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Woodbridge, John.

The Jubilee of New
England. A sermon
preached in Hadley,
December, 22, 1820.





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The Jubilee of New England.

A
SERMON.

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PREACHED IN HADLEY, DECEMBER 22, 1820

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LANDING OF

OUR FATHERS AT PLYMOUTH;

BEING TWO CENTURIES

FROM THAT EVENT.

✓
BY JOHN WOODBRIDGE,
Pastor of the Church in Hadley.



—•—
NORTHAMPTON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

✂ To save the trouble of particular reference in the body of the following Sermon, the writer would acknowledge in this place, his special obligations to Neal's History of the Puritans, Mather's Magnalia, Trumbull's General History of the United States, Miss Adams' History of New England, Marshal's Life of Washington, Rev. Mr. Church's Sermon on the first settlement of New England, Robbins' Continuation of Tytler, and various other works of approved accuracy.

15-28/98

SERMON.

PSALM xliv, 1—3.

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old: How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favor unto them.

TWO hundred years have elapsed, since the settlement of New England commenced; and we, in common with multitudes of christians, in this now populous and happy country, have assembled to commemorate the virtues of our fathers, and the merciful dealings of Heaven towards them, and their posterity. May I not, therefore, hope for your attention, while I briefly exhibit those great outlines of our history, which most impressively illustrate the goodness of God to New England, and our obligations to gratitude.

Our fathers were *puritans*. The name was first given to those, who, under the arbitrary reign of Elizabeth, distinguished themselves by their opposition to the superstitious ceremonies of the English church, and by their zeal for restoring the worship of God to the simplicity and purity of the apostolic days. By an attempt so laudable, they exposed themselves to the resentment of their sovereign, who resolved to enforce, at all events, and by the severest penalties, perfect uniformity in the religion of her subjects. Her successor, James I. with talents incomparably inferior to hers, imbibed all her high no-

tions of prerogative, and pursued the policy of coercing all to a conformity to the rites of the established church. In this situation, the puritans were obliged to violate their consciences, by submitting to forms which they regarded as anti-scriptural; or to subject themselves to persecution at home; or to seek, in some foreign country, an asylum from oppression. They were, as a body, eminent for their piety; and not a few of them, for their learning. Their divines indeed were surpassed by none in extensive erudition, personal sanctity, and diligence in the pastoral office. So far were the puritans from possessing a factious spirit, that they were ready to yield to every exercise of the royal authority, not incompatible with their duty to God, and the just rights of the subject. They were, at the same time, the determined enemies of regal usurpation, and the avowed advocates of rational freedom; so that Hume himself, who hated their principles, is obliged to pay to their memory the following tribute of reluctant praise. “By *them* alone, the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved, and to *them* the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution.” OUR FATHERS WERE PURITANS.

They chose a residence in the American wilderness, not for purposes of gain, or of glory, but for the undisturbed enjoyment of their religion, for erecting a church on evangelical principles, for establishing a christian Commonwealth, and for extending the blessings of the gospel to the savage natives of this new world. Noble design! Let us now mark the success, with which, through the kindness of Providence, it was so gloriously crowned.

A. D. 1608, Mr. Robinson, a learned and pious dissenting clergyman in England, desirous of avoiding the temptations incident to a residence in his own country, and escaping the pollutions of the world, removed, with a part of his congregation, into Amsterdam in Holland. His principles were truly catholic. He was unwilling to separate from any of the churches of Christ; and, while he opposed the corruptions of the English church, he readily received from it to his communion, all such, as manifested an attachment to the essential doctrines of the cross, and exhibited evidence of genuine piety. In the following year, he, with the people of his charge, re-

moved to Leyden, where they enjoyed, unmolested, their religious privileges. After twelve years, they contemplated a removal to America; and obtained from king James the private assurance, that, provided they were peaceable, he would give them no molestation in their enterprise. They were induced to meditate a change of residence, from a consideration of the unhealthiness of the climate; the hardships incurred, in earning the means of subsistence; the prospect of war between Spain and Holland; the licentious manners of the Hollanders, by which the principles and morals of their youth were endangered; and also, by the wish of establishing a church, and civil polity, agreeable to the laws of christianity, and of propagating the gospel among heathen nations. Their resolution was not formed, till after much solemn deliberation, and many earnest prayers. It was at last determined, that a part of the congregation only, consisting of the younger and more robust, should first undertake the perils of a new settlement on the western continent; and that the pastor, with the majority of his flock, should remain at Leyden, till a place of permanent abode had been selected, and a foundation for a colony laid, by their enterprising brethren. The adventurers were not, however, to separate themselves from christian privileges; and Mr. William Brewster, an assistant teacher to Mr. Robinson, was chosen, and readily consented, to attend them in their pious undertaking. After employing two ships for their transportation, this little band of worthies, on the 2d of July, 1620, assembled to hear a farewell Sermon from their pastor; and, having wept for a time in the arms of their brethren, set sail, amidst their tears, prayers and benedictions. They soon reached Southampton in England; and on the 5th of August, sailed from that place, with the intention of crossing the Atlantick. Twice were they driven back by the weather: and one of the ships proved so defective, that they were obliged to dismiss it from their service. The whole company, consisting of a hundred and one persons, betook themselves to the other ship; they sailed from old Plymouth on the 6th of Sept. and, after a tempestuous and dangerous voyage, during which many of them were so disheartened as to meditate a return to Europe, they arrived at Cape Cod on the 9th of November.

