !" Mr. Williams had nothing of that, rather undervalued it ; from no want of feeling or refinement, but the firm texture of the man. Many of you can remember his tall and soldierly form ; his face through which, as in a transparency, every purpose of a heart above disguise, was visible. Here, one would at once say, is a straightforward, honest man ; there are no lurking places of deceit in his heart. His character was firmly rooted, upright and strong in growth ; flinging forth its branches freely to the winds and storms of heaven.

*A pleasing coincidence connects three of the pastors with West Springfield. The writer passed some years there during his father's ministry, Col. Jonathan Parsons being an immediate neighbor ; and was called there at the same time with Newburyport.

He spoke freely, acted freely. When Rev. Mr. Giles honorably placed at his disposal the long withheld church records and offered to send them home, no, he would shoulder the bag. He followed duty on a line; and if difficulty opposed itself, he would mount the hill, but never turn its flank. About the only time, perhaps, that he was known to yield, was when he had fixed upon a residence in Newbury and some of his people, (who wished him nearer) said, "if he lived there he might go there to meeting." Such a man, with faults so superficial, makes warm friends; and his real excellence was appreciated.

Being such in temperament, however, he was not so well adapted to scenes where tenderness and sympathy were demanded. He was a reprover rather than a consoler, and lacked the pathetic. Yet he was very eloquent, a perfect articulator, a master of gesture and oratory, with a "melodious voice that fastened the ear to his theme—whilst his beautiful language, shining illustrations, energy and earnestness and pungency in reproof, captivated the attention and bore down on the heart." But he was deficient in analysis; would sometimes illustrate his illustrations, till his hearers lost the thread; and from a certain obscurity of style, it was by lightning flashes, rather than continuous thought, that his impression was made. Many souls, however, were given to him, and to this people he was a blessing. His last sermon was very touching. It was on Thanksgiving day, less than a month before his death, on the "value of life." Too weak to stand, he preached it sitting in a chair. And although his manner was not as animated as usual, his pallid face, evidently sealed by death, the subject, made it the most effective he ever delivered. He died December 23, 1826.

(4.) GOVERNMENT AND ELDERSHIP.

Avoiding Prelacy on the one hand, and Independancy on the other, the founders organized this a Presbyterian church. To the former with its Bishops, clerical orders and forms, they had no leanings—from the latter their own experience of its workings had made them particularly averse. It was a loose democracy, under which, if passion or prejudice actuated a church, as in their case, there was no appeal, no redress. They were forced, in order to obtain their liberty and rights from church and state, as the law then was, to become another denomination; and to guard themselves and children so far as possible against the evils they had seen and suffered, against false doctrine and oppression, they became Presbyterian. As Mr. Williams says in his sermon, “they had suffered too serious evils for want of a judicatory to which they might resort under their grievances, to expose themselves again to embarrassment.” Mr. Stearns remarks, “Strange as it may seem to some, who are in the habit of regarding Presbyterianism as too rigid, and unfriendly to popular rights, it was expressly for the purpose of avoiding undue rigidity, and in defence of popular rights, that the founders of this church adopted that form of government.” In fact, from seeing how capricious and often oppressive church discipline became under Independancy, and alarmed at the spread of error, many leading ministers of the day were led to advocate a Presbyterian government as the best remedy. President Edwards, for example, said, “I have long been out of conceit of our unsettled, independant, confused way of church government; and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God, and the reason and nature of things.” Under this way, the government is representative and republican. There being a series of courts, beginning with the session; to which should always be elected the men most approved in a church for piety and wisdom.

These courts are under definite rules. And if injured or aggrieved in the lower, appeal may be made to a higher, even up to the General Assembly of the whole church. This was the system under which our fathers sheltered themselves from false doctrine and church oppression ; and their first act was to choose six ruling elders.

Of the Session I can say, from a diligent perusal of the records, that, in general, they have been faithful watchmen over the spiritual interests of the church. It would seem, that till Mr. Murray's day, the visitation of families was not customary with the pastor, except on extraordinary occasions.* Mr. Murray mentioned the neglect of it as one of his objections to settling here. This work the Session performed. In 1780 they districted the parish ; each elder pledging himself to a careful supervision of his charge in spiritual matters. They catechised the children, assisted in arranging personal difficulties, and performed other such duties. Several times addresses have been presented by session to the congregation, with the most happy effect—in which the state of the church was reviewed, prevalent sins were brought to their notice, measures of revival proposed, and means for doing good suggested. Measures of evangelization among the destitute around, were early adopted by them. And though, “for want of co-operation in other churches, less was effected than attempted, yet through their importunity with Presbytery, and a petition to General Court, something was done for their relief.”†

In its times of difficulty, or when destitute of a pastor, the Session has often been the safety of the church. Its unity has thus been preserved, its discipline and purity maintained, the pulpit supplied, and the interests of piety and benevolence have

*Mr. Lowell in one of his letters says, it was not regarded, when he settled, by many of the ministers around as a necessary part of their work unless sent for. He first introduced the practice in that church.

†Williams' Sermon, p. 24.

been attended to ; when otherwise, in so large a society, discipline might have been a fire-brand, evils suffered to ripen unrestrained, false doctrine have intruded, and order been lost.

Of the many godly and praying men who have from time to time composed it, I have not the means of giving any sketch. Yet the names of some have come down to us as very eminent in piety. Such was Captain Jonathan Parsons,* the Christian shipmaster, who carried religion and the Sabbath aboard, and maintained their influence in fore-castle and cabin, in a day when such men were few—a man learned in the scriptures and in doctrine, frugal of sleep and meals that he might read and pray, and whose Bible, his choice companion, lay open, and by early rising was not seldom read through in a voyage—a model Elder, a pattern seaman. Such were Long, and Sewall, and Coombs, and the Moodys ; one of the latter remarkable in prayer, the other, “good old Master Moody” as he was called, the last who occupied the old seats under the pulpit, and “whose eyes were never known to wander during service, however long.” Such, more recently, were Wheelwright and Clark,† and Simpson, my venerable friend. But there is one who deserves a special notice, Ralph Cross, who may be called the founder of the church. Of the work of grace in 1740 he was a noble trophy, and one of its most zealous promoters. To the poor he was “a dew from the Lord ;” in liberality, though dependent on his industry, unwearied, and in ways that were then even singular. During that revival, he opened his heart, his house and his purse freely to all who seemed honestly to befriend it. At length, having found a goodly number, whom he judged sincere subjects of vital religion, he animated them

*Son of the first pastor, and brother of Major General Parsons of Revolutionary memory. Mr. Murray wrote a very eloquent sermon at his death, entitled “The happy voyage completed and the sure anchor cast.”

†Father and uncle of Bishop Clark of Rhode Island, and a family of ministers.

to form this church.* And to his benefactions and other exertions; at the time, was greatly owing its success in surmounting the many difficulties it encountered. Its first stated preacher was boarded at his house, free of expense, for three years. A principle part of the cost of building the first meeting house, was defrayed by him. And of the seven who purchased and presented to Mr. Parsons a valuable house and lot of land, he was the chief. In building the present house, he, also, rendered essential aid—and presented that venerable King James' Bible, from which Whitefield preached, and which is still an appendage and glory of our pulpit. Yet much more even was the church indebted to his piety, his example, his admonitions in word and writing, and his prayers, during a long and useful life. He was an Elder forty-one years; and died 1788, aged 82. Let the church, for which to the last his withered hands and streaming eyes were lifted in the public prayer, hold him and his in remembrance.†

(5.) STRUGGLES AND TROUBLES.

The first great struggle of this church, was with the old parishes; and deserves particular notice, both from its character and consequences. The Puritan fathers did not learn toleration from their troubles in England. They only became the more determined to enjoy peace themselves in their new home. Religion was, therefore, placed under legal enactments. Parish lines were drawn; and all within the limits must attend, and were taxed to support the church there established. Toleration and the voluntary principle were the fruit of time and trouble.

*Murray's funeral sermon.

†His sons Stephen and Ralph; were both members of the Committee of Safety during the Revolution. Stephen was taken prisoner at Fort Oswego, and sent to England; but returned and died in 1809, aged 78. Ralph was in the battles of Stillwater and Saratoga, and became a Brigadier General. He died in 1800, aged 62. Miss Martha Nowell, a granddaughter, is the only one of his descendants now connected with the church, aged about 80.

