C. Francis  
1848
Contents.

1. Channing's Discourse at the Dedication of Divinity Hall, 1826.
2. Lowell's Sermon at the Dedication of the 3rd Cong. Church in Cambridge, 1827.
3. Dr. Thayer's Discourse at the Dedication in Storr, 1827.
4. Gilman's Sermon at the Dedication of the Unitarian Church in Augusta, Geo. 1827.
5. Ritchie's Sermon at the Dedication of the Cong. Church at Upper Falls, Newton, 1828.
7. Lowell's Sermon at the Dedication of the South Cong. Church in Natick, 1828.
8. Deane's Discourse at the Dedication in Scituate, 1830.
9. Newell's Farewell Sermon on leaving the old Meeting House, Sermon at the Dedication of the New Cambridge
10. Francis: Three Discourses: Two upon leaving the Old Meeting House, One at the Dedication of the New, in Watertown, 1836.
11. Slaton: Two Discourses on leaving the Old Church Dedicating the New, Medford, 1840.
17. Robbins: Dedication Sermon, Boston, 1848.
18. Waterton: Dedication Discourse, Boston, 1847.
20. J. F. Clarke: Dedication Discourse in Boston, 1848.
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED

AT THE DEDICATION OF DIVINITY HALL,

CAMBRIDGE, 1836.

BY

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

His word was with power.—Luke iv. 32.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY CARTER AND HENDEE.

MDCCCXXX.
serve peculiar attention. I say then, that this edifice is dedicated to the training of ministers, whose word, like their master's, shall be 'with power.' Power, energy, efficiency, this is the endowment to be communicated most assiduously by a theological institution. Such is the truth, which I would now develope. My meaning may easily be explained. By the power, of which I have spoken, I mean that strong action of the understanding, conscience, and heart, on moral and religious truth, through which the preacher is quickened and qualified to awaken the same strong action in others. I mean energy of thought and feeling in the minister, creating for itself an appropriate expression, and propagating itself to the hearer. What this power is, all men understand by experience. All know, how the same truth differs, when dispensed by different lips; how doctrines, inert and uninteresting as expounded by one teacher, come fraught with life from another; arrest attention, rouse emotion, and give a new spring to the soul. In declaring this power to be the great object of a theological institution, I announce no discovery. I say nothing new. But this truth, like many others is too often acknowledged only to be slighted. It needs to be brought out, to be made prominent, to become the living, guiding principle of education for the ministry. Power, then, I repeat it, is the great good to be communicated by theological institutions. To impart knowledge is indeed their indispensable duty, but not their whole, nor most arduous, nor highest work. Knowledge is the means, power the end. The former, when accumulated, as it often is, with no strong action of the intellect, no vividness of conception, no depth of conviction, no force of feeling, is of little or no worth to the preacher. It comes from him as a faint echo, with nothing of that mysterious energy, which
strong conviction throws into style and utterance. His breath, which should kindle, chills his hearers, and the nobler the truth with which he is charged, the less he succeeds in carrying it far into men's souls. We want more than knowledge. We want force of thought, feeling and purpose. What profits it to arm the pupil with weapons of heavenly temper, unless his hands be nerved to wield them with vigor and success? The word of God is indeed 'quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword;' but when committed to him who has no kindred energy, it does not and cannot penetrate the mind. Power is the attribute, which crowns all a minister's accomplishments. It is the centre and grand result, in which all his studies, meditations and prayers should meet, and without which his office becomes a form and a show. And yet how seldom is it distinctly and earnestly proposed as the chief qualification for the sacred office? How seldom do we meet it? How often does preaching remind us of a child's arrows shot against a fortress of adamant. How often does it seem a mock fight. We do not see the earnestness of real warfare; of men bent on the accomplishment of a great good. We want powerful ministers, not graceful declaimers, not elegant essayists, but men fitted to act on men, to make themselves felt in society.

I have said that the communication of power is the great end of a theological institution. Let not this word give alarm. I mean by it, as you must have seen, a very different power from that which ministers once possessed, and which some still covet. There have been times, when the clergy were rivals in dominion with kings; when the mitre even towered above the diadem; when the priest, shutting God's word on the people, and converting its threatenings and promises into instruments
of usurpation, was able to persuade men, that the soul's everlasting doom hung on his ministry, and even succeeded in establishing a sway over fiery and ferocious spirits, which revolted against all other control. This power, suited to barbarous times, and, as some imagine, a salutary element of society in rude, lawless ages, has been shaken almost everywhere by the progress of intellect; and in Protestant countries, it is openly repro­bated and renounced. It is not to reestablish this, that these walls have been reared. We trust, that they are to be bulwarks against its encroachments, and that they are to send forth influences more and more hostile to every form of spiritual usurpation.

Am I told that this kind of power is now so fallen and so contemned, that to disclaim or to oppose it seems a waste of words? I should rejoice to yield myself to this belief. But unhappily the same enslaving and degrading power may grow up under Protestants as under Catholic institutions. In all ages and all churches, terror confers a tremendous influence on him who can spread it; and through this instrument, the Protestant minister, whilst disclaiming Papal pretensions, is able, if so minded, to build up a spiritual despotism. That this means of subjugating the mind should be too freely used and dreadfully perverted, we cannot wonder, when we consider that no talent is required to spread a panic, and that coarse minds and hard hearts are signally gifted for this work of torture. The progress of intelligence is undoubtedly narrowing the power, which the minister gains by excessive appeals to men's fears, but has by no means destroyed it; for as yet the intellect, even in Protestant countries, has exerted itself comparatively little on religion; and, ignorance begetting a passive, servile state of mind, the preacher, if so disposed, finds little difficulty
in breaking some, if not many spirits, by terror. The effects of this ill-gotten power are mournful on the teacher and the taught. The panic-smitten hearer, instructed that safety is to be found in bowing to an unintelligible creed, and too agitated for deliberate and vigorous thought, resigns himself a passive subject to his spiritual guides, and receives a faith by which he is debased. Nor does the teacher escape unhurt; for all usurpation on men's understandings begets, in him who exercises it, a dread and resistance of the truth which threatens its subversion. Hence ministers have so often fallen behind their age, and been the chief foes of the master spirits who have improved the world. They have felt their power totter at the tread of an independent thinker. By a kind of instinct, they have fought against the light, before which the shades of superstition were vanishing, and have received their punishment in the darkness and degradation of their own minds. To such power as we have described, we do not dedicate these walls. We would not train here, if we could, agents of terror, to shake weak nerves, to disease the imagination, to lay a spell on men's faculties, to guard a creed by fires more consuming than those which burnt on Sinai. Believing that this method of dominion is among the chief obstructions to an enlightened faith, and abhorring tyranny in the pulpit as truly as on the throne, we would consecrate this edifice to the subversion, not the participation, of this unhallowed power.

Is it then asked, what I mean by the power which this institution should aim to communicate? I mean power to act on intelligent and free beings, by means proportioned to their nature. I mean power to call into healthy exertion the intellect, conscience, affections, and
moral will of the hearer. I mean force of conception, and earnestness of style and elocution. I mean, that truth should be a vital principle in the soul of the teacher, and should come from him as a reality. I mean, that his whole moral and intellectual faculties should be summoned to his work; that a tone of force and resolution should pervade his efforts; that, throwing his soul into his cause, he should plead it with urgency, and should concentrate on his hearers all the influences which consist with their moral freedom.

Every view which we can take of the ministry will teach us, that nothing less than the whole amount of power in the individual can satisfy its demands. This we learn, if we consider, first, the weight and grandeur of the subjects which the minister is to illustrate and enforce. He is to speak of God, the King and Father Eternal, whose praise no tongue of men or angels can worthily set forth. He is to speak of the soul, that ray of the Divinity, the partaker of God's own immortality, to which the outward universe was made to minister, and which, if true to itself, will one day be clad with a beauty and grandeur such as nature's loveliest and sublimest scenery never wears. He is to speak, not of this world only, but of invisible and more advanced states of being; of a world too spiritual for the fleshly eye to see, but of which a presage and earnest may be found in the enlightened and purified mind. He has to speak of virtue, of human perfection, of the love which is due to the Universal Father and to fellow beings, of the intercourse of the soul with its Creator, and of all the duties of life as hallowed and elevated by a reference to God and to the future world. He has to speak of sin, that essential evil, that only evil, which, by its unutterable fearfulness,
makes all other calamities unworthy of the name. He is to treat, not of ordinary life, nor of the most distinguished agents in ordinary history, but of God's supernatural interpositions; of his most sensible and immediate providence; of men inspired and empowered to work the most important revolutions in society; and especially of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the theme of prophecy, the revealer of grace and truth, the saviour from sin, the conqueror of death, who hath left us an example of immaculate virtue, whose love passeth knowledge, and whose history, combining the strange and touching contrasts of the cross, the resurrection, and a heavenly throne, surpasses all other records in interest and grandeur. He has to speak, not of transitory concerns, but of happiness and misery transcending in duration and degree the most joyful and suffering condition of the present state. He has to speak of the faintly shadowed, but solemn consummation of this world's eventful history; of the coming of the Son of Man, the resurrection, the judgment, the retributions of the last day. Here are subjects of intense interest. They claim and should call forth the mind's whole power, and are infinitely wronged when uttered with cold lips and from an unmoved heart.

If we next consider the effects, which, through these truths, the minister is to produce, we shall see that his function demands and should be characterised by power. The first purpose of a minister's function, which is to enlighten the understanding on the subject of religion, is no easy task; for all religious truth is not obvious, plain, shining with an irresistible evidence, so that a glance of thought will give the hearer possession of the teacher's mind. We sometimes talk, indeed, of the simplicity of religion, as if it were as easy as a child's book,
as if it might be taught with as little labor as the alphabet. But all analogy forbids us to believe, that the sublimest truths can be imparted or gained with little thought or effort, and the prevalent ignorance confirms this presumption. Obstacles neither few nor small to a clear apprehension of religion, are found in the invisibility of its objects; in the disproportion between the Infinite Creator and the finite mind; in the proneness of human beings to judge of superior natures by their own, and to transfer to the spiritual world the properties of matter and the affections of sense; in the perpetual pressure of outward things upon the attention; in the darkness which sin spreads over the intellect; in the ignorance which yet prevails in regard to the human mind; and, though last not least, in the errors and superstitions which have come down to us from past ages, and which exert an unsuspected power on our whole modes of religious thinking. These obstacles are strengthened by the general indisposition to investigate religion freely and thoroughly. The tone of authority with which it has been taught, the terror and obscure phraseology in which it has been shrouded, and the unlovely aspect which it has been made to wear, have concurred to repel from it deliberate and earnest attention, and to reconcile men to a superficial mode of thinking which they would scorn on every other subject. Add to this, that the early inculcation and frequent repetition of religion, by making it familiar, expose it to neglect. The result of all these unfavorable influences, is, that religious truth is more indistinctly apprehended, is more shadowy and unreal to the multitude, than any other truth; and, unhappily, this remark applies with almost equal truth to all ranks of society and all orders of intellect. The loose conceptions of Christianity which prevail among
the high as well as the low, do not deserve the name of knowledge. The loftiest minds among us seldom put forth their strength on the very subject, for which intelligence was especially given. A great revolution is needed here. The human intellect is to be brought to act on religion with new power. It ought to prosecute this inquiry with an intenseness, with which no other subject is investigated. And does it require no energy in the teacher, to awaken this power and earnestness of thought in others, to bring religion before the intellect as its worthiest object, to raise men's traditional, lifeless, superficial faith into deliberate profound conviction?

That the ministry should be characterised by power and energy, will be made more apparent, if we consider that it is instituted to quicken, not only the intellect but the conscience; to enforce the obligations, as well as illustrate the truth of religion. It is an important branch of the minister's duty, to bring home the general principles of duty to the individual mind; to turn it upon itself; to rouse it to a resolute, impartial survey of its whole responsibilities and ill deserts. And is not energy needed to break through the barriers of pride and self-love, and to place the individual before a tribunal in his own breast, as solemn and searching as that which awaits him at the last day? It is not indeed so difficult to rouse, in the timid and susceptible, a morbid susceptibility of conscience, to terrify weak people into the idea, that they are to answer for sins inherited from the first fallen pair, and entailed upon them by a stern necessity. But this feverish action of the conscience is its weakness, not its strength; and the teacher who would rouse the moral sense to discriminating judg-
ment and healthful feeling, has need of a vastly higher kind of power than is required to darken and disease it.

Another proof that the ministry should be characterized by power, is given to us by the consideration, that it is intended to act on the affections; to exhibit religion in its loveliness and venerableness, as well as in its truth and obligation; to concentrate upon it all the strength of moral feeling. The Christian teacher has a great work to do in the human heart. His function has, for its highest aim, to call forth towards God the profoundest awe, attachment, trust, and joy, of which human nature is capable. Religion demands, that He who is supreme in the universe, should be supreme in the human soul. God, to whom belongs the mysterious and incommunicable attribute of Infinity; who is the fullness and source of life and thought, of beauty and power, of love and happiness; on whom we depend more intimately than the stream on the fountain, or the plant on the earth in which it is rooted,—this Great Being ought to call forth peculiar emotions, and to move and sway the soul, as he pervades creation, with unrivalled energy. It is his distinction, that he unites in his nature infinite majesty and infinite benignity, the most awful with the most endearing attributes, the tenderest relations to the individual with the grandeur of the universal sovereign; and, through this nature, he is fitted to act on the mind as no other being can,—to awaken a love more intense, a veneration more profound, a sensibility of which the soul knows not its capacity until it is penetrated and touched by God. To bring the created mind into living union with the Infinite Mind, so that it shall respond to him through its whole being, is the noblest function, which this harmonious and beneficent
universe performs. For this, revelation was given. For this, the ministry was instituted. The christian teacher is to make more audible, and to interpret the voice, in which the beauty and awfulness of nature, the heavens, the earth, fruitful seasons, storms and thunders, recall men to their Creator. Still more, he is to turn them to the clearer, milder, more attractive splendors, in which the Divinity is revealed by Jesus Christ. His great purpose, I repeat it, is, to give vitality to the thought of God in the human mind; to make his presence felt; to make him a reality, and the most powerful reality to the soul. And is not this a work requiring energy of thought and utterance? Is it easy, in a world of matter and sense, amidst crowds of impressions rushing in from abroad, amidst the constant and visible agency of second causes, amidst the anxieties, toils, pleasures, dissipations, and competitions of life, in the stir and bustle of society, and in an age when luxury wars with spirituality, and the development of nature’s resources is turning men’s trust from the Creator,—is it easy, amidst these gross interests and distracting influences, to raise men’s minds to the invisible Divinity, to fix impressions of God deeper and more enduring than those which are received from all other beings, to make him the supreme object, spring, and motive of the soul?

We have seen how deep and strong are the affections which the minister is to awaken towards God. But strength of religious impression is not his whole work. From the imperfections of our nature, this very strength has its dangers. Religion, in becoming fervent, often becomes morbid. It is the minister’s duty to inculcate a piety characterised by wisdom as much as by warmth; to mediate, if I may so speak, between the reason and the affections, so that, with joint energy and in blessed
harmony, they may rise together and offer up the undivided soul to God. Whoever understands the strength of emotion in man's nature, and how hardly the balance of the soul is preserved, need not be told of the arduousness of this work. Devout people, through love of excitement, and through wrong views of the love of God, are apt to cherish the devotional feelings, at the expense, if not to the exclusion, of other parts of our nature. They seem to imagine that piety, like the Upas tree, makes a desert where it grows; that the mind, if not the body, needs a cloister. The natural movements of the soul are repressed; the social affections damped; the grace, and ornament, and innocent exhilarations of life frowned upon; and a gloomy, repulsive religion is cultivated, which, by way of compensation for its privations, claims a monopoly of God's favor, abandoning all to his wrath who will not assume its own sad livery and echo its own sepulchral tones. Through such exhibitions, religion has lost its honor; and though the most ennobling of all sentiments, dilating the soul with vast thoughts and an unbounded hope, has been thought to contract and degrade it. The minister is to teach an earnest but enlightened religion; a piety, which, far from wasting or eradicating, will protect, nourish, freshen the mind's various affections and powers; which will add force to reason, as well as ardor to the heart; which will at once bind us to God, and cement and multiply our ties to our families, our country, and mankind; which will heighten the relish of life's pleasures, whilst it kindles an unquenchable thirst for a purer happiness in the life to come. Religion does not mutilate our nature. It does not lay waste our human interests and affections, that it may erect for God a throne amidst cheerless and solitary ruins, but widens the range of thought, feeling, and
enjoyment. Such is religion; and the christian ministry, having for its end the communication of this healthful, well-proportioned, and all-comprehending piety, demands every energy of thought, feeling, and utterance, which the individual can bring to the work.

The time would fail me to speak of the other affections and sentiments which the ministry is instituted to excite and cherish, and I hasten to another object of the christian teacher, which, to those who know themselves, will peculiarly illustrate the power which his office demands. It is his duty to rouse men to self-conflict, to warfare with the evil in their own hearts. This is in truth the supreme evil. The sorest calamities of life, sickness, poverty, scorn, dungeons, and death, form a less amount of desolation and suffering than is included in that one word, sin—in revolt from God, in disloyalty to conscience, in the tyranny of the passions, in the thralldom of the soul's noblest powers. To redeem men from sin was Christ's great end. To pierce them with a new consciousness of sin, so that they shall groan under it, and strive against it, and through prayer and watching master it, is an essential part of the minister's work. Let him not satisfy himself with awakening, by his eloquence, occasional emotions of gratitude or sympathy. He must rouse the soul to solemn, stern resolve against its own deep and cherished corruptions, or he only makes a show of assault, and leaves the foe intrenched and unbroken within. We see, then, the arduousness of the minister's work. He is called to war with the might of the human passions, with the whole power of moral evil. He is to enlist men, not for a crusade, nor for extermination of heretics, but to fight a harder battle within, to expel sin in all its forms, and especially their besetting
sins, from the strong holds of the heart. I know no task so arduous, none which demands equal power.

I shall take but one more view of the objects for which the christian ministry was instituted, and from which we infer that it should be fraught with energy. It is the duty of the christian teacher to call forth in the soul, a conviction of its immortality, a thirst for a higher existence, and a grandeur and elevation of sentiment, becoming a being who is to live, enjoy, and advance, forever. His business is with men, not as inhabitants of this world, but as related to invisible beings, and to purer and happier worlds. The minister should look with reverence on the human soul as having within itself the germ of heaven. He should recognise, in the ignorant and unimproved, vast spiritual faculties given for perpetual enlargement, just as the artist of genius sees in the unhewn marble the capacity of being transformed into a majesty and grace, which will command the admiration of ages. In correspondence with these views, let him strive to quicken men to a consciousness of their inward nature and of its affinity with God, and to raise their steadfast aim and hope to its interminable progress and felicity. Such is his function. Perhaps I may be told, that men are incapable of rising, under the best instruction, to this height of thought and feeling. But let us never despair of our race. There is, I am sure, in the human soul, a deep consciousness, which responds to him, who sincerely, and with the language of reality, speaks to it of the great and everlasting purposes for which it was created. There are sublime instincts in man. There is in human nature, a want which the world cannot supply; a thirst for objects on which to pour forth more fervent admiration and love,
than visible things awaken; a thirst for the unseen, the infinite, and the everlasting. Most of you who hear, have probably had moments, when a new light has seemed to dawn, a new life to stir within you; when you have aspired after an unknown good; when you have been touched by moral greatness and disinterested love; when you have longed to break every chain of selfishness and sensuality, and enjoy a purer being. It is on this part of our nature that religion is founded. To this Christianity is addressed. The power to speak to this, is the noblest which God has imparted to man or angel, and should be coveted above all things by the Christian teacher.

The need of power in the ministry has been made apparent, from the greatness of the truths to be dispensed and the effects to be wrought by the Christian teacher. The question then comes, How may the student of theology be aided in gaining or cherishing this power? Under what influences should he be placed? What are the springs or foundations of the energy which he needs? How may he be quickened and trained to act most efficiently on the minds of men? In answering these questions, we of course determine the character which belongs to a theological institution, the spirit which it should cherish, the discipline, the mode of teaching, the excitements, which it should employ. From this wide range, I shall select a few topics which are recommended at once by their own importance and by the circumstances in which we are now placed.

1. To train the student to power of thought and utterance, let him be left, and still more, encouraged, to free investigation. Without this, a theological institution becomes a prison to the intellect and a nuisance to the church. The mind grows by free action.
fine it to beaten paths, prescribe to it the results in which all study must end, and you rob it of elasticity and life. It will never spread to its full dimensions. Teach the young man, that the instructions of others are designed to quicken, not supersede his own activity; that he has a divine intellect for which he is to answer to God; and that to surrender it to another is to cast the crown from his head and to yield up his noblest birthright. Encourage him, in all great questions, to hear both sides, and to meet fairly the point of every hostile argument. Guard him against tampering with his own mind, against silencing its whispers and objections, that he may enjoy a favorite opinion undisturbed. Do not give him the shadow for the substance of freedom, by telling him to inquire, but prescribing to him the convictions at which he must stop. Better show him honestly his chains, than mock the slave with the show of liberty.

I know the objection to this course. It puts to hazard, we are told, the religious principles of the young. The objection is not without foundation. The danger is not unreal. But I know no method of forming a manly intellect, or a manly character, without danger. Peril is the element in which power is developed. Remove the youth from every hazard, keep him in leading strings lest he should stray into forbidden paths, surround him with down lest he should be injured by a fall, shield him from wind and storms, and you doom him to perpetual infancy. All liberty is perilous, as the despot truly affirms; but who would therefore seek shelter under a despot's throne? Freedom of will is almost a tremendous gift; but still, a free agent, with all his capacity of crime, is infinitely more interesting and noble than the most harmonious and beautiful machine.
Freedom is the nurse of intellectual and moral vigor. Better expose the mind to error, than rob it of hardihood and individuality. Keep not the destined teacher of mankind from the perilous field, where the battle between Truth and Falsehood is fought. Let him grapple with difficulty, sophistry, and error. Truth is a conquest, and no man holds her so fast as he who has won her by conflict.

That cases of infidelity may occur in institutions conducted on free principles, is very possible, though our own experience gives no ground for fear. But the student, who, with all the aids to Christian belief which are furnished in a theological seminary, still falls a prey to skepticism, is not the man to be trusted with the cause of Christ. He is radically deficient. He wants that congeniality with spiritual and lofty truths, without which the evidences of religion work no deep conviction, and without which the faith, that might be instilled by a slavish institution, would be of little avail. An upright mind may indeed be disturbed and shaken for a time by the arguments of skepticism; but these will be ultimately repelled, and, like conquered foes, will strengthen the principle by which they have been subdued.

Nothing, I am sure, can give power like a free action of the mind. Accumulate teachers and books, for these are indispensable. But the best teacher is he, who awakens in his pupils the power of thought, and aids them to go alone. It is possible to weaken and encumber the mind by too much help. The very splendor of a teacher's talents may injure the pupil; and a superior man, who is more anxious to spread his own creed and his own praise, than to nourish a strong intellect in others, will only waste his life in multiplying poor copies, and in sending forth into the churches, tame mimics of himself.
To free inquiry, then, we dedicate these walls. We invite into them the ingenuous young man, who prizes liberty of mind more than aught within the gift of sects or of the world. Let Heaven's free air circulate, and Heaven's unobstructed light shine here, and let those who shall be sent hence, go forth, not to echo with servility a creed imposed on their weakness, but to utter, in their own manly tones, what their own free investigation and deep conviction urge them to preach as the truth of God.

2. In the second place, to give power to the teacher, he should be imbued, by all possible inculcation and excitement, with a supreme and invincible love of truth. This is at once the best defence against the perils of free inquiry, and the inspirer of energy both in thought and utterance. The first duty of a rational being is to his own intellect; for it is through soundness and honesty of intellect that he is to learn all other duties. I know no virtue more important and appropriate to a teacher, and especially a religious teacher, than fairness and rectitude of understanding, than a love of truth stronger than the love of gain, honor, life; and yet, so far from being cherished, this virtue has been warred against, hunted down, driven to exile, or doomed to the stake, in almost every Christian country, by ministers, churches, religious seminaries, or a maddened populace. In the glorious company of heroes and martyrs, a high rank belongs to him, who, superior to the frowns or the sneers, the pity or the wrath, which change of views would bring upon him, and in opposition to the warping influences of patronage, of private friendship, or ambition, keeps his mind chaste, inviolate, a sacred temple for truth, ever open to new light from Heaven; and who, faithful to his deliberate convictions, speaks simply, and
firmly, what his uncorrupted mind believes. This love of truth gives power, for it secures a growing knowledge of truth; and truth is the mighty weapon by which the victories of religion are to be wrought out. This endures whilst error carries with it the seeds of decay. Truth is an emanation from God, a beam of his wisdom, and immutable as its source; and although its first influences may seem to be exceeded by those of error, it grows stronger, and strikes deeper root, amidst the fluctuations and ruins of false opinions. Besides, this loyalty to truth not only leads to its acquisition, but, still more, begets a vital acquaintance with it, a peculiar conviction, which gives directness, energy, and authority, to teaching. A minister, who has been religiously just to his own understanding, speaks with a tone of reality, of calm confidence, of conscious uprightness, which cannot be caught by the servile repeater of other men’s notions, or by the passionate champion of an unexamined creed. A look, an accent, a word, from a single-hearted inquirer after truth, expressing his deliberate convictions, has a peculiar power in fortifying the convictions of others. To the love of truth, then, be these walls consecrated, and here may every influence be combined to build it up in the youthful heart.

3. To train powerful ministers, let an institution avail itself of the means of forming a devotional spirit, and imbuing the knowledge of the student with religious sensibility. Every man knows, that a cultivated mind, under strong and generous emotion, acquires new command of its resources, new energy and fulness of thought and expression; whilst, in individuals of native vigor of intellect, feeling almost supplies the place of culture, inspiring the unlettered teacher with a fervid, resistless eloquence, which no apparatus of books, teachers, criticism,
ancient languages and general literature, can impart. This power of sensibility to fertilize and vivify the intellect, is not difficult of explanation. A strong and pure affection concentrates the attention on its objects, fastens on them the whole soul, and thus gives vividness of conception. It associates, intimately, all the ideas which are congenial with itself, and thus causes a rush of thought into the mind in moments of excitement. Indeed, a strong emotion seems to stir up the soul from its foundations, and to attract to itself, and to impregnate with its own fire, whatever elements, conceptions, illustrations, can be pressed into its own service. Hence it is, that even ordinary men, strongly moved, abound in arguments, analogies, and fervent appeals, which nothing but sensibility could have taught. Every minister can probably recollect periods, when devotional feeling has seemed to open a new fountain of thought in the soul. Religious affection instinctively seeks and seizes the religious aspects of things. It discerns the marks of God, and proofs and illustrations of divine truth, in all nature and providence; and seems to surround the mind with an atmosphere which spreads its own warm hues on every object which enters it. This attraction, or affinity, if I may so say, which an emotion establishes among the thoughts which accord with itself, is one of the very important laws of the mind, and is chiefly manifested in poetry, eloquence, and all the higher efforts of intellect by which man sways his fellow beings. Religious feeling, then, is indispensable to a powerful minister. Without it, learning and fancy may please, but cannot move men profoundly and permanently. It is this, which not only suggests ideas, but gives felicity and energy of expression. It prompts 'the words that burn;’ those mysterious combinations of speech, which send
the speaker's soul like lightning through his hearers, which breathe new life into old and faded truths, and cause an instantaneous gush of thought and feeling in susceptible minds.

We dedicate this institution, then, to religious feeling. Here let the heart muse, till the fire burns. Here let prayer, joined with meditation on nature and scripture, and on the fervid writings of devout men, awaken the whole strength of the affections. But on no point is caution more needed than on this. Let it never be forgotten, that we want genuine feeling; not its tones, looks, and gestures, not a forced ardor and factitious zeal. Wo to that institution, where the young man is expected to repeat the language of emotion, whether he feel it or not; where perpetual pains are taken, to chafe the mind to a warmth which it cannot sustain. The affections are delicate and must not be tampered with. They cannot be compelled. Hardly anything is more blighting to genuine sensibility, than to assume its tones and badge where it does not exist. Exhort the student to cherish devout feeling, by intercourse with God, and with those whom God has touched. But exhort him as strenuously, to abstain from every sign of emotion which the heart does not prompt. Teach him that nothing grieves more the Holy Spirit, or sooner closes the mind against heavenly influences, than insincerity. Teach him to be simple, ingenuous, true to his own soul. Better be cold, than affect to feel. In truth, nothing is so cold as an assumed, noisy enthusiasm. Its best emblem is the northern blast of winter, which freezes as it roars. Be this spot sacred to Christian ingenuousness and sincerity. Let it never be polluted by pretence, by affected fervor, by cant and theatric show.
4. Another source of power in the ministry, is Faith; by which we mean, not a general belief in the truths of Christianity, but a confidence in the great results, which this religion and the ministry are intended to promote. It has often been observed, that a strong faith tends to realize its objects; that all things become possible to him who thinks them so. Trust and hope breathe animation and force. He, who despairs of great effects, never accomplishes them. All great works have been the results of a strong confidence, inspiring and sustaining strong exertion. The young man, who cannot conceive of higher effects of the ministry than he now beholds, who thinks, that Christianity has spent all its energies in producing the mediocrity of virtue which characterises Christendom, and to whom the human soul seems to have put forth its whole power and to have reached its full growth in religion, has no call to the ministry. Let not such a man put forth his nerveless hands in defence of the Christian cause. A voice of confidence has been known to rally a retreating army, and to lead it back to victory; and this spirit-stirring tone belongs to the leaders of the Christian host. The minister, indeed, ought to see and feel, more painfully than other men, the extent and power of moral evil in individuals, in the church, and in the world. Let him weep over the ravages of sin. But let him feel, too, that the mightiest power of the universe, is on the side of truth and virtue; and with sorrow and fear let him join an unfaltering trust in the cause of human nature. Let him look on men, as on mysterious beings, endued with a spiritual life, with a deep central principle of holy and disinterested love, with an intellectual and moral nature which was made to be receptive of God. To nourish this hopeful spirit, this strengthening con-
fidence, it is important that the minister should understand and feel, that he is not acting alone in his efforts for religion, but in union with God, and Christ, and good beings on earth and in heaven. Let him regard the spiritual renovation of mankind, as God's chief purpose, for which nature and providence are leagued in holy cooperation. Let him feel himself joined in counsel and labor, with that great body of which Christ is the head, with the noble brotherhood of apostles and martyrs, of the just made perfect, and, I will add, of angels; and speaking with a faith becoming this sublime association, he will not speak in vain. To this faith, to prophetic hope, to a devout trust in the glorious issues of Christianity, we dedicate these walls; and may God here train up teachers, worthy to mingle and bear a part, with the holy of both worlds, in the cause of man's redemption.