Previously to their disembarkation, however, after ardent thanks to God, for his protection and guidance, amidst the dangers of the deep, they formed themselves into a political community, under the English crown; subscribed a contract, as the basis of their government; and elected Mr. John Carver as their governor for the first year. It is not easy for us to conceive, it is not possible to describe, the mingled emotions with which they were agitated, when they found themselves on the American ground. It was their first object to find a convenient place for their intended settlement; and for this purpose, three parties, in succession, were employed to explore the country. The first and the second returned without the desired success; but they found a quantity of Indian corn, which served them for seed in the ensuing spring. They, who engaged in the third expedition, after many sufferings occasioned by the inclemency of the season, and after having resisted and dispersed, without the loss of a man, a band of savages, by whom they were suddenly surrounded, and assailed with arrows, discovered the spot where *Plymouth* now stands, and returned with an encouraging report to their companions. This was therefore chosen as the seat of the colony; and on the 25th of December, the company began to build the first dwelling house, that had ever been erected in NEW ENGLAND.

Many and severe were their trials. Thrown, in the midst of winter, into an uncultivated and inhospitable region; their provisions scanty; without any other habitations, than those which could be raised, in such a season, and in such a place, by their own hands; surrounded by blood-thirsty barbarians; three thousand miles from home, and separated from the nearest civilized settlement by a distance of several hundred miles; they had no where to look for counsel, no where to go for protection and relief in danger, but to the God of their salvation. It was his pleasure, that their faith and patience, in such a situation, should be further tried by wasting sickness. For two or three of the winter months, there were times, when scarcely five of their number had sufficient health to attend upon the sick; and by the opening of the spring, forty-five of this little company had been gathered to the congregation of the dead. So early, and so sudden a removal of almost half

their number, would have destroyed the fortitude of the survivors, and plunged them into despair, had they not already learned to account themselves but strangers and *pilgrims* on the earth.

They found abundant reason to speak of the mercies, as well as the judgments, of the God they worshipped. During that dismal winter, when they were utterly incapable of resisting an enemy; He shielded them against all the cruel designs of their savage neighbors. That very race of men, who six years before had expelled from the coast a company of Englishmen, designing to effect a settlement in the country, were restrained from moving a tongue, against this little host of puritans, benumbed with cold, exhausted by fatigue, and wasted by pestilence. Two or three years previously to their arrival indeed, the population and strength of the aboriginal inhabitants, had been so diminished by sickness and war, as to render them far less dangerous enemies, than they would have been, at an earlier period.

The winter was shorter than usual; and in the spring, two Indians,—of whom, one had been acquainted with some English fishing vessels on the eastern coast, and the other, having escaped from slavery in Spain, had lived some time in England,—made their appearance, and bade the settlers welcome in their own language. This last Indian was particularly friendly; and among other services, that he rendered to the infant colony, he succeeded, in bringing Massasoit, the principal sachem in the neighborhood, into a treaty of peace with the English, which was observed for fifty years. The example of this prince was followed by nine others; who, on the 13th of September 1621, subscribed a written acknowledgment of subjection to the British monarchy. Thus did God raise up friends to our ancestors among the heathen.

In November, the settlers were joined by some of their friends from Holland, who brought with them a supply of necessities, and a charter from England.

At the close of the year 1624, the town consisted of a hundred and eighty inhabitants. From so feeble a beginning, did the colony of Plymouth rise to respectability, riches and power. "In a few years," says Cotton Mather, "there was a

notable number of towns to be seen settled among them, and very considerable churches walking, so far as they had attained, in the faith and order of the gospel. Their churches flourished so considerably, that in the year 1642, there were above a dozen ministers, and some of these ministers were stars of the first magnitude, shining in their several orbs among them."

In the reign of Charles I. while the government of the church was in the hands of archbishop Laud, the spirit of persecution continued to manifest itself with undiminished violence; and the puritans found it necessary to seek a retreat from the storm. Emigrations to New England became frequent; and the worthiest sons of Britain helped to extend the boundaries, and augment the glory, of this new country. The settlement of Salem commenced in 1625; and in 1628, Sir Henry Roswell and several other gentlemen were incorporated, as a body politic, by a charter from the crown, with the title of "The Governor and company of Massachusetts Bay in New England." In 1629, a hundred persons from England, having spent some time in the place now called Charlestown, removed, and began the settlement of Boston. A church was formed, of which the Rev. John Wilson was the first pastor. In the same year, the government of Massachusetts was transferred to the colony: John Winthrop, Esq. was chosen governor, and Mr. Thomas Dudley, deputy governor, who, with the council and others, amounting in all to fifteen hundred persons, set sail from England, and, on the 12th of June, arrived in Salem. In 1630, Dorchester and Roxbury were settled. The minister of Roxbury was the Rev. John Eliot, whose piety, and missionary labors have rendered his name immortal. In 1635, the people of Massachusetts had become so numerous, that it was found inexpedient for the whole body of the freemen to meet in General Court, as had before been customary; and representatives were chosen for that purpose. In the same year, several families from Roxbury, Dorchester, Cambridge and Watertown, with the Rev. Thomas Hooker at their head, pursued their way through the wilderness, and, after a laborious and painful journey of fourteen days, arrived at Connecticut river, and founded the towns of Windsor, Hartford and Weathersfield. Such was the beginning of Connecticut.