In 1634, Roger Williams had broached the heresy, that "no one should be bound to worship or to maintain worship, without his own consent." "What! exclaimed his antagonists, amazed at his tenets, is not the laborer worthy of his hire?" "Yes," he replied, "from them that hire him."

From 1742 to 1770 this church was manfully battling for the very same principle. One evil of the law was, that in many parishes which were originally Calvinistic, the inhabitants, by a major vote, had settled Pelagian or Arminian teachers; whom the minority must support, when they could not, in conscience, attend their ministry. If they built a house of worship for themselves, on the voluntary plan, they were still taxed to support the old one; and for rebuilding or repairing it, they must pay what the parish assessed. Thus, in a time of declension, the law itself became a weapon of oppression to the real followers of the puritan doctrines. So it was with this church in relation to the first and third parishes. Its members could neither get dismissions, redress, nor freedom from taxation, which many were ill able to bear. The Quakers had obtained a special act of exemption in 1737—the Episcopalians in 1743. The Anabaptists enjoyed a like favor. To place themselves, therefore, on the same footing before the law, and for other reasons already stated, this church became Presbyterian.* But the old parishes long and steadily resisted; and General Court again and again refused the petitioners the relief they sought, although itself at the time complaining of the British court for taxing the people without their consent. For the old parishes, however, something may be said. Their spirit, indeed, was bad enough, and their treatment of these brethren sometimes indefensible. Many of them, unable to pay their double taxes, were imprisoned.

*Mr. Rogers of Ipswich particularly advised such a course. The battle was not for themselves alone, but for many more in the churches who were similarly oppressed. If this church succeeded, he said, they might soon form a consociation or Presbytery, which was much the better way.

Mr. Parsons was maltreated, and visited them at a risk. But excitement was running high; the law was on their side, though even "right too rigid, hardens into wrong." Besides and principally, the new society was drawing heavily upon their numbers. One thousand souls from the first and third parishes, were said in 1749 to attend the new church. This was, probably, an exaggeration. Large numbers, however, did go; many of them, the opposers say, "unthinking youth and servants black and white, to be from under their parents and masters' eyes, and partly to see the extraordinaries, still practiced among them, but discountenanced in the regular churches." What these "extraordinaries" were, we remain uninformed, as probably Mr. Parsons also was. Thus the old parishes were greatly reduced. And if General Court were to free the remonstrants from taxation, a heavy burden would fall upon those that remained. Besides, other sects might spring up, and thus the whole parish system be disarranged.

This struggle continued, the members of this church paying double taxes, till 1770. Then one hundred individuals petitioned the town, and the town petitioned the Court to grant exemption; but the trail of the division remained for years after. This church, therefore, (if I am correctly informed), has the honor of being the last sufferer and of breaking up the oppression of the old colony laws. In 1780 the new constitution gave equal rights to all, under certain restrictions.

Other troubles, of an intestine nature, have already been mentioned; and some besides will come under the next head.

(6.) CUSTOMS.

One hundred years make great changes in the habitudes of a people. Then and within remembrance, women came to church on pillions, and were not afraid of weather. When Miss

Hannah Tracy used the first umbrella in town, she was roundly abused for her pride. An item of history sufficiently illustrates their domestic habits. In 1720 the Scotch Irish emigrants had introduced potatoes and the spinning wheel into New England. In 1768 the young ladies met at Mr. Parsons', and after a sermon from Proverbs 34 : 19, they spun for Mrs. Parsons two hundred and seventy skeins of good yarn. In 1787 they did the same at Mr. Murray's ; who preached from Exodus 35 : 25, "And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands." Donation parties, however, were not much the custom. Some changes have taken place in the conduct of weddings and funerals ; for whereas now, the greater number perhaps, go quietly to the minister to be married, then the bride was escorted home by a procession of carriages ; and in many houses a large room was built expressly for weddings and funerals. At the latter, spirituous liquors were provided for the bearers and others. On Sabbath, till within thirty years, tithing-men were about the streets making reconnoissance and sending people to church. But many still had the bad habit of standing about the church doors ; which in 1780 the Session vigorously remonstrated against as a desecration. The clergy, in those days, were more a class apart than now ; and were readily known by the hat, looped up on three sides, the large white wig "full of learning," and other canonicals ; all of which, except the wig, Mr. Milton wore till 1818. The wig, however, was at first looked upon with conscientious abhorrence by many. In 1752 one member in Newbury refused communion with the church, because the pastor wore a wig and the church justified him in it. Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians, believed the sufferings of King Philip's war, a judgment from heaven on account of the practice.

In this church, some customs have come down to us from the beginning, others have been changed for the better. We still

elect elders annually, having from nine to twelve, a number which the business of the church requires. Formerly ordination was sometimes neglected, but we now ordain every new elder ; and except an occasional instance of withdrawal from active service for special reasons, they continue to be re-elected. In the third parish till 1750, and in the first till 1769, the scriptures were not read in the public worship ; the puritans wishing, in this respect as in others, to differ from Episcopacy, which requires such reading and prescribes the portion for every service. The fathers stood in family prayer for the same reason. But here the scriptures were always read. The first attempted change in customs related to the singing, and caused long and serious dissension ; in fact more animosity and alienation of feeling, than almost any other subject which has agitated the congregation. In 1720 a much needed reform had commenced. Till that time the churches had but eight or ten tunes, and they were "tortured and twisted as every unskilful throat saw fit." The singing sounded, says Mr. Walter, "like five hundred different tunes roared out at the same time," and had become so drawling that "I myself have twice in one note paused to take breath." The reform caused a wonderful excitement and opposition—"Truly," says one, "I have a great jealousy that if we once begin to sing by rule, the next thing will be to pray by rule and preach by rule and then comes popery !" It was the attempt to discontinue "lining out the psalm " that produced the commotion here, and during the long contest there was some indecorum. For occasionally, whilst one party sang as the Deacon lined it, the opposers would finish the verse, whatever the discord. But at last the innovators triumphed, and peace was restored. The first organ built in this country was in Boston, 1745. The first playing of one in this town was July 1753, at the Episcopal church. Here, however, they used the old fashioned pitch pipe

with notes on, and blown at one end, till Dr. Dana's day, when the clarionet and bass-viol were introduced—much to the scandal of one worthy member, who said “they had got the fiddle and only needed that the minister should get up and dance.” I do not find that any of the older hymn books, Sternhold and Hopkins, Tate and Brady, or the “Bay Psalm Book,” were ever used in this church, although in use around. In 1718 Dr. Watts sent some of his Psalms to Cotton Mather for his opinion. The first edition in this country was published in 1741; and probably his version was always used, as I have seen a copy of the twenty-sixth edition, 1765, belonging to one of the early members.

The “half-way covenant” was practiced in this church throughout Mr. Parsons' ministry; and although objected to by his successor, and the cause of much difficulty at times, was still in vogue till the last years of Dr. Dana's ministry, when the custom happily went into disuse. To his day, also, the table was “fenced” at the communion; Mr. Miltimore being the last who so conducted the service in this house, although Mr. Milton continued the practice till his death.*

Until the introduction of stoves the winter communion was omitted, as the usual services in connexion were numerous; but in 1818 a change was made from three to six times a year, the Saturday afternoon and Monday forenoon meetings were dropped, and only the fast on Tuesday continued. Mr. Williams discontinued this also, the public relation of “experience” and likewise the usual confessions of those “under scandal;”

*Mr. Milton's usual form was modelled after Mr. Murray's. In the close of his sermon he would say: from our subject we learn who have and who have not a right to come to this holy table. Surely they have no right here, who trample under their feet the blood of the everlasting Covenant and do despite to the spirit of grace—I do, therefore, solemnly enclose and fence this table, I do warn all unregenerated persons not to draw near; I debar all who deny the imputation of sin and righteousness, for they can never have known the plague of their own hearts nor the need of a righteousness, answerable to the demands of the law—all Arminians, for they depend and seek to justify themselves by their own works: all Antinomians who profess to receive him by faith, but in works deny him—all Arians and Socinians, &c.

a term of specific meaning. Formerly, instead of sending a "note" for public prayers, the request was made from the pew; sometimes in language as curious as the subjects were various. Forty-five notes were on one occasion presented to Dr. Dana during the second singing; leaving him but time to classify them for general allusion.

