

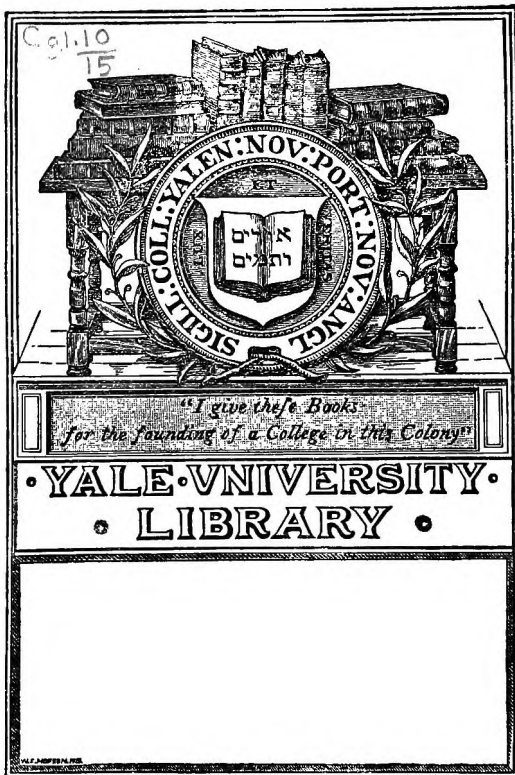
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New England society in the city of New York.
Annual report. [15th] 1820.

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A TRIBUTE TO NEW-ENGLAND:

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE NEW-ENGLAND SOCIETY

OF THE

CITY AND STATE OF NEW-YORK,

ON THE 22d OF DECEMBER, 1820.

BEING

THE SECOND CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE

LANDING OF THE PILGRIMS AT PLYMOUTH.

BY GARDINER SPRING, D. D.

Pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church in that City.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY L. & F. LOCKWOOD, 154 & 177 BROADWAY.

J. Seymour, printer.

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1821,

At a special meeting of the Board of Officers of the New-England Society of the City and State of New-York, held at the City Hotel on Tuesday, the 26th day of December, 1820,—It was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED,

That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Doctor SPRING, for the Sermon delivered at their solicitation on their Anniversary of the 22d instant, and that he be respectfully requested to furnish a copy of it for the press : and that Gen. STEVENS, President of the Society, Mr. LEWIS, and Mr. BRACKETT, be a Committee to present the above resolution to the Rev. Dr. SPRING.

Extract from the Minutes,

AMHERST WIGHT, Secretary.

New-York, 27th December, 1820.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

In compliance with the above Resolution of the Board of Officers of the New-England Society of the City and State of New-York, we have great satisfaction in communicating the enclosed to you, hoping you will not hesitate to comply with the request therein contained. We feel, from impressions made by the delivery, that a perusal of your impressive Discourse cannot fail to prove animating to patriotism, and enlivening to piety.

With great respect and consideration,

Your obedient servants,

EBENEZER STEVENS,
ZECHARIAH LEWIS,
J. WARREN BRACKETT.

Rev. Dr. SPRING.

New-York, January 2, 1821.

GENTLEMEN,

I had hoped the very respectable Board of the New-England Society would have excused me from submitting the ensuing discourse to the public eye; and it is not without much diffidence and hesitation that I now submit it to their disposal.

I am, with the highest respect,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

GARDINER SPRING.

MESSRS. EBENEZER STEVENS,
ZECHARIAH LEWIS,
J. WARREN BRACKETT.

SERMON.



PSALM CVII. 7.

And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

I REJOICE, my friends, that, after so many memorials of the event we now celebrate, the time has arrived, when the Sons of the Pilgrims in this City, deem it a privilege publicly and in the house of prayer, to honour the only wise God, in their rehearsal of scenes, which so often drew tears from the eyes and praises from the lips of their pious progenitors. Two hundred years ago this day, our forefathers landed on the shores of this Western World. We cannot but feel, that this event deserves a grateful acknowledgment and commemoration. The ancient people of God, scattered as they had been in different portions of the globe, enslaved by one enemy after another, oppressed by difficulty and danger from every side, found no sweeter theme for their praise, than that eternal mercy to which they owed all their hopes, and that incessant guardianship which had so often interposed in miracles of mercy and judgment, to guide them to “a city of habitation.” Their danger and their deliverance are exquisitely set forth by the Psalmist in the touching imagery of travellers lost in a pathless desert, wandering about this great wilderness world

as "pilgrims and strangers on the earth," but at last directed and conducted home. The way in which they are led is often dark and mysterious ; but in the issue there is every thing to advance the praises of their guide and deliverer.

Nor can we at once advert to a series of events more illustrative of these sentiments, than the course in which a wise Providence conducted our ancestors. The first settlers of New-England were descended from a highly respectable class of men, who took their rise in England, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and were called Puritans.* After the year 1662, when the famous Act of Uniformity was passed by the English Parliament, requiring a solemn declaration of assent to every thing contained in the book of Common Prayer, and the administration of the Sacraments, they were called Non-Conformists, and since that period they have been more commonly called Dissenters.

Europe was not without the expectation of a partial reform as early as the fourteenth century. Not far from this period, the authority and influence of the Roman Pontiffs began to decline ; and in the fifteenth century, some attempts at reformation were, to say the least, the ostensible objects of two important Councils of the Latin Church.† No serious advance

* The title *Puritans* appears originally to have been a term of reproach. Mr. Neal, in his history of these excellent men, remarks, "If a man maintained his steady adherence to the doctrines of Calvin and the Synod of Dort ; if he kept the Sabbath and frequented sermons ; if he maintained family religion, and would neither swear, nor be drunk, nor comply with the fashionable vices of the times ; he was called a *Puritan*."

† The Council of *Constance* and the Council of *Basil*.

The *Council of Constance* was assembled by the Emperor *Sigismund*, in 1414 ; and after sitting three years and six months, was dissolved in April,

was made in this cause, until the shameless profligacy of the Popes, and the martyrdom of several distinguished witnesses* for the truth, together with the firmness and increase of the Lollards in England, and the Hussites on the Continent of Europe, had prepared the way for Martin Luther to enter upon a work, which was destined not only to suppress the preposterous pretensions of Papacy, but to give an effectual and salutary influence to the Church of God for centuries to come. This memorable REFORMATION was established in the sixteenth century. The principles of the Reformed Church, as adopted by Luther, were extensively received in different parts of Germany; found very powerful abettors in Switzerland, Geneva, France, and Sweden; and were introduced into England towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII, and during that of his successor, Edward VI. With the exception of the Eucharist, there was a happy agreement in the Reformed Churches on all the leading points of Christian theology; and with the exception of the Church of England, there was also a very general concurrence in the essential principles of Church government. A lingering attachment to

1418. The great design of this Council was to put an end to the schism which arose in the fourteenth century in consequence of a collision of sentiment with regard to a successor to Gregory XI. A reformation of the Church, however, was one of the professed objects of this Council, though it was altogether defeated.

The *Council of Basil* was convened in 1431, under the Pontificate of Eugenius IV. This Council sat twelve years; and though a reformation was one of its professed objects, it met with very little encouragement.