Twelve years earlier, a settlement had commenced on the Piscataqua river, the first in New Hampshire ; and another, about the same time, in the district of Maine. In 1636, Roger Williams, who had been banished from Massachusetts as a disturber of the peace, began, with some of his friends, to settle Providence ; and, the next year, the enthusiastic Mrs. Hutchinson, with a large party of her adherents, removed from the colony, and founded Rhode Island. New Haven was settled in 1636, by an opulent company from London and its vicinity, among whom were Messrs. Hopkins, Eaton, and that eminent scholar and divine, the Rev. John Davenport. Thus did the church in New England break forth, on the right hand and on the left. In 1642, twenty-two years from the first landing at Plymouth, New England contained fifty towns and villages, between thirty and forty meeting houses, and, in all probability, a still greater number of faithful and laborious ministers. In addition to all their agricultural and social improvements, the inhabitants had, at their own expense, erected a castle, forts and prisons ; had founded a college ; and had acquired all the consistency, order and harmony of a regular political community, governed by their own laws. In eight years from this time, the number of churches was forty, and of communicants, seven thousand seven hundred and fifty. In 1696, New England contained a hundred and thirty congregational churches, and nearly the same number of ministers.

The population and prosperity of the country had been not a little retarded, by those repeated wars with the natives, in which our fathers were called to engage. Of all enemies, the Indian tribes were most to be dreaded, for their cruel mode of warfare, their inflexible resolution, and their vindictive resentments. It does not comport with my design, nor would it be consistent with my intended limits, to give you a detailed narrative of those horrors, which the early history of New England opens to our view. I shall merely glance at some of those prominent events, by which we may form some conception of the perilous situation of our ancestors, surrounded by foes sagacious to a proverb, and whose revenge was insatiable as death. The famous Pequod war began, seventeen years after the settlement of Plymouth, in various depredations, and

unprovoked murders committed by the Indians. The whole country was in alarm. The colonies, trusting in God, united their forces, and poured them into the country of the enemy. The Pequods were surprised and overcome. Their total defeat terminated the conflict.

After this, our fathers, though frequently threatened with savage hostilities, lived in peace with the Indians for thirty-eight years. The calm was, however, succeeded by a dreadful tempest. In 1675, began the war with Philip, sachem of the Wampanoags, an artful and ambitious man, who, from jealousy of the rising prosperity of the colonies, had endeavored secretly to engage against them all the neighboring Indians. His measures were deeply insidious; and he seems to have aimed at nothing less than the utter extermination of the colonists. In a little time, all the savage nations in the country were excited to arms; and the most terrible ravages were committed by these barbarous enemies of the English. In the course of the war, the Indians laid in ashes Mendon, Groton and Warwick; burnt thirty houses in Springfield, most of the houses in Deerfield, half the town of Medfield, and many buildings in Lancaster, Rehoboth, Providence, and several other places. The inhabitants of this, and the neighboring towns, partook of the general alarm. Troops were for a time stationed in Northampton, Hadley and Hatfield, to protect the people from the sanguinary depredations of the enemy. A signal victory was gained over the Indians in Hatfield, many of whom were killed, and the rest fled with such precipitation, that not a few of them perished in the river. In this encounter, the English lost but one man. In one instance, seven hundred Indians made an assault upon this town, but were repulsed with great loss. It has been stated, I know not upon what grounds, that a field-piece, which, a few weeks before had been brought from Boston, being loaded by the women of Hadley, and conveyed by them to the troops, did great execution upon this occasion. The savages, it is said, were immediately seized with a panic, and fled in every direction. It is furthermore affirmed, that the annual observance of a state thanksgiving^e commenced, in consequence of the extraordinary deliverance then afforded to the inhabitants of this town; and

other successes, with which the arms of the colonists had, in various instances, been recently crowned. Philip's war continued little more than a year; but might have lasted longer, had not the death of that aspiring chief disheartened the Indians, and disposed them to a cessation of hostilities. The victory of the colonists was dearly bought. They had contracted an enormous debt, and sustained a great loss of property, by the war. Twelve or thirteen of their towns had been destroyed; six hundred of their buildings laid in ashes; and six hundred inhabitants of New England, the strength and hope of the country, either killed in fight, or murdered by the Indians.* While Philip was extending his ravages in the west; the eastern Indians were spreading consternation and death through the plantations of the Piscataqua, and the province of Maine. The war in that quarter continued three years; and was terminated by a formal treaty of peace, in 1678.

In 1688, a new savage war broke out upon our frontiers, of which the French were the original instigators. The Indians committed many barbarities, which need not be here related; and the inhuman murder of Major Waldron and his companions can never be forgotten in New England. Forces were raised by the colonists to attack the French in Nova Scotia and Canada; Port Royal surrendered; but the expedition against Canada proved unsuccessful. This war ended in 1693. Peace was however of short continuance; for the next year found the Indians again in arms. This breach of treaty was owing to the instigation of the French, who seized every occasion to embroil the colonists in war with the natives. After harassing and ravaging the country for three more years, the Indians, in 1697, consented to bury the hatchet, and submitted to the English government.

In consequence of the declaration of war by Great Britain, in 1702, against both France and Spain, the provinces of Massachusetts and New Hampshire were exposed, for ten years, to the perpetual inroads of the French and Indians. On the 28th of February, 1703, three hundred of the enemy surprised

* Dr. Trumbull supposes, that nearly one family in twenty, was burnt out, during the war; and that the country sustained the loss of nearly a twentieth part of its fencible men.