5. Again, that the ministry may be imbued with new power, it needs a spirit of enterprise and reform. They who enter it, should feel that it may be improved. We live in a stirring, advancing age; and shall not the noblest function on earth partake of the general progress? Why is the future ministry to be a servile continuation of the past? Have all the methods of operating on human beings been tried and exhausted? Are there no unessayed passages to the human heart? If we live in a new era, must not religion be exhibited under new aspects, or in new relations? Is not skepticism taking a new form? Has not Christianity new foes to contend with? And are there no new weapons and modes of warfare, by which its triumphs are to be insured? If human nature is manifesting itself in new lights, and passing through a new and most interesting stage of its progress, shall it still be described by the
commonplaces, and appealed to exclusively by the motives, which belonged to earlier periods of society? May not the mind have become susceptible of nobler incitements, than those which suited ruder times? Shall the minister linger behind his age, and be dragged along, as he often has been, in the last ranks of improvement? Let those who are to assume the ministry be taught, that they have something more to do than handle old topics in old ways, and to walk in beaten and long worn paths. Let them inquire, if new powers and agents may not be brought to bear on the human character. Is it incredible, that the progress of intellect and knowledge should develope new resources for the teacher of religion, as well as for the statesman, the artist, the philosopher? Are there no new combinations and new uses of the elements of thought, as well as of the elements of nature? Is it impossible that in the vast compass of scripture, of nature, of providence, and of the soul, there should be undisclosed or dimly defined truths, which may give a new impulse to the human mind? We dedicate this place, not only to the continuance, but to the improvement of the ministry; and let this improvement begin, at once, in those particulars, where the public, if not the clergy, feel it to be wanted. Let those, who are to be educated here, be admonished against the frigid eloquence, the schoolboy tone, the inanimate diction, too common in the pulpit, and which would be endured nowhere else. Let them speak in tones of truth and nature, and adopt the style and elocution of men, who have an urgent work in hand, and who are thirsting for the regeneration of individuals and society.

6. Another source of power, too obvious to need elucidation, yet too important to be omitted, is, an indepen-
dent spirit. By which I mean, not an unfeeling defiance of the opinions and usages of society, but that moral courage, which, through good report and evil report, reverently hears, and fearlessly obeys, the voice of conscience and God. He who would instruct men must not fear them. He who is to reform society, must not be anxious to keep its level. Dread of opinion effem­inates preaching, and takes from truth its pungency. The minister so subdued, may flourish his weapons in the air, to the admiration of spectators, but will never pierce the conscience. The minister, like the good knight, should be without fear. Let him cultivate that boldness of speech for which Paul prayed. Let him not flatter great or small. Let him not wrap up reproof in a decorated verbiage. Let him make no compromise with evil because followed by a multitude, but, for this very cause, lift up against it a more earnest voice. Let him beware of the shackles which society insensibly fastens on the mind and the tongue. Moral courage is not the virtue of our times. The love of popularity is the all-tainting vice of a republic. Besides, the increasing connexion between a minister and the community, whilst it liberalizes the mind, and counteracts professional prejudices, has a tendency to enslave him to opinion, to wear away the energy of virtuous resolution, and to change him from an intrepid guardian of virtue and foe of sin, into a merely elegant and amiable companion. Against this dishonorable cowardice, which smooths the thoughts and style of the teacher, until they glide through the ear and the mind without giving a shock to the most delicate nerves, let the young man be guarded. We dedicate this institution to christian independence. May it send forth brave spirits to the vindication of truth and religion.
7. I shall now close, with naming the chief source of power to the minister; one, indeed, which has been in a measure anticipated, and all along implied, but which ought not to be dismissed without a more distinct announcement. I refer to that spirit, or frame, or sentiment, in which the love of God, the love of men, the love of duty, meet as their highest result, and in which they are perfected and most gloriously displayed; I mean the spirit of self-sacrifice—the spirit of Martyrdom. This was the perfection of Christ, and it is the noblest inspiration which his followers derive from him.—Say not that this is a height to which the generality of ministers must not be expected to rise. This spirit is of more universal obligation than many imagine. It enters into all the virtues which deeply interest us. In truth, there is no thorough virtue without it. Who is the upright man? He, who would rather die than defraud. Who the good parent? He, to whom his children are dearer than life. Who the good patriot? He, who counts not life dear in his country's cause. Who the philanthropist? He, who forgets himself in an absorbing zeal for the mitigation of human suffering, for the freedom, virtue, and illumination of men. It is not Christianity alone which has taught self-sacrifice. Conscience and the Divinity within us have in all ages borne testimony to its loveliness and grandeur, and history borrows from it her chief splendors. But Christ on his cross has taught it with a perfection unknown before, and his glory consists in the power with which he breathes it. Into this spirit Christ's meanest disciple is expected to drink. How much more the teachers and guides of his church. He who is not moved with this sublime feature of our religion, who cannot rise above himself, who cannot, by his own consciousness, comprehend the kindling energy
and solemn joy, which pain or peril in a noble cause has often inspired—he, to whom this language is a mystery, wants one great mark of his vocation to the sacred office. Let him enlist under any standard rather than the cross. To preach with power, a man must feel Christianity to be worthy of the blood which it has cost; and, espousing it as the chief hope of the human race, must contemn life's ordinary interests, compared with the glory and happiness of advancing it. This spirit of self-exposure and self-surrender, throws into preachers an energy which no other principle can give. In truth, such power resides in disinterestedness, that no man can understand his full capacity of thought and feeling, his strength to do and suffer, until he gives himself, with a single heart, to a great and holy cause. New faculties seem to be created, and more than human might sometimes imparted, by a pure, fervent love. Most of us are probably strangers to the resources of power in our own breasts, through the weight and pressure of the chains of selfishness. We consecrate this institution, then, to that spirit of martyrdom, of disinterested attachment to the christian cause, through which it first triumphed, and for want of which its triumphs are now slow. In an age of luxury and self-indulgence, we would devote these walls to the training of warm, manly, generous spirits. May they never shelter the self-seeking slaves of ease and comfort, pupils of Epicurus rather than of Christ. God send from this place devoted and efficient friends of Christianity and the human race.

My friends, I have insisted on the need, and illustrated the sources, of power in the ministry. To this end, may the institution, in whose behalf we are now met together, be steadily and sacredly devoted. I would say
to its guardians and teachers, Let this be your chief aim. I would say to the students, Keep this in sight in all your studies. Never forget your great vocation; that you are to prepare yourselves for a strong, deep, and beneficent agency on the minds of your fellow beings. Everywhere I see a demand for the power on which I have now insisted. The cry comes to me from society and from the church. The condition of society needs a more efficient administration of Christianity. Great and radical changes are needed in the community to make it Christian. There are those indeed, who, mistaking the courtesies and refinements of civilized life for virtue, see no necessity of a great revolution in the world. But civilisation, in hiding the grossness, does not break the power of evil propensities. Let us not deceive ourselves. Multitudes are living with few thoughts of God, and of the true purpose and glory of their being. Among the nominal believers in a Deity and in a judgment to come, sensuality, and ambition and the love of the world, sit on their thrones, and laugh to scorn the impotence of preaching. Christianity has yet a hard war to wage, and many battles to win; and it needs intrepid, powerful ministers, who will find courage and excitement, not dismay, in the strength and number of their foes.

Christians, you have seen in this discourse, the purposes and claims of this theological institution. Offer your fervent prayers for its prosperity. Besiege the throne of mercy in its behalf. Cherish it as the dearest hope of our churches. Enlarge its means of usefulness, and let your voice penetrate its walls, calling aloud and importunately for enlightened and powerful teachers. Thus joining in effort with the directors and instructors of this seminary, doubt not that God will here train up ministers worthy to bear his truth to present
and future generations. If on the contrary you and they slumber, you will have erected these walls, not to nourish energy, but to be its tomb, not to bear witness to your zeal, but to be a melancholy monument of fainting effort and betrayed truth.

But let me not cast a cloud over the prospects of this day. In hope I began—with hope I will end. This institution has noble distinctions, and has afforded animating pledges. It is eminently a free institution, an asylum from the spiritual despotism, which, in one shape or another, overspreads the greatest part of Christendom. It has already given to the churches a body of teachers, who, in theological acquisitions and ministerial gifts, need not shrink from comparison with their predecessors or cotemporaries. I see in it means and provisions, nowhere surpassed, for training up enlightened, free, magnanimous, self-sacrificing friends of truth. In this hope, let us then proceed to the work, which has brought us together. With trust in God, with love to mankind, with unaffected attachment to Christian truth, with earnest wishes for its propagation through all lands and its transmission to remotest ages, let us now, with one heart and one voice, dedicate this edifice to the One living and true God, to Christ and his Church, to the instruction and regeneration of the human soul.
Dr. Lowell's

DEDICATION SERMON.
A SERMON,
PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION
OF THE
THIRD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN CAMBRIDGE.
DEC. 25, 1827.

BY CHARLES LOWELL,
MINISTER OF THE WEST CHURCH IN BOSTON.

CAMBRIDGE:
HILLIARD, METCALF, AND COMPANY,
Printers to the University.
1828.
SERMON.

Acts xi. 16.

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

We have, in this verse, the only account that is given us of the origin of the name we bear as believers in the divine mission of Jesus Christ. Previous to this, the disciples of Christ were called by the Jews Nazarens, or Galileans, and by each other believers, disciples, brethren, or saints. They now assumed the name of their founder, or master, as the Platonists, Pythagoreans, and others, did of theirs.

Having given this account of the origin of this appellation, it may be supposed that I might well stop,—for what doctrine can be learned, or what practical instruction derived, from the simple fact that the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch?—This simple fact is, in my view, fraught with instruction of no little moment.

I take up a "Dictionary of Religions," and find I know not how many hundred names of sects into
which the Christian world is divided. And when I behold these ensigns of party distinction, these badges of submission, as they too often are, to human authority, my perplexed and agitated mind goes back to repose itself at Antioch, where the "believers," the "brethren," they who "were of one heart and one mind," were content with the simple appellation which denoted their allegiance to their divine master.

I propose, in the following discourse, to present a few, among many, reasons for an adherence to the example of the first disciples in the use of the name Christian, and that name only, as the designation of our religious faith.

I. In the first place, because it is the only appropriate name, as it is the only name which denotes at once the source from which our religion is derived.

II. In the second place, because it is the name which was adopted by the believers, as we have seen, in the first, and, perhaps I need not hesitate to say, in the purest, age of the church. They who were best acquainted with the mind and will of Christ, when they assumed a name as distinctive of their sect, assumed this name, and this alone.

III. In the third place, because it is the only name which can serve as a bond of union among the believers in Christ. It is the only name which expresses our common faith. It is the only ground on which believers can stand, and act together in defence of their religion, and in promoting the great purposes for which it was given them. All acknowledge Christ as their Lord and Master, but though they have other
"lords" and masters, "many," there is no other to whom all unite in paying homage.

IV. In the fourth place, because the assumption of another name, instead of promoting union, promotes disunion among the believers in Christ.

Any other name is the name of a party in the bosom of the Christian community, and party implies separation, division,—must I not say,—some degree of alienation? Is not an exclusive spirit engendered, which causes the affections to move in a narrow circle, and shuts up the heart against all who are without that circle?

Every new name is a new barrier,—a new partition wall,—between the disciples of the same religion. When parties are formed, and names assumed, hostile bands are arrayed against each other, and the adherents of each, coming often in contact and acting together, are strengthened, and fortified, and embittered, in their opposition. The sanguine act upon the moderate, the over-zealous upon those whose zeal is better tempered, and a flame is kindled which, instead of diffusing a kindly, genial heat, spreads around it destruction and desolation.

Importance is given to differences of opinion which are of little or no importance in themselves, and new differences arise which, without this opposition and combination, would have no existence. The very names themselves, claimed by one party, and denied to them by another,—as if things were not enough to contend about,—are the subjects of contention.
I may add, if I have not already sufficiently expressed it, that this very separation prevents that interchange of thought and feeling which would lead to a juster estimate of each other's religious opinions and character, and to a nearer assimilation. Many are kept asunder who else would know, and honour, and love one another, and many, from the same cause, remain in error, who might otherwise be brought to the knowledge of the truth.

V. In the fifth place, because the adoption of any other name than christian, as the name of a party, excites a spirit of proselytism, or at least brings it into action, and gives it force and efficacy.

I object not to a spirit of proselytism, when its object is to bring the unenlightened to the knowledge of christianity, or the vicious and unholy to virtue and holiness. But I do object to the spirit of proselytism when its paramount object is to make converts to the dogmas of a sect.—It is this spirit which, in times that are gone by, has prepared the tortures and kindled the fires of persecution. It is the same spirit which, in later times, has uttered invectives, and propagated falsehoods, and pronounced anathemas.

I object not to the spirit—object not did I say?—I admire the spirit which would bring every thing that bears the image of its God into the christian fold. I admire the spirit which goes forth upon the wings of love and mercy to the regions of ignorance, and debasement, and misery, wherever they are. I admire the spirit which would pour the light of divine truth on the eyes that are spiritually blind, that
would warm, with the genial influences of our holy religion, the hearts that are chilled and frozen by the terrors of superstition, that would open the prison doors and proclaim to the captive the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his disciples free. I admire the spirit that would rear in the wilderness a temple for the Most High, and cause the knees that had bowed to idols, to bend before the one living and true God.

I reverence the man, let him bear what name he will, and go under what auspices he may, who, with a sincere and heartfelt devotion to the cause, encounters perils by sea and land, perils of the heathen and in the wilderness;—who is in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, that he may carry the bread of life to them that are perishing for lack of knowledge.

I do earnestly desire the spread of the gospel, and I would stretch forth my feeble arm to help it forward; but when I do so,—I am embarrassed by calvinistic missions, and arminian missions, orthodox missions, and liberal missions.—I approve of all, and I approve of neither.—I commend the christian zeal that would cause the parched ground to become a pool, but I deprecate the sectarian zeal that would make its waters bitter. When!—oh when!—will the time arrive, that the heralds of the gospel will not only "go out with joy," but "be led forth with peace;" when the taunting reproof will no longer be addressed to them, "Settle among yourselves what your religion is, and then we will determine whether to embrace it;"—when they
will be ambitious of no other name than the name of their Saviour; and, like their great predecessor, will determine to know nothing among the heathen save Jesus Christ and him crucified!

VI. In the sixth place, because the adoption of any other name than Christian, tends to shackle the mind, to prevent the free, unbiassed, exercise of its powers in the investigation of truth.

When we join a party, we become in some sort pledged to the support and defence of the opinions of that party; and we are in no little danger of imbibing opinions which might not have been the result of our own free and unfettered inquiry. The habit of considering ourselves as belonging to a party,—the reading and intercourse to which it leads,—the very spirit of party itself,—all conspire to this end. Our religious opinions,—if they can be called ours,—are thus apparently the effect of accidental circumstances, of the position in which we have unfortunately been placed, or have still more unfortunately placed ourselves,—for receiving them. If we are able to give a reason for our faith, it is not our own; it is taken at second hand; it is probably, with most, the result of a very limited, partial examination, an attention to one side, without remembering what the wise man has long ago so wisely said, that He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.

VII. In the seventh place, because by the adoption of another name than Christian,—by thus attaching ourselves to a particular party in the Christian church,—if we do not imbibe, or do not in fact defend, all
the opinions of that party, we yet give the sanction of our name, and thus far, of our influence, to opinions which we do not approve.

The opinions of a majority of the party, or of the most forward and active of the party, nay,—perhaps even of the most extravagant of the party, will be considered—do what we will—by the community, as the opinions of the whole. At least, all will be regarded as viewing them without much disapprobation, if not with complacency. We may lift up our feeble voice against them,—if indeed we have firmness and independence enough to do so,—but it will be heard only within a narrow circle. It will be overpowered by the louder and more earnest voice of party zeal.

Every party must, sooner or later, have its creed, not in one particular only, but in all particulars. It will be given in the religious publications of the party, or at the dedication of a church, or the ordination of a minister, and, however different it may be, in many respects, from the faith of an individual who bears the same name, he must submit, as patiently as he may, to the imputation of holding it, or enter, in his own person, and without disguise, upon the thorny, endless path of controversy.

VIII. In the eighth and last place, because the assumption of another name than Christian, is pointedly reproved by an eminent apostle of Christ. "For it hath been declared unto me," he saith to the Corinthians, "that there are contentions among you. Every one of you saith, one I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?
"Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? Who is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye have believed? Let no man glory in men, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

And who, I may ask, are those whose names have been adopted, in later times, as the badge of party, but teachers by whom their followers have believed? Some of them have written works more voluminous, and certainly more involved and obscure, than the bible, to show what the bible hath taught. How much better is it, to go at once to Christ and learn of him.

To all this it may be answered, first, that names are necessary to distinguish the opinions of one individual from those of another.

It will appear, I think, from what has been said, that this end is by no means answered; that, on the contrary, they rather serve to confound and mislead. Even where there is an explicit assent to a certain formula, there is not always an agreement in all the particulars which compose it. It is this which has given rise to the practice of subscribing "for substance," or, as our fathers did, for "substance and scope," or "substance, scope, and end." It was best known to themselves what they meant by this. It serves only to show into what a dilemma good men are brought by taking a party name.

But I want no such distinction among christians as this is designed to give. If an individual chooses to promulgate his views, he may do so. If he does
not choose it, it is well. *To his own master he standeth or falleth.* He is amenable for his religious faith, not to his christian brother, but to God. It is enough for me to know that he receives the scriptures as of divine authority, and endeavours to obey them.

I do not pretend to indifference respecting the doctrines of the gospel. There are doctrines which I value above all price, and they are doctrines, too, about which there is dissent and controversy among christians. They are doctrines which I feel myself bound to teach and enforce.—My christian brother differs from me on some of these points, and widely differs, but if his faith, though not so scriptural, has exerted a holier influence on him, than my faith has exerted on me, he is better acquainted with his bible, and nearer heaven than I am.

It may be answered, *further,* that names must be used to designate parties, and that parties are necessary to a combined and effective effort in the dissemination of truth.

But the very existence of parties denotes a difference of opinion, and in this difference both parties cannot be right,—it is not improbable that both may be wrong,—and if combination is effective in the dissemination of *truth,* it may be equally effective in the dissemination of *error.* It may be remembered, too, by those who may agree with the party with which they are connected, in a few points, but disagree in many more, that they give their aid in the propagation of more of what they believe to be error, than what they believe to be truth.
Besides, after all, the truth that is propagated is not of half the value of the good spirit that is lost in the contest. It would require a great amount of good to counterbalance the evils of misconception, misrepresentation, change of affection, contention, of which party is the fruitful source. How has it disturbed the peace of neighbourhoods, and broken the ties of friendship!—How has it poisoned the cup of domestic happiness! thus,—in sad fulfilment of the Saviour’s warning,—setting father against son and son against father, so that a man’s foes are those of his own household.

I know that great practical importance is attached to the reception of certain doctrines which are the subjects of controversy.—I have had intimate official intercourse, during a ministry of twenty-two years,—with opportunities for this intercourse inferior, perhaps, to none,—with persons of various religious opinions. I have seen them in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness. I have stood by the bed of death, and caught the last breathings of the departing spirit,—and I do now say, that I have witnessed the same gratitude and love, the same trust and devotion, the same patience and resignation, the same holy confidence and joy, among them all.

It hath not pleased the merciful Creator, I do firmly believe, to suspend the happiness, temporal or eternal, of his creatures, on the mode of faith, but, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, on the testimony of an approving conscience, enlightened by the word and the spirit of God.
That certain doctrines are better adapted to promote piety, and consequently peace of mind, than others, I have no doubt; and that it is the duty of every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind that he has the truth, from a serious, deliberate, devout inquiry, is to me equally clear; but it is not for any one to say that the peace which may be the result of such inquiry, is not, to him who enjoys it, an earnest of heaven.

It may be still further answered, that parties do exist, and will exist, in the christian world, do we what we may;—that it is too late now, when so many lines of separation are drawn, and so many names adopted, to think of uniting believers in Christ by the single name of christian.

It is never too late to remonstrate against evil opinions, or evil practices, however venerable by age, or however sanctioned by numbers; and, if parties do exist and will exist in the christian world, we need not join them. Offences will come, but wo unto him by whom the offence cometh. Contentions will arise, but we need not contend; for we are admonished that the servant of God must not strive, but be gentle to all men.

Nor need any fear that, by discarding party, and party names, they must stand alone,—though it would be an honorable distinction, and they might be content to enjoy it. But they will have many of the intelligent, judicious, and excellent, on their side. Yet more,—they will have "the glorious company of the apostles and martyrs," and "the spirits of the just
made perfect”—“a great cloud of witnesses”—on their side, for there are no parties in heaven. Calvin may be there, and Arminius may be there, and a host of others, who have unfortunately given their poor names to a party on earth, but there will be no one's disciples there, as such, but the disciples of Jesus Christ.

It may be answered yet again, that christianity itself was a sect when it was first promulgated. Christianity was then, as it now is, a distinct religion, opposed indeed to heathenism, and, in some respects, to judaism; but in a very different sense from that in which one party of believers in this religion is opposed to another. This, I think, must be so obvious, on the least reflection, that I need not enlarge upon it. The objection has no bearing upon my reasoning on this subject, and therefore does not impair its force.

Once more, it may be said, in reply, that we of this communion are known as congregational, in contradistinction to episcopalian, and other denominations of christians.

It is true,—but this is a name which has respect only to forms,—to the outworks of the house of God,—and not to religious belief. We believe that the simple structure of the congregational church is more in conformity with that of the primitive church than any other. But if any still urge this as an objection, I am not at issue with them.—Retaining the substance, I care not for the name. It is the fundamental principle of congregationalism that each church is competent to the management of its own affairs; that it
may adopt its own faith and government and worship; and is amenable to no other than the great Head of the church. It ill becomes congregationalists, then, to contend for party. I might add, it but ill becomes those who are opposed to human creeds, to urge upon their christian brethren the adoption, as denoting their creed, of a human name.

In the remarks I have made, it has not been my intention to express an opinion respecting the good or ill effects of controversy. Differences of opinion are unavoidable, and the calm, dispassionate discussion of such differences, on individual responsibility, may be useful. It may excite inquiry, and awaken zeal, and elicit truth.

Still less has it been my intention to pass any other censure, than is implied by the expression of a difference of opinion, on those of my christian brethren who have seen fit to enlist themselves under the banners of a party. The right of judging and deciding, which I claim for myself,—and will maintain,—I concede to them, and respect the honest and fearless exercise of it. I belong not to their party, whatever it is; but I honour their devotion to what they believe to be the cause of truth and righteousness, and if this cause should really be promoted amidst the strife of parties,—yes,—if God should cause even the "wrath of man to praise Him,"—I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

I have thus given a few reasons, my hearers, and I might give many more, for believing that we ought to be satisfied with the name which the disciples adopted
at Antioch,—the name of our divine Master.—Let us not be ambitious of exchanging this sacred name for any other. Let us not be ambitious of adding another to a name which in itself is enough to denote our religious faith, and which is hallowed by its association with "the author of our faith," and its adoption in the first age of the church. Let us endeavour, by the grace of God, to do honour to a name which confers so much honour on us. Whilst we study the sacred scriptures, and derive light from every quarter from which we can derive it, let us not suffer ourselves to be bound in the shackles of party, nor be subject, in matters of faith, to human authority,—No,—not for an hour!

It has seemed to me to be not unsuitable, brethren, at the consecration of a Christian church, to set forth a humble plea for the Christian name; nor inappropriate to the day which you have happily chosen for this consecration.—It is the day which is devoted by a large portion of the Christian world to the commemoration of the nativity of the Prince of Peace. "Peace on earth and good will towards men" was the proclamation of the angels at the Saviour's birth!—To plead for the union of Christians under the name of this Saviour is to sound a note in unison with the angelic song. I would that it were met by a full response from every heart in this assembly!—I would that the peaceful strain were uttered by every tongue that is hymning, on this day, the Redeemer's praise!—I would that it were mingled with every prayer that ascends from every Christian altar!—that it were breathed from
every soul that bows itself *at the name of Jesus and confesses him to be Lord!*

In the spirit of peace the work, which we have come hither to consecrate by our prayers, was begun, carried on, and is ended. Those who differ, if I mistake not, in some respects, in their faith, have united in erecting this temple for the worship of the God of their fathers, in the mode in which their fathers worshipped. The blessing of God,—the God of peace,—has attended them. No obstacle has intervened to obstruct their progress; no root of bitterness has sprung up to trouble them; no untoward event has occurred to damp their present joy, or cloud their future prospects. May the good they have already experienced be the harbinger of good to come! May they never come up to this house but in the spirit of mutual kindness and love; and may no voice be ever heard within these walls but the voice of Christian charity!

Peace be upon this house, like the dew on Hermon, like the dew which descended on the mountains of Zion, where the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore!
THE Third Congregational Society in Cambridge was incorporated June 16, 1827, and the corner stone of the meeting-house, erected by the Society, was laid the second day of August, 1827. Prayers were offered on the occasion by the Rev. Thomas B. Gannett, Pastor of the Second Congregational Society in Cambridge. The first sermon, preached before the Society, was by the Rev. Charles Lowell, D. D. July 22, 1827, from John xiii. 35.—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." The meeting-house was dedicated on Christmas day, December 25, 1827, with the following

Religious Services.

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER,
   By the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr.

READING OF THE SCRIPTURES,
   By the Rev. Samuel Barrett.

DEDICATORY PRAYER,
   By the Rev. Francis Parkman.
DEDICATORY HYMN,

WRITTEN BY THE REV. HENRY WARE, JUN.

O Thou, who for thyself didst raise
Creation's wondrous frame,
To be a Temple to thy praise,
An altar to thy name;

And yet art pleased to dwell below,
And there thy name record
Where'er assembling mortals go
To own their common Lord;

Oh, write thy name in favour here;
And, while we bend in prayer,
Lord, bid thy glorious cloud appear
Thy presence to declare.

As in thy gracious courts above,
So in these courts below,
Reveal to every soul thy love,
And heavenly peace bestow.

Here may thy holy will be learned,
And here thy will be done;
Till all to truth and heaven be turned
Through thy beloved Son;

Till all who kneel in worship here,
Be faithfully prepared.
In higher temples to appear,
Crowned with thy great reward.

SERMON,

By the Rev. Charles Lowell, D. D.
ORIGINAL HYMN,

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM PARMENTER, ESQ.

Almighty Father! to thy name
Thy children earthly temples frame;
An entrance, let each house be found,
To mansions which thy throne surround.

And may this gathered flock behold
The Heavenly Shepherd guard its fold,
His sheltering arm extended show;
His guardian, fostering care bestow.

Lord! bless the sacred altar, where
We sound thy praise, or lift thee prayer,
Let every heart with fervour move,
As strong as faith, and pure as love.

The breast, where pious virtue glows,
Thine ever gracious blessing knows;
O guide each heart, instruct each mind
Thy will to serve, and Heaven to find.

CONCLUDING PRAYER,

By the Rev. James Walker.

BENEDICTION.
THE PURPOSES OF THE DEDICATION OF A CHRISTIAN TEMPLE.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT STOW, MASSACHUSETTS,

AT THE

DEDICATION

OF

THEIR NEW HOUSE FOR PUBLICK WORSHIP,

OCTOBER 1, 1827.

BY NATHANIEL THAYER, D. D.
MINISTER OF LANCASTER.

LANCASTER:
PRINTED BY FERDINAND AND JOSEPH ANDREWS.
1828.
This Discourse, delivered and published at the united request of the Rev. Jonathan Newell, and Members of his Society, is inscribed to them with Christian affection and respect. It is accompanied with the prayer, that the house which they have erected for social worship may be a bond of union and a place for spiritual improvement and consolation to them and to future generations.
DISCOURSE.

Exodus xii. 26.—What mean ye by this service?

It is our appropriate duty to consecrate this building to a religious use. We make no pretensions to the performance of a mystical rite. We believe that when this scene has closed there may be from the humble heart, at all times and in every place, a sacrifice equally acceptable to the Great Object of worship, as in this temple.

In ancient times there were places in which God recorded his name, and in which by his spiritual presence he came unto his people and blessed them. The Jewish temple, which for richness and splendour is without example, was erected that it might operate with other causes in preventing the triumphs of idolatry, and in keeping the descendants of Israel a distinct people. It was built that at stated seasons they might repair to it to receive divine communications and to offer a religious service.

Under the christian dispensation, social worship is equally a divine ordinance as under that which preceded. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is."

To carry into effect the purpose of heaven, that christian ordinances should be administered, and that all the benefits of social worship should be realized, it is expedient and necessary that there be some place of general resort. There are also
other and important reasons for the building and decently decorating of Christian temples. In an age of refinement and the highest intellectual cultivation, we are not to expect in the generations who live, entire abstractedness and a superiority to the influence and control of sensible objects. Is it an unworthy supposition that the interest taken in such an enterprise as the preparation of a house for worship will awaken and keep alive devout feelings, sentiments, and purposes? It is not unnatural to believe that a beholding with the eye the building when completed will direct the thoughts to the great design of its erection, to the august Being who has said that he will here command the blessing. A high probability exists that, with other means, it will eventually bring about the melioration of the character and its progress in holiness. It is also highly honourable to the community who have been thus occupied, as it indicates liberality; a laudable concern for their general character at home and abroad; a desire to honour the Lord with their substance; a deep solicitude for their moral and religious interests, and for those who are to succeed them.