* *John Huss* and *Jerome*, of Prague in Bohemia, were condemned and burnt alive by the Council of Constance. The same Council also condemned the opinions of *Wickliffe*, who has well been styled "the morning star of the Reformation," and passed sentence that his bones should be dug up and burnt with his writings.

the rites and ceremonies of the Latin Church, in several of the Monarchs and Bishops who took a leading part in the Reformation, and especially in Elizabeth, in whose reign the Reformation was matured, operated as one of the causes in giving the Church of England its peculiar form of government. Among those, who manifested no small degree of zeal for the entire renunciation of the Popish ritual, and who earnestly contended for a purer reformation, both in discipline and ceremonies, were the Pilgrims of New-England. Neither Elizabeth nor James manifested any predilection for the views of the Puritans ; but, on the other hand, became the advocates of a severe and rigorous uniformity, which obliged multitudes to resist the claims of the Establishment with a perseverance and decision of no bright augury either to their religious or civil tranquillity. Under the fairest and most sacred pretence, an effort was made, combining the power of Church and State, to impose and enforce restrictions upon the conscience, which well nigh proved the rock that severed the peace of England. Elizabeth was at heart averse to a pure reformation, and the enemy of the non-conformists ; and James, though early inclined to favour their cause, and though no prince was ever more able so to favour it as to preserve the peace of the realm, was just pusillanimous and proud enough to become the mere creature of Prelacy, and from the professed advocate of religious liberty, to avow himself its implacable foe.

Toward the latter part of James's reign, it became obvious that the Puritans could not remain with safety in England ; and a little company from one of the Northern Counties, composed principally of the

Church under the pastoral care of the Rev. Richard Clifton, and his successor the Rev. John Robinson, contemplated a removal to Holland, which was effected in the year 1607. After residing some time at Amsterdam, they removed to Leyden, where the kindness and hospitality of the generous Hollanders was conspicuous, and will ever be cherished in grateful remembrance. But notwithstanding the security and peace which this retirement afforded them from the bitterness of persecution, their condition in Holland was not without difficulties of a very serious kind. The labour of becoming familiar with a strange language—the hardships necessary to a bare subsistence—the exposure of the rising generation to the dissipation, immoralities, and profligacy of a populous city—together with the faint prospect of perpetuating a Church which they believed to be constituted upon the model of apostolical simplicity,* led them to direct their thoughts toward the New World.

It could not but be foreseen that their removal to America would be accompanied with the severest danger and deepest self-denial. They were about to

* The Puritans appear to have maintained a sort of Church government which was not strictly Presbyterian or Congregational; but which retained some of the principles of both. They believed,

“That every particular Church of Christ is only to consist of such as appear to believe in and obey him—

“That they have a right to embody themselves into a Church by contract or covenant—

“That being thus embodied, they have the right of choosing their own officers, which are of three sorts, *Pastors*, or, *Teaching Elders*, *Ruling Elders*, and *Deacons*—

“That these officers, being chosen and ordained, have no lordly, arbitrary, or imposing power, but can only rule and minister with the consent of the brethren.” *Prince's Chronology*, vol. i. p. 92.

Prince, in his *New-England Chronology*, complains of the charge that Mr. Robinson and his followers were *Brownists*. Vide vol. i. p. 21.

spread their sails on a boisterous ocean, and under inclement skies to direct their course to an inhospitable clime. After much consultation, and several seasons of special prayer for the divine direction and blessing upon their enterprise, they left Holland for England in July, 1620, and having made suitable preparations for the voyage, embarked for America on the 5th of August, of the same year, the whole number of adventurers being about one hundred and twenty.* After having been obliged, by the badness of the weather and the unsoundness of one of their ships, to return twice into port, they at length survived a tedious passage of suffering and hazard; reached the harbour of Cape Cod on the 11th of November; about the middle of December arrived opposite the town of Plymouth, and on the 22d of the same month, landed on the memorable rock so famed in the history of the Pilgrims of New-England.

Their condition on landing was such as to call for the peculiar benignity of a superintending Providence. Without the limits of their patent†—enfeebled and sickly through the length and hardships of their voyage—without shelter and without friends—before them a wide region of solitude and savageness—they were compelled to pitch their tents between the howlings of the forest and the storm of the ocean, and

* The *Rev. Mr. Robinson* never himself removed to New-England. It was his intention to follow his congregation; but he died March 1, 1625, in the fiftieth year of his age, and at the summit of his usefulness. His widow and children afterwards removed to Plymouth.

† Their design was to make a settlement on *Hudson River*, or in the adjacent country. For this they had obtained a patent: but they were carried beyond the precincts of the territory which had been granted to them, and were prevented from altering their course by the inclemency of the season.

Robertson's History of America.

spend a dreary season in burying their dead, and thinking of their homes. Like the pilgrims of other times, "they wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in." Notwithstanding the rigour of the climate, and the severities of a disease which had cut off nearly one half of the colony, very conspicuous were the divine guardianship and munificence toward these pious men.* Not only was their arrival beyond the limits of their charter a favourable disappointment, but large numbers of the natives had been swept off by a pestilence which raged the preceding year; so that it was not only less difficult to repel their invasions, but more easy to obtain the means of a comfortable subsistence, and to form such alliances as proved salutary to the colony for many years to come.†

Such was the prosperity of the Plymouth colony, that large bodies of pious people in England began to make preparations for settlements among their bre-

* "A combination of circumstances, singularly providential, is observable in the settlement and preservation of these pious pilgrims in New-England. On Hudson's River and its vicinity, the Indians were numerous, and had they not been disappointed with respect to their original design, probably they would have fallen a prey to savage cruelty. In New-England, Providence had prepared the way for their settlement. The uncommon mortality in 1617, had in a manner depopulated that part of the country in which they began their plantation. They found fields which had been planted, without owners, and a fine country round them, in some measure cultivated, without an inhabitant. The winter broke up sooner than usual; and early in the season, they entered into a perpetual league of friendship, commerce, and mutual defence with the Indians." *Trumbull's General History of the United States*, vol. i.

† The first Governor of Plymouth colony, was Mr. John Carver. He was among the emigrants to Leyden, who composed Mr. Robinson's Church in that place. He was unanimously elected to this office by the colony, after their arrival in Plymouth harbour, and before they went on shore. He died on the 5th of April following, greatly lamented by the infant colony.

Prince's Chronolog. Hist. of New-England

thren in the West. Not only were the causes of their dissatisfaction by no means removed at home, but additional considerations began now to influence the English government to increase the facilities of removing abroad. In the year 1628, a patent was granted to a company of knights, covering a large portion of Massachusetts, which resulted in establishments at Salem, Charlestown, Boston, Dorchester, Watertown, and Roxbury. In March, 1631, a plan was set on foot for establishing a colony on Connecticut River; and in the prosecution of this design, several families removed from Dorchester, Cambridge, and Watertown, and commenced settlements at Windsor, Hartford, and Weathersfield. In November, 1635, Mr. John Winthrop, agent for Lords Say, Seal, and Brook, to whom the Connecticut patent had been granted in 1631, arrived at the mouth of the river, built a fort, and commenced an establishment at Saybrook; in April, 1638, a company from England commenced an establishment at New-Haven; and in the same year, a branch of the Plymouth colony began a settlement in Providence, Rhode-Island.* Thus in less than twenty years from the first arrival at Plymouth, were the New-England colonies established, and in the enjoyment of a regular and prosperous government, and amid all the anticipations of a flourishing empire. In this short period, a world that had been little else than the resort of beasts of prey, was turned into fruitful fields and pleasant habitations; and a forest that had swarmed with savage men became peopled with the sons of the Most High.

* Vide Trumbull's History of Connecticut, and Trumbull's History of the United States.

Such is the way in which the God of our fathers led forth the Pilgrims of New-England. "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us what work thou didst in 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." As the difficulties which obstructed the course of our ancestors, seemed to demand no common interpositions of favour ; so did the God of nations seem to "give his angels charge over them to keep them in all their ways." When difficulties and darkness perplexed them, he "sent out his light and his truth that they might lead them : " When they were hemmed in by enemies, he opened a passage for them through the sea : When they "wandered in the wilderness where there was no water," he "brought water out of the rock," and rained down manna for them out of heaven. "He found them in a desert land, in a waste howling wilderness ; he led them about ; he instructed them ; he kept them 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 them, and there was no strange god with them."