Of one old custom, which some yet continue, I find little trace in this church; I mean the preaching of politics on Thanksgivings and Fast days. This was common in the early times of New England, and partly a necessity; for newspapers were hardly known, and the clergy almost the only educated men. And as Queen Elizabeth first *tuned the pulpits* when she would tune the people to a measure, so there was here a reason for political preaching. It was so during the Revolution, when liberty demanded every voice. But afterwards, when parties were formed and measures of policy became the question, the inexpediency of clerical interference soon manifested itself. They lost ground and influence in consequence. "Unfortunately," says one, "for bands and surplices, federalism went down, and almost all the clergy happened to be on the losing side."* With scarce an exception, (during foreign war) my predecessors seem to have kept political subjects from the pulpit.

Its many prayer meetings have been a characteristic of this church. "These, (says Dr. Dana) have been and are the strength and glory of the church." He has mentioned especially those of the females, which have always been numerous and well sustained. Once, the tradition is, an individual went to parish meeting expressly to oppose some measure, but voted for it; and to a question of surprise answered, "What could one do, with so many women praying all around?" In this connection Mrs. Jane Greenleaf will be remembered, as a shining but not

*Withington's election sermon, 1831.

singular example of female piety. Mr. Josiah Plummer, I am told, used to spend the Tuesday fast in prayer, from nine A. M. till evening. That was formerly of special interest, and many came from the other societies, not the aged only, but the young. Such habits, so deeply religious, in the family and in public, indicate the source of the church's prosperity. God has remembered his covenant and blessed it. Rev. Jacob Little of Granville, Ohio, writes thus : " My grandfather, Enoch Little, was born again at the age of eleven under the preaching of Whitefield, while holding on to the pulpit railing to prevent being crushed away by the crowd, and joined the church when twenty-four—removed to Boscawen in 1773, but came twice a year to communion so long as he could ride, 70 miles—dying at eighty-eight, he left a great posterity, the most of whom have become devoted Christians. My father left nine children, all hopefully born again in tender years. Of my own six children, four obtained a hope at the ages of 22, 13, 12 and 10. I am so much a believer in the covenant that I trace the piety of the Boscawen Littles to Enoch, to Whitefield and to the old church at Newburyport ; and the testimony of all his descendants would show much more fully the fruits of your church." Other families show the same. Thirty-four ministers and missionaries are known to have been reared here. One Elder's family has given four ministers to the church. And although there have been but few extensive revivals, the annual average of admissions to the church under the several pastors, has been about as follows :—

Ministers.	No. Years.	Whole No.	Annual Average.
Parsons,	30	303	10
Murray,	12	88	7
Dana,	26	208	8
Williams,	6	89	15
Proudfit,	5½	218	39
Stearns,	14	204	15
Present Pastor,	6	131	22

To one subject more I should be ungrateful not to allude in this history. As a society this, (although others in town merit a like praise) has from the first been distinguished for kindness and attachment to its pastors. Each return of my predecessors has been welcomed with cordial greetings. When the younger of the two was to preach his first sermon after installation, a blind man, not knowing the time but fearing to be late, took his way early in the morning to church ; and to the remark of one who met him, " You must intend to love your new minister ;"—" Not more than the last," was his reply. Mr. Williams, when a candidate, was almost discouraged by the many who were lamenting Dr. Dana's departure, and is himself affectionately and vividly remembered. " On this topic, (says Dr. Dana,) I can bear emphatic and delightful testimony," (concerning his own ministry). Mr. Parsons speaks in a similar way. Mr. Murray in his will earnestly invoked their kindness in behalf of his family, and provision was long made for them. And that this ancient virtue, connected as it is with a religious habit of thought, has not deteriorated, the present pastor can bear grateful record.

(7.) HISTORY FROM 1829.

Rev. John Proudfit, D. D., now Professor at Rutgers College, New Jersey, was installed October 4, 1827. In 1829 alterations were made in the building. At first a "stone monumental church" was contemplated, but sacred attachments and the expense defeated the plan. Finally the inside was somewhat reduced in size, new galleries were put in, the square pews removed, the ceiling was lowered, the pulpit moved from the side, and the cenotaph erected. Shortly after, the "whispering gallery," so conspicuous a feature of the building at present, was accidentally discovered ; and is unsurpassed, it is said, unless by St. Paul's in London.

From the beginning of Dr. Proudfit's ministry to October, 1832, but two communions passed without additions, sometimes considerable. In May 1831 he left home, owing to impaired health, and July 3d sailed for Europe, being absent till January 1832. During this time the pulpit was supplied chiefly by Rev. Mr. Cheever, (now of New York) and Rev. Joseph Abbot, since of Beverly. A four days meeting was held June 21, at Mr. Milton's, as most central, conducted by Drs. Beecher, Wisner, Adams, Rev. Messrs Cumming (of Portland), Cleveland, Blanchard and others ; and an extensive revival prevailed in town. In October 1831, forty-one united with this church at one time ; and in all, from August 1831 to October 10, 1832, the last communion at which the pastor was present, there were added ten by letter, by profession one hundred and twenty ; males thirty-eight, females eighty-two. Of these, however, twenty-nine asked dismissions October 9, owing to some recent difficulties ; and Mr. Cheever would, probably, have been settled in town, could a church have been obtained for him.

His health having again failed him, Dr. Proudfit asked and January 24, 1833, obtained a dismission ; leaving attached friends, and highly regarded as a gentleman of liberal culture, a devoted and successful minister ; one who in the pulpit could instruct and edify, and had, also, what Dr. Watts calls " the happy talent of parlor preaching."

For two years and a half the church was without a pastor ; an event particularly unhappy after so extensive a revival. One or two calls were given, and many candidates heard, without success. A few were disposed to change the government ; but the parish indefinitely postponed the matter—although the purpose was still cherished by some individuals, down to the settlement of the present pastor. One similar proposition had been made by Dr. Dana before his settlement, but then, also, the church refused to loose from its happy

moorings ; and whatever may have been the predilections of his youth, Dr. Dana has ever since evinced a constant attachment to Presbyterian order and discipline.

Rev. Jonathan F. Stearns, D. D., now of Newark, N. J., was ordained September 16, 1835 ; dismissed October 14, 1849. A seven years' absence has not broken the attachments cemented during a fourteen years' ministry ; a ministry faithfully conducted from youth to riper years, and peaceful throughout—except so far as a ripple of controversy with a neighboring brother may once have disturbed its quiet flow. In 1849, another people having become acquainted with his merits, and induced him to accept their call, what have here been by many considered the sacred relations of pastor and people were at length severed.

After his dismissal, the pulpit was for a time supplied by Rev. James Gallaher, so well known at the West. Some of his sermons were novel in style and awakening ; he preached the truth plainly and forcibly ; and there was about the man himself “ such earnestness and such a mass of it,” in connection with some peculiarities, that many here and in town were brought under religious impressions. A considerable revival was the consequence. In conversing with and leading enquirers, however, he seemed to have little facility.

The beginning of November 1849, my first sermon in this house was preached, at the invitation of your committee. After another Sabbath I left, but was re-invited for the month of January ; it being desirable to have some one present, to converse with and direct the enquirers of this church. These services resulted in an invitation to become the pastor ; and I was installed as such May 1, 1850—not, however, without the opposition of a minority, and a protest to Presbytery by a number, many of whom, as in former instances I have mentioned, subsequently left the church. Neither their defection, however,

the grounds of which were various, nor the commencement, during the vacancy here, of a new enterprise under the lamented Emerson, a son of this church, at all impaired the numbers of this congregation ; more than double have since come for all who may have left.

In the last six years, a considerable outstanding debt has been paid, a parsonage bought and paid for. And to-day we re-enter our amiable tabernacle, after thorough repairs, a considerable outlay, and a four months' absence, at peace and prosperous within, with no debt upon the parish, peaceably disposed, and it is pleasant to say on terms of amity with all our evangelical neighbors. At Dr. Withington's settlement, by the joint agency of himself and Dr. Dana, the feuds of the past were put under the vail of oblivion. The severe mother who for thirty years was distraining her daughter for rent, has long since laid aside her anger, and in the changes of time has come much to the daughter's way of thinking. And to her noble pastor, to whom poetry, literature, philosophy and theology, have each awarded a wreath, we are wont to turn as a valued friend and wise counsellor. In Mr. Lowell's church, out of which came part, also, of the original elements of this, Arminianism gradually developed into Unitarianism. Of course, while our views are so opposite, we can hold no ecclesiastical communion. Yet in former days some illustrious in Presbyterian history, Dr. Ashbel Green, Dr. Alexander, Mr. Williams also, and Dr. Dana recently at their invitation, have there proclaimed "the words of this life." And as for ourselves, we can agree to differ ; and extend most cordially that friendliness to their persons, which we must conscientiously withhold from their creed ; in this professing ourselves to be the real maintainers of that only true Christian liberality, which is steady to the truth, but would differ without acrimony.