As a day is appointed, and an assembly convened for the dedication of this Christian temple, it is the natural employment of all who have come up hither to contemplate, in all its relations, the design of this house and scene. It will, I presume, be thought relevant to the occasion if I attempt to aid your meditations in an answer to the question originally proposed by the children who saw their parents employed in celebrating the passover.

1. We mean by this service to dedicate this temple to Christian worship.

The worship instituted by the gospel is of a peculiar character, and is suited to the highest improvements of the social state. What a contrast does it exhibit to the worship of heathen? We read of these children of delusion enduring bodily privations and sufferings; performing perilous pilgrim-
ages; offering human sacrifices; bowing down to stocks and stones, to images graven by art and man's device, as so many oblations to their various divinities. We find them likewise lavishing much treasure to support unmeaning pomp and ceremonies. These things they did or suffered to propitiate the Gods, to avert some imagined or threatened evil, or to secure some desired benefit. Nor were these things done and submitted to with a view to the temporal effects only. In their mind was an indistinct, confused, unsatisfactory notion of an hereafter, and these things were supposed in some way to affect their character and to have an influence on that state.

Not less striking is the contrast of Christian worship to that of the Jews. Theirs stood in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. Who that is conversant with the history of that people can refrain from admiring the wisdom and mercy of God in the wonderful adaptation of these ordinances, however severe, to their infant state? They strongly addressed their senses. They were a continual warning against idolatrous innovations. They proved a salutary discipline under ignorance and strong temptations. The law was to them a faithful schoolmaster, to bring them unto Christ.

The introduction of Christianity was marked by an entire change in outward forms. It was for the Redeemer to institute a simple and spiritual worship. It was for him to direct to a new and living way, which he had consecrated. It was he who was empowered to inspire humble and holy souls to habitual communion with God. There is no single place corresponding to the Holy of Holies in the ancient temple to which we are directed as better fitted than others for an intercourse with heaven. No: blessed be God! we are more highly privileged, and have a more animating prospect than the visitants to that hallowed apartment. In whatever place we may be, if we have a devout heart, we are
never without the hope, that “through Jesus we may have access by one spirit unto the Father.”

The several exercises which form Christian worship, if appropriately performed, have a tendency to edification, and to enkindle humble, fervent, and habitual piety. The prayers, the songs of praise, and the religious instructions, have a common purpose to encourage sober meditations and designs; to lift the soul to God; and to advance the purity and holiness of the worshippers.

We view it as a propitious circumstance that the place which we now occupy is to be exclusively applied to religious worship. It is to be received as a promise of good, that it will not be defiled by the corrupt prejudices, evil passions, and angry debates, which are too often the interruption and disgrace of assemblies for the transaction of worldly concerns. We urgently recommend to other corporations an imitation of the liberality and wisdom of this town, in providing some suitable place for their meetings for secular purposes. We give them this advice lest, when they are made to blush at the recollection of their unchristian temper and course in the assembly of their fellow-citizens, they should have this additional cause of shame and bitter repentance, that they have disgraced themselves in the sanctuary of God.

In conformity to the design of its erection we dedicate this house to the worship of the One God, through the One Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. May it never be desecrated by unholy feelings, affections, and passions. May the prayers, the songs of praise, and the religious instructions, resemble in simplicity, spirituality, and fervour, the homage and service of the primitive Christians.

2. We dedicate this temple to the highest moral improvement and benefit of this town.

Universal history may be adduced in affirmation of the truth, that the outward prosperity of communities has always been proportionate to their exemplary respect for religious
institutions. May not this also be asserted with the highest truth of their social and moral state? Have the people of any age found adequate means of recovery from moral degradation, and of advancement in purity, short of regular and correct religious instruction? It may be pleaded that individuals in gentile countries, where these means of improvement were not enjoyed, have been paragons of rectitude and universal excellence. The existence of such individuals does not invalidate the general position. These distinguished worthies were surrounded by a multitude, debased, corrupt, in the lowest stage of profligacy. It may farther be objected that in the midst of Christian societies the most highly favoured in their advantages, there have been many examples of imperfect virtue and atrocious crime. Is it an extravagant belief that, under different circumstances and deprived of these privileges, such examples would have been infinitely multiplied?

A memorable fact is recorded by cotemporary historians of the Jewish nation. When they were in captivity, distantly separated from their temple, and from the best means of moral cultivation and religious knowledge, they rapidly lost their national character, and became an insignificant and degraded people. On their emancipation they opened their synagogues and appointed the reading and interpretation of the scriptures as a stated exercise on each returning sabbath. The consequence was that after a comparatively short season idolatry was almost eradicated from amongst them. For many ages they were rising in consequence, had a name and a praise amongst the nations, and sustained a higher reputation for general virtue than at any former period of their publick existence.

For whatever of character they possess the people of Christian lands are to own their obligation to their temples, and to the use to which they are applied. Look, ye Christians, to our infant settlements in which there is no established
worship. Look also to our more ancient villages, in which, through religious dissensions, the house of God is closed and going to decay. How little of the social feeling which christianity inspires, if cordially embraced, is there apparent! How far removed from the moral elevation, to which christian institutions are capable of exalting reasonable beings! Suspend the regular and liberal support of these institutions, and you open wide the flood-gates of licentiousness and all sin.

We earnestly invite those who are to be the stated occupants of these seats, to ponder on the thought, that a great purpose for which we dedicate this temple is that they may attain to distinction as a moral people. If you and your children shall from one generation to another use the vigilance which is your duty, in obtaining and generously supporting a christian minister to fill this desk; if you and they shall faithfully attend and apply his instructions; we may then predict that your christian standing will be respectable and good. The social tie will be strengthened. Moral perversity will be restrained. A pride of character which shall have a happy influence on your entire state as a people will be excited. You will be beheld and respected as an honourable example of the benign effect of a regular dispensation of christian truths. You may rely on the cheering ordinance of heaven, that all these things will be accomplished. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

3. We dedicate it as a house in which ministerial and christian communion will be encouraged to all the extent which the gospel commands.

In the first christian age, distinct churches were planted in different cities and countries, but there was an universal persuasion that they constituted but one body, of which Christ was the common Lawgiver and Head. Evidence exists that there was at that early age diversity of opinion, which showed itself by some saying, we are of Paul; some, we are of
Apollos; some, we are of Cephas; others, we are of Christ. It is not however on record, that diversities so far rent asunder the christian brotherhood, as to prevent a cordial union in social worship and in other acts of christian fellowship.

Curiosity may be indulged to learn the ground on which ministerial and christian communion should rest consistently with the prescriptions and usages of the Saviour and his apostles. It ought to rest on this truly evangelical basis; a belief in Jesus as the true Messiah, and an orderly and faithful observance of the regulations and laws prescribed by him, for the government of his disciples and of his church. It is admitted that in their views of the nature and rank of Christ, a distinction manifestly appears in ministers of the gospel. If they own him as an all-sufficient Saviour, affirm with the heart that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ; and nothing is found in their theory or practice tending to the subversion of this great principle; may they not have a free and friendly intercourse? When they are at liberty to preach on every topic on which the Saviour preached in his Sermon on the Mount, which was the longest sermon ever delivered by him, and in his other instructions, in all which not one of the points of controversy agitated by christians at this day is discussed, can they be straitened for topics on which they may address, and by which they may edify, any christian society? Would not a principle and course thus authorized, and in strict conformity to christian rule, have probably saved from dispersion and ruin many of our churches? Might not accredited teachers of religion also, and many who have been guided by them, been preserved from a narrowness and exclusiveness of spirit, which seems to us at variance with all which was taught or practised by Jesus and his first ministers? Professing disciples of every class will be fully justified by the latitude of construction given by their Master, if they adopt a belief in the gospel as a term of communion, and leave to others, what they hope always to enjoy, the liberty of interpreting it.
From the past history and present state of this society we gather strong confidence that the liberal spirit of our religion will ever preside over this pulpit. We give it to you as our deliberate and solemn advice, we exhort you to deliver it to your children and to transmit it to the latest posterity, that it shall be a leading qualification of those who minister in holy things in this temple, that they are prepared to strive by all Christian methods to resist the progress of an uncharitable and exclusive spirit, and that they are disposed to treat and own all teachers of religion, who are the friends and practisers of order, as their brethren.

It also encourages and comforts us in this service to believe that the regular members of Protestant Churches will never have cause to complain of the constant guests at this table of the Lord, that they say unto them, stand by yourselves, come not near to us, we are holier than you.

4. We dedicate this temple with the hope and earnest desire that it may be preserved sacred to the propagation of primitive Christianity.

At one time and another and from various causes there arose many corruptions of the Christian faith. The speculations of superficial inquirers; the heated controversies between the Jewish and Gentile converts; the creeds and formularies of ecclesiastical councils; the sophisms of the schools; incorrect education; added to all these the subtle and hostile designs of the enemies of Christ, had an agency in producing them. The result was as might reasonably be expected. These corruptions brought about an unnatural divorce of principles, which by the divine appointment were to remain inseparable. To some of these causes is to be ascribed the doctrine of the sufficiency of faith without works, or of works without faith; that Christian worship could be maintained independent of morality, or morality independent of worship. To these are we to attribute the belief which has been embraced and propagated, that the death and sufferings of Christ or any thing relating to his mediation could be received as a substitute
for personal holiness and virtue. From one or other of these has come the belief that certain principles might be assumed as fundamental in all cases, and this without regard to deficiencies in mental capacity, or the local impediments and difficulties in coming at truth. This assumption has been defended, not considering that human beings are incompetent to judge of their fellow mortals, or of what is fundamental to their salvation. They are incompetent because they know not the precise strength of their understanding, the state of their heart, the personal and relative evils with which they have to contend, the opportunities they enjoy, and the allowance which a merciful God will make for their various and inevitable imperfections.

The only conceivable method of rescuing Christianity from these corruptions is to receive it as promulgated by the Great Teacher from heaven. Far from designing to appear at this time as a controversialist, or to utter a syllable which can with reason be offensive to any denomination of Christians, I shall simply and unreservedly state what I consider as the great principles of primitive Christianity; the truth as it is in Jesus. I feel constrained to this by the mistaken ideas entertained, and the erroneous views propagated, of such as have and preach the like precious faith.

These principles are the existence of one all-perfect God, who has an inalienable title to supreme homage, to voluntary and universal obedience; the divine mission and mediation of his Son, to whom everlasting gratitude is due for the work he accomplished and the sacrifices he made; the entire dependence of human beings for all spiritual blessings; the doctrine of a resurrection from the dead; and a season of final and impartial retribution.

It will appear that there is expressed or clearly implied in this statement of principles a persuasion of moral agency and accountability; a conviction that repentance and faith are evangelical requirements; that the Christian character is not
of ephemeral growth; that feeling, imagination, and passion are not to be relied on as the evidences of its attainment. We wish it to be realized that the faith which has been disclosed is an active, animated, vital principle. We would bear our testimony against all who are lukewarm and sluggish, that they have not the spirit of Christ, and are none of his. We would now, and at all times diffuse the sentiment, that if Christian truth has reached and sanctified the heart, it will awaken the possessor. He will be tremulously alive to the concerns of his soul. He will be aroused and effectually urged to the inquiry—"what shall I do to be saved?"

To the dissemination of these reasonable views of the religion of Christ, which evince its practical importance, and that it is indeed the doctrine which is according to godliness, do we now solemnly, in the love of truth, in the fear of God, and in the hope of his blessing, dedicate this house. Here may there be found, through succeeding generations, "a burning and a shining light." Here may there be such rational, consistent, faithful addresses to the understanding as shall enlighten, convince, and impress it. Here may there be such appeals to the guilty conscience as will cause it to tremble. Here may the hardened heart be softened and subdued by the moving accents of divine forgiveness and mercy, which are announced for the encouragement of the returning penitent. And here may the consolations of the gospel be administered with earnestness to animate and support the persevering Christian.

Finally. We dedicate this house with the prayer that many immortal spirits may here be aided in their preparation for the temple, which is not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

It is difficult fully to rehearse and appreciate the domestic, social, political, and moral advantages, which flow from the establishment and use of temples for Christian worship. Had human beings only a limited existence in prospect, and that
on this earth, these temples, in their tendency and object, are of sufficient value to claim the most liberal appropriations. Turn your attention, for one moment, to the real character and condition of those who assemble in them. Think of them in intellect, improvement, happiness in their infancy, the lowest stage of moral existence. Contemplate this as a season of tuition and preparation for the advanced, the mature, period of their intellectual and moral being. Consider farther the acquirements, the religious progress, which the gospel prescribes as essential to admission to these higher scenes; that it can only be gained by the devotion of the heart to God; by a seasonable and faithful application of the best powers he has given us to his service. You will henceforth look upon houses for worship as combining the best advantages for Christian proficiency; as being what they were expressly designed, "the gate of heaven."

We do now,—in the hope that we are beheld and approved by Him, in whose name we are assembled, and on whose promise we depend, "Lo! I am with you alway even to the end of the world;" we do likewise in the presence of God, before whom angels bow and seraphs veil their faces, consecrate this building to its ultimate end and object, the training of immortal souls to glory and blessedness. May the gospel be preached in it, in its purity and power. May the generations who shall in succession come into this sanctuary, be sustained and refreshed by the bread of life, which came down from heaven. May they be initiated into correct ideas of the nature of holiness and sin. May they gather, when before this altar, such strength of principle and faith, such an abhorrence of moral evil, such a conviction of the worth of religion, and of an interest in its precious promises, that they may here lay a sure foundation for eminence in the Christian life. When at death their visits to this temple shall cease, may they be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven.
We are persuaded that the aged and respected pastor of this church will fervently unite in this prayer. We doubt not he is at this moment cheered by the remembrance of many, who, during his long ministry, resigned their spirit, and who gave him consoling evidence that they were in readiness for the assembly which is formed of the spirits of the just. We offer him our congratulations on this interesting scene. We sympathize with him in the awakening and solemn thought, that but three men are now living, who took an agency in his ordination. We know that his mind must be impressed with the facts, that nearly fifty-three years have elapsed since his union with this people commenced, and that he is the eldest officiating minister in this Commonwealth, who has the entire charge of a Christian Society. We share with him in the joy which, in these perilous times, must possess the heart of the minister who can offer a tribute of devout thanksgiving to heaven that he lives where there is but one house for worship, and one religious society.* We gratefully review with him all the success attending his exertions to prolong the harmony of this people, and to lead them in the way of truth. We supplicate for him the divine favour, and that when his earthly course shall end, he may, of the mercy of God, through a Redeemer, be admitted to the blessings of salvation.

With the members of this Christian Community we greatly rejoice. The report of your entrance on the work, which is now happily consummated, filled your neighbours with a trembling solicitude. We give you our unqualified commen-

* The following facts in the ecclesiastical history of this town, are worthy of record. The Rev. Francis Gardner was ordained in 1717, and died in January 1775. The Rev. Jonathan Newell was ordained in October 1774, as colleague pastor with the Rev. Mr. Gardner. One hundred and ten years and nine months have already elapsed since the term of their ministry commenced. It is proposed as the subject of inquiry, whether, in the New-England Churches, a case equally remarkable can be found? Nor is the circumstance less deserving of preservation, that the whole of this period has been a scene of parochial harmony, and that no ecclesiastical council has been assembled except for the Ordination of Mr. Newell. It is hoped that the present and all future inhabitants of the town will be as vigilant in guarding against dissensions of every kind as were their predecessors. June, 1828.
dation for the spirit of accommodation and condescension, which marked your course, and that, foreseeing the evils of division, you had the prudence and wisdom to choose the way of harmony and safety. You need have no apprehension on account of the sacrifices you have made and the expense which has been incurred in the accomplishment of this great desire of your soul. The members of other corporations, although they had their seasons of trepidation and alarm, will be forward to assure you, that the foundation of their growing wealth and general welfare was laid in a similar work. If you have done this for the honour of God, you may be of good courage. He will make your way prosperous and will crown your efforts with his blessing.

It is grateful to us, in the performance of this service, to recognize in the previous arrangements for the locating of this house, in the contributions for its completion, and for the decoration of the interior, the correct feelings and the generosity of many, who in these things have reflected honour upon themselves and their Society. We cannot, we ought not, to forget the venerable female,* of whom, and of the circumstances of whose death we are solemnly reminded by the tones of yonder bell. Wheresoever your prosperity and parochial history shall be known, there shall also this which this woman hath done for your good, for the honour of her Saviour, and for the glory of her God, be told for a memorial of her.

Having yielded to the affectionate request of your Reverend Pastor, that I would be your monitor on this occasion, you will hear me with candour, while, standing in his place, I offer you some friendly counsel. Honour yourselves by being

* Mrs. Abigail Eveleth, who died September 14, 1827, aged 83. She possessed a kind and affectionate spirit, and was respected for her Christian virtues and piety. In the distribution of the estate which was left by her husband entirely at her disposal, it was known that she had bequeathed $400 towards procuring a bell. At the suggestion that the Dedication which was in prospect would have additional interest if the bell was procured, she cheerfully consented to an anticipation of her bequest. She was permitted by Providence to hear the bell. She was suddenly arrested by disease before the Dedication, and it was first tolled at her interment.
an example of a Society, who treat with kindness and respect their aged minister, and who esteem him highly in love for his work’s sake. As it has been your avowed motive in raising and finishing this house, that you might be in possession of a convenient and decent place for social worship, let there be a consistency between your profession and practice. If you have publick spirit and piety, you will not fail to be exemplary in your attendance on Christian ordinances. If I address any whose conscience testifies against them because of their habitual neglect of publick worship, let this day be to them a memorable era. Let it originate a deliberate purpose, that you will in future love the habitation of God’s house, and the place where his honour dwelleth. You cannot be unapprized of the influence and effect of the early habits of children and youth on their character in mature life. Let it excite you to train them up to remember the sabbath, and reverence the sanctuary. Deeply impress their mind with the maxim, that the child or youth who is allowed to profane the Lord’s day, who does not act under a conviction of his exposure to the constant inspection of God, and whose heart is not penetrated by a regard to the retributions of eternity, is in the broad road to disgrace, ruin, and misery.

Temples of worship rise, decay, and go to destruction. The fashion of this world passeth away, and we are passing away with it. After a few revolving years we shall be succeeded by other generations. Let me then call upon all my hearers to act under a ruling sense of faith in the Son of God, and of the eternity which is before them. This only can gain for you admission into that city, in which there is no temple; which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.
UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY FREE FROM
OBJECTIONABLE EXTREMES:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED

AT THE DEDICATION

OF THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH,

IN

AUGUSTA, (GEO.)

DEC. 27, 1827.

BY SAMUEL GILMAN,
Pastor of the Second Independent Church, Charleston, (S. C.)

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE HEARERS.

CHARLESTON:
PRINTED BY JAMES S. BURGES,
No. 44 Queen-street.
1828.
SERMON.

Psalm cxxii. 1.

"I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

THE same gladness is felt on every similar occasion, by all who possess the spirit of piety. A man's religious views and feelings are generally dearer to him than any other sentiments; and, therefore, it is a subject of peculiar rejoicing, when he finds that he is not alone on religious ground. We love to meet with the sympathy of others in every thing—but more especially in those awful and endearing relations which bind us to our adorable Creator. To worship God even in perfect solitude, is of itself a privilege and a glory; but to know that another bosom burns with the same flame, to be called upon by our friends, our neighbours, and others of our fellow-men to unite with them in the most interesting employment under Heaven, this is indeed a delight, and a blessing, surpassed by none beside. Well, then, had the inspired Psalmist reason to exclaim, I was glad when they said unto me, let us
go into the house of the Lord—and well may we, my friends, recognise a kindred sentiment, who have this day assembled together in dedicating a new Church to the worship of Almighty God.

Such is a plain and general statement of the happy circumstances in which we are at present situated. But it is customary, on occasions like this, to exhibit a detailed and particular account of the motives and feelings professed by those who partake more immediately in the ceremony. I therefore cheerfully proceed to the task of specially analysing the different causes of mutual congratulation, which, I trust, belong to the future worshippers in this Church.

In the first place, the house of God is the scene of social worship and prayer. Here is transacted an interesting portion of the business between ourselves and our Eternal Creator. Here, we publicly mingle our vows with those of our fellow-creatures, and borrow from the example and countenance of each other new accessions of warmth to our too transient and decaying piety. Here, we enter, as it were, into a purer presence than the outer courts of the world will admit of; we dismiss the anxieties that harass, the enmities that embitter, the pleasures that dissipate, and the vanities that seduce the soul. Here, we come to pour the penitential prayer into the ear of a merciful parent; to ponder on the number and the guilt of our transgressions; to increase our abhorrence of sin which is so offensive in the sight
of Heaven; and to gather new strength and sanctification to our sacred purposes and resolutions. Here, we come to invoke a blessing from Heaven on our persons, our lives, our exertions, our plans, our prospects, our friends, our kindred, our country, our fellow men. Here, we approach the mercy seat, to look for comfort under the afflictions incident to the mournful lot of man; to seek relief for heart-withering disappointments; to gain a shelter from the attacks of an unjust and misjudging world; and to extract from the influences of devotion a balm for the stricken breast of sorrowing affection. This, then, is the place for superior enjoyments, for unequalled privileges, for heavenly intercourse. Here, in some humble measure, we prosecute the employments, and partake the bliss of angels and unbodied spirits. It is a blessed sanctuary of peace amid the war and tumult of life. It is a spot on which the brightness of spiritual sunshine reposes. From this place, gratitude takes her flight on the wings of praise, and rises to heaven. Here, piety finds an ample field for her overflowing yet humble emotions. We here presume to expect unusual visitations of Jehovah's spirit, and illuminations of his presence. Existence in this spot assumes a new aspect. We are made here to feel as if we were citizens of another world. Here, we seek a society, where there is no danger of corruption; a friend, who has no interest to deceive; a parent, whose very chastisements are mercy; a God,
whose most dreadful attributes, are arrayed in the mild and beautiful garments of love. Who, when he thus reflects on the sanctuary as a place of social worship and prayer, where the highest dignity of his nature is promoted, and the loftiest privileges of existence shared, who can help exclaiming, on an occasion like the present, I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord?

A second cause of the joyous gratitude which it becomes us to exercise on entering these newly raised walls, is, the opportunity to be here permitted us of contemplating and digesting all wholesome religious truth. It is the spot for sacred reflection. Here, the holy scriptures are interpreted and dispensed. Here, our relations to God are considered; our duties to Him, to our fellow men, and to ourselves, are developed and enforced; the path to true and lasting happiness is explored; the various attributes of Jehovah are viewed in their impressive glory; ideas are revolved, which tend to furnish the mind with spiritual improvement; and the whole atmosphere of a Christian Church, to every one who is religiously or seriously inclined, must necessarily be filled with all that can elevate, expand, and ennable the soul. Here, no subjects of transient or temporary interest are discussed; it is unworthy of the place that appeals should ever be made to the earthly passions; the views that are here revolved have a more or less direct reference to
eternity; man is here prepared for immortal life; the very morality which is, or ought to be preached from a Christian pulpit, has more than one everlasting relation, since it purports to be founded, not only on the eternal truth of things, but on the express command of God, and has, at the same time, a powerful bearing on the future state of man. In short, the peculiarity and the glory of Christian temples, distinguishing them from most consecrated places of ancient times, is, that they are places of instruction as well as of worship.* They are adapted to educate the mind, as well as to impress and improve the heart. They are, or ought to be, schools for reason and knowledge, as well as for devotion and the imagination. How different from all this were the temples of old! There, when the incense had been wafted, and the victim slain, and the wine and oil poured out, the business of the sanctuary was over; the worshipper retired, as ignorant, and almost as thoughtless, as he came. He had paid, as he conceived, his debt, to the powers above. He had purchased their favours for a new interval. But as for making any inquiries into truth and duty, as for enlightening the mind, and gaining clearer and larger ideas of religious subjects, that was as far from his thoughts as heaven is from earth. Not so, however, in the places, where Christians meet to pass their holy time.

* The Jewish Synagogues, even before the time of our Saviour, were places of instruction as well as of devotion.
Here, prayer is but a part of our occupation. Praise is but a portion of our pleasure. A sacred curiosity urges us to know something of the being to whom we pray. Besides, we consider, that by filling our minds with stores of religious knowledge, we shall be better fitted to pray with effect, and to gain the favour of that Being to whom we address ourselves. In a Christian church, the whole recesses of the human heart are explored and brought to view. Our moral powers are studied and described. Our memory, also, is filled and refreshed by the recorded facts of the Bible, and by all the events of ancient and modern history which can be brought to illustrate them. Our discernment is exercised by sacred criticism. Our understandings are strengthened by the arguments brought to our reflection. On all these accounts, it is evident, that a Christian church, in its true acceptation, and in the exercise of its proper function, is a spot for inquiry and learning; and that, too, on the most noble and important subjects that can occupy the thoughts of man, viz. Religion and Morality. If, therefore, we have any sensibility to our best interests, if we care for the enlargement of our immortal souls, if we feel at all the value of wholesome religious truth, and are in consequence attached to the place where it is appropriately cultivated and dispensed, we shall find a second cause in these respects, to exclaim with the Psalmist, I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.
But, in the third place, I am aware that the considerations already presented, however valuable they may be to men in general, are yet not sufficiently evangelical in their character for those who are about to dedicate an edifice to God, in the name of Jesus Christ his Son. I therefore proceed to a more particular subject of congratulation, which, I trust, fills many of your hearts this day. The voice of the GOSPEL sounds in the House of the Lord. The religion of Jesus Christ is in that place preached, explained, inculcated, defended, and preserved. There is maintained the great fact of a revelation from heaven to man. There is exhibited the inestimable treasure, the rich inheritance of promises, which have been communicated to our race by the Messenger and Son of God. There, the character of Jehovah shines forth in purer light, and brighter glory, than unassisted reason could array it in. There, the motives to every virtue are invigorated with a new strength; duty is exhibited in a fairer path; prayer is awakened by more gentle and winning invitations; and the destiny of man shines out from the depths of eternity into his waiting, hoping, and believing eyes. But most of all, a way is there pointed out, by which the favour of God may be obtained, and the dreadful effects of sin in a great degree obliterated. Faith and repentance are there represented and recommended as the simple, but all-powerful keys, by which these blessings are acquired from
the treasury of heaven. The delicious and reviving sound of *pardon* is there announced to the guilty, yet returning and yielding penitent. Yes, when we think of the value of this heavenly religion, of the importance of the doctrines it unfolds, the bright prospects which it opens to our hopes, the mild and benignant spirit which it universally breathes and inculcates, we shall indeed be glad to visit the place where it is taught, if we have reason to believe that it is faithfully expounded, and sincerely preached, and earnestly recommended to our reception. And when, in addition to the substance and internal excellence of this religion, we consider also its solemn ordinances, so simple, so impressive, so instructive, so easy to perform, we shall find a new attraction calling us to the House of the Lord. There, Baptism invokes the blessing of God on the tender infant, or the believing adult, dedicates them to his service and glory, and inculcates on all, who either engage in, or witness that expressive rite, the necessity of inward purity and holiness. There, the table of the Lord's Supper is spread for those who love Jesus in sincerity, and who wish to commemorate, by an obedience to his last command, the affecting excellencies of his unrivalled character, and the precious benefits of his sufferings and death. What cold philosopher will pretend to pour contempt on the influences and blessings that have now been enumerated? What warm enthusiast will assert that the description thus far given contains
nothing corresponding to the loftiest aspirations of the soul? And yet I have done no more than trace a feeble picture of the employments and tendencies that properly belong to every house of God.

Such, at least, we trust and pray, will be characteristic of that which we have this day entered. Sure I am that it has been erected for no other objects, and with no other views. Ought not, then, every friend to religion and morality, as connected, especially, with the interests of this flourishing city, to partake of a satisfaction, similar to that which warmed the heart of the pious Psalmist in our text? The existing population of this place probably amounts to more than double the numbers which can be accommodated in the churches already established. In the present state of religious inquiry and freedom of thought, which prevails in our country, it is impossible to expect that opinions and doctrines will be uniform, at least for a long time to come. Since, in a city like this, there will be persons of different shades of belief, since the language of scripture, and the doctrines of the gospel, in the existing state of biblical criticism and mental imperfection, will not impress all minds alike, no benevolent heart, of whatever denomination, would wish to deny to the small flock who expect to assemble here, the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences, and the views which they at present entertain. As long as there exists so immense a disproportion between
the population and the number of churches, the probability is, that any new denomination, entering in and planting its standard, with credentials as fair and respectable as those of Unitarians, so far from injuring, will, on the contrary, promote the general interests of religion, and prosperity of the churches. Because, more zeal and ardour will be awakened among the other denominations; a fresh attention will be paid to the subject of religion; new efforts will be made to acquire converts, and to confirm such churches as are already established; and the surplus population will furnish sufficient resources for all these favourable operations.

The alarm and jealousy, occasioned in many places by the introduction of Unitarian Christianity, has at least produced a happy degree of union and sympathy among other denominations, and increased the conscientious zeal of many pastors in awakening conviction among those of their charge. The truth is, if I may be indulged in so worldly a comparison, that where there is a sufficient field, competition increases religion, in the same manner as it increases business. Many a man, in a large and flourishing place, who has trembled to see another come and settle near him in an occupation similar to his own, has found at length that he could not have devised a surer avenue to his own prosperity. Unitarians never will regret the reflected good they can do in this way. They wish neither to
force nor to frighten others into their own persua-
sions. Conscious that there is every thing in
their principles, to improve, to comfort, and to
save, they esteem it their duty fairly, calmly and
firmly, to preach and defend them, wherever Pro-
vidence opens for them a door. They bring no
demoralizing doctrines with them. They trium-
phantly ask, where is the neighbourhood, the con-
gregation, or the individual, that has ever become
corrupt or degenerate through the prevalence and
legitimate influence of their system? They pos-
sess many points of sympathy and kindred action
with the other sects of Christianity, which will
be appreciated, acknowledged and welcomed, as
soon as the magnified jealousies and confused
alarm, arising from ignorance of their doctrines
and persons, shall begin, as they certainly will,
to subside.