A sensible writer on the uses of history, remarks, that "History tends to strengthen the sentiments of virtue, by the variety of views in which it exhibits the conduct of Divine Providence, and points out the hand of God in the affairs of men." I do not see how any man can deny the agency of the Supreme, in upholding and directing all things, who considers the supremacy he exercises "in increasing the na-

tions and enlarging them ; in enlarging the nations and straitening them again." How obvious to the most superficial observer, that the whole course of our venerable forefathers was the result of the divine purpose, lay under the divine inspection, and was directed by a divine and omnipotent hand. There was no slumber to his eye, no intermission to his agency and care. There was nothing fortuitous in any one occurrence connected with this humble, yet magnificent enterprise. Events, which a superficial observer would have been tempted to pronounce unimportant and accidental, flowed from design, and in the issue were seen to be invested with real importance.

But what we design to bring into view in this part of our subject, is, that this enterprise was under the guidance of a Providence not only particular and constant, but singularly wise. The settlement of New-England was designed to have a very important influence on the character, prospects, and usefulness of the American nation. I speak not of that hardihood and enterprise, which distinguishes the physical character of New-England, and which is felt in different parts of the land to the present period ; but of the operation of those moral causes which have acted so powerfully, not only on their own immediate descendants, but on this risen and extended empire. You will allow me, then,

In the first place, to call your attention to the influence of this event on religious liberty. It was not until lately, that even in Protestant countries, the spirit of intolerance in matters of religion was deemed no constituent part either of good government or vital godliness. When we consider what human nature is,

and what the world has seen, we may well suppose, that this was not a lesson to be learned at once. From the age of Saul of Tarsus down to the oppressions of Archbishop Laud, the visible Church has contained within her own bosom men, who under the specious pretext of zeal for the truth, have disregarded and trampled under foot the most sacred and important rights of man. The Reformation did much to weaken prejudices, which were founded in ignorance and superstition, and to advance and establish the principles of religious liberty ; but the rights of man, as a moral being—as a creature bound by the laws of Jesus Christ, were not in a good degree understood, until the catastrophe of the scene, which was exhibited in the days of James and Charles, and which issued in the expulsion of the Pilgrims of New-England. The contest of the Puritans was one into which they were drawn with reluctance, and was a contest for principle. It was not so much their opposition to ecclesiastical establishments, or their inveteracy toward the Church of England, but their love of “ pure and undefiled religion,” and their purpose to enjoy it, that constrained them to leave their native shores. To adopt the language of what may with no impropriety be called their own manifesto,—“ That the inspired Scriptures contain the true religion—that nothing is to be accounted the Protestant religion, respecting either faith or worship, but what is taught in them—that every man has the right of judging for himself, of trying doctrines by them, and of worshipping according to his apprehension of the meaning of them”^{*}—these were the sentiments, which

^{*} Prince's New-England Chronology, p. 91.

inspired them with so much self-denial and intrepidity; and which, notwithstanding their comparative weakness, they resolved, under God, should never be renounced.

In those countries where the principles of religious toleration have acquired their maturity, the constitution and laws smile with equal favour and protection on all sects and denominations. If the law of the land lay me under no restriction, as to the doctrines I shall believe and the duties I shall practise; if in the form of my worship they leave me to the dictates of my own conscience, and to my present and eternal responsibilities; I surely enjoy all the religious liberty, which an honest man can desire. I will not ask that my opinions should escape the ordeal of severe discussion, or that my conduct should be exempt from scrutiny and censure, where it deviates from the line of rectitude; I will not plead for that "magnanimous liberality" which exults in indifference to all opinions, and which is satisfied only with contempt of the truth: nor will I complain of the vigilance and fidelity with which the constituted authorities of the Church throw the shield of her maternal discipline around "the faith once delivered to the saints." And if, on the other hand, I may be allowed a candid examination of the sentiments of others; if I may disapprove and censure what in my judgment demands censure and disapprobation: and if, in the enjoyment of these rights, no sect or persuasion can claim any pre-eminence, except what it derives from the validity and excellence of its principles, what is this but religious liberty? We are not insensible that there

are those who “complain that they have no religious liberty, unless they have liberty to have no religion at all.” It is somewhat amusing to see what impatience of contradiction, and what a morbid sensibility some men discover to every thing that looks like a discussion of their favourite creed ; and if we, my friends, have not become the abettors of this bigoted liberality, we owe much to the decision of our forefathers. With honest exultation, be it said, there is no spot on the globe where the rights of conscience are more sacredly revered than in New-England. There every man thinks for himself on subjects of the greatest moment. The spirit of discussion and inquiry is encouraged to an extent almost without a parallel ; and if the Church had been as watchful in the exercise of a vigorous discipline on the one hand, as the State has been in guarding the rights of private judgment on the other, the benefits of this spirit would have been extended with fewer of its evils. I am well aware that liberty of conscience is one of those things which is easily abused ; but when I consider the mischiefs, which an intolerant spirit has spread through the earth, the groans with which it has filled all Europe, and the rivers of blood it has shed, I feel grateful to a good Providence that I am a descendant of the Pilgrims. I ask no man to relinquish his opinions because they differ from mine, unless I can show him that they differ from the Bible. What I give, I claim ; and what I claim, is the privilege of all. Painful as it was, the struggle of our fathers was not in vain. It will not soon be forgotten in Britain, that the Dissenting interest once had the

C

ascendancy over the Establishment,* and that when royal oppression and ecclesiastical violence combined to bring in arbitrary power, both the Prince and the Prelate were brought to the block. That the American States have not been so slow to learn, is in no small degree owing to the high sense which our fathers cherished of the rights of conscience. It is now an unquestioned axiom, that religious freedom is the sacred and inviolable right of every man. It is no longer disputed that a man may worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, and be notwithstanding entitled to the protection of the laws, and to all the immunities of a citizen. And what Christian, what patriot, but will rejoice that this most important principle has been so highly esteemed and so jealously guarded by the American people, that it holds a prominent place, not only in the several State Constitutions, but in the great bond of our National Confederation? Ever since the establishment of the Plymouth colony, the Western World has in this respect been unfolding a splendid and consoling prospect. At no period for these last two hundred years, has the afflicted Church from any quarter of the globe looked in vain for a secure retreat, or the daughter of Zion been denied an inviolable asylum.

There is a second point of view in which the colonization of New-England may be considered very important; and that is, the influence of this event on American literature. Piety may be fraught with the most benevolent desires, and in retired spheres of

* The writer does not mean to say, the *Dissenting* interest was ever formally established by the English government; but that it had the popular ascendancy. In the latter part of the reign of Charles I, and until the restoration of Charles II, it actually exercised a predominant influence.

action may mature and carry into effect the most beneficent designs; but piety without learning, in a more extended province, accomplishes little, either for the honour of God, or the benefit of mankind. "Through wisdom an house is builded, and by understanding it is established." Lock up the treasures of knowledge from the great mass of the community, and you doom them to a condition of intellectual meanness and poverty, at no great remove from "the horse and the mule which have no understanding." Few have more sacredly felt the importance of the general diffusion of learning and science, than our forefathers. A very respectable writer of our own country has remarked, "that it might be expected the colonists of New-England would be most early and zealous in their attention to literature. Their character both for learning and piety, and the circumstances attending their establishment, were a sufficient pledge of their disposition to promote the interests of knowledge, which they well knew to be one of the most important pillars of the Church as well as the State."* It is no partial or extravagant representation to say, that they were men of vigorous talent, enlarged views, and uncommon learning.† America has not seen a more manly and gigantic race than that which took

* Miller's Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century.