In conclusion. After completing a full century of hallowed

service, our venerable sanctuary has now the honor of a re-dedication. This I suppose to be an event entirely singular. One who is good authority in matters of the kind, writes to me, "Where is there another which has been thus honored? of what similar occasion is there a memorial in our commonwealth, or in New England?" The instances certainly must be very few, if there are any; and it furnishes one additional reason, why God's servants should "take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof." And now, what is our out-look upon the future; "watchman, what of the night?" what lessons and hopes may we gather from the past? "The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night." First, our statistics show, of living church members, 366; a number greater, it would appear, than at any former period except for a short time in 1832, when it reached 365. The benevolent contributions, also, have trebled since Mr. Williams' day. Although, therefore, churches have multiplied in the place, and the congregation is, no doubt, smaller than during the first half of the century, the church has not lost ground.

Second, churches, like individuals, have a character, impressed upon them at the beginning of their history, by the men who founded and the circumstances which surrounded them. Cradled in a revival, a revival of sound doctrine as well as piety, and through its youth fostered by men deeply imbued with the spirit of that revival, and whose principles persecution helped to confirm, this church received a peculiar character. It has been perpetuated. The catechism is still a text-book in the Sabbath school, the doctrines of that revival are still preached, the prayer-meetings are still maintained, the characteristics of the church are much the same. And in each generation there have been, there are still those whose piety has been of the olden sort, when the church was in "her first glory;" "say not, the former days were better than these." We need

but the divine blessing upon the means of grace, continued as in the past, and our God shall still have here a seed to serve him ; in him is our hope and our confidence.

Third, by this review we are taught to "hold fast that which is good," and not be seduced from the old foundations. Our form of government has stood the test of one hundred years. Providing all desirable safe-guards for individual rights by its courts of appeal, it has preserved a healthful discipline in the church, and brought her through many difficulties. And if at times it has stood in the way of agitators or those who were loose in doctrine, so much more reason do we find to love and cherish it. The old doctrines, too, have here commended themselves by their fruits. The speculations of men have never entered this pulpit. And if the track of our history is one luminous with examples of a devout, prayerful, sterling yet benevolent piety, under the preaching of the old doctrines were they formed and trained. "Hold fast, therefore, the form of sound words ;" for your own sakes, for the sake of your children, for the sake of religion. The circumstances of the day, render this a point of peculiar importance. Your fathers made their protest against Arminianism. "The Arminian churches, it has been said, in that revival stood as a barrier to check the fanaticism[¶] which threatened the land"—they were the "ballast-chests" which restored the vessel's balance, when by the rush of passengers to the opposite side, a fatal disaster was impending. Rather would I say, it was they that kept her down, and by long persistence caused the panic and the rush. It was churches like this and men like Parsons that restored the vessel's trim.

Of certain philosophic subtleties which prevailed early in this century, a divine of note attributes the arrest, to "*the power* that had been left among the unsophisticated churches by Whitefield and the Tennents ;" their preventive, although

unsuspecting antagonism. And to the various errors and the abounding ungodliness and wickedness of the present day, let us offer the same "preventive antagonism." Such has been the position and mission of this church from the beginning. A controversial or antagonistic attitude in any other way than that alluded to, this church has never assumed. The only weapons of her armory are the doctrines of the Gospel, taught in their simplicity and plainness in her Sabbath school and sanctuary, and the prayer-meeting. These are her burnished weapons. It has been the preaching of these doctrines, and the faith and illustration of these doctrines in her members, that have alone given her standing among the churches of Christ.

Finally. There was in Sparta the following custom. The inhabitants, on a certain day, divided themselves into three companies, the old, the middle aged and the young; and each company had its speaker. The old then said to the middle aged:

"We have been in days of old,
Wise, generous, brave and bold"—

to which they responded,

"That which in days of yore ye were,
We at the present moment are."

In turn the young now reply:

"Hereafter at our country's call,
We promise to surpass you all."

My young friends, the fathers of this church were men of vigorous and exemplary piety; and if in any measure their successors have fallen behind, I trust they have not been entirely unworthy of this lineage. The post of duty will soon be yours; and what this church is to be in coming years, it is for you to decide. Aim, then, by a diligent improvement of your privileges, and with fervent prayers for grace to help you, to surpass them all; to make this church what it was in "her first glory" not only, but tenfold better. I commend to you the words of John Higginson in 1663, as still good and appropriate: "If any man amongst us make religion as twelve and the world

as thirteen, let him know he hath neither the spirit of a true New England man, nor yet of a sincere Christian."

And now, Lord God of the fathers, thee we invoke for their children, that their heart may be perfect with thee, to walk in thy statutes, and to keep thy commandments; and that thou would'st maintain the cause of thy people at all times, as the matter shall require, and hearken unto them in all that they may call for unto thee. Amen.

MINISTERS THAT HAVE SPRUNG FROM THIS CHURCH.

- Rev. Nathaniel Noyes,* Maine.
 " Caleb Jewett,* Gorham, Me.
 " Paul Coffin, D. D.,* Maine.
 " Thomas Peirce,* Maine.
 " Stephen Sewell,* Elder, voice failed, preached at times.
 " Silas Moody,* Maine.
 " Jonathan Atkinson,* Limerick, Me.
 " James Morse, D. D.,* Episcopal, Newburyport.
 " Jeremiah Noyes.*
 " Eben Coffin,* Brunswick.
 " Jonathan Greenleaf, D. D., Brooklyn.
 " Daniel D. Tappan,* New Hampshire.
 " Jacob Eastman, Methuen.
 " William Horton, Episcopal.
 " George Noyes, D. D., Professor at Cambridge.
 " John March,* Belleville.
 " Warren Nichols, Home Missionary.
 " M. A. H. Niles,* Congregationalist.
 " Thomas M. Clark, D. D., Bishop of Rhode Island.
 " John Pike, Rowley.
 " William C. Dana, Charleston, S. C.
 " Daniel T. Smith, D. D., Professor at Bangor.
 " William P. Lunt, D. D., Quincy.
 " William C. Greenleaf, Springfield, Ill.
 " Isaac W. Wheelwright, never settled.
 " Rufus W. Clark, East Boston.
 " William Hills,* the West.
 " George Clark, Episcopal, Georgia.
 " Samuel Clark, Episcopal, New Jersey.
 " Joseph Noyes, New Jersey.
 " John E. Emerson, Newburyport.
 " Elias Nason, Natick.
 " Roger S. Howard, Episcopal, Bangor.
 " Francke Williams, M. D.

A P P E N D I X .

One hundred years having elapsed in July since the building of the church, extensive repairs were commenced under an intelligent and judicious committee, viz.: Isaac H. Boardman, Benjamin Harrod, William Pritchard, John N. Cushing and William Graves, Esqs. July 16, a "corner stone" was laid, with appropriate services, none having been found under the building. The house was re-opened November 28th, the day after Thanksgiving, and re-dedicatory services held. The following hymns were written for the occasion.

HYMN, BY GEORGE W. CAMPBELL.

A hundred rolling years have fled,
Since the true hearted, honored dead
This temple reared, where they might meet,
To sit and learn at Jesus' feet.

His voice inspiring urged them on,
Whose name is graved on yonder stone;
His stirring voice is hushed, and here
He sweetly sleeps, till Christ appears.

Pastors, whose lips the altar-fire
Had touched, their accents to inspire,
Here warned of Sin's destroying sway,
"Allured to Heaven, and led the way."

Their virtues let us emulate,
Who, sternly good and simply great,
Bowed here, imploring grace divine,
But made their hearts a holier shrine.

Still may we guard with jealous care
 The truths the fathers held so dear;
 Their Savior serve, like them press on
 And sing at last, the vict'ry won.