Who but a determined bigot will maintain, that
it is better to spend the Sabbath in idleness and
dissipation, than to go and hear a practical and
serious sermon? Who will insist, that the father
of a family, by never attending at a place of wor-
ship with those under his care, more faithfully
discharges his duty to them and his Maker, than
he does by leading them punctually and religious-
ly to a spot, where the Bible is regularly read,
where the Deity is solemnly invoked, and where
the highest duties of mankind are constantly urged
upon the understanding and the heart? Can such
a religious society be any other than a valued
wheel within the machinery of a well-ordered community? Is it the part of wisdom to compel those who constitute such a society, either to attend where doctrines are preached at which their souls revolt, or to disperse themselves loosely among the careless and impious crowd? And as to the true friend of religion, of whatever denomination he may be, while he would prefer, of course, that they should believe and worship with him, will he not regard such an organized body of worshippers, as at least more likely to catch some spiritual and moral improvement, than if they were mere scattered elements in those haunts of society, where no scripture is heard, and no prayer is uttered, and no song of praise resounds, and no lessons of wisdom are dispensed, and no religious subjects presented to the mind? I would therefore frankly and confidently invoke the members of other denominations now present, with candour to revolve these views in their minds, before they refuse to sympathize, in some Christian degree, with the gladness which conducts us this day to a new house of the Lord.

With respect to the congregation itself, by whose laudable exertions and sacrifices, and for whose especial use this edifice has been erected, I need not say how happy a subject of mutual congratulation is the occasion which at present assembles us together. You yourselves, my friends, will bear the speaker witness, that when, at a period of no little trial and anxiety, you did
him the honour to consult him as to the expediency of going forward, and building this house, he respectfully and deliberately gave you the following advice:—"If, on examining your own sentiments with care and fidelity, you feel confident of possessing a well founded attachment to the cause of liberal Christianity; if you cannot, with satisfaction, improvement, and comfort to yourselves, worship elsewhere; and if, moreover, on surveying the character of the population of your city, you find reason to believe that the spiritual wants of the community will justify such a measure, proceed, and the blessing of heaven will crown your endeavours. But if the result of your inquiries be the reverse, I would recommend you to entertain the project no farther." Upon this, you deliberated with calmness, and you acted with promptness and energy. The event of your pious enterprize must now inspire you, especially, with the Psalmist's devout gladness. You have at length a church for yourselves. The opinions, which you have been led to embrace, after strict and conscientious examination, and amidst much opposition, obloquy, and difficulty, are, as it were, now embodied in this edifice, which henceforth will be a new rallying point for your sacred endeavours, and a palpable and lasting bond of your social affections and religious sympathies. You now partake the hallowed relation of fellow-worshippers beneath one dome, and members of one Christian congrega-
tion. You behold in each other living testimonies to the sentiments you have felt constrained to adopt, and pledges of support and encouragement in your future maintenance of those sentiments. As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Nor does your cause of rejoicing rest here. The mere fact that you are lending countenance to each other in the promotion and support of your religious opinions, is comparatively of inferior importance. A higher question arises—are the doctrines, in reference to which this church has been erected, of themselves intrinsically correct? Is Unitarian Christianity sufficiently valuable to justify the sacrifices you have so willingly incurred on its account? Have your views of religion that inherent and distinguishing excellence, which warrants you, before God, and man, and your own consciences, to separate yourselves from other communions? Is the truth of the opinions you hold so capable of vindication, as to render the pity expressed by some of your brethren, a mistaken pity, and the reproaches of others unfounded and uncharitable? I come prepared to demonstrate the affirmative of these questions. The vast importance of the subject impels me to indulge the hope that your patience will submit to this concluding application of the text, while I attempt to show that you have pre-eminent reason, as Unitarians, to be glad in entering this house of the Lord.
The particular propositions that I shall labour to prove in the remainder of the discourse, by a variety of compressed arguments, are these: That Unitarian Christianity, as a system of religion and morals, is perfectly free from every doctrinal extravagance, every practical excess, and every formidable difficulty with which other systems of opinion are chargeable: That it preserves the midway path between opposite, offensive, and dangerous extremes: And that, when faithfully carried into effect, its tendencies are more beneficial to the whole present and future condition of man, than those of any other system. To all these results, the entire series of arguments which I shall adduce, will, I apprehend, infallibly lead. As we pursue the main thread, however, occasion will arise to present subordinate recommendations, to remove objections, to refute different charges, and to correct some prevalent mistakes with respect to the system under discussion.

In the first place, then, Unitarian Christianity avoids every objectionable extreme in doctrine. It is infinitely removed from Atheism on the one side, since the very basis of our whole system, and the fact from which it derives its name, is, that there is ONE Living and True God. It is equally removed, on the other side, from Polytheism, or from any of those forms of belief, which, as far as language has any meaning, imply the existence of two, or three, or more distinct, supreme, and independent Gods. Certain
it is, that these forms of belief, whatever may have been the intention of their original framers, have been in all ages, by many of the wisest, ablest, and best men who have ever lived, understood as palpably involving the monstrous extravagance in question. I quote, as a passing instance, a proposition, with which you are probably familiar, from the Athanasian Creed. "The Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God." As to the truth or falsehood, the absurdity or reasonableness of the proposition itself, I am not now to argue. I only say that it is an extreme, a violent extreme in the history of human opinions; just as Atheism is the opposite violent extreme; and that between these two points, at both of which reason confessedly shrinks aghast, and piety herself is bewildered, stands the foundation doctrine of Unitarian Christianity, the terms of which can never be mistaken, that there is but One Mind, One Spirit, One creating, presiding, redeeming, and sanctifying Energy involved in the being of a God.

Let us next examine our system in reference to certain kindred doctrinal extremes in a different quarter of contemplation. One of the extremes to which I allude, is Deism, between which and Unitarianism there is also an immeasurable distance. The Deist rejects a revelation, denies the truth of the Bible, and considers God as sitting apart from all concern in the moral
creatures whom he has formed.* The Unitarian, on the contrary, embraces a revelation with his whole heart, believes devoutly in the truth of the Bible, adores a superintending Providence, relies on the efficacy of prayer, acknowledges his immediate responsibleness to his Creator, and adopts the sanctions of a future state of retribution. But he vibrates not over to what he esteems the opposite point of the arch, viz. that revelation and reason are at variance. He rejects with abhorrence the idea, that revealed truths are not to be scrutinized with all the powers of the mind, nor any attempts made to comprehend them. On the contrary, he thinks that we ought and that we can understand revealed truths, precisely because they are revealed; otherwise their object would be manifestly frustrated, and the Deity would appear to be trifling with his creatures. He apprehends that on this, as on most other subjects, extremes will be seen closely to meet, and that the difference will not be found very wide between no revelation at all, and a revelation which we must not hope to comprehend. Accordingly, he here also still preserves his safe and favourite midway path. He receives a revelation with reverence; but the language in which that revela-

* This is not perhaps universally true. I think there are some, but very few Deists, who believe in a superintending Providence, in the efficacy of prayer, and in a future state; all which are reflected lights, evidently caught from Christianity.
tion is couched he submits to the test of reason, for he has no other test whereto he may submit it. He disclaims, from his heart, the slanderous charge so widely and industriously circulated, of setting reason above revelation; for if he is true to his own principles, he would ever, with the greatest alacrity, subject all his mental faculties without exception to what God, or any of his authorized Messengers, has clearly spoken.

Perhaps I might not here notice the systems of Judaism and Mahometanism, were it not that we are sometimes taunted with the charge of leaning towards them, until the popular mind has been imbued with a vague notion of its being the case, and did they not also furnish striking illustrations of my position, that Unitarianism keeps the happy line between violent and antagonist extremes. The Jewish doctrine is, that the long promised Messiah has never yet been sent; the Unitarian’s belief is, that he did appear in the person of Jesus Christ. The former represents the character of the Messiah, whoever he may be, as that of a national deliverer, a military conqueror, the possessor, in short, of resistless physical power. The latter regards his glory as official and moral, rather than personal and physical, reveres him as the spiritual sovereign of mankind, and, from the moment the age of miracles had ceased, invests his kingdom with spiritual triumphs alone. That in our views of the nature of the Deity we coincide and sympathize with the children of Abraham,
we are not ashamed to avow. For do we not hold in our hands the Hebrew Scriptures? Shall we be ashamed of worshipping the same God whom Moses, and David, and Isaiah adored? Be it observed, too, that if our belief of the Unity of God allies us in any manner with the Jews, yet a belief in the Trinity would involve us in an alliance still less to be desired. Traces of the latter doctrine have been discovered among the religious systems of the Hindus, and in the visions of the Platonists, a sect of heathen philosophers in Egypt.

Let us next take Mahometanism. The Unitarian is so much of a Mahometan as to believe that Mahomet was either a madman, a fool, or an impostor; he believes that the Koran owes its best parts to the Christian scriptures; he believes that Mahometanism is a religion of war; that its converts are made by the sword; that the moment it ceases to be upheld by political power, it must fall; and he rejoices as devoutly as his fellow Christians at every new dilapidation of the Mahometan power. On the other hand, he believes that his own religion, or that of Christ, is a religion of peace, and that it must prevail just in proportion as the passions are subdued, just in proportion as men love one another, and as the arts of sound reasoning, sincere persuasion and holy living are exercised and improved. But if he glories in being thus at so wide a distance from Judaism and Mahometanism, which
in all that respects the character and person of Christ, occupy one quarter of the compass, he also glories in being at the same distance from what he esteems equal errors in the other. He does not, he cannot admit, that the Agent, the Messenger, the Instrument, the Son, the Messiah of God, is either that great Being himself, or equal to him, or independent of him. And his rejection of this proposition arises, not only from its violating the ordinary uses of all language whether literal or figurative, not only from its being inconsistent with the Unity of the Godhead, not only from its incapability of being even conceived by the human mind, but also from the explicit and undoubted declarations of Jesus Christ himself, who assures us that the Father is greater than himself, and that the doctrine he delivered was not his, or did not originate in his own mind, but from him who sent him.

And here we are led to another double comparison on doctrinal points, equally favourable to the Unitarian. While he does not, on the one hand, so far contradict the professions of Jesus himself, as to deify him, so he is equally remote, on the other hand, from embracing what is meant in the very common charge about reducing the Saviour to the level of a mere man. This charge implies, not only on the face of it, but in the odium it is intended to excite, that Unitarians view the Saviour as no higher a personage than Socrates, or any human teacher—having no peculiar or
mysterious connexion with the Deity—but placed in every thing, except merely accidental circumstances, on a level with the other sons of Adam. The charge is as unfounded as the others. We do believe, that the Deity, in his adorable counsels, from all eternity, invested Jesus with a glory peculiarly his own; that he bestowed on him a character of inimitable perfection; that he appointed him to a destiny and a dignity of infinite and unrivalled excellence. Our opponents, when they animadvert on our views of this subject, sink out of sight the unlimited *exaltation* which Unitarians believe was conferred on Christ by his Father. Respecting the actual existence of a human nature in Christ, both parties agree. No practice is a more favourite one with Trinitarians than to say, that Jesus delivered several of his doctrines in his *human nature*; that he uttered some things as God, and some things as man. Of course, they must mean as *mere man*, in the strictest sense of the term, and is not this the very extravagance with which they would reproach us, and which I have just now, as I trust, wiped away from our escutcheon? And thus which party leaves unimpaired the real glory of the Saviour?

But what is the essential point, the real heart of the *difference* which separates the two parties? It is this. Unitarians believe that the Father and

*God hath highly exalted him.—St. Paul.*
the Son are intimately connected. Trinitarians maintain that the two Beings are in some way mysteriously identified. They imagine that one person had at the same time a divine and a human nature. We believe that the divine nature filled the human with its unspeakable effluences. The doctrine of Trinitarians is equivalent to asserting that a single object can at the same moment possess the nature of fire and water. The doctrine of Unitarians is but analogous to the assertion that the heat of fire may pervade and become intimately mingled with the water. Thus we avoid the inadmissible extreme just mentioned, with which our opponents are chargeable; and also the opposite extreme, which they so mistakenly ascribe to us, of reducing, as it were, the water to a mere mass of ice.

That you may perfectly understand our mutual opinions on this point, I will further try to explain the matter by a clear and familiar illustration. Suppose some rich, powerful, and benevolent friend should make you a present of a golden cup. If the vessel contained nothing, I allow that it would be a “mere” golden cup. But suppose that your friend had filled that cup with some infinitely precious cordial, some elixir of immortal life, which you could obtain from no other quarter in existence. Would it then be right to say that he had given you a mere cup? Now I frankly assure you that Unitarians regard the Saviour not as the mere golden cup, not as a mere man, but as that
cup filled with the precious elixir of life; and in this point of view they gratefully receive him from the hand of God, invested with divine authority, filled with heavenly wisdom, and laden with eternal blessings to mankind. But what do our Trinitarian brethren insist upon? They say, your cup is worth nothing, and all that it contains is worth nothing, because it is not *equal* to the friend who gives it, and because it does not possess his nature! If this be not an unwarrantable extreme in doctrine, I know not what is; but it certainly is an extreme of which Unitarians are not guilty.

I proceed to notice another instance wherein I think we advance in a safe, true, and right line, between two opposite but inadmissible extremes. Unitarians in general believe that the Supreme God, or the Father, communicates in various ways, the happiest *influences* to the human mind. Now this is a clear, simple, powerful, and delightful doctrine. But on one side of us we see a large class of men who deny that there are any influences at all communicated by the Deity to the mind; and on the other side, a large class who declare that these influences are a person, the third person of the Trinity, and not only that, but a person equal to the Father who sends him! And they bitterly condemn us, not because we deny or undervalue the influences themselves, for we allow them in all their reality, fulness, and power, but simply because we do not regard them
as an eternal and separate person, and worship
the influences along with the God who sends
them!

Again, on the subject of the *atonement*, the
Unitarian avoids injurious, revolting, and incre­
dible doctrines. He does not believe that an
Eternal Being suffered on the cross, nor that the
Creator of the world expired. Even the strictest
of our orthodox brethren demur at such a naked
statement, and disclaim the consequences which
it involves. Yet what they mean by insisting on
an infinite atonement, and at the same time deny­
ing the sufferings and death of an infinite being,
surpasses our powers of comprehension. The
Unitarian’s view of the subject involves no such
inconsistency. He falls not, either, into the oppo­
site error of denying all benefit, merit, or efficacy,
to the death of Christ. He assigns to it a high
rank and importance in the plan of the Gospel.
He views a suffering Saviour in the light of a
sacrifice for his sins. But the whole application
of the sacrifice he believes must be made by his
own heart, by repenting of his transgressions,
and by believing in, and obeying that Gospel for
which Christ died.

Again. Behold our denomination embracing
the golden mean, the safest, the clearest, the most
impressive scheme of the *doctrine of future pun­
ishment*. We do not discourage our hearers by
telling them that a few have been elected from
eternity unto salvation, while all the rest are in­
evitably doomed to damnation. On the other hand we do not destroy all distinction between the righteous and the wicked, nor promise them an equality of future happiness. We exhort them to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and warn them of consequences attached to transgression, inconceivably more dreadful than the poor gratifications purchased by their disobedience. I have scarcely ever heard of a Unitarian preacher, who did not enforce his exhortations by sanctions drawn from eternity, and by urging on the consciences, both of himself and his hearers, the awful doctrine of a future retribution. I am aware that in our denomination, as well as among Trinitarians, there are Universalists of various shades; but a much larger number hold to the doctrine of eternal punishment, or rather the eternally unhappy consequences of sin, while several believe in the future entire extinction of the wicked, and everlasting happiness of the good. The view, however, which I have above presented of our doctrines on this subject, is embraced, I feel confident, by a majority so overwhelming, as to leave the minority too incon siderable to be noticed in a general statement of fact.

Respecting the doctrines of divine decrees, fore-knowledge, and predestination, as Unitarians, we neither deny nor enforce them, but generally leave them in edifying silence. The prac-
tical results of clear and well ascertained truths, seem enough to employ us in the present world.

We believe not in total depravity—we believe not in human perfection. We believe that our nature, moral as well as physical, is compound; and that it is our duty to co-operate with the blessed Saviour in diminishing as much as possible the amount of evil, and to increase as much as possible the amount of good, in the world.

Again—In our views and use of the Bible, we claim to follow that happy medium, which God must the most approve. There are some persons who believe that every word of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, as they now stand in the originals, and even in the English translation, was dictated by the Deity himself. But this has been shown by the most eminent Calvinistic theologian in America, to be impossible.* There are other persons again, who consider the whole mass of these writings as a fabrication and imposture. But how stands the case with Unitarians? They all maintain and defend the truth of the Bible, and they generally believe in the inspiration of the original writers, though differences of opinion confessedly exist among them respecting the precise degree and nature of that inspiration. But at all events, we find in the Bible from first to last, a grand and consistent scheme of religion

* See the close of an article on the Hebrew Pentateuch, in the North American Review, No. 51, well known as the production of Professor Stewart, of Andover.
and morals, which we would on no account exchange for any other that the world can afford. We would cleave to its representations of the character, and government, and operations of our Creator, of our duties towards him, towards our fellow-men, and towards our individual selves; and we should feel, with trembling earnestness, that if the Bible were extinguished, the entire scheme of Unitarian Christianity would be extinguished too.

Again. I would ask, if there be no extravagance in exalting to an equality with the word of God, those errors in the English translation of the scriptures, which all Greek and Hebrew scholars of the present day, of every denomination without exception, concur in admitting to exist; and if there be none in obstinately maintaining the integrity of those passages, which the most fair and learned critics of all denominations, on consulting the best manuscripts, pronounce to be spurious? I would ask, on the other hand, if there be no extravagance in declaring, as too many do, that they will give up the whole Bible at once, if it can be shown that any corruptions whatever have been permitted, in the lapse of two thousand years, to creep into it? Now, between these two revolting species of extravagance, the Unitarian with firmness takes his stand, and while he considers the Bible too precious, for him to regard manifest errors and corruptions as a genuine part of it, he certainly considers it too precious, for him,
on account of those comparatively few errors and corruptions, to throw entirely away.

So, too, with regard to our rules and principles of scriptural interpretation, while we avoid, on the one hand, those visionary schemes which reduce the whole Bible to a kind of allegory, a wilderness of types and shadows, a labyrinth for the unlicensed fancy to revel in, in search of some spiritual hidden meaning, and in entire neglect of the letter—so, on the other hand, we remember and account for the prevalence of ancient imagery, and oriental figures of speech. We do not insist that every expression in the Bible shall be taken in its literal sense; for that would be to change the bread of the Lord's Supper into his real body, and to admit the shocking absurdity of representing him as an actual shepherd, or a door, or a way, or a lamb. These, and other similar expressions, we explain according to the common uses of language, and we profess to fortify every figurative interpretation by other texts of scripture, where the meaning is evidently literal and plain.* But the chief particular which distin-

* In a late ingenious and interesting Discourse delivered before the South-Carolina Synod, the venerable preacher argued the Divinity of Jesus from that passage in the fourteenth chapter of John, where our Lord says to Philip, "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." Here the preacher did not advert to the following considerations. First, We are assured that God is invisible, and that no man can see him, and live. Consequently, some kind of figurative meaning must be applied to our Lord's assertion. Secondly, The
guishes us from our opponents on the subject of scriptural interpretation is this. When a passage is susceptible of two different explanations, the one mysterious and the other clear, we think it our duty to adopt the clear in preference to the mysterious. Our opponents often insist upon the mysterious in preference to the clear, and thus maintain, as we apprehend, one of those fundamental extremes, which we are desirous to avoid.

With respect to points of religious ceremony, and ecclesiastical order, our sentiments and practices will be also found to maintain a scriptural and an eligible medium. We do not, with some sects, deny the validity of the Lord’s Supper, or of Baptism, or of the Sabbath; but we do not,

preacher undermined his own creed. That creed asserts, that Jesus is the second person in the Trinity, or the Son, but surely not the first person, or the Father. Therefore, his interpretation would be as fatal to his own belief, as to that of Unitarians. But thirdly, if the preacher had quoted the whole passage in which the text occurs, all the difficulty would have vanished, together with all the support he imagined he was deriving from the Saviour’s words. For Jesus there explains himself as only meaning, by seeing the Father, that an exhibition of the power and wisdom of Jehovah was made through his instrumentality; which is exactly the Unitarian and intelligible view of the case. “The words,” says he, "that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

This instance, which happened to be recent in my memory, I offer as an exemplification of the mode in which Unitarians adopt a figurative explanation of Scripture, and of the sure and cautious manner in which they fortify it.
with other sects, require a particular creed to be subscribed or assented to, before we will sit down with Christians at the table of our common Master, or conduct them or their children to our common font. We regard the mere desire of observing these ordinances, as a satisfactory creed; and we think, that if men are so hypocritical or so loose as to come to these ordinances with improper motives, they would not scruple to subscribe a creed with motives of the very same kind.

In matters of church government, we also preserve an equipoise between inconvenient extremes. We conduct our worship in organized and regular churches, and we entrust the administration of our ordinances to pastors of tried qualifications only. But on the other hand, we hold no particular form of church government to be essential. We do not, with the Episcopalian and Roman Catholic, say to all other denominations, your ministers are not of the true clergy, and have no apostolic authority to administer the ordinances. While the majority of Unitarians prefer the system of churches being entirely independent of each other, as most agreeable to original institutions, and to a perfect enjoyment of religious privileges, yet there is nothing incompatible with their principles, in ranging themselves voluntarily beneath the jurisdiction of a Unitarian Bishop, or subjecting themselves to the authority of a Unitarian Synod. The shape of the lamp alters not the brightness of its blaze; and the spirit of Chris-
tianity, they believe, may burn and flourish in one external form as well as another.

In propagating their opinions, they disdain the leaven of proselytism on the one hand, but they equally disdain on the other, that silence, which acquiesces in the misrepresentation of their opinions, the injury of their good name, and the prevention of their means of doing good. We have great confidence in the moral and religious effects of a long, steady, serious, practical course of preaching, when founded on the principles that have been laid down in the foregoing discourse. If we do not aim at what are technically called Revivals of Religion, it is not that we are not anxious to see pure religion revive and flourish in every living man. But we believe that the subjects of these revivals are made so, under a bewildering storm of feeling, while those who escape being influenced are thrown into despair, or relapse into irreligion, under the idea that as yet they have nothing to do with piety and Christianity. We address all our hearers, without distinction, as capable of religious feelings and religious duties.* We wish religion to be revived in every heart, on every Sabbath day, on every

* One of the most popular sarcasms of the day, is, that Unitarianism is "an easy way of getting to heaven." This charge comes from those who maintain that man has nothing to do in working out his own salvation, and is made against those, who inculcate the strict morality of the gospel, as founded on divine authority!
morning, at every moment when it begins to de-
cline. Is it said that no conversions are made
by Unitarians, and that we urge not the ne-
cessity of repentance and regeneration? They
are the whole objects of our preaching. We
could tell you of professed infidels becoming be-
lievers, of the thoughtless made serious, of the
undevout brought to their knees, and of the wan-
dering prodigal restored to his Father in heaven,
beneath the influences of Unitarian preaching.
But such conversions are registered in heaven,
not blazoned through the land.

I acknowledge, with all my heart, that there is a
high degree of piety among other sects; but after
enjoying extensive opportunities, and being no in-
attentive observer, I have seen as much cheerful,
steady piety, and as much strict morality in my own
denomination, as in any other. It is true, I have
seen some Calvinists perfectly happy, and passing
their whole lives in an elevated and almost unearth-
ly serenity, in consequence of believing that God
has singled them out from the millions whom he
has devoted to destruction. But I have seen as
many, and I think rather more, driven to despair
and distraction by the idea of their inevitable ex-
clusion from the Calvinist's heaven. I have seen
congregations where such views were maintained,
distinctly divided into two parties, of which the
one was marked by an overbearing spiritual pride,
and the other by a reckless, ferocious kind of
defiance; and I have turned with relief to the
sight of other sanctuaries, where Unitarian principles, carried into all their grand, solemn, and consoling consequences, have perceptibly elevated, from year to year, both the individual and collective character subjected to their influences—shed over active life a sweet and serious charm—and brought support, comfort, peace, hope, and joy, to the dying bed. Will you say that I am an interested witness? I reply, not more so than my opponents are prejudiced accusers.

If there are preachers, or hearers among us, who are deficient in a religious zeal, it is no more than is the case with every sect, and certainly it is not the fault of our principles. Surely there is enough in those principles, as they have been this day faithfully represented, to arouse and engage all the powers of the mind in their behalf. A lukewarm spirit must be set down as one of the extravagancies which genuine Unitarian Christianity, when exerting its legitimate influences, entirely rejects. There can be no natural connexion between such a spirit and our system, since the very passage in scripture which most decidedly condemns lukewarmness,* describes Jesus as being but a part of the “creation of God,” and represents his relation to his Father, even in glory, as only similar to the relation which his faithful disciples will hereafter bear to himself.† Alive to the denunciation threatened against

* Rev. iii. 14—22.
† “To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me
those who are "neither cold nor hot," we remember, at the same time, that we are not commanded to be fiery; we remember the rebuke which our Master at different times gave to his too zealous disciples; and we appreciate and admire the precept of St. Paul, in its right and true application, "Let your moderation be known to all men." Afraid of ever inflaming the passions in behalf of religion, we should feel guilty if we did not strive to engage the interest and affections in a cause of such momentous importance. But we do lay, and we profess to lay great stress on a calm, reflecting, argumentative mode of dispensing religion. We wish men to feel surely and distinctly the grounds on which they rest. We think the habit of giving a good reason for everything, ought never to be abandoned, and if abandoned in religion, we know not, we dread to know, where it would land us at last.

Our doctrines have been stigmatised as the half-way house to infidelity. Perhaps this fancied reproach will be found to contain the highest praise. If infidelity resides at one extremity of the great road of opinion, and blind credulity at the other, blessed is the man who can gain the half-way house between them, and find a shelter of peace, security, and happiness for his soul.

There are many who allow, that the Unitarian

in my throne, even as I also overcome, and I am set down with my father in his throne."
doctrines are the most reasonable, and have numerous passages of scripture to justify them; and yet they profess a dread of abandoning the scheme of what is called orthodoxy, since they know not where to stop. Miserable timorousness indeed! Will not God take care of his own truth? Is there no strength in the human mind? Are there no solid principles of scriptural interpretation? Shall the door be shut upon examination? Did our Saviour and his Apostles, when they perceived those monstrous errors in the religion of the Jewish Pharisees, and of Pagan Rome, say, we will refrain from the work of extermination and reformation, because it is impossible to tell where the human mind will stop? Did Luther and Calvin, and their intrepid brother reformers, act on this pusillanimous principle? If you are really conscientious, fear not to launch on the stream of truth, and it will never carry you too far.*

* None more than Unitarians lament and discredit the extravagant speculations into which some of the German theologians have been borne. It is just as unfair to charge the odium of such speculations upon Unitarianism, as it would be to say, that Calvinism leads to Unitarianism. What so frequent as this latter transition? Bossuet's great charge against the Reformation was, that it conducted from one opinion to another, until it terminated in absolute infidelity. But the truth is, neither the Reformation nor Unitarianism is specifically liable to the charge. Infidelity was as prevalent in the bosom of the Romish church as it ever was in that of the Protestant. Its true origin, (as well as the true
A strange and mistaken argument is adopted by some, for refusing to yield to their convictions, and espouse the cause of rational Christianity. They profess that they feel safer in believing too much than too little. But it is not proved that Unitarianism contains too little. Our system might easily be expanded out into a creed of more than one hundred important and impressive propositions. It is better, I apprehend, to believe exactly enough, than either too much or too little. We believe enough for human nature to bear; enough to fill all the conceptions, and regulate all the conduct. More is superfluous. On my pilgrimage through life, as on my travels through a country, I will not thank the guide who permits me to go beyond, any more than I will thank him who leads me to a spot short of a safe shelter for the night.

Such, my Christian friends and hearers, is a compendium of the general principles and motives which have governed the erection of this church. I trust I have fully demonstrated, that we have good grounds for rejoicing in the inherent excellence of those particular religious views which will be cherished and inculcated within these walls. In the statement now presented of Unitarian doctrines, I beg it distinctly to be understood that I have not spoken in the capacity of an oracle, origin, I apprehend, of much that is called orthodoxy,) lies in a partial consideration of the whole subject of Christianity.
or an authority for our denomination. No given catalogue of articles could precisely correspond with the opinions entertained by every individual. I have aimed at such an outline as should express my own convictions, supported, as I am constrained to believe, by a very great majority of my brethren, so far as their views could be learned by extensive experience among them, and a still more extensive acquaintance with their writings. And if by this faithful exhibition of facts, I have but softened the unfavourable prejudices of a single person, I shall think my time and strength have not been applied in vain.

Our doctrines have been so often represented, and particularly in this region, as something monstrous, horrid, and extravagant, that it seemed a fit object of labour to strip such an illusion bare, and place the subject in its fair and true light. I have shown that such a charge, if it falls any where, must fall back on the heads of those who make it.

A still more prevalent idea every where entertained, is, that our system is encompassed with so many difficulties, that it must be rejected by the humble and unlearned Christian. I have shown that the burden of difficulties falls on other systems.