Deerfield, killed about forty of its inhabitants, destroyed the town, and took nearly a hundred captives, of whom, more than twenty, being unable to travel with as much expedition as the rest of the company, were murdered on their way to Canada. Many other settlements shared a similar fate. "The whole country," says Dr. Trumbull, "from Deerfield to Casco, was kept in continual alarm and terror by small parties of the enemy. The women and children were obliged to retire into garrisons, the men to go armed to their labors, and constantly to post sentinels in their fields." The colonies resisted these savage aggressions with becoming spirit; and the exploits of Colonel Church in this, and in the preceding war, have given to his name a just and lasting celebrity. This war continued, till the 29th of October, 1713, when intelligence of the treaty of Utrecht arrived in Portsmouth; and the Indians, no longer stimulated to hostility by the French, readily consented to a peace. A few years afterwards, the Indians were again excited to a rupture with the English, chiefly by the influence of a Jesuit French missionary, and the governor of Canada; and for many months, they pursued the work of devastation with their accustomed ferocity. The obnoxious papist, with about eighty of his Indians, was at last killed by the English; Massachusetts and New Hampshire sent a remonstrance to the governor of Canada against the injustice of his conduct; and soon afterwards, a peace with the Indian tribes was concluded at Falmouth. This was in the year 1725.

Amidst all these Indian wars, by which the interests of our fathers were so often put in jeopardy, and New England bled at every pore, God was still her Friend; and she rose superior to the violence and rage of her most deadly enemies.

In addition to all the other troubles of our ancestors, they suffered from attempts, made by the mother country, to deprive them of that liberty, which they had earned and maintained, amidst the greatest dangers, with an invincible courage and resolution. In 1672, customs were imposed upon the colonists by an act of Parliament; and their opposition to this measure, which they considered unjust and arbitrary, since they were taxed without their consent, awakened the resentment of the British government. Various oppressive measures

succeeded. In 1682, Henry Cranfield, Esq. was appointed by the king, lieutenant-governor of New Hampshire ; and exerted his power by assuming the legislative functions, endeavoring to introduce into the province the ceremonies of the English liturgy, punishing those clergymen who refused to conform, and silencing, by the most severe and arbitrary treatment, all such, as betrayed disaffection to his measures. In 1684, Massachusetts was deprived of its charter ; and in 1686, Sir Edmund Andross, whose principles were no less arbitrary than those of his royal master James II. was appointed captain-general and vice-admiral of New England. He dissolved the government of Connecticut, displaced the old officers civil and military, and appointed in their room men of similar views to his own. He would have seized the charter of that colony, had it not, by an ingenious artifice, been taken away, and sequestered. His whole government was oppressive to the last degree. Enormous taxes were demanded ; the liberty of the press was taken away ; the rights of conscience were invaded ; titles to land were declared invalid ; and old proprietors were obliged to pay exorbitant fees for new patents, while those who refused, being driven from their farms, had the mortification and sorrow of seeing them occupied by others. That the people might have no opportunity of consulting together, for the redress of grievances, town meetings, except once in a year, for the election of town officers, were prohibited ; and that no complaints might be carried to Great Britain, none were allowed to leave the country without the express consent of the governor. A systematic effort seems to have been made, to humble the spirit, and crush into the dust the glory, of New England. But God would not permit a catastrophe so deplorable. The revolution, which placed the Prince of Orange upon the throne of Britain, while it saved the three kingdoms from popery and oppression, was also the signal of deliverance to the American colonies. The imperious Sir Edmund and his colleagues were sent to England, there to answer before a proper tribunal, for their abuse of power.*

Our fathers were warmly attached to the doctrines of the

*Andross, in consequence of an informality in the charges, was dismissed without trial. He was afterwards appointed governor of Virginia.

Reformation, usually denominated the doctrines of grace. They maintained a trinity of persons in the Godhead, the divine foreordination of all events, personal election, the total depravity of man by nature, justification by faith alone, the certain perseverance of the saints, and the eternal punishment of such as die impenitent. It was the cordial belief of such doctrines as these that supported them under all their trials, and animated them to the faithful discharge of every duty. Though differing from many others in his views of ecclesiastical government, Mr. Robinson had the highest regard for the doctrinal articles of the protestant churches of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Geneva, Switzerland, and the United Provinces; and he defended, in a very able manner, the orthodox faith, in opposition to Arminianism, called by Cotton Mather, the "grand choak-weed of true Christianity." Our fathers not only believed; they maintained with great zeal, as essential to true religion, the peculiar sentiments of the gospel. We read of a Synod in Cambridge, as early as the year 1637, in which the Rev. Thomas Hooker and Mr. Peter Bulkeley acted as moderators, when eighty errors were examined by that body, and formally condemned. The consequences were highly salutary. Eleven years afterwards, the "Cambridge Platform" was adopted by another Synod; and this Synod, by a unanimous vote, declared their entire approbation of the confession of faith, published by the assembly of divines in Westminster. At this time, the ministers and churches of Connecticut and New Haven were present; and concurred in the doings of the Synod. In 1680, another Synod was convened by the general court in Boston, by whom the same confession of faith was again adopted. In 1702, the general Convention of ministers meeting in Boston, published a treatise, entitled, "A seasonable testimony to the glorious doctrines of grace;" in which, the doctrines of election, total depravity, effectual calling, gratuitous justification, and the sure perseverance of all the faithful, are asserted in the strongest terms. Five or six years afterwards, a Synod, convened in Saybrook Connecticut, adopted a platform of church government, and acknowledged the same doctrines with those contained in the Assembly's Confession of faith. I refer you to

these public bodies, because they represented the great christian community in New England. All the works, with which I am acquainted, of our early divines, are richly replete with those glorious and soul humbling truths, which have in all ages been so much opposed by men of corrupt minds.