Ever upon this sacred height,
 May Christians keep the beacon bright;
 Still may it light the heavenly way,
 Till the glad dawn of endless day.

HYMN, BY HON. GEORGE LUNT.

Behold! the house of God!
 Our grateful toil is done;
 These courts a hundred years have trod
 The father and the son.

Within its sacred walls,
 Once more each reverend head,
 Each sainted form the heart recalls,
 Fathers and mothers dead.

They wrought with pious hands,
 In God they put their trust,
 And like his word their memory stands,
 To consecrate their dust.

Yet, though the house be drest
 With honors newly won,
 While they from earthly labor rest,
 Our work is but begun.

Before us still their race,
 By bright example given,
 Their faith to keep, to win their grace,
 And meet them safe in Heaven!

Of ministers from a distance, there were present Rev. Dr. Proudfit of New Brunswick, N. J., Dr. Stearns of Newark, Dr. Vermilye of the Collegiate Dutch Reformed Church in New York, Dr. Worcester of Salem, Dr. Perry of Groveland, Dr. Chickering of Portland, Rev. Messrs. Kimball, Fitz and Southgate of Ipswich, Pike of Rowley, Tenney of Byfield,

Prince of Georgetown, Herbert of West Newbury, Thompson of Amesbury ; with those in town.

In the afternoon addresses were made. The venerable Dr. Dana, now 85 years of age, opened his remarks with an affecting allusion to the occasion ; and then addressed his audience in words which his years made impressively solemn :

“Once more,” he said, “he was permitted to stand before this dear church and to address his dear friends. His feelings it was difficult for him to explain, or for us to conceive. The occasion called back his mind to scenes long passed—to periods of great interest—and found him once again in the midst of a beloved people, with an assurance of their continued regard and kind sympathies. The seasons he had enjoyed with this church, when as their pastor he was with them in their joys and their sorrows, in sickness and in health, were this day renewed ; and memories were awakened of a portion of life which would never be forgotten. This beloved people had always been the subject of his prayers. While he had enjoyed this occasion, his mind had been deeply impressed with one thought ; the vast importance of properly hearing the gospel preached. By way of putting out some particular thought to illustrate the importance of this matter, he would look to the great number who have rightfully heard the gospel preached in this church. Who could doubt that they were now joined to the angels in their happy worship ; and how many who now live will, by and by, find themselves in the same holy and happy regions of bliss. He would have his hearers ponder these thoughts and pray over them. He would suggest a few thoughts as to the proper manner of preaching and hearing the gospel. 1st. He would have the minister fix his undivided attention upon the Word of Life, and select the purest topics for his sermons, the character of God—the undying love of our Savior—the mercy of our Redeemer—the everlasting happiness of the Christian and the equally undying misery of the sinner, beyond the grave. Topics of great interest like these should demand his fixed attention, and be presented in a manner to command the hearers. It was a beautiful impression that the angels of heaven were present in our worship ; he would have in our ministrations a devoutness that would be acceptable to them. God is always present with us, his searching eye scans our hearts, and he would that this presence should never be forgotten, and never be without its influence. 2d. He would impress upon the minister the importance of faith, and the importance of inculcating in the hearts of his hearers a corresponding implicit faith in his doctrines. By these he did not mean a blind belief and bigotry in all things. It was the duty of all to examine carefully and in the right spirit. When the hearer is satisfied that the preacher declares the truth, it is his duty to receive such truths with implicit faith. He knew that some were luke-warm, and although they had faith, and the doctrines inculcated were clear to them, yet they would go away and find fault with the preach-

er. They make a sad mistake, to their own great injury and to the discouragement of the preacher. 3d. The importance of self-application. He was bold to say that a vast amount of good was lost through this neglect. A preacher may be fervent and zealous, he may bestow much care upon his sermons and pains upon his preaching, his doctrine may be pure, and his truths weighty, yet if he fails in application, his hearers go away without benefit. He would entreat them, if they would not lose their labor, to give their sermons an application.

We should come to the house of God with the desire and purpose to gain good. He was glad to know that many did come with the full belief and expectation that here they would receive good, and receive advantage in the way of religion, and progress in the pathway to Heaven. God treats them according to their purposes and actions. But alas! for the multitude who come without such feelings, and who gain no real good, they too are treated according to their merits. He would have a full attendance at every service, and would desire that no one should depart without a blessing. It would do no hearer any harm to attend every sermon. What a new air it would create could it be so. What a new kind of people we should have. How pleasant for the preacher to come with this impression upon his heart. He would have him reflect that the sermon he listens to may be the last he will ever hear. He would have him make the consideration and the purity of the heart a preparation for eternity. The hearing of the Gospel to be truly profitable must be attended with prayer. To go to God in prayer would greatly aid in hearing and speaking his divine truths. The most earnest listeners come from their bended knees. No one could tell how much aid this custom would be to us. It would lighten the labor of the preacher, give to his tongue unusual eloquence in the unfolding of the gospel, and open the understanding and hearts of his people. If all could be thus be prepared what a living hope could we have.

He congratulated the church on its prosperity—a prosperity dear to his heart—and closed with an earnest entreaty to all to direct their thoughts to the welfare of their souls. and prepare themselves for a glorious immortality.”

After the close of Dr. Dana’s remarks, DR. PROUDFIT spoke as follows :—

I am happy to be with you my friends, to-day, and join you in thankful commemoration of the goodness of God to this church. The happy years of pastoral labors and social joys which I spent among this people—none happier in the retrospect of the past, none happier, I may add, among the anticipations of the future, on this side Heaven—come up before my memory. I came among you little more than a boy in years, and quite destitute of pastoral experience; I succeeded to men eminent in the Church of God for every ministerial endowment; how kindly you bore with my youth and immaturity, how cordially you sustained me, how generously you appreci-

ated me, I can never forget. Nor can I forget, nor you, the rich blessing of God which rested on our mutual relation. I scattered the seed of the Spirit with a weak and trembling hand, but lo! it sprang up before my eyes and ripened quickly to fruit; and my own hand was permitted to gather much of it into the garner of God. These were the first years of my ministry; we cannot, I know, judge of the consequences of our own labor, but as to *visible* result, they were far the most fruitful. Your pastor has given you the statistics: two hundred and eighteen added to this church in those five years—an annual average of thirty-nine. This is something for a man to remember with joy so long as life shall last, the traces of which can never be obliterated, but like an incision on a living tree, will grow deeper, broader and more vivid while the soul itself shall live. No doubt much of this was fruit ripened from seed sown long before. The perpetual culture of the Christian ministry is necessary to its results. I am willing to share my joy with those who sowed before me and those who reaped after me. He that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together. No mean rivalry, no invidious competition over the works and achievements of Christian love, should ever exist; but mutual joy, *joy together*. Yet I do love to dwell with thankful and wondering joy on these remembrances of my early ministry—that period of quiet, visible, and abundant growth and fruitfulness. It was the first thrust of my sickle into the Spiritual harvest, and it yielded the largest and fullest sheaf. If there is somewhat of “glorying” in the recollection, I do not suppress it. Who would not rather—who, at least, that looks at the whole course of this immortal existence, would not rather convert one to God than found a State or discover a continent? Who would not rather “shine as the stars forever and ever,” than flash and glitter for a brief hour across the lower atmosphere of this world? If it is the boldest ambition, it is the purest. We may indulge its highest aspirations without fear of selfish taint. God has enjoined it. God manifest in the flesh looked to its gratification as to “the joy that was set before him.” May he cause it to burn in my soul, and in the souls of all his ministers with an everlasting flame.

The presence of these beloved and honored brethren, Drs. Dana, Withington and Dimmick, with the remembrance of others departed, add a solemn interest to this scene. We have preached together, prayed together, deliberated together, held an alternate weekly lecture and a common monthly concert; and not one word of unkind dispute or altercation has ever passed between us. This is a pleasant recollection to-day. We have had differences, should doubtless have them now, and that too upon matters which we deem important; but not important enough to cause the severing of Christian ties or the interruption of ministerial intercourse.