† There is a very interesting fact related by Prince, in his *New-England Chronology*, which redounds much to the honour of the Rev. Mr. Robinson, the patriarch of the Plymouth colony. Soon after the Curators of the University of Leyden had invited Simon Episcopius, a professed Arminian, to the divinity chair in that institution, an event deeply deplored by the Churches, and especially by Polyander, the Calvinistic professor, Episcopius published several Arminian Theses, which he engaged to defend against all opposers. Mr. Robinson, being earnestly requested by Polyander and the divines of the city to accept the challenge, consented to enter the lists with Episcopius, and completely foiled him, not merely once, but a second or

possession of this western wilderness during the first century after the landing at Plymouth. There are not wanting at the present day, illustrious specimens of their native acuteness and patient research, which would reflect honour on any age, and which will long preserve the American name from oblivion. In vain will New-England now look for a Cotton, Hooker, Davenport, Mather, Mayhew, Norton, Oaks, Prince, Cutler, and Dickinson.* Nor were her worthies confined to any one class of men. The names of Winthrop, Eaton, Hopkins, Wolcott, and Prince,

third time, in the presence of a numerous and learned assembly. *Prince's New-England Chronology*, p. 38.

* The Rev. John Cotton came to this country in 1633, and was settled in Boston as colleague with the Rev. Mr. Wilson, the first minister in that place. While in England, he was chosen head lecturer in Emmanuel College; and became subsequently an instructor of young men designed for the ministry, some of whom were from Germany and Holland. He was a distinguished critic in the Greek and Latin languages, and conversed with some facility in the Hebrew.

The Rev. Thomas Hooker came to New-England in company with Mr. Cotton. He was first settled at Cambridge, and afterwards at Hartford. A very competent judge once said of him, that "he never met with Mr. Hooker's equal, either in preaching or disputation."

The Rev. John Davenport was the first minister of New-Haven, and one of the founders of that colony. He was an universal scholar, and held the first rank as a preacher. The late Dr. Dwight used to remark, that Mr. Davenport did more than any other man to form the character of Connecticut. Such was the reputation of the abovementioned three gentlemen, that they received a pressing invitation to go over to England and assist in the deliberations of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster.

Dr. Increase Mather was a native of New-England, and a graduate of Harvard College, of which he received the Presidency in 1685.

Dr. Cotton Mather was a native of Boston, and one of its first and best ministers. He was a man of vast learning, and his industry was even proverbial. It is said of him, "that no person in America had so large a library, or had read so many books, or retained so much of what he read." He was familiar with the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Spanish, and Iroquois languages.

There were four Mayhews, men of eminence and usefulness,—Thomas, John, Experience, and Jonathan,—all lineally descended from Governor Mayhew, of Martha's Vineyard; of whom the first three, together with

among her laity, will long be remembered as the enlightened and distinguished patrons of American literature.* Such were the men who made

their ancestor, were distinguished for zeal to promote the Gospel among the Indians.

The Rev. John Norton came over to this country in company with Governor Winslow, in 1635. He was early settled at Boston, and afterwards at Ipswich, and afterwards again established at Boston. After the restoration of Charles II, Mr. Norton was one of the agents of Massachusetts appointed to go over to England to obtain the confirmation of their charter. He was an eminent scholar and divine. One of his friends used frequently to walk from Ipswich to Boston, a distance of thirty miles, to attend the Thursday Lecture, and would say, "that it was worth a great journey to unite in one of Mr. Norton's prayers."

The Rev. Urian Oaks was a native of England, but was educated at Harvard College, and became the President of that institution in 1680. He excelled equally as a scholar, as a divine, and as a Christian. By his contemporaries, he was considered as one of the most resplendent lights that ever shone in this part of the world.

The Rev. Thomas Prince was the son of Thomas Prince, the Governor of Plymouth colony. He was colleague with Dr. Sewall in the Old South Church in Boston. In the opinion of Dr. Chauncy, no man in New-England had more learning, except Cotton Mather.

The Rev. Timothy Cutler, D. D. was a native of Charlestown, Massachusetts, and was inducted to the Presidency of Yale College in 1719. He was particularly distinguished for his acquaintance with oriental literature.

The Rev. Jonathan Dickinson was a native of Connecticut, and first President of New-Jersey College. He was a man of learning, of distinguished talents, and much celebrated as a preacher.

* The Hon. John Winthrop was one of the company which arrived at Salem in 1630. He was the first Governor of Massachusetts.

The Hon. Theophilus Eaton accompanied Mr. Davenport to New-England in 1637, and was the first Governor of New-Haven colony.

The Hon. Edward Hopkins was also in the same company with Mr. Davenport. He was one of the Governors of Connecticut, a benefactor of Harvard College, and the founder of a grammar school both at New-Haven and Hartford.

The Hon. Roger Wolcott, a native of Windsor, and Governor of Connecticut.

The Hon. Thomas Prince was a native of England, and arrived at Plymouth in 1621. He was chosen Governor of the colony in 1634. He was not only distinguished as a man of great worth and piety, but as the advocate and patron of learning. He was the firm supporter of a learned and regular ministry, in opposition to lay preachers. By his decision in procuring revenues for the support of grammar schools, he rendered himself obnox-

those exemplary and benevolent efforts for the foundation and maintenance of those literary institutions, which have exerted so commanding an influence on the American character, which are felt to the remote limits of the Union, and which have given this youthful Republic a superiority and elevation above many of the older nations of the earth.

Anxiously attentive to the general diffusion of science, our forefathers laid the basis of their exertions in the extended establishment of common schools. It was as much a point of conscience with them, and it entered as really into all their plans of colonization, to furnish their posterity with the means of intellectual advancement, as to provide them with the means of daily and comfortable subsistence.* Nor may it be denied, that in consequence of the high estimation in which they held this plan of instruction, common schools have been set upon a more respectable footing, and cherished with a more paternal regard, in New-England, than in any other portion of the globe, if we except perhaps Scotland. Beside their attention to common schools, our ancestors also laid the foundation of those higher seminaries of learning which have been justly considered among the brightest ornaments of the land.† “Accordingly, during

ious to the clamours of the populace ; but was entitled to the praise of being the founder of public schools. Vide *Mather's Magnalia*, and *Allen's Biographical Dictionary*.

* In 1641, the Massachusetts colony enacted, that “If any do not teach their children and apprentices so much learning as may enable them to read perfectly the English language, they shall forfeit twenty shillings.” Not long afterwards, a law was made, that when any town increased to the number of one hundred families, they should set up a grammar school, the master thereof being able to instruct youth, so far as that they may be fitted for the University. *Miller's Retrospect*.

† The different Colleges of New-England are :—Harvard College, or the

the greater part of the seventeenth century, the literature of the American colonies was in a great measure confined to New-England." For a series of years, New-England had the almost exclusive incumbency of the various seats of American learning; and even now, with some very honourable exceptions,* she furnishes the largest part of the teachers of our schools, the preceptors of our academies, and the Presidents and Professors of our Colleges and Universities. It is no enviable task to institute a comparison between this and other sections of our country, but I believe it will be found upon examination that New-England has had her full share of authors in moral, physical, and political science, and those too of no disreputable character.

The style of education is a subject to which our ancestors paid early and particular attention. That New-England has generally excelled the Southern and Middle States in the study of Oriental Literature, and in mathematical and metaphysical science, is to be attributed to the high estimation in which the first colonists held the severer studies, and the consequent influence of this predilection upon her literary institutions. In the estimation of our forefathers, religion excepted, nothing countervailed the weight, and dignity, and usefulness of a solid education. "Wisdom and knowledge, and strength of salvation, were the stability

University of Cambridge—this is the oldest institution of the kind in North America, and was founded in 1638; Yale College, first established in 1700, and incorporated in 1701; Rhode-Island College, which received its charter in 1764; Dartmouth College, incorporated in 1769; Williams College, incorporated in 1793; Bowden College, instituted in 1794; Middlebury College, founded in 1800; and the University of Vermont.