The character of our fathers corresponded to the purity of their sentiments. The Lord's day was with them truly a day of rest from all worldly labors and recreations. They made great sacrifices to support the institutions of the gospel; and, wherever their lot was cast, their first object was to form themselves into a religious society, and settle a minister. They were eminent for prayer, and all the exercises of devotion. In all their difficulties, whether public or private, they were accustomed to look to God for relief; they cast their burdens upon his arm; they trusted to his guidance; they acknowledged his hand, and joyfully gave thanks to his name, under all the tokens of his favor. Never were people more strict and exemplary in their morals. The magistrates of Leyden gave the following testimony to the character of Mr. Robinson's people, the first settlers of Plymouth. "These English have now lived ten years among us, and yet we have never had any accusation against any of them." The Rev. Thomas Prince says, "Those who came over first, came hither for the sake of religion, and for that pure religion, which was entirely hated by the loose and profane part of the world. Their civil and ecclesiastical leaders were exemplary patterns of piety. They encouraged only the virtuous to come with and follow them. They were so strict on the vicious both in the church and state, that the incorrigible could not endure to live in the country, and went back again. Profane swearers and drunkards were not known in the land." An eminent minister of the gospel, who had lived seven years in the country, declared, in a sermon preached before Parliament, that, during the whole time of his residence here, he had never heard one profane oath, nor seen one man intoxicated with strong drink. Every symptom of degeneracy excited the greatest alarm in magistrates, ministers and people.

Zeal for personal sanctification was attended with great love for souls, and missionary exertions, which, for that day, and

under the peculiar embarrassments of our fathers' situation, were very extraordinary. Who has not heard of the labors of the venerable Eliot? By him, the scriptures, and other valuable books were translated into the language of the natives; and his efforts for their conversion were unremitted. By the same disinterested spirit, Mr. Richard Bourne, and the Mayhews were induced to devote themselves to the salvation of the heathen in America. God gave to these endeavors distinguished success. By the year 1660, there were ten towns of christian Indians; and twenty-seven years later, there were more than twenty assemblies of the natives, who worshipped God through Jesus Christ. At the same time, the Indians had four English ministers, and twenty-four preachers of their own nation. In 1684, the praying Indians, in the single colony of New Plymouth, had ten worshipping assemblies; and in 1685, the number of professing christians among them, exclusive of children under twelve years of age, was computed to be one thousand four hundred and thirty-nine. In 1695, the number of converted Indians in Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, was supposed to be three thousand; and in the latter place, there were three churches, and five regular congregations. Such was the diligence of our ancestors, under all the difficulties of a new country, and the hostility of savage tribes, to extend the blessings of the gospel to the surrounding heathen; and thus did God smile upon their benevolent undertaking.

Men high in office were not ashamed to employ their talents and their influence, in promoting the cause of God. The names of Bradford, Winthrop, Eaton and Edward Hopkins must be dear to all the friends of evangelical truth, and vital godliness. To the memory of GOVERNOR HOPKINS, whose liberality laid the foundation of yonder Academical Institution, indulge me in offering, more particularly, the tribute of affectionate veneration. He was eminently a man of faith and of prayer. In earnest devotion, and diffusive benevolence, few have been his equals. A few days before his death, he exclaimed, "Oh! Lord, thou has kept the best wine until the last. Oh! friends, could you believe this? I shall be blessed forever. I shall quickly be in eternal glory. Now let the whole world count me vile, and call me an hypocrite, or what they will, I matter

it not; I shall be blessed; there is reserved for me a crown of glory. Oh! blessed be God, for Jesus Christ. I have heretofore thought it an hard thing to die, but now I find that it is not so." In this heavenly frame he continued, until his redeemed spirit took its flight to the bosom of his Saviour. May the prayers of this holy man be answered, in the richest blessings upon the Seminary, founded by his munificence, and bearing his venerable name.

The laws and institutions of our fathers are an imperishable monument of their wisdom, as well as of their piety. These were in a high degree calculated to promote religion, industry, enterprise, frugality, temperance, and all those virtues, which make a people great, free and happy. Among the other means, employed to maintain good principles and habits, the early institution of schools is particularly worthy of notice and of praise. Every town and parish was obliged to support a school; and, where the number of families was sufficient, a grammar school was to be maintained, at the expense of the inhabitants. Towns, neglecting for a few months to furnish teachers, were liable to a severe penalty. Legal provision was also made, for the education, in the higher branches of literature and science, of young men, designed for the learned professions. As early as 1637, the General Court of Massachusetts appropriated four hundred pounds for the establishment of a publick school at Newtown; and in 1642, only twenty-two years from the landing of the pilgrims at Plymouth, the first commencement was held at Cambridge. Yale College was founded in 1700; and received its charter from the general assembly of Connecticut, in the following year. To the various advantages for instruction, furnished by the enlightened piety of our forefathers, New England is chiefly indebted, for its superiority in knowledge, virtue and happiness, to the other states of the union.

I know, it has been fashionable with some, ungratefully forgetting their obligations to our ancestors, to reproach the names of these excellent men. They have been charged with oppressing the natives. No accusation, considered in reference to the great body of the first settlers of New England, can be more false. Aggressions generally began on the

part of the Indians ; and the wars of our fathers were for self-defence. Extermination, except for their own security against savage depredations, was never their object. They *purchased* their lands of the Indians ; and, “ notwithstanding all that has been said of the frauds that were practised, I am convinced that the purchases were made as honestly then as they are now, and that much more valuable considerations were usually given.”