Among the thoughts which press for utterance at this hour, some of the most solemn are those which are awakened by the very name of this festival. A hundred years! The world has seen but some fifty-eight of these periods, and will not, probably, see so many more. A hundred years! Giant strides of time they are, these centuries. Time will not take many

such to reach the end and witness the completion of "the mystery of God." One hundred years back, and this powerful nation was not founded. The venerable church in which we stand is older than our republic by some quarter of a century. While these 100 years have been rolling away, what vast changes have taken place in the comparative power and political relations of the nations, in the condition of science, the application of material forces, the visible boundaries of the kingdom of God! No century, since time began his march to the song of the morning stars and the shouts of the sons of God, has witnessed such changes, such progress, such amazing developments as the last. The next will be still more memorable. The prophetic voice tells us that events will crowd upon each other with increasing rapidity as the world grows old and the end approaches. A hundred years hence! Who will attempt to forecast what shall then have taken place? One thing we may look upon as certain; at the expiration of that period, you and I will not be here. Your pastor's retrospect has shown that four generations have passed away since this century began. Four generations of church members and of hearers! Four generations of believers and of unbelievers! That is a solemn reflection. Yes, if another centennial celebration shall be held in this house, you and I will not be here. Not here, but *where*? Where? O, it is the great end of the ministry, it is the great business of life to get that question happily answered. Where? Let it never cease to agitate our souls till we can say with humble faith, "When I go hence and am no more seen, I shall be at home with the Lord. Neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, shall separate me from the love of Christ."

All that meets the eye this morning, as compared with former years, is changed. The children have grown up into men and women. I look over the pews in vain for many beloved faces of former days—faces beaming with intense and thoughtful interest in the great themes of the Gospel. They are not here. Other occupants hold these pews, other feet walk in these aisles, other forms fill yonder choir, other hands touch the organ, other voices resound from these walls.

But amidst all these changes there is something here that is not changed, that will never change. The faith that founded this church, the love which like a holy bond has held it together—the spirit of Christian liberality and activity which has caused it to abound in all holy works and Christian charities, (Dr. Cornelius once told me that the largest collection he ever took up for Foreign Mission, was from this church), all these, I hope and believe, are here yet. "The Church," said an eloquent preacher fourteen centuries ago, "not the place, but the character, spirit, life." That is the church which stands here unchanged to-day. The material church decays and is repaired, grows antiquated and is re-fashioned, falls down and is re-built. But the Spiritual Church cannot decay, and undergoes no changes but by growth, progress, expansion. Its materials are "living stones," it is "a spiritual house." It cannot change except by a continual approximation to that form of perfect grandeur and beauty in which it will stand forth

at last—every renewed soul from the creation to the end being inserted just in its right place.

There is not a more beautiful illustration of this immortality or the life of the Spirit than the constant mutual love of those who are related by spiritual ties and sympathies—especially by those which unite a pastor to his people. This truth, in fact, first struck my mind in a real and living way as exemplified by yourselves. From my first coming here to this day, I have continued to receive from this people proofs of constant, generous Christian love; now in one form, now in another, but always beautiful, always precious for the spirit which prompted them. Far above all others, I prize and am thankful for the prayers which have here been offered up for me. Paul says to his Christian friends, “I have all and abound, I am full.” But amidst all this abundance and sufficiency, he begs a continuance of their prayers. I have often felt in my own soul and seen in my house what I believed, and now believe, to be the blessed virtue of the prayers which have been offered for me and mine in this church. Brethren, pray for us. And for myself, so long as I shall tread the path to the throne of grace, “my former flock” will be remembered in my intercessions.

If time and premonition had permitted me to take a subject to-day, it would have been the influences and benefits of the pastoral relation; not its benefits to the people only, though these, I believe, are beyond all appreciation. How much of our American liberty, with the solid intellectual and moral basis on which it rests, is due to the Christian pulpit and preacher, I will not attempt to decide. Certain it is, that liberty in the true republican idea of it, has no existence on earth but in connection with a free gospel ministry. It is not, therefore, extravagant to suppose that it is really an emanation from that of which it is only found as a concomitant. Since I have ceased from the pastorate and ministered occasionally to many different congregations, I have been more powerfully struck with this fact than ever before. Often, as I have looked from the pulpit over the assembled congregation, it has occurred to me that the spectacle is unique and strictly American. Nowhere does it meet the eye out of our own country. I am not insensible to the rich and beautiful culture—Christian culture, of the old world. But it is, in its finest aspects, an individual affair. It is the general aspect of the American congregation which characterises and distinguishes it. Intelligence, competency, self-reliance, reverence for the word of God combined with a disposition to scrutinize everything that claims its sanction, this is what seems to me to be the congregational expression of the assemblies in our American churches. Now these are the very habits, mental and moral, which go to make up a freeman—thoughtful, earnest, fearing God, and therefore fearing nothing else, bowing with awful reverence to truth and law, but looking with bold and searching scrutiny into the things which claim his homage under these venerable names. The disposition to question and investigate, if it do not stagnate into skepticism, is favorable to freedom and progress. This disposition is constantly cherished by the Christian ministry, which is ever throwing out great and

solemn thoughts and themes to occupy and arouse the soul, and withal exhorting the hearers to "prove all things," to "search the Scriptures daily whether these things are so," and to "ask wisdom of God who giveth to all men liberally." He who is imbued with such sentiments and formed to such habits, cannot surrender his rights to despotic power, nor his conscience to priestly dictation. The truth has made him free. And, therefore, truth and freedom are the very constituents of his life. We talk of education, and certainly it is a great and admirable thing in all its parts as conducive to its true end. But here is the very bloom and culmination of all true education—the teaching and training of the house of God.

Who can estimate what this city owes to its pulpits and its pastors? Its quiet streets, its happy homes, its genial hospitality, and all the rich and various culture which makes it what it is—is it not largely fed and kept alive by influences which emanate from this place and others like it. What a rapid deterioration and disorganization would follow if its pulpits were silent, the sweet rest of the Lord's day disused and all the wholesome restraints and pure charities suspended, which have their centre in the house of God, and all animated and directed by the Christian ministry.

These, however, are its present visible and to some extent temporal results. "They are," in the fine language of Robert Hall, "the flowers which Christianity strews along her path on her way to immortality." The noblest triumphs of the pastor are in the realm of the Spirit. His most endearing works will only come to light when time is no longer. His proper work is upon and within the soul. Other men work on perishable materials, and for objects which lie directly and properly within the limits of time. Their work has indeed, (as all human work must have), relations to our future and endless life, but these are incidental. The pastor's direct business is to "save souls from death." All other results and influences of his work, important and noble as they are, are incidental and accessory. His proper work is to unfold and press home in all its boundless capabilities of illustration and application, that "word of life," whereby it even now comes to pass that those who are in their graves do hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth. Here lies the true glory and power of the Christian ministry. Here the weakness of man and the power of God stand forth in the most wonderful combination. In this way it is that "a worm doth thresh the mountains," and God says to his servant as of old, "thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war." Luther once wrote to a desponding friend thus: "Be of good cheer! I have lately seen two miracles. This is the first: I saw the stars and the sky and that vast and magnificent firmament in which the Lord has placed them. I could nowhere discover the column on which the Master has supported this immense vault, and yet the heavens did not fall. And here is the second: I beheld thick clouds hanging above us like a vast sea. I could neither perceive ground on which they reposed, nor cords by which they were suspended; and yet they did not fall upon us, but saluted us rapidly and fled away."

But we see a much greater miracle, (if the physical and the spiritual

admit of a comparison), when a soul dead in sin, suddenly shows the power of an omnipotent breath passing over it, is agitated by new fears, stirred up to longings, hopes, joys and aspirations which it felt not before—is not this a new life? And is not life more wonderful than matter? O, if we should see a cold corpse begin to breathe and move, if the dust which has slept for near a century beneath this pulpit should come forth in living forms before our eyes, we would not witness a more palpable display of almighty power than when “life from God” enters into a soul dead in trespasses and sins. This far surpasses Luther’s miracle of the unpillared firmament draped with clouds and studded with stars. These are miracles, doubtless, of which Christ spoke when he said, “Greater works than these shall he do that believeth on me, because I go unto my Father.” Such miracles we have seen here, my friends. They have never ceased from this church. How easy it would be to recall instances which occurred while I was with you! I have seen tears flowing down the cheeks of those whose levity and utter indifference to religion but a little before, amazed and distressed me. I have seen men whom I regarded as of a singularly impassive temperament, men utterly wedded to this world as if there were no other, sometimes men of decidedly skeptical turn, pass into a new phase of character, as it were, and show the simplicity, the warm love and ready trust of a true spiritual childhood. The faintest whisper of divine truth sometimes sufficed to evoke into existence this new world of thoughts and emotions. “This is the finger of God,” have I said to myself when I have seen such things.