* The College of New-Jersey, founded in 1746, enrols among her alumni some of the most distinguished men of our country.

of their times.” Nor have the grand pillars which then supported the fair fabric of public and individual welfare, though they have been subject to some decay, lost their original strength and beauty. The benign influence of learning has been widely diffused ; and if some of it has become vitiated, and much of it superficial, it is no longer confined to the higher orders of men, but pervades very considerable portions of the community. Our infancy as a nation, our habits as a large commercial people, sedulously intent on gain rather than the pursuits of learning and science, together with the want of leisure and patronage, have operated as serious discouragements to men of letters ; but notwithstanding these, the field of literature is still extending, while there is no diminution of that ardent and inquisitive spirit which prompts to indefatigable, and patient, and bold excursions. Thanks to the God of our ancestors, that we are not dragging out our existence in the dark regions of sottishness and barbarism. Let any man compare the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, with their ignorant and barbarous cotemporaries ; let him look at Europe since the revival of letters in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and compare it with the ignorance of the tenth and eleventh centuries ; let him survey the present condition of Britain, Germany, and the United States, and contrast it with that of Africa, Russia, and Hindostan ; let him seriously advert to the influence of learning and science on the human character, and appreciate the distinctions it has made among nations and individuals ;

and he will discover the wisdom of Divine Providence in the early settlement of New-England.

But let us, in the third place, contemplate this event in a still more important attitude :—its operation on the extension and influence of the gospel. Most, if not all ecclesiastical historians, who have written since the commencement of the sixteenth century, have not failed to take notice of the discovery of America, as an event, pregnant with interesting results to the Church of God. President Edwards, in his *History of Redemption*, remarks, that “ we may well look upon the discovery of so great a part of the world as America, and bringing the Gospel into it, as one thing by which Divine Providence is preparing the way for those glorious times, when Satan’s kingdom shall be overthrown throughout the whole habitable globe.” But, if the discovery of the New World is an event of so much moment in the progress of the great redemption ; if America has been reserved as the theatre of scenes, which in their progressive developement are to hold an important place in the illustration of the Redeemer’s glory ; it cannot be difficult for us to feel the sentiment, that one of the earliest of these favourable indications was the migration of the Pilgrims of Leyden to this western wilderness.

Until that memorable day on which our forefathers landed at Plymouth, the Sun of Righteousness had never penetrated the dark climes of New-England. Sixteen centuries had passed away since the blood of propitiation was shed, and this vast continent, comprising a large part of the earth, remained in the undisturbed possession of the “ god of this

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world." Here, the "dark places of the earth were filled with habitations of cruelty." It was a bleak, dreary abode, resembling the "region of the shadow of death," where millions were groping "without God and without hope in the world."* It was the great empire of heathenism. My friends, "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God." On the spot where you and I have enjoyed so many of the divine mercies, and beheld so much of the divine glory, the "dwellers in this wilderness" once made their children to pass through the fire unto Moloch. How long the prince of darkness would have quietly enjoyed his dominion, no mind can conjecture, unless God in his holy pro-

* The leading tribes of Indians that inhabited New-England at this time, were,

1. The Pequots, or Pequods, a very warlike and potent people, who were scattered over Connecticut. Old Indians relate that in former times they could raise four thousand men fit for war.

2. The Narragansits, inhabiting Narragansit Bay. They were a great people, and once able to arm more than five thousand men.

3. The Pawkunnawkutts, living to the East and North-East of the Narragansits, and scattered over the Plymouth colony. They originally consisted of about three thousand armed men, but were swept off in great numbers by a pestilence which prevailed in 1612 and 1613.

4. The Massachusetts, inhabiting about Massachusetts Bay. This tribe was about as large as the Pawkunnawkutts, and shared the same fate from the epidemic in 1613.

5. The Pawtuckets, lying on the North and North-East of the Massachusetts, about as large a tribe, but almost totally destroyed by the great sickness.

Beside these, there were the inland Indians,—the Maquas or Mawhawks, the Massawomeks, the Canada Indians, the Kennebeck Indians, and other tribes in the District of Maine and on Long-Island.

Their religion was like the religion of other Gentiles. Some as their god, adored the sun; others, the moon; some, the earth; others, the fire, &c. &c. The prominent characteristics of their worship were obscenity and blood. Vide *Gookin's Historical Collections of the Indians in New-England*. A copy of this work will be found in the library of the New-York Historical Society.

vidence had raised up just such a race of men as our progenitors, to disseminate the glorious Gospel in these ungenial climes. The Pilgrims of New-England were men who had pity on the heathen. Their spirit was the spirit of missions. They gloried in the prospect of planting Churches, and propagating a heaven-born religion. It was this that mitigated the horrors of their persecution at home, and that inspirited them with so much patience and heroism abroad. Among the early settlers of New-England, you not only find the Mayhews, but others of a kindred, if not a superior spirit. Elliott, that famed "apostle of the Indians," was one of the chosen band that followed up the first colony;* and Bourn, Treat, Sergeant, Edwards, Brainerd, and Hawley,† soon became either coadjutors or successors in the work. The prosperity of their labours was almost without a parallel. The darkness, the thick darkness, which covered the people, began to

* The Rev. John Elliott, minister of Roxbury, Massachusetts, came to this country eleven years after the landing at Plymouth. He was intensely devoted to the work of evangelizing the Indians. He published the New Testament in the Indian language, and in a few years the whole Bible, and several other books. He established schools and Churches among them with great success; and, after a life indefatigably devoted to this cause, died in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

† The Rev. Richard Bourn was one of the first emigrants from England, who settled at Sandwich. He was pastor of an Indian Church at Marshpee, which was composed of his own converts, and which was constituted by Elliott and Cotton. He is deserving of honourable remembrance as a faithful and devoted missionary.

The Rev. Samuel Treat was the first minister of Eastham, Massachusetts, and devoted much of his time and attention to the Indians. He had under him four Indian teachers, who read in separate villages on every Sabbath, excepting every fourth, when he himself preached the sermons which he prepared for them in their own language.

The Rev. John Sergeant was a native of Newark, New-Jersey, and was a most faithful servant of Jesus Christ among the Housatonnoc, or Stock-

flee away.* Yes, it has gone—and now, what do we see? An army of ministers—a world of Bibles—I had almost said, a continent of Churches, where, two hundred years ago, not a solitary missionary of the cross had ever trodden the desert, not a Bible had blessed the cell of the savage, not a Church had lifted its spire amid the trees of the forest. The war-whoop has ceased, and the angel “having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth,” in his flight over this New World has proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, and good will to men.”

The spirit of evangelizing their fellow-men did not soon forsake the bosom of our fathers, nor has it left the bosom of their children. It has lived from generation to generation; it has diffused its blessings; it

bridge Indians. He was succeeded by the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, to all whose excellencies as a scholar and a divine, we may add the labours of six years as a missionary.

The labours of David Brainerd are fresh in the recollection of every friend of missions.

Gideon Hawley also is a name that ought not be forgotten. He commenced his missionary labours at Stockbridge; thence made an excursion to the Mohawks; thence to the Oneidas and Tuscaroras; thence to the Six Nations on the Susquehanna river, devoting more than half a century in benevolent exertion to promote the salvation of the heathen.