Our fathers have been exposed to not a little ridicule for their superstitious belief in prodigies, and their prosecutions for pretended witchcraft. But under their circumstances, the wisest of us should, without doubt, have imbibed the same error. The mistake into which they fell, was not *peculiar* to them ; they held it in common with the greatest divines and civilians in Europe. Witchcraft was every where accounted a reality, and a capital crime. Cotton Mather asserts, that nine hundred persons, for this supposed offence, were put to death in France ; that many were prosecuted for it in Suffolk in England ; and that, in the English county of Essex, in the year 1645, fourteen persons were hanged, and a hundred imprisoned, under the imputation of the same crime. The law, by which witches were condemned in this country, was copied from the English statutes ; and it was not repealed in Great Britain, till some time in the reign of George II. Our ancestors were credulous, relative to the subject of witchcraft, not because they were wicked, or peculiarly weak, but because, being men, they could not entirely emancipate themselves from the prejudices of the age. We should perhaps find, on examination, that much of our skepticism, which we think so agreeable to reason, has no higher origin than the fashion of the times. It was once as reputable, to think with Baxter and Lord Hale, as it has more lately been, to agree in opinion with Hume, or Priestly.

Respecting the religious persecutions, with which our fathers have been reproached, while I am far from justifying their conduct, I must say, that, in my judgment, much of the invective, we are accustomed to hear, is misplaced and extravagant. It was their design to establish a christian community ; and they were therefore tempted to employ improper meas-

ures, for perpetuating among themselves harmony of religious opinion. Besides, most of the persons whom they persecuted, held disorderly, as well as unchristian sentiments. Roger Williams, much as has been said of his amiable manners, adopted notions hostile to all social order. While he withdrew himself from the communion of the churches in Massachusetts, he refused to take the oath of fidelity; and he taught others to follow his example. For a long time, he was treated with gentleness; and, though he was at last banished from the colony, it was not simply for his doctrinal errors, but for the factious spirit he manifested. The persecution against the quakers was indeed severe; but it should be considered, that the professors of that sect were then far less peaceable citizens than they have been since, and that their conduct was, in many instances, as shamefully indecent, as it was irregular. Had our fathers been better instructed in the morality of their religion, they would doubtless have refrained from all acts of violence in enforcing uniformity of sentiment. But they lived in an age, when the subject of religious liberty was not understood by christians in any country. Coercive measures in matters of faith were almost every where deemed justifiable and necessary. In Virginia itself, it was made penal for parents to refuse baptism to their children; and severe laws were passed against the quakers. Our fathers were, by no means, *remarkable* for their intolerance. On the contrary, when the principles of that period, in reference to the right and duty of the magistrate to punish heresy, are considered, it will appear surprising, rather that they did not carry persecution further, than that they should have persecuted at all. To traduce their memory, because they were, in some instances, guilty of this crime, is to condemn them, because they were not, in all respects, wiser and better than all the rest of mankind. And indeed, with all their faults, they deserve, more than any other people, the everlasting gratitude and veneration of their posterity.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, a declension in the religion and morals of the country became too evident; and deeply was it lamented by all, who still retained the sentiments and feelings of the old puritans. But God had not for-

gotten the prayers of his saints, who then slept in the dust. In various instances, he granted the effusions of his Spirit, to convert his enemies, and to build up his churches, in favored New England. In 1734, the memorable revival in Northampton began with power; and in a little time, it spread, to a great extent, through the country. Places, near and more remote, were visited with a glorious shower of divine grace. Sinners, in multitudes, resorted to the standard of the Prince of peace. Not a few, who were then inhabitants of this town, are, we trust, now praising God in the heavenly world, that they were permitted to live in such a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The number of those, who were subjects of the blessed work, which then prevailed in this place, we have not the means of ascertaining; but it is a consolation to know, that not one of the Lord's redeemed will be forgotten in the morning of the resurrection. In 1740, the Rev. George Whitefield first visited New England; and I need not tell you of the wonderful blessing from God, which attended the labors of that extraordinary man. The revival, which was commenced by his instrumentality, extended through a great part of New England; and thousands, we have reason to believe, then began their eternal song. Though in a few years, the work seemed to cease, and errors of various kinds prevailed to an alarming degree; yet many and precious were its fruits, and their savor has reached even to us.

In tracing the dealings of God towards our churches, we cannot forget the spirit of missions, which began to manifest itself, in the early part of the last century. No one man, perhaps, has done more than DAVID BRAINERD, to excite that universal zeal for the salvation of the heathen, which is so conspicuous in the benevolent exertions of christians, at the present day. While we read his life, and contemplate his self-denying labors; let us bless God, that such a man has lived in our world. Above all, let us imitate his humility, his faith, his patience, his zeal, and those many virtues, which have rendered his memory precious.

A few years after the commencement of that powerful work of grace, of which we have spoken, the colonies were involved, with the parent country, in a war with France; and in

1715, forces were raised, of which 3,200 were employed by Massachusetts, for an enterprise against Louisbourg. The project was deemed by many very rash and dangerous; but, by the favor of God, it was successful, and, to the unspeakable joy of the colonies, that strong fortress fell into the hands of the British. American bravery was now the subject of admiration in Europe, and the source of jealous apprehension to the government of England. In the following year, the goodness of Providence to the colonies was signally displayed. Instigated by revenge, the French had resolved to reduce the country; and an armament, consisting of many ships of war, and transports which contained several thousand men, with experienced officers, and an ample supply of military stores, had sailed for New England. The Americans were exposed, unprotected by any mortal arm, to the rage of their formidable enemy. What could they do? Almighty God was their Deliverer. Sickness began to prevail among the French; thirteen hundred of them died at sea, and the rest lost all their resolution; their fleet was broken and scattered by a tempest; their commander* and vice-admiral killed themselves in despair; and the ships, which escaped destruction, returned, carrying pestilence with them, to France. In the next French war, the colonists bore a distinguished part. In 1755, the English gained possession of Nova Scotia; and the forces, employed in the successful expedition against that province, were chiefly from Massachusetts. The same year has been rendered memorable in America, by the defeat of General Braddock; and the youthful honors, earned by the valor and conduct of Washington. For two years afterwards, the prospects of the colonists were peculiarly gloomy; and, in various instances, the French arms were successful. In 1758, fairer hopes began to be entertained. Louisbourg, which had been by treaty restored to the French, was again reduced; and the next year, Niagara, Ticonderoga and Crown-point became the property of the English. The same year was distinguished by the conquest of Quebec, after a campaign of three months. With the history of the gallant General Wolfe, who fell upon the heights

* The duke D'Anville is generally supposed to have destroyed his life by poison. Perhaps his death was occasioned by an apoplexy.

of Abraham, in the arms of victory, we have been familiar from our earliest years. In 1760, the whole province of Canada was reduced; and it has remained to this day, annexed to the British empire. A definitive treaty of peace was settled between the belligerent powers in 1763.