And now look at this aspect of the pastoral work here, as it was presented to you in your pastor’s “Retrospect,” this morning. Over four thousand souls have passed through this church on their way to eternity. O, what a greeting will every faithful pastor whose labor went to the making up of this aggregate receive from those who were led to Christ by his ministry! He will there see faces which here below he only knew wet with tears or wasted with sickness or racked by pain, but there glowing with unwonted beauty and heavenly joy and love. Methinks some of those “shining ones” will meet their pastor as he is struggling out of the swellings of Jordan, the first to welcome him. Will they not know him? Will they not, of all the redeemed, sustain peculiar relations to him as endless ages shall roll away? And when he shall present them before the throne, saying, “Behold I, and the children whom thou has given me;” will not their voices be first in the heavenly chorus which shall re-echo the approving sentence, “Well done! good and faithful servant.”

Whether we look at the present or the future, the pastor is himself the subject of some of the richest influences and blessings of this relation. The studies, the duties, the whole work and life of the Christian minister afford as perfect and complete a discipline and development of the whole man as could possibly be devised. He *must* be a man of study and of thought. He must refresh, enrich and invigorate his mind by large and various reading, if he would not have his emptiness instead of his “proficiency appear to

all." No intellectual soil is so rich as to yield two or three crops a week without liberal and skilful tillage. The drain of the ministry is incessant and exhausting, and must be met by constant acquisition. Then there is no danger that his faculties should "rust in him unused," or his "thoughts want air and spoil like bales unopened to the sun." He must be a student, but he cannot be a recluse. He has occasion to use all he can learn as fast as he can learn it—generally, in fact, a little faster. He must study the human heart, too, and the philosophy of teaching and applying truth. After all, he will soon find that all he can do of himself is nothing; and that will send him to God for skill, strength and success. Here is a discipline of all the faculties and all the virtues. A Christian heart will, it is true, render any course of life such a discipline. But certainly its widest sphere, its strongest incentives are found in the ministry. And as it goes its blessed round, he finds that like all other charity, it is "twice blessed." When he went to *teach*, he often *learns*; he receives more than he gives. The most touching and powerful discourse on Christian resignation which I ever heard, was from a poor old woman in yonder alms-house. I was speaking to her of Christian submission under trials and humiliations. "O, sir," said she, "the goodness of God! That is what I think of—the goodness of God; that he should put it into the hearts of people to build such a comfortable home as this, and provide food and clothes and a warm fire in this dreadful weather, for such a poor creature as I am." I once heard M. Monod preach on "Christian Contentment." But the eloquent preacher did not teach my heart half so powerfully as the broken accents of this child of God, uttering words of thankfulness and shedding tears of joy where I thought of exhorting her to no higher virtue than patience and submission. The eloquence of the pulpit is, no doubt, a fine affair; but the eloquence of uncomplaining poverty, the eloquence of the Christian mother when she says, "O, I have lost my only son, the only hope and support of my old age—but it is the Lord. O, I will try to say, 'Good is the will of the Lord;'"—the eloquence of the contrite heart, smitten with a sense of sin and revealing its intolerable anguish through the workings of the countenance; the eloquence of holy joy when the soul has found its Savior—this eloquence without words often conveys truth which no words can utter. These are some of the experiences of the pastor. They are brought to my mind, as I look around me this morning and pass once more through these familiar scenes. I could go from spot to spot in this town and say, "*Here* I saw the power of truth to awaken the careless sinner; there, like a beam from heaven, I saw it give hope and peace to the troubled spirit; there it conquered poverty and pain, there cheered the weariness of long sickness or lighted up the chamber of death with the radiance of opening heaven; here I learned, how in total seclusion from the world, a praying and believing soul could keep alive the warmest and largest charity, and powerfully influence the affairs of the world through him who made and governs it, just as one who has the ear and confidence of an earthly monarch often exerts a power over the realm far greater than that of the bustling visible actors in the scene; here

I learned how Christian love could make a man cheerful and active without a ray of sunlight ; when I saw a member of this church utterly blind, yet unweariedly busy in doing good, going forth with his staff on Monday morning to look after the seekers of truth and report anxious souls to the minister, and from that to Saturday night having nothing to do but to comfort the sick and sorrowful, to look after the poor, to converse with inquirers, to collect the incomes of charitable institutions. When I have gone on pastoral visits to the sick and afflicted, I have heard that well known voice in prayer as I approached their dwellings. Such scenes, such living examples teach a man as no books, or occasions or teachers can, that Christianity is a real and living thing. The man of science must go to nature and look upon her actual phenomena and living forms, if he would gain exact and satisfactory knowledge. So the things of the Spirit must be studied in those wondrous phases which in the spiritual progress and development of the church of God display their power. And to this comparative study of the word of God and the heart of man, the life of the Christian pastor affords the most favorable opportunities.

It is sometimes affirmed that this relation between pastor and people is less strong and sacred, and therefore less enduring than formerly. But certainly the history of this congregation discloses no such fact nor tendency. In the last century you have had seven pastors. Dr. Dana was twenty-six years pastor, and only left to assume the presidency of Dartmouth College. Mr. Williams remained with you till death. For myself, when after four years the state of my health induced me to resign, the elders with one voice besought me not to mention the thing again, and offered me an assistant, to be nominated by me and paid by themselves. This arrangement continued for some months. And when I felt obliged to persist in my former resolution, you publicly declined to accept my resignation, and left me at liberty to go where I would for the recovery of my health, offering to take care of yourselves, and desiring that the relation between us might stand unaltered. These resolutions, signed in behalf of the church by the venerable Deacon Moody, were enclosed to me, accompanied by expressions of generosity and affectionate sympathy, in a letter from General Cushing, and signed in behalf of the society by Caleb Cushing, Thomas M. Clark and M. P. Parish. And when after several months absence I was obliged to renew my request, your love to me did not cease, but, as I have said before, continued to reach me in the shape of kind and valuable mementos, some of which it was long before I could trace to the individual donor—so generous, so self-forgetting was the love which prompted them. It is impossible to speak or think of such things without deep emotions of admiration and gratitude. And for the other congregations of this town, here is Dr. Withington, who after a pastorate of forty years could not persuade his people to let him retire last summer, but was constrained to remain. Here is Dr. Dimmick, too, who has been pastor of the Titcomb street church for thirty-seven years ; Dr. Morse was rector of St. Paul's church for thirty-nine years, and the venerable Miltimore and Milton only laid down their pastor's crook

in death, having tended the same flocks, the former for nearly twenty-five, the latter for forty-three years. Whatever blight, therefore, may have fallen on other parts of "the minister's paradise," this corner of it, at least, seems to be as green, fruitful and snugly sheltered as ever. Among all the details of the last century to which we listened this morning, not one instance occurred of a violent disruption of the pastoral tie. And your history proves that this policy is as wise as it is magnanimous and noble. This church has not only been a strong and prosperous, and generally, a united church, but it has been a mother of churches. Whereas, no congregation that has pursued a mean, exacting, capricious, unfeeling policy towards their ministers, has failed to be smitten with barrenness or the spirit of disunion, as the punishment for their sin. Christ loves his ministers, with all their imperfections. He make common cause with them, (Luke 10:16.) Paul tells the Christians of Philippi that their noble and exuberant generosity to him was "a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God;" and that they should not suffer for it. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

One impression made upon me by the appearance of the congregation. I cannot leave unexpressed. "Instead of the fathers God has taken the children." The body of this church still consists of those who have been nurtured in her own bosom. Here is a delightful proof, at once, of God's fidelity to his covenant, and of the efficacy of pastoral labor and of pious family culture. The family of one of my elders, (my dear and honored friend, Thomas M. Clark, Esq.,) has yielded four ministers to the church. May the dew of God's blessing ever rest on the baptized youth of this church! Are any of them without the sacred enclosure of her communion? May they begin this century by falling into that line of march which is ever passing on through the earthly into the heavenly temple. God forbid that any of them should linger behind and be left forever with "them who are without."

And now, let me express the pleasure it gives me this morning to see my young friend, Mr. Vermilye, whose honored father was one of my earliest friends in Christ, ministering to you in holy things. May God greatly bless you both in this sacred and delightful relation, and make it fruitful alike to you and to him of all the influences and blessings of which I have spoken.