Nor can it with any more justice be said, that our religion, by being placed at a distance from unwarrantable extremes, is a religion of mere negation and indifference.* Under every head of the

* It is easy to say of Unitarianism, "that it is neither one thing nor another." It seems more than that to those who
foregoing discourse I have shown the contrary. I have shown that we do any thing but "halt between two opinions," or hesitate between God and Baal.* We have chosen and act upon our "opinions" in the face of the world, cleaving to the God of the Scriptures, and only rejecting such views of him as Elijah never taught or demanded. I have shown, that while there is nothing in our articles of belief to revolt the reflecting, pious mind, there is in them every thing to attract the attention, to engage men's religious wonder and awe, to excite the affections, to regulate the life, and to prepare for the realities of an eternal world. And what, after all, is their highest recommendation, I have shown that they are deduced from a faithful, reverent, enlightened, and rational interpretation of the scriptures. We have not arrived at Unitarianism, by laying down the rule beforehand, that we would keep clear of widely opposing sentiments.—That I allow might have been a fallacious mode of proceeding. But surely, if, on examining our opinions after they have been cautiously deduced from scripture, we find that they actually are at equal distances from every kind of speculative and practical extreme, then, I maintain, that we have happily discovered a new and encounter odium and persecution in its defence. It certainly is neither one excess nor another. But this impairs not its positive and substantial contents.

* Elijah.—1 Kings xviii. 21.
strong proof in their favour. To establish this proof by an induction of various particulars, has been the leading and specific aim of the foregoing discourse. The argument, I am confident, could be extended to many other topics in a similar manner. Enough, I trust, have been adduced to fortify and recommend our system in the view of unprejudiced minds.

That such a system will not eventually prevail, I entertain no fears whatever. Calculating, not as the member of a sect, but as an observer of human nature, I am entirely persuaded that the present outrageous and disproportioned prejudice against Unitarianism, must, from the very nature of things, ere long experience a re-action.*

The coming generation will wonder, what ex-

* Some persons whom I revere, are anxious to exclude the use of the name Unitarian, as tending to keep alive the spirit of party. But if there be really a distinction between the opinions of different Christians, what can be more convenient and appropriate than to adopt corresponding names descriptive of these opinions? You cannot make men think alike, by banishing distinctive names. With regard to the title Unitarian, none could be more happily selected. It has the advantage of expressing a fact—a doctrine, the foundation of all true religion. Viewed in its true light, it even comprehends the name of Christian. How much more preferable is it to those derived from a sectarian leader, such as Calvinist and Arminian, which even to this day, I think, savour somewhat of personal bias—or to those, originating from a contemptuous source, such as Methodist and Quaker, which have scarcely yet, with all the surpassing piety and virtues of those sects, shaken off the whole dust of their au-
cesses of immorality, what daring acts of impiety, what freaks of folly and absurdity, exhibited by Unitarianism, could provoke in their fathers so much hostility against it. Even now it finds some professed advocates in almost every church in Christendom. Even now there are innumerable unconscious Unitarians in all churches, who scarcely dare to think that they are so, but who have no other mode of explaining their meaning, when the touchstone of inquiry is applied to their belief. Even now, also, nearly every week brings tidings of some new church being established on these dear and sacred principles, in spite of a compacted and persevering enginery of bitter opposition, which would overwhelm any other cause in the world, but one, founded on the felt principles of everlasting truth. For every single individual who abandons Unitarianism, it is an undeniable fact, that more than one whole congregation accedes to the system. And such, I see and feel, will be the proportion of its progress to that of its decline, for centuries to come. Unnumbered serious, pious, and conscientious inquirers, when shocked by the excesses, and staggered by the ancient opprobium. We must be willing to encounter some unpopularity attached to our appellation. Let us only clear away the mistakes to which it is subjected. Let us be faithful to our acknowledged principles; and the few and light pangs which a name gives us shall be amply rewarded by its constituting, as it is destined to do, the honour of our children, and the glory of theirs.
difficulties, in which the present popular systems of orthodoxy are involved, yet still more shocked and staggered by the opposite excesses and difficulties attending on irreligion and infidelity, must, I devoutly believe, after vibrating from opinion to opinion, and from doubt to doubt, find no place for their trembling, wearied souls to rest in, but that blessed poise of Unitarian Christianity, through which the directest line is drawn from earth to heaven.
A SERMON,
PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION
OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
AT THE
UPPER FALLS, NEWTON,
FEBRUARY 27, 1828.

BY WILLIAM RITCHIE,
MINISTER OF THE FIRST PARISH IN NEEDHAM.

DEDHAM:
PRINTED BY H. & W. H. MANN.
1828.
II Thessalonians, iii. 1.

That the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified.

Assembled, Christians, to dedicate this edifice to the worship of God, we have in the words of the Apostle, which I have read, the object for which it is erected. The purpose to build this sacred temple did not originate in party feelings and sectarian views; in a zeal to propagate the peculiarities of any denomination of Christians, or to support any favourite theory of religion. It has a purer, nobler origin, the desire to furnish the inhabitants of this village with a house, in which they can conveniently assemble for moral and religious improvement.

It is highly gratifying to the Philanthropist and the Christian to behold, mingled with that spirit of enterprise which has given existence to this village, a spirit of beneficence furnishing it with the means of instruction, consolation and happiness. We contemplate with pleasure the ingenuity, which causes
the waters that for ages had only fertilized the valleys through which they passed, to accomplish the important objects of the manufacturer, and to give employment, subsistence and comfort to many of our fellow-men; but still more pleasing are those objects of contemplation, which relate to the moral and religious improvement of mankind. The influence of divine institutions may effect existence and happiness long after all the complicated machinery of the present world shall cease to operate. How grateful, therefore, to see near spacious manufactories, a spot consecrated to God and religion, and a sacred temple directing the thoughts to a brighter, happier world; a world which never should be forgotten amidst the cares and employments of the present transient state.

It is happy for those whose livelihood depends on manufacturing establishments and for the community, whose well being and greatest prosperity are inseparably connected with the intelligence and virtue of the people, when those who form and conduct such establishments, have higher views than the accumulation of wealth. When the instruction of the rising generation, and the improvement of those in mature age, enter into their plans, and the means of promoting these objects are liberally supplied. This house, raised to the honor of Jehovah, and that his word may have free course and be glorified, is a monument of the deep interest, which the proprietors of these manufacturing establishments take in the religious improvement of this village, as well as of their munificence.
The important object for which this house is built, explained in my text, may afford us useful reflections, not unappropriate to the occasion on which we are convened, and to the present state of society. The request, which St. Paul entreats the Thessalonians to make in their prayers, implies that obstructions then existed to the spread of Christianity, for the removal of which Christians should pray and consequently labour. It may be useful to consider some of those obstructions which then existed, and which have since existed, to the spread of pure Christianity; and to show the connexion between the free course of the Gospel and its being glorified.

I. I will mention some of the obstructions to the introduction and spread of Christianity.

It may, indeed, seem incredible, on first view, that a religion so unostentatious, pure and benevolent, as Christianity, which breathes peace and good will to men, should have met with obstructions and opposition; especially in an age of liberal enquiry, and among a people, whose advancement in polite literature has been celebrated in all succeeding ages, and whose catholicism on religious subjects led them to grant to their conquered provinces the free enjoyment of their ancient religion. When, however, we consider the immense difference between Christianity and the religion of idolaters, the impossibility of their coalescing, the object of the former being to completely overthrow the whole fabric of idolatry; when we reflect also that the benevolent spirit of the new religion would not permit its friends to sit down in the quiet enjoyment of their
own religion unconcerned and uninterested for others, but enkindled the most ardent desires and unconquerable zeal, to bring all men from darkness and error, from a corrupt and debasing superstition into the marvelous light of the Gospel, and from the dominion of sin, into the glorious liberty of the children of God; when we contemplate, moreover, the powerful prejudices of education, the veneration of men for an ancient religion, the fascinating nature of a ritual, which addresses itself principally to the senses; add to these the purity of character, the life of devoted piety, benevolence and self-denial which Christianity unyieldingly demanded; it will not appear surprising that this religion should excite the powerful opposition, which it actually encountered. Its few and simple rites exposed it to the charge of atheism, and its holy precepts were an insurmountable objection in the lovers of pleasure. The power of truth, accompanied with the visible interposition of Jehovah, was the means by which this religion spread; and it had to contend with wealth, learning, eloquence, and the arm of the civil power bearing down and destroying those who stood forward to defend it. Hence those long and bloody persecutions, which under different emperors were waged against the Christians; so barbarous and severe, that at times Christianity was considered by its enemies as extinct; but supported by an unseen power it arose again from the obscurity in which it had been involved. The multitudes, who were destroyed by the most public and ignominious death, instead of diminishing, seemed only
to increase the number of those who adhered to the truth.

Terrible and destructive to Christianity as this opposition may appear; there was a still more powerful obstruction to it in the systems of philosophy, which then existed, and in the various systems of religion from which the Church was collected. It was natural for men to endeavour, as far as possible, to reconcile a religion to which they had been recently converted, with the favourite principles of their philosophy and with those religious rites, which were the more venerable from their antiquity. Hence Christians early became divided into sects and parties, each sect tenacious of its own peculiar views, and generally censorious and intolerant towards others. These divisions arose even in the days of the Apostles, and many of St. Paul's epistles were designed to correct them.

As Christianity spread over one portion of the globe after another, it encountered a greater variety of prejudices, and every revolving year from the age of the Apostles diminished the influence of their doctrine and example, errors were multiplied, and the truth as it is in Jesus, had numerous obstacles to surmount.

In the beginning of the fourth century, a great revolution was effected in the religion of the Roman empire. The emperor embraced the Christian faith, and the obstructions to the spread of the Gospel were apparently removed. But it was only nominal Christianity which had free course, or rather was imposed upon men; and multitudes were
compelled by the sword to submit to baptism, who were utterly ignorant of the doctrines and duties of the new religion, whose condition and character were little improved by their ostensible conversion. The emperor assumed the right of regulating religion, accommodating the government and doctrines of the Church to his political and ambitious purposes. Instead of facilitating the spread of the truth, new and powerful impediments were opposed to it. The humble unostentatious religion of Jesus, was transformed into a pompous religion; its simple rites were clothed with mystery and celebrated in splendid churches, adorned with images and relics. The decisions of councils were more respected than the decisions of the Sacred Scriptures; the foundation was laid for the most arbitrary and tyrannical dominion over the consciences of men, which ever existed; and the whole Christian world was eventually involved in darkness. The light of truth gradually declined from the time, when Christianity became the national religion, till the last glimmering rays faded away, and the word of the Lord was literally confined from public inspection. The worst passions of human nature nourished by superstition, produced the most deplorable consequences. The consciences and minds of men being completely enslaved, it seemed almost impossible that any event should awaken them from this intellectual and moral stupor, and inspire them with resolution and strength to burst the chains by which they had long been confined. Under the wise government of God the increase of errors and the open and shameless
encouragement, which was given to iniquity, awakened in Luther the spirit of reformation. He boldly asserted and publicly vindicated the rights of conscience and the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, as a rule of faith and conduct. Aided by others, he laid the foundation for the emancipation of conscience and the word of God from spiritual domination; and although the work is yet incomplete, the happy influence of this memorable event has been felt not only among Protestants, but even in the dominions of the Pope. No religion seems, however, to have been compelled to struggle with so numerous difficulties and by so gradual triumphs to gain a conquest. The fearless reformer opened the way to a complete reformation. The grand principles which he avowed, if acted upon, were adequate to produce it. Yet the friends of the Reformation have not only timidly shrunk back from the undertaking, but have even united with its enemies in confining the word of the Lord. They have feared to trust it to the examination, reason and consciences of men, without their support, and have given free course only to their expositions of it.

The great reformer, accustomed to the infallible decisions of the Roman Pontiff, was willing to retain this part of Popery himself, and although none of the best traits of that corrupt system, it seems not the least agreeable to Christians of every name. When Zuingle would have advanced the great work begun by Luther, he strenuously opposed it; and thus every succeeding improvement on what had been effected before, has been opposed and denoun-
ced by the ruling party, as an advance towards infidelity.

I am far from supposing every innovation in religion a reformation, or from thinking there is no danger of going to extremes. The principles of the Reformation, however, which from that time to the present have been the motto of Protestants in their opposition to the Roman Pontiff, are not dangerous. They are what we all claim as our right, in our own case, however reluctantly we grant the same privilege to others. If unwilling to act on the great principles which I have mentioned as the foundation of rejecting the dominion of the Pope; why declaim against his usurped authority? What liberty of conscience, I would inquire, has that Protestant, more than the Papist, who is not permitted to examine and judge for himself the meaning of the Holy Scriptures; who must constrain his conscience to speak the language of the leader of some sect or party; be condemned as heretical or infidel in his views, if they vary from the approved creed? Are the Sacred Scriptures so unintelligible, that they need a supplement by erring man; so obscure that a creed must be annexed to them, to show what they contain? If the grand leading principles of the Reformation be incorrect; why not submit to the authority of the boasted successor of St. Peter? His claims to infallibility are certainly as unquestionable as those of others; his consistency is greater. I can, however, perceive no inconvenience in giving the word of the Lord free course. It will unquestionably produce a diversity of religious
opinions; but these, accompanied with the candour, forbearance and love, which Christianity inculcates, would not be a serious evil. If all the contending sects of Christians would follow the direction of St. Paul, and put off uncharitableness, bitterness, wrath and evil speaking, meet each other as children of the same Heavenly Father, and disciples of the same master; if, instead of letting the spirit of their religion evaporate in the heat of controversy, they would elicit truth by amicable discussion and harmoniously unite in the duties of religion, good instead of evil would be the result.

If the Holy Scriptures are of themselves a sufficient guide to salvation, why compel them to speak the language of your creed to every mind? If equal rights of conscience be the inheritance of all; why condemn the man who decides according to the dictates of his own conscience, and refuses to conform to the decisions of yours? Is his differing from you a stronger evidence that he is erroneous, than your differing from him is that you are in an error?

But is it not necessary to limit in some degree the principles of the Reformation? And is it not a fact that they have been limited by Protestants in every age? If this be necessary in practice, why adopt the principles in theory? It is then only a stratagem, by which to triumph over Popery. The fact that these principles have never been fully acted upon by any of the various sects of Protestants, proves nothing against them. It is only another added to the innumerable instances of the inconsistency between men's principles and practice. If
the principles be correct, and they appear to me unquestionably so; then let us reduce them to practice. Only cast off the bigotry and uncharitableness of sectarians, which would be no serious loss, and those who believe in Episcopacy, and those who believe in the equality of the clergy; those who believe in baptism by much or little water, in infancy or mature age; those who stand and those who kneel in their devotions; those who attach importance to this view of religion, and those who prefer another; might all in the same temple unite in worshipping God; at the same table commemorate the love and sufferings of their common Saviour; with mutual charity live in peace, each following the dictates of his own conscience, and esteeming and respecting his Christian brother for pursuing the same course.

A serious objection to this I am aware arises from the vast importance which each sect and party attaches to particular doctrines and modes of worship. Ought men to act contrary to their own convictions and discard or treat with comparative indifference views of religion, which are, in their opinion, of vital importance to Christianity? By no means. The decisions of conscience are to be respected, and to be uniformly followed. But have we not a duty to perform in enlightening conscience? Are we innocent in following its misguided decisions, when the means of informing and rectifying its errors are within our reach? And would not the application of the grand principles, which I have so often brought to view, shake, if not entirely over-
throw the infallibility of all sects, and lead them to a critical examination of the correctness of their own views and to respect the decisions of conscience and the right of private judgment in others? Considering none infallible, and allowing to all the privilege, which they themselves claim, could they deny, could they doubt, that those who maintain the Christian character, have all equal claims to Christian privileges? An attention to the origin of those opinions to which so great importance is attached, would weaken still farther their confidence in them. They, probably, have seldom been the result of laborious and impartial examination of the Holy Scriptures; but generally the speculations of bold and ambitious men, who wish to give their name to a party, and have acquired their importance in the desire to obtain a victory, where the strongest party have solemnly voted their creed to be the truth of God, and have pronounced anathemas against their opponents. The history of the Church furnishes numerous examples of this kind, where directly opposite systems, according as parties triumphed, were voted the only orthodox faith.

The clergy have frequently been accused, as the ambitious leaders of party, and as seeking, by such means, an undue influence over the consciences and minds of men, in order to accomplish plans of interest and domination. The reproach, applied to them as a body, I trust is unmerited. We must, however, be exceedingly partial in reading the history of Christianity, not to find too many of the professed ministers of the humble and benevolent
Jesus, displaying an aspiring, ambitious, arbitrary and tyrannical spirit and conduct, utterly inconsistent with the principles of the Gospel. And we must close our eyes not to behold the same disposition operating, at the present day, in those unholy contentions, destructive divisions, and high party feelings, which exist in society. It seems impossible that sober, intelligent men, who seriously contemplate these things, should not have less confidence in the creeds of sects, and more charity for those who reject them. It is high time, if Christian teachers still urge their dogmas as essential, and denounce all who reject them, that the people decidedly express their unwillingness to submit to any usurpation of the rights of private judgment, and fearlessly follow the dictates of their own consciences. This course is agreeable to the direction of Jesus Christ; "not to be called masters, and to call no man master, for one is your master even Christ, and all ye are brethren. To judge not that ye be not judged;" assuring them that with what judgment they judge, they themselves shall be judged. The immediate successors of Jesus Christ, scrupulously followed the directions of their master, commending highly those who searched the Scriptures to discover, if even their preaching was confirmed by them. St. Paul expressly declares, that he wishes to have no dominion over the faith of his converts; but to be helpers of their joy. Not only he, but all the Apostles laboured to give free course to the word of the Lord.

Must the different sects in religion then be de-
prived of a privilege, which all other associations of men possess and claim, as a right, to establish rules by which their members are to be admitted, regulated and excluded? By no means, so long as they consider themselves, as merely human institutions. But the moment they give these associations the name of the Church of Christ, all human authority ceases; all creeds and inventions of men vanish, "like the baseless fabric of a vision." Jesus Christ appears supreme law-giver, claims the right of regulating his own Church, and has authorized no individual or body of men to dictate to his disciples. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls."

Powerful obstructions to the spread of pure Christianity exist also in the corrupt passions and vicious habits of men, and in their insensibility to heavenly things. Those who would give the word of the Lord free course to their hearts, must have no favourite sins to palliate, no sinister views to accomplish, no party interest to promote: and laying aside prepossession and prejudice, they must study the Sacred Scriptures with humility, candour and impartiality, having no desire but to know and obey the truth. With such a temper we cannot fatally err. "The meek God will guide in judgment, and the meek he will teach his way."

II. There is an intimate connexion between the unrestrained progress of Christianity and its being glorified.

It is an excellence of the religion of Jesus that it is adapted to the intellectual nature of man; and it
is glorified in developing mind, in accelerating the progress of knowledge, and in manifesting its intimate connexion with science. This is strikingly exhibited in the decline of pure Christianity and science in those ages of darkness previous to the Reformation, and in their reviving together at that great event. No sooner was the word of the Lord released from confinement, and the first rays of Christian truth burst forth upon the world, than learning also revived.

The religion of Jesus is glorified when it is proclaimed as a sufficient rule of faith and duty as the only infallible standard of divine truth. It claims on no slight evidence a divine origin. Addressing men as intelligent beings, it calls upon them "to hear and understand; to judge of themselves what is right; to prove all things; to hold fast that which is good." And it is glorified, when every individual is permitted unawed by human authority to imbibe his religious faith from this pure fountain of truth; and when all who support the Christian character and claim a right to Christian privileges may freely enjoy them. Christianity will never appear in all its loveliness and glory until Christians feel so much of its heavenly influence as to enable them to vindicate and advance their leading views of it, with mutual candour and charity; until the majesty of divine truth goes forth unrestrained, causing all human decisions and creeds, and their associates, uncharitableness and bigotry, like the gods of the Phillistines, to fall prostrate before the ark of the Lord.
A more splendid glory encircles the Gospel in its influences on our moral nature and its adaptation to the necessities of man; in the provision it makes for the emancipation of slaves to sin, by the renovation of their minds, and the powerful aids and encouragements it offers to a holy life; in the elevating principles of conduct it inspires, and the perfection of virtue it is designed to produce; in those correct views of the original character, of the condition and destiny of man, which it imparts; and in those grand and astonishing views of the Divine Character and government it unfolds.

Christianity is glorified, when it is permitted freely to impart its divine consolations to suffering humanity; in the serenity and peace it spreads around the bed of sickness and death; in the sustaining influences it affords to the bereaved and afflicted; in bringing life and immortality to light. It is glorified when it dissipates the clouds and darkness in which false views have enveloped the character of God; and displays him as the affectionate Father of the Universe, beholding with equal regard every part of his great family, impartially judging according to every man's work, and correcting his offending offspring not for his pleasure, but for their profit. It is glorified in representing Him, not as a partial and vindictive being, but as sincerely and affectionately inviting all, who have wandered from the way of holiness and peace, to return and enjoy his favour.

The free course of the word of the Lord renders
it glorious in displaying clearly the frivolous nature and useless or pernicious influence of many of those views and practices, which the zeal of party has magnified into the essentials of religion, and in proclaiming love to God and man as the essence of all goodness. Transcendently glorious must religion appear, when these are made the distinguishing characteristics of piety, when their importance is felt on every heart, and their influences displayed in the lives of men.

My friends, may this be the happy fruit of your exertions in erecting this house; which we now dedicate to the worship of the great Father of the Universe, who beholds with equal favour sincere and devout worshippers, and humble and impartial enquirers after truth, of every name.

We dedicate this house to the honour of the Son of God and Saviour of men, to the enjoyment of Christian ordinances and to the diffusion of the Gospel of peace.

We dedicate this house to the advancement of the great principles of the Reformation, the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures and the right of private judgment. Here may these truths be acknowledged and enjoyed without molestation, and no unhallowed hand of party throw obstructions in the way of Christian truth, or erect unscriptural barriers around the table of Jesus. May it here be the table not of a sect or party, but truly the table of the Lord, to which all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, may approach, and in gratitude to their
Saviour, and mutual charity and good will to each other, forget all the trifling distinctions, which bigotry and party zeal have created.

Here may the truth always be spoken in love, be heard with candour, and its happiest influences manifested in producing all the fruits of the spirit. And when not only the present, but generations unborn, shall have here devoutly worshipped the Father, imbibed the spirit of Christianity, and acquired the character it enjoins, and shall have passed away; may religion in its purity and simplicity be still maintained, and this and succeeding houses of God in this place, be the gate to heaven to countless multitudes, and heaven itself be a continuation and perfection of the tempers and characters here formed.
A

SERMON,

By Rev. T. R. Sullivan, Keene, N. H.

[Preached at the dedication of a new meeting-house in Walpole, N. H. Feb. 20th, 1828. Published at the request of the Society.]

ON THE NATURE AND REMEDY OF SIN.

1 Timothy 1. 15.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

We are assembled, my friends, to dedicate a house of worship to “the only true God.” We hope that from this place our prayers will come unto him, yet we know that he is every where accessible, and ever disposed to hear our supplications. We hope that this may be a house in which he will delight to dwell, yet we know that it is not God that needs temples made with hands, but man. We know that God is a Spirit—filling immensity and inhabiting eternity—and that he is equally near in the solitude of deserts, as in the crowds of cities; in the closet, as in the temple. He is supremely excellent and adorable, without imperfection, without variableness, without beginning of days or end of years. But we are weak, dependent, imperfect, perishable—creatures of sense, association, sympathy, habit. Our devout affections are prone to be weakened, and our good impressions to be worn away, by the various cares and intercourse of life; and therefore we require a place, devoted to religious purposes only—hallowed in its associations, and consecrated by its uses—where many may meet in one spirit, and join in
one object, and where the soul, aided by sympathy to rise, may be carried upward from the world to God, and onward from the things that are seen and temporal to the things that are unseen and eternal.

All Christians profess to believe in the unity of God. Happily, the instructions of the scriptures are so plain on this point that none can err. But you are aware that many Christians think the scriptures teach, that there is a mystery in the divine unity, and that the deity is to be worshipped as one God, in three persons. Others,—and we profess to be in the number,—believe the scriptures reveal that the Being, who is the object of our highest veneration, and the only object of religious worship, is one God, in one person. They think our Saviour taught, that God is strictly one Being, to be worshipped in the name and character of a Father;—and they believe that this word does not denote a distinction in the deity, but the whole deity,—just as when the Psalmist worshipped God as a "King," the word king did not signify a personal distinction in the deity, but the whole deity worshipped with the title of king. It is thus that we worship the Father: and to God the Father we dedicate this house.

We dedicate it also to the religion of Jesus Christ, whom all Christians receive as their Saviour: and the ground on which we thus receive him, is, not that he is God himself, but that,—both as he taught and was testified unto,—he was sent into the world by God, spake the doctrine of the Father, and performed the works which God gave him to do; and finally rose from the dead, and ascended to his Father and our Father, his God and our God: thus giving assurance that he came from God, that God was with him, and that he went to God in the heavens, where, exalted at his right hand, he still liveth to make intercession for us. In this sense, and with these views, we dedicate this building to Jesus Christ.

We dedicate it, too, to free inquiry into the meaning of the Holy Scriptures,—which protestant Christians acknowledge as the only rule of faith and practice. We hope that all who may hereafter stand in this desk, will search them without restraint from human authority—with no motive to direct them but the love of truth, and no fear to restrict them but the fear of God:—and that they will teach men to do
likewise. We hope they will respect the religious opinions of the serious, honest, humble-minded inquirer, and denounce nothing but sin, and that they will meet the same charity from others; that the spirit of Christ may testify that they are his; and that love may be shed, while light shines, into every heart to which they dispense the word of life.—In the course which our thoughts may at this time pursue, it is our hope and prayer that our inquiries may be conducted and received in the same spirit, and be attended with the same good results.

The great design of the gospel is, as all allow, to save sinners. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." It is because the world is sinful, that the gospel is needed; and it is because it is our happiness to be delivered from sin, that the gospel is a blessing.—The subject to which I would particularly invite your attention, is the Nature and Remedy of sin. It so intimately belongs to the purposes of religion, that it is not inapplicable to any occasion intended to promote them.—I am fully aware, I trust, of the importance of this subject. I know that it is not to be treated lightly, nor attempted without due consideration, seriousness, and prayer. I would carefully avoid engaging in the inquiry to which it may lead in an uncandid and acrimonious manner, or with feelings of hostility or disrespect towards those who may differ from me, honestly, I doubt not, in their conclusions. It will not help the cause of religion to declaim against the doctrine of total depravity, or to ridicule it as the tenet of a bigoted faith, the opinion of men blinded by prejudice and inflamed with party zeal. It does not aid our Christian virtue to regard our brethren in this light, and it would be an unsuitable preparation either for the speaker or the hearer. There is prejudice and party zeal in every denomination. There may have been misrepresentation or misunderstanding on every side. Let Christians have done with hating and despising each other—at all events, let not a spirit of bitterness profane the present solemn occasion. Let doctrines stand upon their own merits, and let the merits or demerits of their opposers and defenders be forgotten in the more important investigation of the truth.
I. The nature of sin.

1. Sin is the transgression of the law of God. Every human being is liable to sin. This liability is not criminal, because it is the work of God. Sin is the work of man, and it deserves punishment from the circumstance that it is voluntary. Besides the revealed law of God, there is a law in the conscience; that is to say, there is a law in the human mind which would be obligatory on man, were he entirely ignorant of a divine revelation. Thus the Gentiles had a law in themselves, because conscience indicated to them what was right and wrong. The dictates of conscience were to the Gentile the law of God, the transgression of which is sin. The Christian has increased means of knowing the divine will. The revealed law of God rectifies and guides the conscience; and when he transgresses, he sins against a clearer light, a purer and more perfect law.

Sin is to be imputed, not only where there is a conscious transgression of the law, but also when there has been a neglect of it. I mean that a consciousness, in every instance, of breaking a divine commandment, is not necessary in order to constitute sin. Perseverance in sin blunts the conscience and hardens the heart; impairs the sensibility of the mind to the obligations which it habitually violates; so that a man may omit many duties without being at the moment conscious of the neglect, because he has been accustomed to omit them without reflection or remorse. The habitual neglecter of the law, however, is becoming more and more sinful, although when he sins the law that he violates is not always present to his mind. To mention an instance,—the neglect of the duty of prayer. Persons may neglect praying until they become unconscious of the omission, and of the guilt they are thus contracting; for every Christian knows that the will of God requires prayer. Sabbath-breaking is another offence to the sinfulness of which men grow insensitive by habit. And there are other and bolder transgressions in which men become hardened, and are treasuring up guilt while they are thinking only of pleasure. Ingenuous and well disposed minds are the most susceptible of the pains of conscience. The habitual sinner loses his sensibility to guilt, and at length sins daily without being conscious of trans-
pressing. But is he less a sinner than one who offends less frequently, and never without compunction and sorrow? Surely not. Sin is contracted, therefore, in neglecting the law, as well as in each conscious violation of it. We become guilty by negligently omitting to do right, as well as by knowingly doing wrong.

But I know of no other sense (if we except neglect from culpable ignorance) in which sin can be ascribed to man. I do not see how it can be attached to his propensities, desires, and affections, considered abstractly, as they lie in his nature; or how they can be the occasion of defilement until they have been the cause of transgression. The first motions of our nature are often involuntary: it is cherishing, instead of checking, the evil desire or purpose, that constitutes the sin. When our Lord spoke of the heart as the source of evil, he referred to the state of the heart; for if he said, that "the evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil," he said also, that "the good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good." It is the evil state of the heart and the corresponding acts that defile a man, and not the heart itself. Adam is not supposed to have had a sinful nature until he had actually sinned: it is the same with all his race: they are guiltless until they sin; and when they have sinned, and not before, they begin to be depraved.

Nor can there be sin until there is accountableness. How early this may be, we do not know. From its very nature, however, it cannot begin until there is, in some degree, a knowledge of right and wrong. But how soon a child is capable of so distinct an understanding of his accountableness, as to be properly charged with sin, we cannot determine. To apply the term sin to children before they can have any idea whatever of right and wrong, is manifestly improper; to speak of hereditary corruption, to apply the terms guilt, or punishment, or the wrath of God, before transgression, is equally so. There may be hereditary weakness or disease of body and mind, but not hereditary guilt. Guilt is a personal thing. It is contracted by the individual himself, and cannot be conveyed from a foreign source. It originates in every one's own mind. "Every man is tempted, when he
is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin." Sin is the offspring of the sinner. Wrong inclination is first excited, and the sin consists in following it, instead of restraining it. This is the true genealogy of sin. It is not to be traced through the veins of our ancestors to an origin beyond the flood. It originates, in every instance, in the sinner's mind; and it is not there attached to his propensities, but to his indulgences; not to his affections, but to their exercises.