The result of this war was scarcely less glorious to the colonies, than to the parent State; it removed from them hostile neighbors; it raised to a higher pitch their zeal for liberty; and it added, in no small degree, to the splendor of their reputation. They had furnished for the war 23,800 men; and many of the soldiers, who, by their undaunted courage, acquired such fame on the plains of Abraham, were sons of Massachusetts. The successes of Britain served, however, to increase in her that love of domination, of which the exercise towards her colonies, elate with sentiments of freedom and honor, led on to the AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

You will not expect from me a full account of the causes, and the progress of that war, which terminated in our independence, and the establishment of a new empire in this western world. I shall only glance at a few of the more important particulars. The celebrated stamp act was passed in 1765; and was received in America with a spirit of indignation, and manly resistance, which the British ministry had little anticipated. A congress of deputies from nine of the provinces, having met at New York, protested, with the energy of men determined to be free, against all taxes, not imposed by representatives of their own choice. In 1766, the offensive act was repealed, but the right of taxing the colonies was still maintained by Parliament; and in 1767, duties were laid on various articles, imported from Great Britain into this country. In order to carry this law into effect, a Board of commissioners was stationed in Boston; and, as the measure produced great excitement in the town, an armed force was sent thither, to compel the inhabitants to submission. The energetick conduct of Massachusetts, upon this occasion, was not without its effect on the measures of the ministry; and in 1770, they repealed all the duties, with the exception of that upon the article of tea. This diminution of their burdens did not, however, satisfy the patriots of Massachusetts; they were contending for a

principle, not for paltry savings of expenditure. To be taxed, little or much, without their consent, they would not submit. The massacre of the 5th of March, in which four men were killed, and several others wounded, by the British troops stationed in Boston, excited great alarm, and the keenest resentment in the inhabitants. A new cause of irritation was the provision in 1771, for making the governor and judges independent of the people, by obliging them to look to the crown for the payment of their salaries. In 1773, two hundred and forty-two chests of tea, designed for the market in Boston, were emptied into the sea, by several persons, disguised in the Indian habit; and in the following year, the Boston port-bill, and other odious acts were passed, to punish the inhabitants of the town for their alleged contumacy. A military force was ordered to Boston; and general Gage was appointed governor of Massachusetts. The same year, the deputies of the colonies assembled at Philadelphia, where they exerted themselves in the cause of freedom, with a wisdom and vigor, that have never perhaps been exceeded. After all these proceedings, new acts of oppression against the colonies, continued to be passed. The awful moment was evidently now at hand, when slavery, or a resort to arms was to be the only alternative. At Lexington, on the 19th of April 1775, the war of the revolution commenced. The provincial Congress of Massachusetts voted to raise an army of 30,000 men; and to send a letter and delegates to the other colonies of New England. A general fast, to be observed on the 20th of July, was recommended by the continental Congress. This year records the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown point; the famous battle of Bunker-hill; the organization of a regular continental army, and the appointment of the illustrious WASHINGTON as commander in chief; the reduction of St. John's and Montreal, by the valor of the noble Montgomery; and his fall, with that of many other brave officers, in an unsuccessful enterprise, under the walls of Quebec. On the 17th of March 1776, the British troops evacuated Boston; and the next summer, a signal victory was gained by the Americans, at Charleston in South Carolina. On the 4th of July, a day never to be forgotten, that

solemn instrument, the Declaration of Independence, was published by Congress. During the remainder of the year, Providence seemed, in general, to frown upon our enterprises. I need not remind you of the unfortunate action at Long Island; the abandonment of New York by the Americans; and the successes of the British at fort Washington, and fort Lee; at the Jerseys; in Canada; and in Rhode Island. At this distressing period, the Congress continued firm; and exerted themselves, with a zeal worthy of the cause in which they were engaged, to rouse the people to more vigorous action. The battle of Trenton served to raise the drooping spirits of our countrymen. It was followed, early in the year 1777, by the victory at Princeton. But our prosperity was by no means uninterrupted. Various and alarming were our defeats, and the losses we sustained during this year. Of these losses, none was more deeply deplored in New England, than that of Mount Independence and Ticonderoga. From the shock of these disasters, the Americans soon recovered; and assumed anew their courage and resolution. The battle of Bennington exhibited the American valor to peculiar advantage; and the surrender of Burgoyne, with his army at Saratoga, was an event of the greatest importance to the country. It inspired the warmest hopes; and it gained for us the friendship and assistance of France. In 1779, Stony Point was captured by troops, principally from New England, commanded by general Wayne; but at Savannah, the American forces were severely repulsed. In the following year, the Americans, though in various instances successful, suffered great losses. Charleston in South Carolina, after a gallant defence, surrendered to the British arms; and the brave general Lincoln, and the troops under his command, were made prisoners of war. In 1781, the decisive blow was given, by the capture of Cornwallis; and Great Britain was convinced, that it was now too late to think of subduing to submission THE UNITED STATES OF FREE AND INDEPENDENT AMERICA. The provisional articles of peace, between Great Britain and this country, were signed at Paris, on the 30th of November 1782; and on the 3d of September 1783, were ratified by a definitive treaty. In 1787, the federal constitution