The Rev. Eleazer Wheelock, D. D. while a minister at Lebanon, Connecticut, established an Indian school, where a number of Indian youth were educated as missionaries. This establishment resulted in the foundation of Dartmouth College, of which Dr. Wheelock was the first President.

* Previous to the death of the venerable Mayhew, about two-thirds of the inhabitants on Martha's Vineyard were reckoned as “praying Indians.” There were thirty *Indian ministers*. In 1634, there were fourteen towns within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts colony, inhabited by these evangelized heathen.

For the substance of the information on this and the preceding page, vide *Gookin's Collections*, *Allen's Biographical Dictionary*, and the *London Missionary Register*.

has marked the course of the Pilgrims wherever they have gone. Let any man sit down to the sober calculation, and he will be convinced that a full share of the exertion which has been made by the American Churches, with the view of bringing back this lost and guilty world to God, may be attributed to the descendants of New-England. Not a few of those benevolent designs which have poured their blessings on mankind during the last century, and which have increased in number and become magnified in importance within the last thirty years, were originated and brought to maturity, and have been preserved in progressive advancement by the same active and persevering class of men. New-England has been scattering her sons and her daughters, in untold numbers and rapid succession, over this fertile continent; and wherever they have been dispersed, the "wilderness has blossomed as the rose, and the desert has become as the garden of the Lord."

While on this part of my subject, a thought occurs to which I wish it were in my power to impart all the importance and urgency it demands. Our ancestors were men who were not ashamed of their dependence on the immediate and omnipotent influences of the Holy Spirit. They preached, they acted as though the motto of their every enterprise was, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." They took great pains to bring forward, in the personality and divinity of his nature, and the efficiency and glory of his office, that Almighty Agent, who is commissioned in the method of redemption, to make "the gospel the power of God unto salvation." Their best adapted, their most self-

denying, their most vigorous exertions, they saw and felt were absolutely dependent on the Holy Ghost. And it is this thought that sunk them so often on their knees; that excited such ardent and irrepressible desire for the salvation of men; that roused the spirit of confident and intrepid exertion, and that inspired their bosoms with the all-conquering sentiment, confidence in God. They were men whose hearts were set on revivals of religion. Their Churches were early in the habit of looking up to God for the effusions of his Holy Spirit, and of setting apart seasons of prayer for this most desirable and important blessing. And many were the seasons of the outpouring of his Holy Spirit upon that favoured land. Very early after the establishment of these infant settlements, the presence of God was wonderfully manifested in the years 1629, 1630, and 1637; and, in allusion to these seasons of mercy, one of them says, "In those days God, even our own God, did bless New-England."* In the year 1680, there was a general revival of religion in Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Connecticut.† About the year 1705, very remarkable were the visitations of redeeming grace to a portion of the Massachusetts colony.‡ In 1679, 1683, 1696, 1712, 1718, and 1721, the blessing of God descended in a remarkable manner upon some of the Churches in the interior of Massachusetts and Connecticut.§ In 1727, after the great earthquake throughout New-England, there was a

* Gillie's Historical Collections, vol. i.

† Ibid. vol. ii.

‡ Ibid. vol. ii.

§ Ibid.

very general, deep, and saving impression upon the minds of multitudes in different parts of the country.* In 1734, there was a general revival of religion in Northampton, which extended to several towns in the county, and also to others in Connecticut.† About the year 1740, the Spirit of God attended the ministrations of the Rev. George Whitefield, in different parts of New-England and America; and the same influence also accompanied the labours of the Rev. William Tennent.‡ From the year 1740 to 1745, there was a signal manifestation of Divine power, grace, and mercy, which ought never to be brought into view without sentiments of sacred wonder and praise. Upwards of one hundred and twenty ministers, and sixty-eight in convention, bore public testimony of their firm persuasion in the power, reality, and genuineness of this work; and, at the close of their memorable attestation, say, “And now we desire to bow the knee in thanksgiving to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that our eyes have seen, and our ears heard such things.”§

The early days of New-England, my friends, were not days when revivals of religion were reproached as the reveries of deluded fanatics, or the effect of priestcraft and ecclesiastical policy; nor when good

* Vide Preface to the third edition of Edwards's Narrative, by Dr. Sewall, Mr. Prince, and others.

† Edwards's Narrative.

‡ Prince's Christian History, and Gillie's Collections.

§ This interesting document will be found at length in Gillie's Historical Collections, vol. ii. p. 306.

men stood aloof from them, because they were apprehensive that they savoured more of extravagance than solid piety. No—they were not satisfied without them. And it was for such scenes of mercy that a benignant Providence directed their course to this new world. For two hundred years New-England has been blessed with the effusions of the Spirit above any other section of our country, and these American Churches above any other section of the earth. The unction has been preserved and diffused. Different sections of the continent have been the theatre of these wonders ; and it appears to us, that one grand design of the colonization of the Pilgrims was, that the work of redemption should ultimately be carried forward on the largest scale in the western world.

But there is an additional consideration, which we may not pass over in silence. The wisdom of Divine Providence, in the removal of our ancestors, appears in a very interesting light, in the influence of their doctrinal belief and practical piety. In this respect, they were men of “sterner stuff” than some of their puny descendants. In sentiment, they adhered rigidly to the doctrines of the Reformation. The doctrine of the Divine existence in a Trinity of Persons ;—the doctrine of the entire and complete sinfulness of all mankind by nature ;—the doctrine of the atonement by the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ ;—the doctrine of regeneration, or the necessity of a radical change of heart by the special agency of the Holy Spirit ;—the doctrine of justification, by faith alone, in the imputed righteousness of the Son of God ;—the doctrine of the certain and

final perseverance of the saints ;—and the doctrine of the everlasting blessedness of the righteous, and the everlasting punishment of the wicked—are those which the fathers of New-England considered fundamental to the system of Redemption. The Confession of Faith, drawn up by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, may be considered as a fair exposition of their creed. While they did not bind themselves to a rigorous uniformity on all the numerous subdivisions of thought which are contained in so detailed a confession, they regarded this noble instrument as containing the great truths of the Bible, and as sufficiently explicit to distinguish the friends of our holy religion from every class of errorists in the world.* Though professed Calvinists, they were men of true liberality and original investigation. They neither despised nor gave implicit confidence to human authority;† and their doctrines and their spirit have had no small influence on their descendants from generation to generation. New-England has ever

* This Confession was framed after the removal of our ancestors to this country. The Westminster Assembly was convened as a Council to the English Parliament in 1643. To show the high estimation in which the first Churches in New-England held the Westminster Confession, in the year 1648 a Synod was convened, with the view of adopting a system of Church discipline, and in the course of their sessions, unanimously passed the following resolution :—“This Synod having perused and considered, with much gladness of heart and thankfulness to God, the Confession of Faith, lately published by the Reverend Assembly of Divines in England, do judge it holy, orthodox, and judicious, in all matters of faith, and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto for the substance.”

† There is an interesting fact in relation to the character and views of the Rev. Mr. Robinson, which I am gratified to present to the reader in this place. Prince, in his *New-England Chronology*, has a quotation from a work of Governor Winslow, in which he says, that “when the people of Plymouth parted from their renowned Pastor, he charged us, before God and his blessed angels, to follow him no further than he followed Christ. And if God should reveal any thing to us by any other instrument of his, to be as

stepped forward the bold and successful advocate of the doctrines of the Reformation. She has fearlessly driven them to their legitimate consequences ; and, within the last two centuries, has done more to illustrate and defend them, than any other section of the Christian world. The New-England divines, though differing, as we might naturally suppose men of bold and independent thought would differ, in some points of minor moment, are generally Calvinists of the first grade, and able defenders of the faith.*

Nor was the piety of our forefathers less conspicu-

ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry. For he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light to break forth out of his holy word. He took occasion also miserably to bewail the state of the Reformed Churches, who were come to a period in religion, and would go no further than the instruments of their reformation. As for example, the Lutherans could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw ; for whatever part of God's word he had further revealed to Calvin, they had rather die than embrace it. And so, said he, you see the Calvinists : they stick where he left them—a misery much to be lamented. For though they were precious, shining lights, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them ;—and were they now alive, they would be as ready to embrace further light, as that they had received. But withal, he exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth ; and well to examine, compare, and weigh it with other Scriptures, before we receive it. For, said he, it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such an antichristian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.”—P. 89, 90.