2. Depravity is the fruit of habitual sin. Depravity implies corruption, vitiation. The mind is not corrupted before it sins. Could you suppose it possible for a human being to pass the first ten or fifteen years of his life without a single transgression, his moral nature would not be in the slightest degree depraved,—not the least corrupted from what it originally was when it came from its Maker's hands. In that period, the heart might have acquired a settled purity, but not defilement. It would not have been at all vitiated. The first sin is the beginning of corruption. The work of God is then marred and stained by the work of man. And the work of God is more defaced, the die grows deeper, the heart afterward becomes more and more depraved, according to the number, kinds, aggravation, and permanence of the sins committed. The habitually vicious man is the depraved man. He it is that is corrupted, and spreads corruption by his example.

I am aware that at the present day there is very little said about hereditary depravity, and also that in former times there was a great deal said about it and made of it. It has been the complaint that ancient and modern doctrine has been confounded, and the tenets of an earlier theology unjustly blended with later opinions. What foundation there may be for this charge, I will not undertake to discuss. If there is a real change in the modern system, it is a subject of thankfulness; for it is believed that any departure from some of the ancient confessions which is an approach to what is more rational, must be nearer the truth. Perhaps there would be a still greater approximation both to truth and unity, were all articles expressed in human language abandoned as tests of fundamental doctrine. We would not in-
tentionally confound different systems; but until the distinctions are more definite and generally understood, it may not always be avoided—for there is a difficulty,—which no efforts yet witnessed seem entirely to have overcome,—in supporting ancient forms without defending the ideas which they contain. I am not reluctant, however, to express the opinion, that as long as some of them are retained, it is doing good to the public to refute them; and if those who retain them do not receive the doctrines they express, it is doing them no injury. If modern explications of ancient creeds are said to constitute the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, let the creeds be confuted as long as they are held up as tests, and employed as binding instruments, on the score of their incorrectness; and let the explanations of them which are truly distinct, be controverted on the ground of their incorrectness, so far as they are inconsistent with the scriptures. But I am not about to traverse the wide field of controversy opened by the doctrines of innate depravity and imputed sin. What further I have to offer on the nature of sin, relates to modern positions.

It is at present affirmed, that man's destitution of religion implies the depravity of his nature; or, as the doctrine is further explained, that there is nothing in man of which religion is the natural effect; nothing in his constitution of which religion is the result without a special divine interposition; nothing in his constitution by which he will become religious, as by the cultivation of his natural faculties he becomes learned, or refined, or moral; and that religion is not found except as the result of a special divine interposition: and by religion is meant a supreme love to God. To say after this, that man is naturally rendered capable by his Maker of obedience, (religious obedience, of course, is meant,) is a manifest contradiction. The preceding statements, if they mean any thing, imply that man has no natural capacities by which he may become religious, as by the use or culture of his natural powers he becomes learned, or refined, or moral. This doctrine, I believe to be erroneous. The question is, whether we can account for the want of supreme love to God without resorting to the theory of man's depravity by nature. If we can, the modern doctrine of natural depravity is disproved.
Now what is affirmed in this system of one individual, is affirmed of all men; and what is affirmed of all men may be tested by its application to the individual. If we can prove that the want of religion in the individual may be explained without supposing his nature to be depraved, we may thus account for irreligion in any number, and so in the whole human race, if the whole race be destitute of religion. Is it then true that the absence of religion in the individual is owing to the depravity of his nature? Recollect that this depravity means that he has no natural powers by which he may become religious without a special interposition of God. He may make the highest proficiency in learning, in taste, and even in morality, without a special divine interposition, but not in religion. Man, in other words, is incapable of supreme love to God, unless God specially interposes to change his nature. What is meant by supreme love to God? It has been defined by the supporters of the preceding positions, as including a predominant friendship for God, complacency in his character, delight in his service, approbation of his law, and resignation to the dispensations of his providence. How is friendship for the person, and complacency in the character of any other being, acquired? Is it not by an acquaintance with him, an esteem for his excellence, an assurance of his friendly regard for us, an experience of his kindness, a trust in his faithfulness, and all advanced and matured by habits of intercourse? Will not friendship and complacency be the natural results of these circumstances? Now what is to prevent man from placing himself in similar circumstances with respect to God? Has not God made us acquainted with the perfections of his character; has he not shown us abundant tokens of his love; has he not daily loaded us with benefits; are we not allowed to expect from him unlimited good; are not his word and promises sure; and have we not access to him, and may we not have constant communion with him by prayer and a devotional habit of mind? Of which of these exercises do we suppose ourselves to be incapable? Is it that we cannot know him, or revere him, or be grateful to him, or hope in him and trust in him, or pray to him and live as in his presence? All these things we feel to be within our ability. We have in
this ability a natural power of forming a predominant friendship for God, and acquiring a predominant complacency in his character—of approving, esteeming, admiring, and delighting in him above all other beings. So far, then, there is no evidence of the depravity of our nature.

But are we capable of a predominant approbation of his law? Are we not so opposed to his law as to be inimical to him? We may be or we may not be—that is not the question. The question is, If we are, how are we to account for it? Can we account for our opposition to God's law without having recourse to the supposition of the depravity of our nature? It seems to me that we can. I ask then whether we have not the power to approve God's law in any particular instance? His law requires of us, for example, the virtue of veracity. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." Cannot we approve the divine law that prescribes truth? Who does not feel that we can and do? How many are there that have a predominant respect for this law, who yet have not a supreme love to God! The law of the Lord requires sobriety, honesty, justice, filial affection. Cannot we and do not we approve these laws? Is it not within the natural powers of any man to do so? Now why may he not approve the whole of God's law, as well as parts? Cannot he approve one part as well as another; and if he approves each particular of the divine law by itself, does he not approve the whole? Why then is he not capable of a predominant approbation of God's law? If he has not this approbation must not the cause lie somewhere else than in a want of natural capacity? Do we not feel that it is so? Do we not know that inattention, neglect to improve our powers, and want of inclination, are essentially concerned in it? Do we not feel that we might be practical approvers of the divine law if we would? Is not this the true state of the case with every sinner? Does not his consciousness bear witness to it?—If it is so with one man, it is so with all men. If there are capacities of religion in one man's nature, there are in human nature everywhere. For my own part, I cannot conceive of any man's feeling that he cannot be religious if he will. I believe no one will dare to offer that excuse at the bar of God. I believe he will confess then, if he is not
persuaded now, that he was not a religious man, not because he did not possess the talent, but because he buried it in the earth—did not cultivate the powers of his nature which render him capable of religion, and which, with the divine aid and blessing, might have made him a faithful servant, and insured him a welcome to the joy of his Lord.—We need not pursue the definition further in its particulars. Delight in God's service and resignation to his providence, require no peculiar powers which are not implied in the ability of friendship for God, complacency in his character, and approbation of his law. These suppose delight in his service, and submission to his will.

If then man has the power to become truly religious, and nothing interferes with it but his will, may not the depravity of his nature be seated in the perversity of his will? It does not necessarily follow, recollect, that if his will is perverse, nothing but the depravity of his nature can account for it. If the depravity of his nature is the cause of his perversity, that is to say, if his want of right will is to be traced to his having no natural ability to will right—if he came into the world without it—then he cannot help it, and the perversity of his will is no sin. God made us what we are at our birth; and if he gave us no power to will right, it is our misfortune, and not our fault, and we are no more blameworthy for it, than for being unable to walk upon the sea. This distinction between moral and physical liberty is inadmissible. Free will implies a liberty to do or not to do. If man cannot choose good as well as evil he has no freedom of will. If a man can move in no direction but one, where is his liberty? If two ways are before me, and one of them is inaccessible, how am I at liberty to choose my road? If I go forward at all, I must take the one that is open. I have no choice. Affirming that men are destitute by nature of a capacity for religion, and cannot have religion without a special divine interposition, and at the same time saying that their depravity, or want of religion, is voluntary, involves a contradiction. If men are unable to be religious without a special divine interposition, they cannot choose to be religious. There is no choice in the case. Choice implies a comparison between two or more objects, among which there is a
preference. In this case, religion is on one side and depravity on the other. Men, it is said, cannot become religious without a special interposition of God, and unless they are religious they are depraved, and must remain so. What choice then have they? How can they help remaining depraved as long as this interposition is withheld?

I have heard the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation defended on the plea that the sinner is only left to his choice, and therefore no injustice is done in passing him over to snatch others from the destruction to which all alike are thus voluntarily and wickedly hastening. But the truth is, there is no choice in the case. If he cannot go the narrow way without a special divine interposition, he must of necessity go the broad way. There is no choice given him. If he never had the power to choose, he never had freedom of will. He must necessarily will to be destroyed. —Such reasoning may possibly confuse some minds, because every one must feel that the sinner's ruin is voluntary. But the true state of the sinner's mind when he comes to himself, is, regret and shame, not alone that he went the wrong way, but that he took the bad course when he might have taken the good. This is his condemnation. He chose darkness rather than light. It is the perversity of his choice that occasions his remorse. But if there was but one way for him to go, until arrested by a special interposition, there was no choice in the case. Necessity drove him downward to the gates of eternal death—and that necessity was the decree of his Maker! Merciful God! —

The importance of this topic urges me to protract its discussion, perhaps beyond your patience. I have stated the case the most favorably for the opposite side of the question; but it must be remembered that there may be religion without supreme love to God: that is, religion admits of degrees as well as any other trait of character. One man may be more religious than another, as well as more just, or generous, or honorable. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," or religion. Have we not a natural capacity to fear God? And if we have the power to begin to be religious, why may we not advance in godliness—grow in the love and favor of God, and in the knowledge of our
Lord Jesus Christ? Does not godliness increase as every other virtue, by practice; as every other affection, by exercise? Let a man daily discipline himself in piety, and he will daily improve in it. And why may he not go on from strength to strength until religion predominates in his character? "The path of the just is as the rising light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Once more—the opposite argument proves too much. If man's inability to gain the highest point of religion proves that he cannot become religious by his natural powers, why should not his incapacity to attain the perfection of morality prove that he cannot become moral by his natural powers? And what irreligious man ever reached the highest degree of moral goodness?—But the truth is that this is a narrow view of religion and morality. The scriptures recognize no such distinction. There, every moral duty is but a branch of religion. Virtue, properly speaking, includes religion—our whole duty—our duty towards God as well as our duty towards man. If we can perform our duty towards man, (which the argument admits,) we can perform our duty towards God: if we cannot, it is not our duty; in that case, religion is not obligatory, nor will it be expected of us. As there is no sin in not doing what we are not bound to do—our want of capacity to fulfil our duty towards God, would not prove the depravity of our nature, but its deficiency. A deficiency of this kind, however, we cannot admit. We believe that we have duties towards God, that the scriptures require us to discharge them, and, therefore, that there must be certain capacities in our nature on which those duties are grounded, and which make it possible and reasonable for God to demand them.

Religion does not suppose the attainment of new faculties, but the direction of our powers to their highest and best objects. We are naturally capable of admiring what is great and wise, approving what is right, and loving what is good in man. Extend these qualities infinitely, and we have them as they exist in God. Are they less adapted to call forth the appropriate feelings when they are perceived in the greater degree, than when they are perceived in the inferior? The more excellent the qualities the more are they suited to ex-
cite the corresponding sentiments; and that they do not is owing to our inattention and neglect, not to our incapacity. And this affords reason, and this alone, for the remonstrances in the scriptures against the want of religion. That we do not become devout is owing to our not forming just conceptions of God, feeling what he is, and realizing his presence, as we might. Would we acquaint ourselves with him—meditate upon his perfections and providence, his will and authority, his goodness and benefits, his judgments and mercies—would we remember him, acknowledge him, and seek him, the corresponding effects would be produced in our minds by the objects which religion presents, as well as by any other object of affection, or subject in which our interest is concerned. That it is not so, is not because it is impracticable, but because other objects are allowed to divert our attention and absorb our minds: the things of sense and time engross our faculties, and God and eternity are forgotten, or neglected, or excluded—and that too, although religion is the only adequate resource for us amid the wants, the cares, the afflictions, the uncertainties, the unsatisfying pleasures of our mortal condition. Had we no power to prevent this adverse and prevailing influence of sensual and temporal things, we should not be blamable for it. It is because we have affections of which God is the natural object, powers by the cultivation of which we may become religious, that we are urged to give our hearts to God, and blamed and punished for cleaving to the dust.

If we are asked how then it is to be accounted for that there is and has been so much depravity, so much want of religion, the reply is obvious. It is because men depart from what is becoming and suitable,—abuse their natural powers,—neglect the appointed means,—and not because their nature incapacitates them from being religious. But does not the universality of depravity in all ages prove the depravity of human nature? Recollect that it has not been strictly universal; there have always been just men, fearing God and hating evil; there has always been a remnant. If no instances of religion among men could be adduced, the objection would seem more formidable. But why may not the depraved character of mankind prove a general departing from
nature as well as following of nature? The fact that sin is universal proves only that "all have sinned;" it proves nothing respecting the cause. The fact, however, that men deviate from what is suitable for them to do and to be, indicates that they are naturally made capable rather than incapable of rectitude—and by what is suitable I mean, not only what is beneficial, but what might be reasonably expected from such beings as men. We do not look for moral sentiments in brutes, because there is nothing in their nature indicating an ability to discern right and wrong, and feel the obligations of the one, and foresee the consequences of the other. But we expect both moral and religious affections in man, because besides an animal man possesses a moral nature—and the scriptures as much imply that his moral nature includes a capacity for religion as for morality.

Having finished what it was intended to say on the nature of sin, as connected with the religious capacity of man, we proceed to the second part of our subject,

II. The remedy of sin.

This remedy is contained in the gospel of Christ. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."—The gospel is a system of means adapted to produce Reformation:—to reconcile the sinner to God, to deliver him from the bondage and punishment of his evil dispositions and affections, and to bring him to obedience—to a holy and happy state. These means are addressed to him as a human being, and are suitable to the faculties of his rational, moral, immortal nature. They may all be comprised in two classes, the Mediation of Christ, and the Influences of the Spirit of God.

1. The mediation of Christ. A belief in the divine mission and authority of Jesus, the divine origin of his doctrine and wonderful works, is the foundation of Christian duty and safety. Here is common ground on which all Christians stand, and on which they might meet in mutual respect and peace. All agree that when we have discovered what Christ taught, the result is of divine authority and paramount obligation. The question what Christ taught is the root of bitterness—would it were not so—but it is a question of too much interest to be decided for us by others. Why cannot Chris-
tians agree to leave each other unmolested in the common right and obligation of seriously searching the scriptures? Then would this root of bitterness be removed. But this is digression.—We are taught that Jesus was sent "to turn us from our iniquities;" and we are informed that he "died for our sins."† Besides the influence of the instructions, discoveries, and motives of his religion, his death is supposed to have had a peculiar efficacy in procuring forgiveness. I propose to enquire what this efficacy is; for various opinions are entertained respecting it. Some have thought that it consisted in preparing a way for God to pardon, or, rendering it consistent with his justice to show mercy. The law annexes a penalty to sin; and the divine justice, it is said, is pledged to inflict it. But the gospel is an offer of mercy. The statutes of justice, then, are to be reconciled with the dispensations of mercy. The method resorted to is the death of Jesus Christ, received as an equivalent for the infliction of the penalty: or, displayed as an exhibition of the righteousness of God as a moral governor, to impress upon his creatures a sense of the majesty and sanctity of the law, and the criminality of disobedience to it, after which pardon may be dispensed to the reformed sinner, consistently with the order and happiness of the divine kingdom.

These certainly are worthy objects; and the systems grant that reconciling the justice and mercy of God will secure them. Is there not, then, a more simple and satisfactory mode of reconciling these attributes, than is presented in either of the preceding views of Christ's death? The object is to show the consistency of God's dealings in one case with his dealings in another—that extending mercy to the penitent is compatible with appointing punishment for the sinner. Perhaps it might be as well to receive the measures of the divine government as we are taught them, without seeking to find them out unto perfection. But since recourse is had to schemes and expedients which do not satisfy all minds, there may be, possibly, no impropriety in inquiring whether these attributes cannot be reconciled—since reconciled they must be—without resorting to a theory; that is to say, whether the scriptures themselves do not plainly exhibit their harmony.

† Acts iii. 26.

† 1 Cor. xv. 3.
The object then is to account for different parts of God's ways at seeming variance. How would you vindicate the conduct of a good man, which in certain particulars should appear to be contradictory? Doubtless by giving good reasons for his actions; and if the reasons were in each instance satisfactory, the harmony of his character would be preserved, and the inconsistency removed. Many apparent anomalies in conduct are to be explained often by a knowledge of the principles and motives from which they proceeded; without which knowledge the appearances would be inexplicable, although the motives might be pure and the actions right. In the case of a condemned criminal, who had been betrayed into an offence against the laws by accident, artifice, or compulsion, so that upon an acquaintance with all the facts it had appeared, that the offender did not really possess the guilty mind contemplated in the penalties of the law, there would be a satisfactory reason why his sovereign and judge should release him, or limit his punishment; a good reason for mercy to interpose to suspend the execution of the law: and justice would be injured rather than honored by inflicting the sentence. Now the penalties of the divine law,—the law of the gospel, under which we live,—relate to the impenitent sinner; for forgiveness is connected in the gospel with repentance, and we are told that there is joy in heaven over the sinner that repenteth. But whenever the sinner is reformed, he ceases to be the person contemplated in the penalties of the divine law; he is not one of those who persevere in sin; and in the gospel's equity he is entitled to a very different treatment from the obstinately wicked. The reformation of the sinner, then, is a suitable ground for not inflicting punishment, and if so, a suitable ground for mercy; for the exercise of mercy is implied in relinquishing the demands of justice;—and the reason is, that the reformed sinner is not the person intended in the penal provisions of the law. The relinquishment of justice and the exercise of mercy being in this case both reasonable, they are consistent, and these attributes are reconciled in the divine character and government.

If the terms on which pardon is offered are such as bear their own consistency on their face,—which is the view I
have been supporting, is not the necessity of the popular schemes relating to the death of Christ, superseded? But does not this set aside the efficacy of Christ's death? By no means. For we hold, according to the scriptures, that "Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." The object of his death was to bring us to God—to produce a religious influence upon our minds. This, I say, was one object of it. It is of the highest importance as a pledge of God's willingness to forgive, and as connected with the resurrection. There are those who think it had an efficacy with which we are unacquainted. This it would be presumption to deny. But if it is unknown, I do not see how it can have a specific effect upon our minds. However that may be, we are plainly instructed that it was designed to have a religious influence upon us—an influence to bring us to God;—and to this point I would for a moment direct your attention.

The view which has been advocated represents our Saviour a sufferer for the benefit of mankind, not for the vindication of the Deity, or the honor of his law—not to appease his anger, or justify his government. How then, it may be objected, does the death of Christ differ from that of the patriot or martyr, or other good men in great causes? It differs in its infinitely greater moral, religious effect. The patriot who sacrifices his life for his countrymen, dies to secure to them a civil benefit, and the moral influence of his death is indirect and subordinate. The martyr dies to testify his confidence in the truth for which he is willing to suffer to extremity. Here again the moral influence is indirect and secondary. Not so with the death of Christ. We are told expressly that Christ died for our sins—that we might forsake sin, and as we leave it flee from its punishment. He died that we might know that to be an exceeding evil and bitter thing on account of which he was willing to lay down his life; and his death shows how great an evil he thought sin to be, and how perfect a remedy for it he knew his religion would prove to those who will apply it.

Now the weight of a person's opinion of our danger, is in proportion to the reasons we have to confide in him, our conceptions of his knowledge, sincerity, disinterestedness, the probability that he is not deceived himself, and that he
has no motive to deceive us. Jesus was taught of God. His view of the evil of sin is the divine view of it. We learn then from the death of Christ for our sins, not indeed that every man's sin is infinite, (for there can be nothing infinite in finite beings,) but that in the view of Christ and of God, in sober truth and certainty, there are no conceivable bounds to the evil sin will be to us,—the degree of suffering it will cause us,—if we do not forsake it. This, let me repeat, gives his death a potent and specific agency to bring us to God, to convince us of sin and duty, to enlighten our understanding respecting our danger, and to turn our eyes inward to our real state. We do not act without motives. The strongest are the apprehension of danger, the fear of evil or punishment, and the hope of reward, or expectation of good. We are led to realize our danger, and seek the remedy, because Christ by his death has afforded the strongest possible testimony to the magnitude of the evil of sin in his own estimation and in the sight of God, and at the same time a token that God is willing to forgive. We are led to consider the manner in which sin is spoken of in the bible, where we are told that "the wages of sin is death," where we find connected with it every image of misery and terror; where, in short, its evil consequences are represented to be as great as words can express or thought conceive. In the voluntary death of our Saviour to deliver us from them we find a strong argument for conviction and gratitude.

2. Your further indulgence is asked, while we hasten to the other class of means, comprehended in the Influences of the Spirit of God. By these are meant all the divine means employed to save us from sin, as distinguished from human faculties and efforts. First of all, the bible, which is a record of God's providence, government, and laws, a history of his dispensations, a revelation of his perfections and will. The scriptures are divine means. They are the work of men inspired by the Spirit of God. Our Lord says of his own instructions, "The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life." To the same class may be referred all the instructions that we receive which are conformable to the scriptures, and truly founded upon them, whether in advice, example, books, sermons, or other instruments of religion. Here too we may comprise the various discipline of divine
providence—every thing susceptible of a moral, religious improvement. To this may be added, especially, the good influences particularly promised to such as make a right use of other means; influences, which are to be sought and obtained by prayer, and which are multiplied to the devout and spiritual mind.

Does any one object that this system gives man capacities of religion, and yet admits the interposition of God? This objection, which is but a cavil, may be readily dismissed. If you mean by a divine interposition the gospel itself, with all its provisions and influences, as means, it is self evident that there cannot be Christians without Christianity. But something more is conveyed in language which speaks of a divine interposition without which there is nothing in our nature which will result in religion, without which our nature is, and continues to be depraved—a special divine interposition without which religion is never found—a peculiar divine agency to change man's nature, or give him powers of which he is naturally destitute. We believe that the divine influences are given to develop the religious capacity which man really possesses; and the necessity of these no more implies the want of a natural ability to become religious, than the necessity of the means of education implies the want of a natural capacity to become learned and refined. The divine influences, or means of religion, are the instructors of the soul, designed to unfold its religious faculties, enlarge its ideas, expand its views, extend its hopes, exalt its affections, and train it up for everlasting life; and like the means of education for usefulness, honor, and happiness in this life, they may be abused and neglected, and the result be unfruitfulness in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and disappointed expectations in the future world. Applying a sentiment, which, where it occurs, especially related to the apostle and his office, we believe with him that “our sufficiency is of God”—but we believe that this sufficiency consists, not in divine influence alone or human exertion alone, but in the union of human efforts and heavenly aids; and that they who do not improve their natural religious faculties, and are not careful to be found in the ways of duty towards God and towards man, are not encouraged to expect the sanctifying agency of Heaven.

* 2 Cor. m. 6. 11
We perceive from this mode of viewing the subject of divine influences, that it is the idlest of fears to imagine that we can do nothing to obtain the Spirit of God. It is given to those who ask it, and increased to those who improve it. It may be improperly sought, and, in the figurative language of scripture, it may be resisted and grieved; but it is to be obtained at all times and in all places. It does not confine its visits to a selected portion of the Christian community—it is not wafted like the rain-cloud from one tract of land to another—but, like the air we breathe, it is near to all at all times, always in some degree operating, and always readily particularly to affect any mind that will give it access. Scarcely have we left the cradle before it is given to us, as our opening minds are then able to receive it; nor is it taken from us, unless we voluntarily discard it, till flesh and heart have failed us on the dying bed. Through life we may find it in our pious counsellors, our exemplary companions, our sabbath meetings and our bibles, in the arrangements of providence, and, most of all, in our prayers. We have but to open our eyes to see, and incline our ears to hear, and to stretch forth our hands, in order to receive the Spirit of God—to lay hold on eternal life, the gift of the Father's mercy by his Son.

Our brethren who have erected this edifice for his service, will receive, in closing, our congratulations, good wishes, and prayers. Again we dedicate this house to the only true God, the Father, and to Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; to the religion of his Son and the influences of his Spirit; to the principles of the protestant reformation—the right of private judgment, and the sufficiency of the scriptures; to the truths, instructions, consolations, hopes, and purposes of the gospel. Here may the truth be spoken in love. Here may it come from the heart and reach the heart. May this roof never echo with the voice of denunciation, and may the spirit of contention never find an entrance within these walls. May this be a temple where true worshippers shall worship, and God's own pastors teach. And when ages shall have rolled on, and the place that knows it shall know it no more, may many souls, the seals of its ministrations, bear record on high, that this was none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. Amen.
UNION OF SENTIMENT AMONG CHRISTIANS NOT ESSENTIAL TO PEACE.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN NATICK,

NOVEMBER 20th, 1828.

BY CHARLES LOWELL, MINISTER OF THE WEST CHURCH IN BOSTON.

BOSTON: N. S. SIMPKINS & CO. 79, COURT ST. CORNER OF BRATTLE ST. 1829.
SERMON.

HAGGAI, ii. 9.

IN THIS PLACE WILL I GIVE PEACE, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.

The love of excitement is a part of our nature. It is early developed, and gathers strength with our increasing years. It is into this principle that we must, in part at least, resolve the desire for rash and hazardous adventure, as well as for deeds of high and noble daring. It is to this principle that we must refer that fondness for the marvellous of which we are conscious ourselves, and which we discover in those around us; the interest with which we listen to tales of wonder, or of horror, or of deep pathos, and the propensity we have to relate to others whatever will occasion a strong emotion. In this respect mankind always have been, and always will be, Athenians, who loved to tell, or to hear, something new.

It is not to minister food to this passion, as you may perceive from the text, my hearers, that I have come hither. There is nothing new or exciting in the language of peace. It is old as the days, when
the shepherds tended their flocks upon the plains of Bethlehem, and the angels announced the peaceful reign of the Redeemer. It is old as the first-born days of our beautiful world, ere sin had entered to mar its just and fair proportions, when the Creator looked upon the works he had made and pronounced them good, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

But these days have passed away. They are discerned only through the long vista of intervening years. The song of the angels, and their shouts of joy, are heard no longer, but the sound of the trumpet, and the tramp of the war-horse, and the clash of arms. The followers of the meek and lowly Jesus have girded themselves for the fight, and gone forth to battle, not with their enemies, but with their brethren. They are contending with each other in the open field, or, they are whetting their tongues like a sword, and in secret are shooting their arrows, even bitter words; or they are watching at the passages of Jordan, like the Gileadites of old, to prevent those from passing over to the promised land, who cannot sound the aspirate in shibboleth with as much distinctness as themselves.

It might seem, then, to be more in accordance with the spirit of the times, though not with the genius and spirit of Christianity, if I were to take,
on this occasion, the side of one of the belligerents, and wield the weapons of controversy. But, in so doing, I should do violence to my own feelings, and injustice to you. *I am for peace;* and it is for this reason, as I am well assured, that I have been called to address you at the present time. I view it as one among many indications of a returning feeling in the community in favour of peace. These are the harbingers of better times. They are streaks of light which betoken the dawn of a brighter day. The world is becoming tired of contention. It is beginning to sigh for repose. It is looking back with melancholy remembrance to the time, for there was such a time, at least in our community, when Christian ministers, and Christian people, forgot their differences in the consciousness of brotherhood. They differed, but agreed to differ, and thus, problematical as it might at first appear, could walk together, when they were not agreed.*

But I am told that the world is growing wiser as it is growing older. I hear much of "the march of mind,"—of the rapid strides it is making in the path of perfect knowledge and perfect virtue. I hear much of an influx of light from the eastern hemisphere, and that controversy is to promote its diffusion through our western world.

"Tell us not," it is said, "of uniting Christians

* There were doubtless some exceptions, but they were, comparatively, few.
by a christian name. Christians will differ. Christians must differ in order to their agreement. Contention will lead to investigation, and investigation will elicit truth.' But what truth? 'Orthodoxy,' says one of the contending parties. 'Unitarianism,' says another of the contending parties. 'Give them but just principles of criticism,' says one, 'and they will understand all mysteries.' 'Give them a knowledge of exegesis,' says the other, 'and they will learn that there are mysteries.' 'And thus they will come to the truth and be united.' But in what will they be united? I grant that if they could see with the eyes, and understand with the understanding, either of my orthodox or unitarian brother, they would think alike; but can they see with the eyes of both?

But the subjects of controversy are revealed, I am told, and nothing is needed but an unprejudiced attention, with the blessing of God, to come to the knowledge of them. 'Can any thing be clearer than that the Scriptures reveal a trinity of persons in the Godhead? Is it not the alpha and omega of revelation? Does it not begin and end the Bible? Can language be more explicit than that of our Saviour, I and my Father are one?'

'And is it possible,' it is replied, 'that you do not perceive the divine unity distinctly impressed upon every part of the works, and every page of the word of God? Does not the Son of God
himself declare, *My Father is greater than I?* And thus it is that my brethren shew me that the nature of the **Godhead** is revealed, and that nothing is needed but devout investigation to understand it.