was formed; the first Congress, under the new government, met at New York, March 4th, 1789; and on the 30th of the following April, GEORGE WASHINGTON was inaugurated in that city, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. The other Presidents have been JOHN ADAMS, THOMAS JEFFERSON, JAMES MADISON, and JAMES MONROE. From the year 1791, to some time in the year 1795, the United States were engaged in a war with the Indians on the north of the Ohio river. Mr. Jay's commercial treaty with Great Britain was negotiated and ratified, in 1794. In 1798, we were threatened with a war with France; an army was raised; and the venerable Washington consented again to assume the sword of command. In 1812, we were once more involved in a war with Great Britain; the events of which need not be here mentioned, since they are fresh in your remembrance. Peace was concluded between that country and ours, on the 25th of December 1814; and on the 11th of the following February, the intelligence reached New York, diffusing sincere joy among all parties.

The period since our revolution, has been distinguished by great events in the political and moral world. While Infidelity has exhibited itself in all its terrors, and Europe has been convulsed to its centre; the cause of the Redeemer, gathering strength from opposition, has advanced with a rapid and glorious march. Christendom has seemed to be awaking from its long slumber; and the angel, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto all that dwell upon the earth, has commenced his flight through the midst of heaven.

Though the degeneracy of New England has been great; though wickedness, to an alarming degree, abounds; though—on the very spot where the Cottons and the Mathers prayed,—the Saviour is insulted, and robbed of the honors of his Divinity, yet God has not forsaken the land of the puritans. Oh, may all the churches, that were planted amidst their prayers, and watered by their tears, soon be revived by his grace, and bloom and flourish in their primeval beauty.

Concerning the origin and progress of this church and society, I have been able to collect few facts, with which you are not already acquainted. To the "Half-Century Sermon" of

my predecessor, preached on the 3d of March 1805, and which is, I trust, in most of your houses, I would refer you, for information upon this subject.*

In reviewing the dealings of God towards New England, we find the utmost reason to praise and exalt his name. What wonders, in the course of two centuries, have been achieved by his Providence! From the small band, who, two hundred years ago, chose their residence in the American wilderness, a mighty nation has arisen, like the star of heaven for multitude. "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in desert land, and in the waste, howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.— Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." And shall the inhabitants of New England ever forget the distinguishing goodness of their God and Redeemer? If they can, will not the very inanimate creation around them, "cry out," to rebuke their stupidity and ingratitude? This day, O that all would unite, in celebrating with the whole heart and soul, the praises of our fathers' God.

May we cherish a more profound respect for the character of our ancestors. To them, under Providence, we are indebted.

* Hadley was settled in 1659; and originally comprehended, with the present town of that name, South Hadley, Granby, Amherst, Whately, Hatfield, and the largest part of Williamsburgh. The settlers were principally from Hartford and Weathersfield in Connecticut; and were accompanied by their pastor. The ministers of the town have been Messrs. Russell, Chauncey, Williams and Hopkins; all of whom, with the exception of Mr. Williams, lived to old age. The present pastor was ordained over the church in Hadley, in 1810.

ed for our liberties, and those wise institutions, of which we so justly boast. Freedom and learning, next to piety and virtue, were the earliest lessons which they instilled into the infant minds of their children. Nor have they labored in vain. Our schools, our colleges, and all our various means of social improvement, declare to all the world, that their counsels have not been lost. New England has stood first in every hour of peril. She was first in the struggle for independence. In answer to the prayers of our fathers, our religious privileges are continued; and with them, all that is consoling in the virtues of social life, all that is ennobling in the hopes of immortality. In answer to their prayers, the Spirit descends upon our churches, reclaims the wandering, subdues the obstinate, and leads immortal souls up to glory. *Let us then, reverence, as we ought, the character of our fathers.*

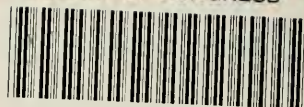
Let us follow their example. May those doctrines, in the firm faith of which *they* lived and died, be ever the support and the consolation of their posterity. Let them not, with the vain boast of superior illumination, despise and reject the principles, which have been maintained and loved by the best and wisest men that the earth ever saw. Let the religion of our fathers be dear to us as our heart's blood. Let us imitate their love to God, their affectionate reliance on the divine Redeemer, their humble dependance on the influences of the Spirit, their benevolence to the souls of men, their disinterested labors, their respect for the holy sabbath, their undissembled, ardent devotion. Yes, we will prove that we honor their memory, by cherishing their maxims, and contributing our unfeigned support to the institutions they loved. Thus shall we be great like them in the eyes of the nations,—thus shall we be honorable in the sight of God. Let us remember, that, in the same proportion as we depart from the purity of their faith, and the strictness of their morals, we engage the Almighty against us, and our country. If we forsake their God, He will reject us forever. “Say not within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore eve-

ry tree, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire."

A solemn thought forces itself upon my mind. We, my audience, shall never again meet on a like occasion. When the third centurial Jubilee of New England shall come, who of us will then be living to participate in the general joy? Ah! let this reflection repress our levity, and excite us to an active preparation for our dying hour. With our hearts sanctified by grace, interested in the atonement and righteousness of the adorable Saviour; may we, whenever the pale messenger shall arrive to summon us hence, be gathered to our *fathers* in peace. AMEN.

F. J. J.

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