* The New-England divines have usually, and I think without reason, been called Hopkinsians : but the fact is, they are decided and consistent Calvinists. As such Dr. Hopkins was always considered ; and as such his followers were uniformly called, until the famous dispute in New-England about the means of grace, and the discussion of the question, *Whether the Scriptures contain any promise of grace to the doings of the unregenerate ?* Dr. Hopkins had good sense enough to espouse the negative of this question ; and, though the doctrine was far from being novel, from this circumstance alone his disciples were denominated Hopkinsians. The writer is sensible of the importance to be attached to the principles of the new school ; but that there is no such difference between Calvinists of the old and of the new school, as ought to separate brethren, is obvious from one fact,—The great body of both have agreed in recommending Scott's Family Bible, and the Assembly's Catechism.

ous than the purity of their doctrines. As though blessings were designed for this nation for a great while to come, her early colonists were not merely good men, but some of the best men the world has seen. About to make this happy land the theatre of memorable displays of his mercy, the Great Husbandman planted it with the choicest vine. "He sifted three kingdoms, that he might plant the American wilderness with the finest wheat." A very faithful historian says of them, "There never was perhaps before seen such a body of pious people together on the face of the earth."* In all their designs and conduct, personal and public, they were men who appear to have been governed by the fear of God and the love of Jesus Christ. They felt the importance, saw the beauty, and enjoyed the consolations of true godliness. They were "children of the light and of the day;" "crucified to the world, and alive unto God;" and, in their habitual conduct, exhibited the enlightened and holy zeal of sincere Christians. Nor were they negligent in the performance of external duties. No people cherished a more sacred regard for the holy Scriptures; none paid a more reverential respect to the Lord's day; none more punctual and profitable attention to family worship and the religious education of children. Nor was their morality less uniform and consistent than their religion.† It was the deep and thorough morality of the gospel, pervading alike the chair of magistracy,

* Prince's Christian History.

† When they left Holland, the magistrates of Leyden gave them this honourable testimony: "These Englishmen have lived among us now these twelve years, yet we never had one suit or action against them."

the pulpit, the bench, the workshop, and the field. Vice and immorality sought a distant retirement, and scarcely found a place among them.* And when in the progressive advancement of the colony, there appeared some symptoms of declension, the whole land was filled with alarm. Ministers and people, rulers and subjects, were alive to the question, What is to be done, that these evils may be reformed?†

Such was the character and influence of the primitive colonists of New-England. And can we, can these United States, can the world be too grateful, that this important section of the earth was first settled by such men? It was a concern of vast importance to the generations destined to inhabit this extended and fertile country, that its first settlers should be wise and good. Had New-England received her first colonies from countries where the refinements of modern philosophy had superseded the religion of the Bible; where the faith and morality of the Gospel were a secondary concern, or the object of no concern; had her early colonists been a Laud, a Priestly, or a Belsham,

* In a sermon before the House of Lords and Commons, and the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, the Rev Mr. Firmin, who had resided some time in this country, said, "I have lived in a country seven years, and all that time I never heard one profane oath, and all that time I never did see a man drunk in that land."

† In 1679, the Massachusetts government actually called a Synod of all the Churches in that colony, to consider and answer these two most important questions:—1. What are the evils that have provoked the Lord to bring his judgments on New-England? 2. What is to be done that so these evils may be reformed? Among their answers to the second question, the Synod advised the several Churches to an express and solemn renewal of their covenant with God and with one another. Immediately following this, was the outpouring of the Divine Spirit in 1680.—*Vide Gillie's Historical Collections, vol. ii. p. 20.*

instead of a Cotton, a Hooker, and a Davenport ; had they been Atheists, Infidels, Jews, Socinians, or Universalists, rather than well-informed and humble Christians ; and New-England been issuing a race of corrupting errorists, rather than scattering far and wide a collection of men who feared God and loved righteousness ; this anniversary would have kindled a very different flame in our bosoms, than that which now animates them, as we call to mind the faith and virtues which have been cemented with our literary and moral institutions, and which were imbedded in the very foundation of our colony.

That was a “right way,” a most wise Providence that “led forth” our fathers to this wilderness. Future generations, and other centuries, my friends, will appreciate it better than we. The spirits of the Pilgrims,—now the possessors of a richer inheritance,—now the inhabitants of a loftier and more commanding world,—can look down the “descent of ages,” and appreciate it better than we. And could they tell us, I have not a doubt they would rehearse in our ears a catalogue of results, with which this memorable event cheers the prospect of their progressive eternity.

In paying this tribute to New-England, let no one suppose, that, with all our filial partialities, we are ignorant of her faults. Faults she would have, did she retain the primitive wisdom and integrity of the Pilgrims. But, my friends, in this survey of the footsteps of Divine Providence in this favoured land, from the commencement of our national existence, truth obliges us to record, that her growth and prosperity, has been attended by a sensible and humiliating degeneracy.

There are not wanting men and communities who retain much of the rigid virtue and high morality of our forefathers ; but it cannot have escaped the observation of any impartial inquirer, if morality be regarded as our ancestors regarded it, that there is a manifest declension of public morals in the different States of New-England. We observe not now the purity and sincerity which so eminently distinguished the manners of our forefathers, and which dignified and adorned the age of New-England's simplicity. That universal regard for the institutions of the Gospel which elevated the Eastern so much above their sister States ; which pervaded the old and the young ; which influenced the legislative, the judicial, and the executive departments of her government ; which gave such dignity to office, and such energy to law ; and which on every side erected a bulwark against the encroachments of irreligion and licentiousness : is found now, with few exceptions, only on the page of some antiquated statute book, or inscribed on the tomb of Puritanism. There has been also a growing inattention to the religious and moral education of the young. Churches seem in a measure to have forgotten to "train up" their youth in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord ;" and parents appear rather to have manifested a deeper concern to ingratiate their children with the "friendship of the world, which is enmity against God," than to restrain them from unhallowed indulgences, and imbue their minds with a sacred regard for the principles and duties of piety. In many districts of New-England, there exists a serious and alarming deficiency of the ordi-

nary means of grace and salvation, occasioned no doubt, partly by the rapid increase of population, but radically owing to that criminal apathy to spiritual want, which has not merely disregarded the demands of an increasing population, but has suffered towns and villages to lie waste, where the fathers of New-England assiduously scattered "the seed of the kingdom," and watered it with their prayers and their tears. The increase of religious sects is an evil of no inconsiderable magnitude ; and has had a baleful influence, not only in disturbing the harmony and diminishing the strength of the Churches, but in sinking the sacred character of the Gospel in the view of multitudes who were taught to respect it, and in leaving others to pass with less remorse and censure into the neglect of all religion. The almost entire neglect of Gospel discipline, is one of the features in New-England's degeneracy, which greatly obscures her ancient glory. The greater part of her Churches have thrown aside those common bonds of union, which, in the days of our ancestors, contributed so much to purity of doctrine and mutual comfort and edification ; while a growing contempt of creeds and confessions of faith has facilitated the encroachments of error, and given countenance to those who deny the essential truths of Christianity. It is obvious that this is an evil which crept into the Churches gradually. For a long time, the people were much more Calvinistic in their principles than their ministers ; and not until many an art and subterfuge to conceal their sentiments,* and great vagueness and ambiguity in their public instructions, did the abettors of a loose