And can it be that any one can seriously think that the mass of Christians will ever have time to learn the principles of criticism, or even to understand the hard names by which they are designated? Can it be that any one can seriously think that the farmer will leave his farm, or the merchant his merchandise, to become biblical critics? I have no fear of it. No—I shall be glad if they will read their Bible as they now have it, with such understanding as God has given them, and such light as the Holy Spirit will impart to them. Criticism and learning and historical research have doubtless done much to elucidate Scripture, but the unlearned Christian need not fear that in following his Bible as it now is, he is following an uncertain guide. There may be here and there a homely phrase, and a refined taste may wish to change it; and here and there a mistranslation, which criticism may correct, if critics can agree what it should be; but the version you now have, my hearers, is sufficient, without any alteration, to guide you to heaven. Yes, this time-hallowed book,—associated with your dearest remembrances, with instruction which yet lives in your hearts
though the sound has ceased to vibrate on the ear, and the lips which imparted it may be silent in the grave,—this time-hallowed book, without any alteration, is sufficient to guide you to heaven. Let theologues beware how they obscure its light by their glosses, and *darken its counsels by words without wisdom.*

I highly appreciate the labours of the learned in ascertaining the true text of Scripture, and illustrating the circumstances under which it was written. I rejoice in every thing that enables christians to read their Bible intelligibly, but I would have them read it with their own understandings. I much doubt the benefit of doctrinal expositions, and if all such expositions were collected and offered in sacrifice to the cause of truth and charity, I have a strong persuasion that the world would gain by the holocaust. It is well that the ministers of religion, where it can be so, should study the principles of criticism; but, after all, studying them under different auspices, from the same principles they will arrive at different results,—and the world will go on as it has done. One set of opinions will be taught and received in one church, and another set of opinions in another church, till men have other powers and other passions than they now have.

Let me tell the controversialist, let history tell him,—and facts are worth all his theorizing,—that, if he hopes to see a union of sentiment among
Christians, or that there ever will be a union of sentiment among Christians, his hopes are visionary. If he is laboring to effect it, he is laboring in vain, and spending his strength for nought. If he is contending to effect it, he is fighting as one that beateth the air.

From the infancy of Christianity men have differed, and till the end of Christianity they will differ. They must learn, whilst, by the best investigation they can yield, they seek to arrive at the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, amidst differences of opinion, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Peter and John differed, Paul and Barnabas differed; but Peter and John and Paul and Barnabas did not stigmatize each other as heretics, refuse to each other the Christian name, and communion in Christian ordinances.

Yes! I repeat the language of the controversialist, 'Christians will differ. Christians must differ.' But I go farther,—it is well they should differ. Who maketh thee to differ from another? may be asked with as much propriety in regard to opinions, as in regard to the faculties of the body, and the powers of the mind, and I discern as much wisdom in these differences as in the differing lineaments of human countenances and the different degrees of human intellect. I discern in them a moral beauty, and a moral benefit.

Can there be a more beautiful spectacle than a
Christian community differing in opinion, but united in affection? Each maintaining his own right of private judgment, but respecting the rights of others? Can there be a more beautiful spectacle than that of christians assembling in various places, under various forms, to worship God, but mingling their spirits in their acts of devotion, as children of one Father, and disciples of one Saviour? Besides, how different are the understandings and dispositions and circumstances of mankind, and by what different motives are they impelled to duty. You teach your brother that the faith by which he overcomes the world is unsound, and the hope by which he aspires after heaven is fallacious, and thus take away the foundation on which his faith is built, and the anchor on which his hope is leaning. And what do you give him in exchange? It may be, the faith of infidelity, and the hope that terminates in 'an eternal sleep.' Having removed the prop which supported him, you may launch him on the sea of doubt and uncertainty, to be shipwrecked and lost. Enlighten your brother as much as you will, if it will make him better, but be cautious how you interfere with his religious opinions, if you perceive in his life the fruits of holiness. Call not his doctrine 'a soul destroying doctrine,' if, by the grace of God, it renders him meek and humble, benevolent and devout. Call him not 'a child of hell,' if he sets thee an example of forbearance
and charity. Were his opinions ever so wrong, indeed, your enmity and bitterness would not correct them. Hard names and reproachful language may lead him to suspect the soundness of your faith, but will never convince him of the unsoundness of his own.—But you view him through a distorted medium, and decide too hastily. Your trinitarian brother is not ‘an idolater,’ but believes in one God, and one mediator, as well as yourself. Your unitarian brother is not ‘an unbeliever,’ but has as firm a faith in revelation as you have. Your unscriptural, unhallowed names, keep you asunder. Discard them, and come together, that you may know each other better. Christ is not divided, nor should Christians be divided. Judge with less severity, relinquish your unholy prejudices, emulate each other’s piety, and love as brethren.

The world has had enough, and too much, of angry contention. The calm, dispassionate statement of our opinions, may do good. I will not say that controversy may not do good; but I am compelled to doubt its utility when I witness its baneful effects. It may sometimes elicit truth, but it oftener elicits anger, and truth is seldom discerned with clearness through the mists of passion. It may excite inquiry, and, on subjects which are revealed, inquiry is lawful. Inquiry is now excited, and will go on.

I call upon polemics to lay down the weapons
of their warfare, and study the things that make for peace. I call upon the ministers of religion, of that religion whose essence is love, to exhibit, in their own example, the meekness and gentleness of Christ, their master. By all that is lovely and attractive in Christian charity, by the tender mercies of God, and the compassion of the Redeemer, by their regard for the interests of our holy religion, by the worth of their own souls and the souls of those who are within the sphere of their influence, I call upon them to refrain, or desist, from an unrighteous warfare with their brethren. I conjure them, as they conjure others, to carry forward their thoughts to the time, when, from the bed of death, they shall look back upon the troubled scene which is passing from before them, and forward to the rest of heaven, and ask themselves how all this contention will then appear? I conjure them to carry forward their thoughts to the time when the troubled scene of life will be over, and ask themselves how the notes of contention would mingle with the hallelujahs of angels and of the spirits of the just? If they are deaf to all the motives which urge them to cease from their unholy feuds, Christians will soon rise in their strength, and compel them. They cannot withstand the force of public opinion, and the tide of public opinion is setting strongly in favor of peace.

I earnestly admonish those who are coming for-
ward to labor with us in the work of this ministry, or to bear the ark of the Lord when our hands shall have become feeble, or are mouldering in the dust, to keep themselves free from the perverting influence of party combinations, and the paralyzing influence of human authority. Let them spurn the fetters which theological dogmatists, with however good intentions, may be ready to put upon their understandings, and assert the liberty wherewith God and Christ have made them free. Let them be careful lest the opinions of the wise and good should give a bias to their judgment in the search after truth. They must answer for themselves before God, for the doctrines they hold, and it becomes them to take heed lest these doctrines are founded in the wisdom of man, and not in the power of God. A responsibility, deep and awful, is soon to rest upon them. By the exercise of their own minds in the study of God's word, and especially by the cultivation of a meek and lowly spirit, let them prepare to sustain it, that, by the light of their instructions and the light of their example, they may win souls to Christ.

It is in the spirit of peace, my christian friends, that you have erected the temple which is now consecrated to the service of God. You dedicate it to the cause of truth and righteousness, to the cause of religious freedom and free inquiry, of christian peace and charity. And may the bless-
ing which rested upon the second temple at Jeru­
salem, rest also here. *In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.*

How interesting are the associations which are connected with this place, and this occasion! Nearly two centuries have elapsed since this spot was first hallowed by the rites of religion. It was then that the apostolic Eliot imparted to the rude, untutored children of the forest, the light of divine truth, and the wilderness echoed the voice of christian prayer, and the songs of christian praise. We revert with admiration to the wearisome pilgrimages, and the toilsome and perilous, though patient and persevering labours, of this holy man. Imagination delights to go back through the long tract of time, and see him travelling on foot, with his staff and his Bible, or surrounded by his Indian children, with no altar but the trunk of the forest tree, and no canopy but the vault of heaven, yet cheered by the consciousness of devotion to the best of causes, and by the hopes of success. We honour thy memory, devoted servant of the Lord Jesus! Though no fruits of thy labours remain, thou hast erected a monument to thy praise in the hearts of the pious, in all times, who shall hear the story of thy toils and thy sufferings, and hast secured to thyself a portion with those, who, *having turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, forever and ever.*
You have done well, my friends, to select this consecrated spot, consecrated by the tears and the prayers of the first protestant missionary in this western world, as the place for your new house of worship. It is emphatically holy ground. May the recollections it revives, as you trace hither the footsteps of the pious dead, impart a holy influence! May this sacred place never be desecrated by unhallowed passions, by hollow-hearted prayers, or cold and lifeless praises! May no gift be ever brought to this altar but in the spirit of love to God, and love to man!

This temple is erected to the service of God, but God dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, how much less this house which you have builded. Neither on Mount Gerizim, nor at Jerusalem, neither here, where the savage, renouncing his idolatry, bowed down before the God and Father of our Lord, and where, too, your fathers worshipped, nor elsewhere, shall men exclusively worship the Father. God is a spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. He looketh on the heart. If there is really an altar there, however poor and humble the sacrifice that is laid upon it, fire will come down from heaven to kindle it, and, like the angel in the smoke of Manoah's sacrifice, it will ascend with acceptance to God. If there is really a temple there, however
faint and feeble the sounds that are uttered in it, they will be audible by God. The aspiration of thankfulness he will hear, the sighing of the contrite heart he will not despise.

They who first worshipped, and succeeding generations who worshipped here, have passed away. There is not a remnant of the little tribe to which Eliot ministered. And we, too, must pass away. Let us not be regardless of the admonition which the review of the past brings home with so much force and solemnity to our minds!—Our fathers, where are they; and the prophets, do they live forever?

Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. 'The awful now,' it has been impressively said, 'asks us but once to embrace it, then turns its back upon us, and our hands are stretched after it in vain.' If we have not already resolved to be religious, let us resolve now, and if there be no time for the performance of religious duties, the resolution will be accepted and registered in heaven. Now is the day of salvation. Is there any assurance that we shall have another? that when this day of counsels and entreaties, of promises and threatenings, of admonitions and warnings, of hopes and fears, is ended, a new day of probation will begin? Is there any assurance that we shall enter on a new state of preparation for heaven, and that if that should be unavailing, as
this may have been, there will be yet another, and another, through an indefinite extent of an interminable existence? I caution you not to stake on such a presumption the eternal interests of your immortal souls. It may not be so.—And where then will he be who has 'laid this flattering union to his soul,' and thrown away, misapplied, perverted, in the hope of future opportunities, the only opportunity that will ever be given him? Where will he be who has said, 'God will be gracious,' and has persevered in sinning *that grace might abound*? Where will he be?—I leave it to the revelations of eternity to reveal it.—I leave it to the unfolding of that scene which to us, creatures of a day, will soon be unfolded.—I leave it till the *books are opened* and the record read and the sentence passed.—Oh that he may not find himself dreadfully and irretrievably mistaken!
APPENDIX.

The following account of Eliot, and of his missionary labours, will, probably, at least be interesting to those at whose request the foregoing sermon was preached and published. It is taken principally from Gookiu’s ‘Historical collections of the Indians in New England,’ and from Dr. John Eliot’s biography of this distinguished man, chiefly from the latter, and his language is generally used.

John Eliot, commonly called the apostle to the Indians, exhibited more lively traits of an extraordinary character than we find in most ages of the church, or in most Christian countries. He, who could prefer the American wilderness to the pleasant fields of Europe, was ready to wander through this wilderness for the sake of doing good. To be active was the delight of his soul; and he went to the hovels which could not keep out the wind and rain, where he labored incessantly among the aboriginals of America, though his popular talents gave him a distinction among the first divines of Massachusetts, at a time that the magistrates and all the people held the clergy in peculiar honor.

He was born in England, A. D. 1604. There is nothing related of his parents, except that they gave him a liberal education, and were exemplary for their piety;—for this their memory is precious. ‘I do see,’ says this excellent man, ‘that it was a great favor of God to me that my first years were seasoned with the fear of God, the word, and prayer.’

When Mr. Eliot left the University of Cambridge, he himself became a teacher; and, while he led children and youth into the paths of virtue, acquired also an acquaintance with the human heart.

In the year 1631, he arrived at Boston, and the succeeding year, November 5th, 1632, was settled as teacher of the church in Roxbury. Being moved with compassion for the ignorant and degraded state of the Indians, he determined to devote a part of his time to their instruction; and first preached to them on the 28th of October, 1646, ‘at Nonantum, near Watertown mill,
upon the south side of Charles river, where, at that time, lived Waban, one of the principal men, and some Indians with him. His first discourse was from Ezekiel xxxvii. 9. Their mode of worship is thus described. After a short prayer, he rehearsed and explained the ten commandments. He then described the character of Christ, told them in what manner he appeared on earth, where he now is, and that he would again come to judgment, when the wicked would be punished, and the good rewarded. He spoke of the creation and fall of man; then persuaded them to repent, to pray to God, and own Christ as their Saviour.

Within a short time after this first attempt, he instituted a lecture at Neponset, within the bounds of Dorchester, where another company of Indians lived, belonging to the sachem Kuchamakin. Besides preaching, he framed two catechisms, one for children and one for adults, in the Indian language, which he had learned of an old Indian, who had been taken into his family for this purpose. In this language he translated the Bible, and several practical treatises, and composed a grammar, which is published in several editions of the Indian Bibles. The questions in the catechism he propounded on one lecture-day, to be answered the next lecture-day. His method was 'to begin with the children, who, in general, answered readily, and whom he encouraged with some small gift, as an apple, or a small biscuit, which he caused to be bought for that purpose.' 'After he had done with the children, then would he take the answers of the catechetical questions of the elder persons; and they did generally answer judiciously. When the catechising was past, he would preach to them on some portion of Scripture for about three-quarters of an hour; and then give liberty to the Indians to propound questions, and, in the close, finish all with prayer.'

Among the questions proposed, at different times, by the Indians, were these:—Whether Jesus Christ could understand prayers in the Indian language? How all the world became full of people, if they were all once drowned? How the English came to differ so much from the Indians in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, since they all at first had but one father? How it came to pass that sea-water was salt, and river fresh? That if the water was bigger than the earth, how it came to pass that it does not overflow it? When the preacher had discussed these points as well as he was able, they expressed their satisfaction by saying, after their manner, they did much thank God for his coming, and for what they had heard, which was wonderful news to them.

When he began his mission, there were about seventeen or twenty tribes within the limits of the English planters. But these tribes were not large, and hardly to be distinguished; for their manners, language, and religion were the same. He made
a missionary tour every fortnight, planted a number of churches, and visited all the Indians in Massachusetts and Plymouth colonies. He certainly was the most successful missionary that ever preached the gospel to the Indians. His prudence and zeal, his patience, resolution, activity, and knowledge of mankind, were equally conspicuous. Many have done worthily in this benevolent work; but, if we unite an apt method of applying the truths of christianity to the minds of the heathen, with the success of his labours, he far excelled them all. He likewise claims a very peculiar character, as being the first protestant minister who diffused the means of evangelical truth among the wild nations of this benighted part of the globe. The tribes that roamed through the deserts became dear to him, like his own people, and he often forsook the charms of civilized and cultivated society to reside with men, who were not only unacquainted with every thing called urbanity, but who wanted comfortable means of subsistence; with whom he would associate days and weeks, to instruct them in divine things, and also acquaint them how they could improve their condition upon the earth. Though in general well received and treated with kindness, he sometimes met with opposition, especially from the sachems, and the powows, who were their physicians, and pretended to skill in magic. When threatened by them, his answer was, 'I am about the work of the great God, and he is with me, so that I fear not all the sachems in the country. I'll go on, and do you touch me if you dare.'

As to his moral and christian character, it was as exemplary as his ministerial qualifications were excellent. His mind was governed by a sense of duty, and not a mere ease and complacency of humour, which makes a man good-natured when he is pleased, and patient when he has nothing to vex him. He brought his religion into all his actions. He habitually lifted up his heart for a blessing upon every person whom he met, and when he went into a family, he would sometimes call the youth to him, that he might lay his hands upon them, and give them his benediction. A stranger to artifice and deceit, he disliked the appearance of them in others. He felt equal obligations to perform the duties of piety, virtue, and benevolence. Such was the man. He clothed himself with humility as with a robe. Literally speaking, he wore a leathern girdle about his loins. Perhaps this might show too strong a prejudice against dress; but all his actions discovered a temper free from vanity, and a desire to be humble, rather than to gain the praise of men. He was very temperate: one dish was his homely repast. When he dined abroad, he would not indulge himself in the luxuries of the table. He drank water, and said of wine, 'it is a noble, generous liquor, and we should be humbly thankful for it, but, as
I remember, water was made before it.' His maintenance was a free contribution, or raised upon pews, and the people of Roxbury cheerfully supported two ministers. It was his request, to give up his salary when he could no longer preach. 'I do here,' said he, 'give up my salary to the Lord Jesus Christ; and now, brethren, you may fix that upon any man that God shall make a pastor.' But the society, in their answer, told him, that they accounted his presence worth any sum granted for his support, even if he were superannuated so as to do no further service for them. The youth of the congregation called him their father and their friend, and their affection chased away the gloom so apt to hover round the evening of life. Such attentions from the rising generation, are like medicine to the spirit of a man sinking within him. The reflection of a life well spent, and the kind­ness of his friends, made his old age pleasant.

In domestic life, Mr. Eliot was peculiarly happy. His lady was an excellent economist, and by her prudent management enabled him to be generous to his friends, and hospitable to strangers. It ought to be mentioned, to the credit of this excellent woman, that, with a moderate stipend and her prudence, he educated four sons at Cambridge, who were among the best preachers of that generation. He gave largely from his own income to the poor, and promoted all kinds of useful distributions, especially if he could serve the cause of religion. When his age unfitted him for public employment, he reflected that he did good as he had opportunity. 'Alas!' said he, 'I have lost every thing.—My understanding leaves me, my memory fails me, but I thank God my charity holds out still.' So great was his charity, that his salary was often distributed for the relief of his needy neighbours, so soon after the period at which he received it, that, before another period arrived, his own family were strait­ened for the comforts of life. One day the parish treasurer, on paying the money for salary due, which he put into a handkerchief, in order to prevent Mr. Eliot from giving away his money before he got home, tied the ends of the handkerchief in as many hard knots as he could. The good man received his handkerchief, and took leave of the treasurer. He immediately went to the house of a sick and necessitous family. On entering, he gave them his blessing, and told them God had sent them some relief. The sufferers, with tears of gratitude, welcomed their pious benefactor, who, with moistened eyes, began to untie the knots in his handkerchief. After many efforts to get at his money, and impatient at the perplexity and delay, he gave the handkerchief and all the money to the mother of the family, saying, with a trembling accent, 'Here, my dear, take it; I believe the Lord designs it all for you.'

During the war with the sachem Philip, 1675, Mr. Eliot ap-
pears in a character very interesting to the community. The traces of war are blood and slaughter. The people of Massachusetts, in their frenzy, would have destroyed the praying Indians with the savages, whose feet were swift to spread destruction in every path. Mr. Eliot was their advocate and friend. Being assisted by general Gookin, he defended their cause, and protected them from violence. It is no wonder, therefore, that, having shown his abilities and firmness, he acquired such an influence over the various tribes as no other missionary to the Indians could ever obtain.

After living eighty-six years in this world of trial, the spirit of this excellent divine took its flight to a better world. For many years he had his conversation in heaven; his faith seemed to be swallowed up in vision, and his hopes in fruition. He lost his most amiable companion two years before. He was then sick, and expected and longed for his own departure. Their children they had followed to the grave, and had comforted each other as they drank the bitter ingredients from the cup of adversity. On being asked how he could maintain so much cheerfulness under such afflictive bereavements, he replied, 'I had hoped that my sons would have lived to serve God longer on earth, but as He has seen fit to take them to serve him in heaven, why should I object?' When he was bending under his infirmities and could no longer visit the Indians, he persuaded a number of families to send their negro servants to him once a week, that he might instruct them in the truths of God. He died May 20, 1690, aged about eighty-six years, saying, that all his labours were poor and small, and exhorting those who surrounded his bed to pray. His last words were 'welcome joy.' Such a man will be handed down to future times, an object of admiration and love; and appear conspicuous in the historick page when distant ages celebrate the worthies of New England.

The town of Natick (which signifies a place of hills) was granted to the Indians at the request of Mr. Eliot, and laid out in 1651. In 1674, it had twenty-nine families. The town contained about six thousand acres. It is thus described by Gookin. 'It consists of three long streets, two on the north side of the river, and one on the south, with house-lots to every family. There is a handsome large fort, of a round figure, palisaded with trees; and a foot bridge over the river, in form of an arch, the foundation secured with stone. There is also a large house built after the English manner; the lower room a large hall, which serves for a meeting-house on the Lord's day, and a school-house on the week days. The upper room is a kind of wardrobe, where the Indians hang up their skins and other things of value. In a corner of this room Mr. Eliot has an apartment partitioned off, with a bed and bedstead in it.'
Mr. Eliot was assisted by his eldest son, the minister of Newton, in his labours with the aborigines, and in the translation of the Scriptures. A son of gen. Gookin, who was the minister of Sherburne, co-operated with him in the care of the Natick Indians in 1684, holding a lecture in Natick once a month. In 1721, Mr. Peabody came here, and in 1729 was ordained, at which time a church was gathered, partly of Indians and partly of English. Mr. Peabody died in 1752, and was succeeded by Mr. Badger, who was ordained in 1753, and died in 1803, at the age of seventy-eight.

On the erection of the fourth place of worship, at a distance from the spot on which the old church had stood, a number of the inhabitants connected themselves with other religious societies in the neighbourhood. It is for their convenience, and in consequence of the flourishing state of the village in which most of them reside, that a new church has been erected the present year. A spirit of harmony and kindness has marked all their proceedings. May it always exist, and may they firmly maintain the resolution of having no other creed than the Bible, and no other name, as denoting their faith, than that of Christian!

The services at the dedication were as follows.

ANTHEM—

"O praise God in His holiness."

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER,

By Mr. Wight, of East Sudbury.

READING PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE,

By Mr. White, of Dedham.

HYMN,

WRITTEN BY JOSIAH BIGLOW.

Thou Mighty One! whose boundless sway
Pervades all worlds, and fills all space,
To Thee we bow, to Thee we pray,
To Thee we consecrate this place.

Here first the forest sons were taught
To know thy name, and own thy word;
Here first thy beams of truth they caught,
And nature's children own'd Thee, Lord.

Our fathers, on this hallow'd ground,
From olden time, have knelt and pray'd,
And we, their children, would be found
To tread the footsteps they have made.

Again, O Lord, thine altars blaze,
Again thy temple decks the land,
Where stranger nations mingled praise,
Led by the Saviour's guiding hand.
God of all people! we would bring
The offering of our praise to Thee,
And, while our lips thy glories sing,
May every heart thy dwelling be.

This humble effort of our powers,
This lowly temple we have given;
O may it prove to us and ours,
The house of God, the gate of heaven.

DEDICATORY PRAYER,
By Mr. Sanger, of Dover.

SERMON,
By Dr. Lowell, of Boston.

HYMN,
WRITTEN BY WILLIAM BIGLOW.

He, who the universe commands,
Needs not the worship of our hands;
Yet all, whose souls adoring rise,
Whose hearts with true devotion glow,
While from their lips His praises flow,
Through faith may win the heavenly prize.

Accept, O God, this house of prayer;
Preserve it, by thy guardian care,
From sinful thoughts and deeds of shame,
From hatred and from party pride:
Our Father, be our friend and guide,
And here engrave thy holy name.

Here may the great eternal One
Be worship'd through His blessed Son;
And may the spirit of His grace,
Descending, like the mystic dove,
From Him, whose favourite name is love,
Dwell in and bless this hallowed place.

May all in charity, O Lord,
Found their opinion on thy word,
And, free from bigotry and strife,
Walking the straight celestial road
That leads to happiness and God,
Adorn their doctrine by their life.

To God, our King, by mortal eyes
Unseen, eternal only wise,
Whom heaven of heavens cannot contain,
Be honour and all glory paid,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord and head,
Now and forevermore. Amen.

CONCLUDING PRAYER,
By Dr. Saunders, of Medfield.

ANTHEM—
"O give thanks unto the Lord."

BENEDICTION.
DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION

OF A

HOUSE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP,

ERECTED BY THE

SECOND CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN SCITUATE.

OCT. 13, 1830.

BY SAMUEL DEANE,
Pastor of said Society.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY CARTER AND HENDEE

1830.
DISCOURSE.

ACTS, VII. 48.

"HOWBEIT, THE MOST HIGH DWELLETH NOT IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS.'

It was one of the most important objects of the prophets and teachers of the ancient church, to cherish and retain just ideas of the spirituality, the unity and the ubiquity of the Deity. When once the people should begin to contract these vast conceptions, their worship would suffer a rapid decline to ignorance and superstition. Let them begin by imagining a local residence of the Divinity, and they would hastily pass to the low heathen notions of a plurality of divinities and of tutelary gods, whose authority was restricted, each to a particular department. Let them begin to conceive it to be necessary to erect a house for his residence, and the transition would easily be made to images and idols and gods to be seen going before them.* On this principle we account for the caution of the ancient prophet, 'The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest? for all these things hath mine hand made, saith the Lord.'† The earliest worship paid to the Deity, was the spontaneous prompting of devout hearts, under the open canopy of the sky, or on the tops of the hills, or beneath the embowering

* Exodus xxxi. 1.  
† Isaiah lxvi. 1.
shades of the forest; and truer worship was never perhaps offered, in the holiest temple. But sacred places were always allowed, under the wholesome caution, not to conceive of God's presence as bounded and restrained. The earliest altar of which history speaks, was that of Noah;* and after that were the altars of the patriarchs.† The first house, (or that which answered the purpose of a house of worship,) in the Hebrew History, (though the heathens may have had temples earlier,‡) was the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses prepared, by divine direction, during the wanderings of the nation in the wilderness, in search of the promised land. It was so constructed that it could be conveniently taken down, and transferred from place to place, as they travelled or rested. They were in no condition to erect a permanent temple at that time.

The first temple for the worship of the true God, was that of Solomon, erected after the people had become established in safety and prosperity in the promised land. But it does not appear that there was any divine command for this end. Moses had died without leaving any directions of the kind. It originated with David, though he did not live to accomplish his design. He was, however, commended for it, 'he did well that it was in his heart,' and the merit chiefly belonged to him; however, the wars which he was obliged to carry on to the last of life, defeated his intentions.

This great national work, completed by his son Solomon, so long as it stood, was the pride and glory of the people, a bond of union, and a safeguard, in some degree, to the true religion. Corruption, at length, brought the ruin of the nation, and the destruction of the temple. But after the return from captivity, it was one of the first and dearest objects, to see it rise again in greater glory, and exercise again its happy influence over the whole people. They finally carried their veneration so far, that it became an error and a superstition. They had a law which required them to look toward that holy place whenever they

prayed, which, by degrees, was corrupted by the gross conception that God was there, and could hear and answer only from thence. The Saviour had reference to this superstition when he observed, that the hour had come, when it was neither necessary to worship in the mountain of Samaria nor in Jerusalem, but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. And Stephen, the martyr, quoted the words of our text from the prophet Isaiah, with the same intent: 'Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.' But still we do not understand that consecrated places of worship were intended to be forbidden. The Saviour kept the holy festivals at the temple, and the apostles frequented the synagogues. There exists, however, even now, the same reason for guarding against the superstitious veneration of houses of worship. It is like that superstitious conception of the Hebrews, in fancying that God could answer only from the holy city — it is like that superstitious practice of Christians, in bowing and worshipping toward the east.

Let us understand it, then, in its true light. It is more a matter of convenience and decency than of divine command, when Christians, who can offer prayers hallowed and pure in any place, erect houses for conducting their public worship. The institution of public worship itself, is of divine authority; it may be conducted acceptably in the open field or the shady grove; but when we take into consideration, the circumstances of seasons and climates, we yield at once to the propriety, nay, to the necessity of erecting commodious houses for the purpose. There is no model prescribed for a Christian sanctuary; the discretion of men is to lead and determine in all things respecting the form, the magnitude, the costliness and the ornament, guided by the taste and the ability of those at whose charge it is to be erected. On the one hand, we properly regard it as a reproach to any Christian people, when they shall remain destitute of a convenient and decent house of worship, especially if there be no want of ability to provide such a place.
Solomon was roused with a sense of impropriety, and urged onward to the erection of his temple, when he recollected that the rich cedars of Lebanon had furnished himself with a beautiful palace, while the worship of the Most High was still conducted in the old and incommmodious tent provided by Moses. We safely conclude that there is something wrong, something deficient in a reverence for religion, or in christian love, when a religious community shall manifest a peculiar care for the comfort and the ornament of their own dwellings, and a remissness in regard to the sanctuary where they assemble for the most solemn and holy purposes of life. Then, on the other hand, it argues something wrong, some tendency to superstition, or some weak vanity, when we observe the people oppressed and impoverished, and their temples loaded with costly ornament. The catholic cities of Europe furnish striking examples, of a wretched and beggarly population, walking amidst their needless clusters of gilded sanctuaries, and paying them a superstitious veneration, as if they were in very deed, the residence of God. 'Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands.' On the whole, the truth, as is usual, lies in the medium. We would not have our sanctuaries furnished with splendid ornament, to call off the mind from the pure worship and reasonable service of the universal spirit; and, for similar reasons, we would avoid every ruinous or uncouth deformity, which might distract the attention, by offending good taste. Nature herself has better promptings: she leads us to some place of becoming decency, when we would pour forth our devotions; and before temples were conceived in the mind, the devout, as if by instinct, sought the most beautiful groves or the most delightful hills.

The consecration of sacred places is of sufficient antiquity to have acquired respect and authority; but that ceremony to which we pay the most regard, is the dedication of the temple of Solomon. In that ceremony there was no mixture of superstition—nothing to offend against the purest worship of the
purest Christian times — nothing like the ceremonious baptisms, dedications and purifications of household utensils, which the Jews afterward practised. It is a fair example for all ages and for all devout worshippers under heaven. But had we not the advantage of this eminent example, the propriety of the thing in itself would lead an enlightened people, to consecrate, by significant ceremonies, their sacred edifices to sacred uses. It would be well that no transactions should customarily take place in our churches, but such as have some near connexion with the interests of religion; not that it desecrates the place,—not that it banishes the presence of God, for he dwells in no temple, so much as that it introduces an unfavorable train of thought. Should we enter a place of worship today, and remember that yesterday we were assembled at the same place for the discussion of worldly affairs, nay, perhaps engaged in the too commonly angry debates of political strife, it needs no great portion of wisdom to judge that it would be unfavorable to solemn and unbroken devotion.