And as my eye rests on that monument let me recall the way in which it came there, as it may hereafter be a tradition of some interest. I was calling one evening on Mr. Bartlett, when about to leave for an absence of some weeks. He told me that he had heard Whitefield when a boy, and had never forgotten the impression made upon him by his preaching. He expressed a desire to have a suitable monument erected to his memory in this church. He asked if I would look after the matter and employ an eminent artist to do the work. I inquired how much he was willing it should cost. "On that point," he replied, "I leave you entirely at liberty. Let it be something worthy of a great and good man." That monument, designed by Strickland and executed by Strothers, is the result. I used the liberty

he gave me moderately. Had it cost ten times as much he would, I have no doubt, have paid it cheerfully. When the artist presented his demand, Mr. Bartlett gave his check for a hundred dollars above the amount. When I was in England the congregations of Tottenham Court and the Tabernacle intimated a desire to have his remains removed to England. But when I told them what Mr. Bartlett had done, they said that if an American gentleman was willing to give three hundred pounds to do honor to his memory, America was well entitled to his remains.

May God be ever rearing in this church nobler and more endearing monuments than of marble or executed by human art. May peace be within these walls and prosperity within this palace of our God. And if a centennial festival is held here in 1956, may you and I look upon it from those heavenly seats whose blessed occupants are ever beholding in the church on earth "the manifold wisdom of God."

(Circumstances have prevented our receiving a corrected copy of DR. STEARNS' very touching and impressive address.) He spoke, in substance, as follows:—

Dr. Stearns said there was something very impressive and solemn in the consideration of the onward movement of time. An act once performed could never be undone, a sin once committed could never be swept away—there was no retreat from the past, no calling back of time. If we make a mistake and commit a wrong we may repent of it, and by the blessing of God, may be forgiven, but the record of the past must remain. You that are old men and women can never be young again. You that are in middle life can never again enjoy youth. You that are in youth can never return to childhood, can never claim the promise, if you have not already—"They that seek me early shall find me." We gather age as years roll on, unmindful of the fleeting days. I am reminded of this fact by the scene which lies before me, which carries me back in memory over twenty-two years, when I stood in this desk. As near as I can fix the time, it is twenty-two years and two weeks since I preached my first sermon from this pulpit. It was the first sermon I ever preached to a vacant congregation. I came here with two sermons in my pocket and one unfinished in my desk, upon an engagement of two Sabbaths. After that service, to my great surprise, I received a call from this society to become their pastor. I shrunk from the pastorate of this large congregation, and then you will recollect there were some difficulties about Presbyterianism. I was away about a year when I again came among you. Twenty-one years ago the 16th September, I stood in this desk and received the solemn charge. Since that time what changes have taken place. If it were not for the presence of my two predecessors in this desk, to keep me company, I should feel old. A week after my removal to this place, as I was visiting one of my parishioners, I was met at the gate by a little girl who said she had come to welcome her new pastor. To-day I am the guest of that girl who has grown to womanhood, and is blessed with a happy family. He held in his hand the catalogue of the Sabbath

school, published two years after his settlement. He knew the names and the ages, and if he should read them, he thought his hearers would smile more than they were wont to do in that sacred place. He then pointed out the seats of many of his parishioners, recalling their virtues and qualities, and the impressions made upon him by their presence.

There was one feature of this society which struck him with peculiar interest. Allusion had been made to prayer meetings. He never knew a society that contained so large a number of praying women. It was distinguished for that. There was another trait in this people; they always loved their pastor. When Mr. Williams came as a candidate among them, he was almost discouraged by the women who were weeping for Dr. Dana. It is a people distinguished in all their history for their esteem for their pastors. Not for the man, but for his works' sake. It is the shepherd that has had the affection of the people. He had never changed that impression. He never knew a people that combined more of the virtues of a good society than this, to whom for a period of fourteen years his earthly ministrations were devoted.

He rejoiced in the scenes of the day. The venerable house, renovated in a manner to send it down to another generation, he should always look to with pleasure. He rejoiced in the spirit which he was permitted to discover, in that interesting unity which was manifest in support of their young and beloved pastor. He rejoiced that God had opened the windows of heaven, and poured out his mercies among them. He rejoiced that the church was growing in numbers in strength, in the graces of undivided devotedness. He would have the members hold fast to the great principles, which their fathers loved so much, and which lightened for them the dark passage to the tomb. He would have them search for vital godliness. The church had always been distinguished for this. To use a term which was common in years past, and which would be a good one now, this church had always been eminently a *revival* church. It was born in one of those seasons of universal outpourings of gospel riches, and he hoped it would always continue to be so. There was no true religion unless it was begotten by the Holy Spirit—no real piety unless coming from God, no conversion except by power from on high. We could not trust so much upon the success of preachers as upon Him who alone can bring light out of darkness. He would have them look to Christ for support.

This was the first time that the four pastors ever stood together, and would probably be the last. Many who then looked upon each other face to face would never again have an opportunity. We were all moving on life's journey; the end would soon be reached and all of us pass to eternity. We should soon stand before the bar of God to give our last account. Oh, what a scene will that be, when pastor and people come together before him who searcheth the heart of man. How many will be sent away who gave no evidence of peace with God. How many will cover up their face and bow down, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Let us all try and bring our sins to the foot of the cross and strive for purity. But what a glorious

day will that be when we meet the smiles of our Maker. Whitefield and Parsons, and Murray and Williams and those whom these faithful pastors have drawn from their sins through the grace of God, by their labors. God grant that we may all be partakers of his love in that day.

DR. VERMILYE of New York, remarked—

That this seemed so much like a family gathering that he was afraid it was hardly becoming in a stranger to intrude upon their family joy. Yet he could hardly allow himself to be thought an entire stranger; he could not feel so. For there were ties in his connexion with a former pastor, to which so pleasant an allusion had been made, and especially in his connexion with the present, which certainly awakened his most lively sympathy in all that was going on among this people. He would, therefore, most cordially unite his voice with others in congratulation. The occasion, it seemed to him, was altogether congratulatory. It was a matter of thanks to God that the old meeting-house, the scene of so many interesting events, the spiritual home of so many now present and so many who have passed to their rest: a building combining so much that is interesting in the history of this town, and so much connected with the history of the church in this country, should yet stand. While change has been going on through the country and the world, this building remained a monument written over with the records of the past—a guide-stone pointing the path of the future. Its frail materials have outlived not only every other edifice in the place, probably, three generations of men, but the very government which was recognized in this land when it was erected. During a period of agitation and change greater than was ever known in the same space of time, while the kingdoms of the earth have been moved, and thrones and altars have gone to the ground, while this continent has beheld more wonderful changes than any other portion of the globe and reveals literally a new world to our eye, this house remains, fulfilling the same ends for which it was erected. Should one of the original worshippers return, he might indeed observe some slight alterations in its arrangements; but he would see that here it still stands, and hither the tribes still come up to the testimony of the Lord.

It is a subject of gratulation, also, that the spiritual edifice likewise remains unchanged. The same form of church order is upheld, and the same doctrines are here preached that first were heard within these walls. A pure gospel: man's ruin by the fall and recovery by the grace that is in Christ Jesus alone; justification by faith, renewal and sanctification by the Holy Spirit—these have been the blissful themes to which all the ministers of this church have successively devoted their powers. While changes have been going on in these respects all around and in your immediate region, and another gospel has been widely inculcated, this has been and continues the faith of this church; and this simple gospel God has abundantly blessed to the establishing of this church and the upholding of the Saints.

It is cause of congratulation, also, that the ministers among this people

have been always, I believe, well esteemed for their works' sake. Four successive pastors are here to-day. And I feel strongly impelled to offer thanks to this people in the name of Christians generally, for the good example they have set in this respect. While their ministers have been among them they have had grace and good sense and right feeling enough to treat them with kind consideration; and when after removal they visit you, to give them the affectionate grasp of the hand and a cordial welcome. God is wont to bless a people who display a right estimate of the gospel by due benevolence to his servants. And for the reverse the blight has fallen upon many a people.

These were proper causes of congratulation. May this edifice and the spiritual house here collected remain during the changes and storms of another century. Within its gates may devout worshippers never cease to gather. May its light shine on, illuminating this whole region, until it shall be merged, not lost, amidst the splendors of the millennial day.