* The Rev. Dr. Freeman, a distinguished Unitarian, of Boston, in a letter

theology succeed in giving currency to sentiments which now distinguish some of the oldest and most respectable congregations in New-England; and which has left comparatively few in her metropolis "upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."* It cannot be dissembled, that a very different faith is inculcated from some of the pulpits of New-England, from that for which our fathers bid adieu to their native land—encountered the perils of the ocean—became exiles, and which they trusted would be the hope and consolation of their children in future ages:—a faith, which so far from being humbling to the pride of man, commends itself to the unrenewed heart, and constitutes precisely the resting place for a mind awake to its obligations, and determined to maintain its rebellion against the Most High:—a faith, which the purest self-righteousness demands, and with which the most unyielding impenitence is satisfied;—a faith, which mocks at the seriousness and spirituality and self-devotement of true religion, and which considers all the tenderness of an awakened conscience,

to Mr. Lindsey, a man of the same stamp in England, writes—"I am acquainted with a number of ministers, particularly in the southern part of this State, who avow, and publicly preach, the Unitarian doctrine. There are others more *cautious*, who content themselves with *leading* their hearers, by a course of rational but *prudent* sermons, *gradually* and *insensibly* to embrace it. Though this latter mode is not what I entirely approve, yet it produces *good effects*. For the people are thus kept out of the reach of these false opinions, and are *prepared* for the impressions which will be made on them by more bold and ardent successors!"—*Vide History of American Unitarianism.*

* It is supposed that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts contains about *eighty* Unitarian ministers. Probably about *fifty* of them openly avow their opposition to orthodoxy. There may be *twenty* professed anti-Trinitarians in other parts of New-England.

all anxiety for the salvation of the soul, all the solemnities of conviction for sin, as well as "all joy and peace in believing," the object of ridicule and sarcasm;—a faith which relaxes the obligations of personal and domestic religion; which makes no scruple in allowing ministers and people an occasional indulgence in the more refined and fashionable vices; and which often descends low enough to caricature the simplicity and purity of better days. Yes, all this is to be found in New-England—where the daughter of Zion was once "comely as Tirzah, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners"—where our fathers enjoyed such memorable effusions of the Divine Spirit, and beheld such illustrious exhibitions of the Divine glory—where so much has been accomplished, and so much endured, to extend and perpetuate a "pure and undefiled religion." There is something in the apostacy of these latter times to be bitterly bewailed; and if it were not an apostacy that involves the rejection of all the essential articles of the Christian faith; all that is binding in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures;* all that is precious in the hopes of the Gospel; all that is holy in a Christian walk and conversation;† and

* As conclusive evidence of the truth of this observation, we refer to the fact, that the Socinians of Boston are the known patrons of the "Improved version of the New Testament." One of their publications, *The General Repository*, published at Cambridge, declares it to be "a version far more faithful, more correct, and more intelligible, than that in common use." And yet in this version, whole chapters of the Gospels have been rejected, and nearly all the fundamental doctrines explained away. We might also advert to the disrespectful language with which even the unlearned of the Socinian party are taught to speak of the Epistles.

† Dr. Priestly himself acknowledges, that "a great number of the Unit-

all that is solemn in the retributions of the eternal world: the peculiarities of time and circumstance might, perhaps, at the present opportunity, with some justice be considered paramount to the claims of truth and religion. But we dare not suppress the fact, and to us it is a source of the heaviest grief, "that many of the sons of the Pilgrims have forsaken the Lord;" "have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger;" "are gone away backward."

Descendants of New-England! This is a day on which it becomes us, with high exultation, to commemorate the virtues of our ancestors; and by our adherence to the principles, and our attachment to the institutions, which they have intrusted to our care, prove to the world how worthy we are to be called their sons. Wherever your allotment may be cast, you have much to do, to revive, and defend, and perpetuate the spirit and influence of men "of whom the world was not worthy." Your children, and your children's children, "will rise up and call you blessed," as you tread in the steps of your fathers. Little do the advocates of a liberal religion and morality anticipate the influence of their views on future generations, or suspect that they are devoting their offspring to a system of faith and practice that will plant thorns on their dying pillow, and embitter their reflections throughout eternity. "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good

rians of the present age, are only men of good sense, *and without much practical religion*: and there is a greater apparent conformity to the world in them, than is observable in others." He also says, that "he hopes they have more of a real principle of religion than they *seem to have*!" He further allows, "that they are peculiarly wanting in zeal for religion."

way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

Christians of New-England! The events of the present day are calculated to prove your sincerity, and to discover the secrets of your heart. "Watch unto prayer." Alike fearless of the allurements of that modern catholicism, which chants forth the praises of its own liberality* only to betray the unthinking and the unwary, and fearful of that "philosophy and vain deceit," where many a mind shoots ahead of its own expectations, and passes beyond the hope of recovery or return;† "contend, earnestly, for the faith once delivered to the saints." "Be ye holy, harmless, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

* In a very excellent sermon, preached by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller, not long since, at the ordination of the Rev. William Nevins, as Pastor of the first Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, after expressing his views of the "dreadful and soul-destroying errors of Arius and Socinus," the Rev. author subjoins the following note:—

"The above language, concerning the destructive nature of the Arian and Socinian heresies, has not been adopted lightly; but is the result of serious deliberation, and deep conviction; and in conformity with this view of the subject, the author cannot forbear to notice and record a declaration made to himself, by the late Dr. Priestly, two or three years before the decease of that distinguished Unitarian. The conversation was a free and amicable one, on some of the fundamental doctrines of religion. In reply to a direct avowal on the part of the author, that he was a Trinitarian and a Calvinist, Dr. Priestly said, 'I do not wonder that you Calvinists entertain and express a strongly unfavourable opinion of us Unitarians. The truth is, there neither *can*, nor *ought to be*, any compromise between us. If *you* are right, *we are not Christians at all*; and if *we* are right, you are *gross idolaters*.' And nothing certainly can be more just."

† Dr. Priestly says of himself, "He was once a Calvinist, and that of the strictest sect; then a high Arian, next a low Arian; then a Socinian; and in a little time a Socinian of the lowest kind, in which Jesus Christ is considered a mere man, as fallible and peccable as Moses, or any other Prophet." He also says, "*I do not know when my creed will be fixed.*"

Ministers of New-England ! “ Hold fast that you have received, let no man take your crown.” “ The time will come,” yea, is now come, “ when men will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and shall turn away their ears from the truth.” The prevalence, the deception, the dishonesty of error, are no cause of despondency to the friends of the “ truth as it is in Jesus.” Perilous times may come ; but in a little while, the Church shall put on her glory. Do not dissemble ; do not wrest the Scriptures from their native import ; but seize on every opportunity to manifest your adherence to the adorable mysteries of the Gospel. Stand up to your work ; and be assured you have nothing to fear, but from the unfaithfulness of a shameful neutrality in a cause which is identified with your Redeemer’s glory.

Fellow-immortals ! see how every thing is measuring out the span of human life, and hastening one generation after another to eternity. Before another century shall pass away, other men will walk these streets, and be invested with these possessions. Before another anniversary, the places which now know you may know you no more. Forget not the God of your fathers. Come out from the world, and live as “ pilgrims and strangers on the earth.” And in a little while, all your wanderings shall be over : chastened by the trials of earth, and exalted by the spirit of heaven, you shall be partakers of a rich, a glorious inheritance, and enjoy the rest which remaineth for the people of God.” AMEN.