Let us carefully preserve the idea that God is not to be sought or found exclusively in temples dedicated to his service — that the darkness and the light are full of his presence — the crowded city and the desert plain — all that is deep and all that is high is filled and supported by him — that his children have no need to go forth to wearisome lengths in search of him — that they can speak to his present ear in the closet or in the holy temple — that they can converse with him in the noontide light, or in the nightly shadows — that they can address him in the wastes of ocean or of earth — in the palace or in the prison — from the throne of power or from the lowest bed of misery and want; let us preserve this idea, and we shall be in little danger, when we consecrate temples to his service, of paying to those places a superstitious veneration; — we can dedicate our holy places under a sense of the approbation of heaven — we can consult what is commodious, what is honorable in the sight of all men, what is appropriate to our own circumstances,
and feel a becoming satisfaction that we have made an acceptable offering to the Lord, and honored him with our substance.

Time, which impairs all earthly things, had passed on and brought the season, when it was proper that this ancient religious society should prepare a house more safe, decent and commodious for conducting the public instructions and worship. The ancient edifice, which had outlasted the very long ministry of Dr Barnes, and in which twenty years of my own feeble services had been devoted to God and to his people, had won the attachments of us all. Every pillar and door seemed to have acquired a greater sanctity by age, and it was with reluctance that we yielded to the necessity of giving it up. The regrets of many will not soon be forgotten — regrets which command respect, and which speak much in favor of their sacred attachments. It was to me a peculiar privation, that, through illness, I was compelled to forego the solemn satisfaction of taking leave of that venerable place in some appropriate services, before it was rased. But is there not a sufficient relief in the rational joy of seeing another sanctuary rise as it were from its ruins? With a laudable zeal, my friends, you have prosecuted and finished this work. You have caused an edifice to be erected, not in the gorgeous splendor of ancient temples, not with the ornament of catholic cathedrals, to provoke a sensual worship, but simple yet decent, in magnitude suited to our wants, in costliness, I will not offend you by saying, above your ability or above your cheerfulness to bear, for I trust it will be a free will offering to the Lord. We enter its courts for the first time today, for the purpose of consecrating it to the holy uses for which it is designed.

We now dedicate this place to the service of the One living and true God, to the honor of his Son, by whom he instructs to redeem, and to the Holy Spirit by which he sanctifies the world. Let this sacred desk be dedicated to the publishing of the gospel of peace. Let these hallowed seats be dedicated to a love of the truth — to a patient and attentive hearing of the counsel of
God — to a spirit of prayer and a spirit of praise. Let those who shall henceforth occupy these seats, think and act as in the invisible presence of Him whose temple is all space; let them gather together here under a sense of the divine privilege of communing with God in his sanctuary — under a sense of the account which they must give of the manner in which they have prized and improved that privilege — under a conviction that a cloud of witnesses may compass them about. Let them be ready to say, while we shall sit here beneath the refreshing dews of heavenly love — while we shall listen to the persuasions that would win us away from earthly thoughts and sensual delights — while we shall hear of promised pardon and reconciliation to God through repentance — while we shall look to the promised mansions of Jesus Christ, from these houses of clay — while even the wholesome alarms of the gospel may speak out in thunders, and the sword of the word turn its glittering point even on us — bear witness heaven and earth — bear witness spirits of our fathers — bear witness Jesus our advocate, and God the judge of all, if this grace shall be lost upon us by our insensibility or abuse.

Let him who shall occupy this stand, hallowed from henceforth, say with himself, so long as there shall be erring mortals, searching for the way of life, or hungry souls looking upward for the bread of heaven — so long as there shall be tender consciences to be soothed — so long as there shall be gentle spirits to be won by love — so long as there shall be the earthly and hardened to be saved by fear — heaven and earth

"Witness if I be silent."

We love, on such occasions as this, to cast our views, for a moment, backward to times that are past, and forward to the prospects before us. The history of this religious society, all at least that pertains to our present purpose, may be briefly told. A church has existed here for the term of one hundred and eighty-six years, and during that whole course of time has enjoyed an exemplary union and peace. It is the seventh
pastor who now ministers holy things.* Some of the most distinguished of the seven have been Witherell, who was more liberal than his brethren in general, and to whom many from the neighboring towns came for the benefit of the ordinances, while a rigid discipline excluded them at home. Eells, the venerable and discreet, who resisted, and successfully resisted, the incursions of fanaticism amongst his flock, while the false fire of Whitfield was consuming the peace of the neighboring churches. And the beloved Dr Barnes, who gradually brought his own principles, and moulded the minds of his people, to that true medium of liberality, short of which if we stop, or beyond which if we go, we might be in danger of error. It is the fifth house for public worship, which this ancient Society has consecrated to God this day. There is a kind of holy charm that leads us to muse upon the founders of this Society and their successors. Beginning with the Pilgrims, (and some of them were of the company of the first ship that arrived at Plymouth) we form a true image of them in our minds, worshipping at first in their straw-thatched sanctuary — we follow them and their sons, as their community increased, enlarging the walls of their Zion and adding to its accommodations — and from time to time displaying more decency and taste, until we find the present generation gathering for worship in this beautiful edifice. But we must pass to another train of thought.

We know something of the past, and can review it with some satisfaction — but on the future, obscurity and uncertainty rest. We, however, love to look forward, and from the thing that hath been, calculate, as well as we may, the thing that shall be. Every man of reflection and prudence has a deep feeling of interest in the condition and destination of posterity—a deep feeling of interest in the question, whether those who are to

* The ministers of this (Second Church) have been Witherell, Mighill, Lawson, Eells, Dorby, Barnes, Deane.

The ministers of the First Church have been Lathrop, President Chauncey, President Dunster, Baker, Cushing, Pitcher, Bourne, Grosvenor, Dawes, Thomas.
come after him shall be wise or foolish — whether his labors for human improvement shall terminate with his own efforts, or shall find a faithful hand to carry them forward, when his own shall be low in the dust — whether the useful and holy institutions to which he has lent his support, and the customs and manners which he has proved to be good, shall gain a permanency through the stability of coming generations, or shall be lost through their indiscretion.

In forming an estimate of our prospects, it is just to take into consideration the permanency of our customs, opinions and institutions for the two last centuries. We ought to consider from whom we are descended. The first church established in this ancient town in 1634, under the pastoral care of Mr John Lathrop, was a Puritan church of the moderate principles of that day. It is well known to you, that there were the rigid party, which went all lengths in separation from the church of England, and advocated the utmost rigor of close communion; and the moderate party, which proposed a reform, but not an exclusion of the members of that church from communion. Lathrop had cultivated this moderation of sentiments, by a free intercourse with Robinson, the venerable pastor of the first Puritan church, which fled to Holland from the persecution of England. Robinson was of the liberal party — not at first — but he was won to liberal sentiments, by conversing with the celebrated Dr. Ames. When a portion of Robinson's church at Leyden, took leave of their friends, and launched forth upon the ocean in search of a resting-place in this wilderness, (it was that little band of pilgrims that landed at Plymouth in 1620,) their pastor delivered a remarkable farewell address. Liberal Christians of the present day are sometimes reproached for quoting it so often, but it is a reproach which ought to be deemed an honor for it is worthy to be repeated, and repeated to every generation of Christians to the end of time. He exhorted them not to entertain the presumption that they had arrived at all truth and perfect accuracy of faith, and with the unction of a prophet,
forewarned them that 'more light should yet break forth from God's word.' He deemed it a reproach to rely on the opinions of others, without weighing them well, and holding the mind in readiness to adopt such further improvements as might be discovered. 'The Calvinists (says he) stick just where Calvin left them.' It is a bitter sarcasm truly; but no man or class of men need be offended at it, in whom the love of truth prevails over the love of party. The church which landed at Plymouth, was of this liberal school; somewhat different from the Puritans who afterward peopled the colony of Massachusetts. They had remained longer in England; they had become somewhat exasperated by lengthened persecutions; they, too, perhaps, had become excited to a relish for power, by the success which the opposition to the church of England seemed on the point of achieving. Brewster, the teacher of the Pilgrim church at Plymouth, was of Robinson's stamp. Lathrop and 'the men of Kent' who settled Scituate, were of the same school. In short, they are to be ranked amongst the leaders of liberal opinions for all christendom, and amongst the founders of all true Christian moderation of the present day. They would not countenance the hierarchy of England, yet they would admit the members of that church to their communion: they were no bigots for forms — no advocates for close communion — they were ashamed to shut up posterity to their opinions, and foreclose themselves or others from improvements. They aimed at no ecclesiastical power — they wished for no alliance of church and state — they held that ordination by the elders of churches was apostolic * — that churches were independent of each other, and counsels had no higher power than that of giving advice. It is most certain that those venerable teachers, Robinson, and Lathrop and Brewster, with their churches, were liberal-minded men, the advocates of true toleration, demanding it for themselves and exercising it toward others. Some who call most loudly upon the present generation

* The two first ministers in Scituate were ordained by the church members.
to maintain the principles of the forefathers, know not what they do; for they maintained opinions which are the very substance of liberal Christianity at the present day — open communion — free toleration — it is all we ask — it is all that is worth contending for in the controversies of the times; in short it is a conjecture too probable for us to doubt, that had those venerable men alluded to, lived at this day, they would have found the liberal class of Christians most congenial to their minds.

It is true that about the year 1640, there came into this town, with President Chauncy, more rigid and severe opinions and practices, which led to a division, and to the establishment of this second church, under the charge of Mr Witherell, of the liberal party. There was no communion between the two churches for more than twenty years; not, however, through the principles of this church, for it was a place of refuge for men of liberal minds — even from Massachusetts,* some who fled from their severe discipline, which would tolerate no dissent of opinion, came hither for an asylum. The two churches in this town were at length reconciled, and Chauncy grew milder in his old age.

What I wish you to remark is, that the grand principles of the Protestant Reformation have always been maintained by the congregationalists in this town; and long may they be maintained. I see here amongst the present generation, some in whose veins the blood of Robinson flows; I see in this assembly some who are the lineal descendants of Lathrop and of Brewster; I see in this assembly many descendants of those who came out of Massachusetts to enjoy a milder form of Puritanism here. What then may we not reasonably expect in time to come? An immense revolution must take place, before the descendants of such men shall willingly introduce that strong alliance between church and state, that has made religion the tool of tyranny, and enslaved nearly all Europe hitherto. Episcopacy resting upon the arm of government, and government upon the arm of Epis-

* Some of Mr Lenthal's church of Weymouth, c. g.
copacy in England, like the giants heaping mountain upon mountain, have long ago made war with heaven, aye, by oppressing the saints and staining the earth with the blood of martyrs. But Episcopacy and Presbytery here, have been comparatively harmless things, because government has put no sword in their hands; and comparatively harmless they will remain, so long as popular opinion shall prevent their alliance with government. They may maintain a show of ecclesiastical power; but it is a mere vapory form, unreal and intangible, destitute of effective power to interfere with any man’s conscience — unable to stretch forth their hand to vex another sect — unable to reach the person or the property of the weakest individual, paralyzed as they are by our free institutions. They seem like exotics, out of their native soil in this country, for in their very structure, they seem formed to join hand in hand with absolute, and not with free governments.

Religion ought to be, and true religion always is, ‘the spontaneous approach of the creature to the Creator,’ and not a set of stocks or fetters, by which absolute governments shall bind and force mankind to conform to arbitrary rules, and to adopt opinions prepared for them. True religion is the fair growth which springs up from the devout heart, and a free, unshackled conscience; force it in the hot bed of fanaticism, and it becomes defective — bind it with the bonds of civil or ecclesiastical power, and it becomes warped and stinted. Religion ever has been the voluntary and free exercise of the mind in this vicinity, and has been becoming more so for the last three quarters of a century. The only alliance between government ever known to us here, is a mutual moral aid and support — a friendly combination to give freedom, not a league to oppress. Religion in all her offices, looks carefully to the civil institutions of the country, and enjoins subordination — she raises her advisory voice that those institutions be made more and more to comport with the spirit of the gospel — she raises her supplicating voice for blessings on all who rule in the fear of God. Government, on the other
hand, embraces religion as a friend, not an ally to fight for—a companion, not a champion to draw swords with, in mutual defence—a dignified compatriot, able to defend herself, not a feeble creature to be nursed into life and supported by the arm of power or by cunning legislation. Yes, we must forget from whom we are descended, we must suffer an immense fall from moral elevation, before we can consent to be civil or ecclesiastical slaves.

It is not improper for us, on such an occasion as this, to form our devout wishes that this place may never be desecrated by a cruel discipline or an unworthy worship. We should do it, however, in moderation and candor, not presuming that we have attained to all truth. And when we offer to heaven our holy desires that this place may never be disgraced with close communions and tyrannical discipline, we shall feel bound also under a fear of God and a reverence for his sanctuary, to pray that it may never be stained by a lax and careless freethinking. It is the poor petulance of novices in religion, to imagine that there is no liberty, unless there is a bold beating against all divine restraint and government—a casting off fear and restraining prayer—a reckless despising of accountability at a future tribunal. Let extremes forever fly this place.

In forming our prospective desires, we are led to the wish that this place may ever be favored with a well educated and qualified ministry. In times long past it has been eminently thus favored. The memory of our ancestors derives one of its brightest honors from this well known fact, that they spared neither labor nor expense to encourage and support a ministry of thorough and accomplished education. It has been the safeguard of order and a source of light in the community. We would always have the minister of religion keep pace with the improvements of the day, in all laudable science and knowledge. We mean not an eager running after all the lighter novelties of literature, which are overwhelming the world and putting the most hardy readers out of breath, but a respectful
attention to all substantial improvements in science. Because St Paul determined to know nothing amongst the Corinthians, 'save Jesus Christ and him crucified,' we are not to infer that any useful knowledge whatever was despaired by him, or is to be neglected by the minister of religion now—but rather that all knowledge is to be made subservient to one great object. St Paul was a thoroughly educated man, and doubtless turned all his various learning to a noble use. All sciences cast a light upon religion, and all knowledge strengthens the mind to receive it, and prepares the lips to teach it. History illustrates the ways of Divine Providence;—all the natural sciences, the knowledge of the heavens and of the earth and of nature's laws, open and publish the government and counsels of the mighty God—the study of mankind is a necessary qualification for a messenger to men. The sciences may all be associated with religion without dishonoring her; for they all, with her, deal with everlasting truth;—aye, they are sisters all, as much as the bright luminaries that revolve in the skies are sisters;—they all reflect from one to another the same light of truth—they all revolve around the same radiant centre—they are all shined upon by the same Father of Lights.

We are not now hinting a complaint, as if the license of the present day and of our very free country, were tending rapidly toward lay teaching, and a carelessness in regard to a learned ministry. We have, in this country, no law which forbids laymen to teach religion; and God forbid that we ever should have. We rather rely upon the good sense of the community, and upon the influence of the long approved customs of our fathers, to provide that ignorance, however honest and devout, shall never be set up for a guide to the people.

When we ask for a qualified ministry, we mean not a ministry which shall pretend to a divine succession from the apostles, descended through an unbroken chain of ordination: for we congregationalists do not believe that the apostles ever claimed the exclusive right of ordaining ministers; we hold in little re-
spect while we do not attack the ordination which the Protestant Episcopal church professes to have received from the Church of Rome, a church which Protestant Episcopy herself has pronounced to be antichrist and the mother of abominations,—a church which has anathematized and excommunicated Protestant Episcopy, in her turn; but we believe that the elders or seniors of any church may lawfully lay hands upon and ordain its own pastors and teachers, and we can find examples to our own satisfaction in apostolic days;—we mean rather, by a well qualified ministry, such as shall have kept pace with the substantial learning of the times—well trained in a knowledge of the scriptures in their original tongues—skillful in sound and wholesome rules of interpretation—able to expound by comparing scripture with scripture, to estimate the various readings and to vindicate the pure text.

We put up our petitions this day, that this place may ever be furnished with an earnest and faithful ministry. We desire that whosoever shall minister in holy things here, he may speak boldly the words of truth and soberness, without the fear of opposition, without the desire of favor, without regarding unjust reproach. Let the weapons which he shall draw from divine truth, be sent forth in the confidence that they shall be guided by the hand of God: let them fall where they will fall, and pierce whom they will pierce, for none will feel the wound but those whom conscience and God designate. And let him draw out and exhibit the consolations of religion, always with the warning voice, that they are not for the touch of impure hands, not for the healing of unbroken hearts. But let him be direct in his zeal. A minister of religion is not the more respectable in the eyes of a people of sound mind, for having mastered his own modesty so far, that he can go out and call loudly upon the people to come to his conventicle. There is something so uncharitable and selfish in that—it is so much like calling upon you to beware of all other teachers—it is so much like saying that your spiritual welfare can speed nowhere but under his
ministry, that true modesty revolts at it. But after all, we must urge on the people the necessity of attending on the public services of religion somewhere. I hold that man to be insane, who does not feel and acknowledge that religion owes its support to the institution of public worship, and that all the decencies, the charities, the blessings of society, as well as the hopes of future happiness are begotten and supported by religion. This is our warrant, when we call upon the people in God's name, to visit his sanctuaries. I dare not warn you to assemble in this place, as the only place where your salvation can speed; but at the same time I dare not leave you unadmonished of the infinite importance of a regular and faithful attendance on the public services of religion, and I feel entitled, with somewhat more boldness, to invite your attention here, when I consider how short must be the time in which my voice can be heard—how soon he who speaks in this place today, shall occupy that other house, the house appointed for all living.

Finally, we form our devout wishes today, that this place may be ever occupied by a people who shall be in earnest with themselves, and awake to the high vocation to which Christians are called. The whole success of religion depends not upon the gifts or the fidelity of the preacher. A people can defeat, by a cold and gainsaying temper, the most faithful labors that are ever proffered, and the most fervent prayers that ever ascend to heaven; but on the other hand, a people, by a gentle and teachable temper, can make even services so poor as mine, to be eminently successful.

This day begins as it were a new era with us. It is a solemn yet joyful occasion—an occasion that seems connected with future generations as well as the present—an occasion rendered the more interesting that it usually occurs but once in a century to the same religious society. Children will recur in memory to this day through a long succession of years; and though perhaps not one who is living, will see this house in the ruins of age, yet they will long count back the years to this interesting
day. The aged will bless the hand of a kind Providence that has preserved them to this period, and even the burdens of years will seem lighter in the remainder of life. Let us then be roused to new attention and a better zeal. Let us seek this place often, under a sense of responsibility for our own spiritual welfare and that of others. Let parents lead their children to this place, as leading them to receive a blessing from the hand of the benevolent Saviour. Let us come hither in the spirit of meekness, and learn to bear with each other’s weakness here, that we may rejoice in each other’s happiness hereafter. Let jealousies be laid aside—let wounded feelings be forgotten—and let love be cemented, where love has reigned so long.
A

FAREWELL SERMON

UPON LEAVING

THE OLD MEETING HOUSE

OF THE

FIRST PARISH IN CAMBRIDGE

On Sunday, December 1, 1833.

BY WILLIAM NEWELL,
PASTOR OF THE SOCIETY.

Printed by Request of the Society.

CAMBRIDGE:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
1834.
TO HIS PARISHIONERS,

WITH AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCES AND CHRISTIAN HOPES,

THESE DISCOURSES

ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.
DISCOURSE.

HAGGAI, ii. 3.

Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory?

We are assembled for the last time in this ancient house, where of old our fathers worshipped, and where we have so often communed together with God. The sanctuary, which, for nearly four-score years has welcomed within its doors the multitudes that have here kept holy time, — the altar, from which the Sabbath prayer, the Sabbath hymn, the lessons of Holy Writ, and the words of the Christian preacher have been so long heard, are now to be forsaken and removed. We come to bid them farewell.

Upon this occasion it may be gratifying to my hearers to learn some particulars of the age and history of the house which we are about to leave; and to be informed of the little that can now be known concerning the several places of worship which preceded it. For this purpose we must go back two hundred years to the original establishment of the religious society for whose use they have been successively erected. This society, as you all know, was one of the first churches planted by our Pilgrim Fathers in the American wilderness;
and, for its antiquity, the celebrity of its founders, the high character of its pastors, and its ancient connexion with the university in this place, which was once united with it in the offices of public worship,* it has some claims upon the interest even of those who are not immediately connected with it.

Its history commences with the early settlement of this town. In the year 1630, soon after the arrival of the fleet which brought Winthrop and Dudley with their Pilgrim band to the shores of New England, it was determined to build a fortified town to protect the colonists from the apprehended incursions of the Indians. The spot which was finally selected for this purpose was that which we now so peacefully inhabit; where the Red Man of the forest, when by some rare chance he wanders among us from his distant home, comes but as a timid stranger, an object of curiosity indeed, but not of dread. "After divers meetings at Boston, Roxbury, and Watertown," says Deputy Governor Dudley in his letter to the Countess of Lincoln, dated March 28, 1631, "on the twenty-eighth of December, we grew to this resolution, to bind all the assistants (Mr. Endicott and Mr. Sharp excepted, which last purposeth to return by the next ship into England) to build houses, at a place, a mile east from Watertown, near Charles River, the next spring, and to winter there the next year; that so by our examples, and by re-

* Since 1815 there have been distinct religious services on the Sabbath for the members of the college in the university chapel.
moving the ordnance and munition thither, all who were able might be drawn thither, and such as shall come to us hereafter to their advantage, be compelled so to do; and so if God would, a fortified town might there grow up, the place fitting reasonably well thereto."

According to the agreement which is here mentioned by Dudley (who was himself one of the chief founders of Cambridge, "being zealous to have it made the metropolis") in the spring of 1631, the building of "the New Town" was commenced and carried on with much activity. A fortification, of which some traces are supposed to be still visible, was made about it at the public expense. As it was originally intended for the seat of government, and the residence of the chief men of the colony, it was for a time the object of especial legislative attention and patronage; but, in consequence of the failure of the governor and others to fulfil their agreement to build and settle in it, as well as the disadvantage of its situation for purposes of commerce, it soon appeared evident that the expectations of its founders could not be fully realized. It must have grown very rapidly, however, during the first two years of its settlement; for we find it described by a writer, † who returned from this country to England in 1633, as "one of the neatest and best compacted towns in New England, having

---

* Prince. See Appendix, Note A.
† Wood in his New England's Prospect.
many fair structures, with many handsome contrived streets.” In the summer of 1632, “the Braintree Company,” which had begun to settle at Mount Wollaston, removed by order of court to this place.* Having thus received a considerable addition to their numbers, and being now in the expectation of the arrival of the celebrated Thomas Hooker, who had been invited from Holland by his old friends and hearers of the company just mentioned to become their pastor, the inhabitants of the village began to make preparation for the regular observance of religious ordinances, and the support of a settled ministry among them.

This, as you well know, was one of the first objects of attention with our ancestors; “it being as unnatural” (to use the quaint language of one of our ancient historians) “it being as unnatural for a right New-England man to live without an able ministry, as for a smith to work his iron without a fire.” As soon, therefore, as they were settled in their new habitations, in the course of the year 1632, according to the annalist, Prince, who states it upon the authority of a manuscript letter, the people of Newtown (as this place was called until 1638)† “built the first house of public wor-

* Winthrop. “The Braintree Company” probably took its name from a village in England, near Chelmsford, where Mr. Hooker preached for several years. His eloquence and popularity were such that people flocked from all parts of the neighbouring country to hear him.

† Its name was then altered to Cambridge “in compliment to the place where so many of the civil and clerical fathers of New England had received their education. There were, probably, at that time,
ship with a bell upon it.” This house, we are told, stood about thirty rods south of the spot on which we are now assembled. At this distance of time there is little information to be obtained concerning it; especially as the church records previous to the time of Mr. Brattle, who was settled in 1696, have been by some unfortunate accident lost or destroyed. We learn from other sources that a church (the eighth of the New-England churches) was first gathered in the new meeting-house, and a pastor settled, in the autumn of 1633. On Friday, the 11th of October of that year, Thomas Hooker was ordained as pastor, and Samuel Stone as teacher, of the congregation at Newtown. The autumn of the present year therefore completed just two centuries since the gathering of the first church of Christ in this town, the ordination of a settled ministry, and the commencement of the regular preaching of the Gospel in the first lowly temple built by our fathers. Mr. Hooker remained here but a short time. In consequence of the smallness of the township, as originally laid out, and the want of sufficient land for the purposes of agriculture and pasturage, he and his people soon became dissatisfied with their situation, and finally obtained permission from the General Court to remove in a body to Connecticut, on condition of their remain-

forty or fifty sons of the university of Cambridge in Old England,—one for every two hundred or two hundred and fifty inhabitants,—dwelling in the few villages of Massachusetts and Connecticut. The sons of Oxford were not few.” —Savage’s Note upon Winthrop. Vol. I. p. 265.
ing under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. They left Cambridge in June, 1636; and, after a fortnight’s journey on foot, at length reached the place of their destination, where they built a town, which they at first called Newtown, afterwards Hartford. Before their departure they had disposed of their houses and lands to another company, who had arrived from England, the autumn previous, with “the faithful and famous Shepard” their future pastor. On the 1st of February, 1636, a new church was organized here with much form and solemnity in the place of that which was about to remove; and Mr. Shepard was soon after ordained as its pastor.

This pious, faithful, and simple-hearted servant of Christ, after a devoted and successful ministry of thirteen years, died August 25, 1649, at the age of forty-four. He was succeeded in the ministry by Jonathan Mitchell, who was ordained August 21, 1650. — It was about the time of his settlement that the second church was erected, somewhere near the spot on which we are now worshipping. It appears from the ancient town records* that a vote had been passed in February, 1650, to repair the old meeting-house; but, on farther consideration, it was determined at a subsequent meeting in March to build a new one “about forty feet square” and “covered with shingle.” It was also then voted and generally agreed that “the new meeting-house shall stand on the Watch-House Hill;” the same eminence, it is supposed, on which the house in which we are now assembled is placed. The

* See Appendix, Note B.
second church must have been completed, and the old one removed, in the course of the year 1650 or 1651; as we find a vote of the town passed in February, 1652, "that the Townsmen * shall make sale of the land whereon the old meeting-house stood."

It appears, then, that the first house of worship erected for the use of our fathers of this society was occupied only eighteen years. It was probably a small and humble edifice, accommodated to the numbers and means of the early settlers. In other and more important respects, however, — in the piety of those who worshipped beneath its lowly roof, in the devotion, industry, talents, and fame of those who ministered at its altar, — the glory of that ancient house is not likely to be surpassed. It was in that house that Thomas Hooker, † afterwards "the Renowned Pastor of Hartford church, and Pillar of Connecticut colony," and one of the most eminent preachers ‡ of his day, commenced his ministerial labours in New England. — It was in that house that Thomas Shepard, called by one of his cotemporaries "that gratious, sweete, heavenly-minded, and soule-ravishing minister," whose solemn, impressive, and melting delivery

* The Selectmen.
† A fuller account, which did not come within the plan or the limits of this discourse, of Hooker, Shepard and their successors in the ministry, may be found in Dr. Holmes's History of Cambridge, where he gives a distinct biography of each. The well known accuracy and thoroughness of my respected predecessor leave little to be done by one who comes after him.
‡ See Appendix, Note C.
seems to have produced a great effect on all who heard him, and whose writings, now almost unknown and forgotten, were once in high estimation, — preached to the little flock who had accompanied him in his exile and shared with him the dangers of the great sea. — It was in that house that Jonathan Mitchell, another of the most eminent and influential clergymen of New England, — a man universally beloved, esteemed, and admired for his talents and learning as well as for his eloquence, wisdom, and piety, — began his labours; and his lips no doubt spoke the words of farewell when our fathers left it for their second temple.

There are some other historical recollections connected with the first meeting-house which deserve to be noticed. It was in that house that the two most famous synods of New England were convened; the first, in 1637, for the exposure, condemnation, and suppression of Antinomian doctrines, introduced by Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers; and the other which, in 1648,* after continued meetings and discussions for nearly two years, finally adopted the Platform of Church-Discipline, called “The Cambridge Platform,” which was for a long time the acknowledged rule of ecclesiastical discipline among the greater part of the churches of New England. It was in that house too, I believe, that the first commencement of Harvard College, and of course the first in America, was celebrated on the second Tuesday of August, 1642; when the governor, magistrates, and ministers,

*See Appendix, Note, D.
with a great concourse of people from all parts, joyfully assembled to witness the triumphs of Christian learning on a spot which a few years before had been the abode of the untutored Indian.

These are some of the interesting facts connected with the history of the first house of worship in this place, which make its short life of eighteen years a memorable one in the eyes of lovers of the past. The minute circumstances relating to its size, materials, and architecture, we have now no means of ascertaining; nor indeed have they any importance or interest except as matters of antiquarian curiosity. There is one fact however, with regard to the mode in which people were once summoned to public worship in it, which happens to have come down to us, and which though trivial in itself may be worth mentioning on this occasion.

It appears that, at one time, for some reason now unknown, the bell (which, as we learn from Prince, whose words I have quoted to you, and also from the town records, was at first used to call the people together) was either removed, or became unfit for service, and a drum was substituted in its place;—a fit emblem, methinks, of the early times of New England, when the sounds of worship and of war were so often blended together; when the hymn of the Pilgrim, as it rose upon the stillness of the Sabbath, was sometimes mingled with the battle-cry of his Indian foe. The fact which I have mentioned, the use of a drum instead of a bell, is confirmed by the town records, in which we find an order from the select-
men (in 1646)* for the payment of a man "for his service to the town in beating the drum." We learn it incidentally also from a singular story in Johnson's "Wonder-working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England." † As this story is, on several accounts, a curious one, I shall repeat it as nearly as possible in the language of the historian. In "the dismal yeare of sixteen hundred thirty-six," a person who had lately come over to New-England, hoping to find the true doctrine of Christ preached there, "was encountered at his first landing with some of the Errorists" of that time, viz. Mrs. Hutchinson and her disciples. "When he saw the good old way of Christ rejected by them, and he could not skill in that new light, which was the common theame of every man's discourse, hee betooke him to a narrow Indian path, in which his serious meditations soone led him, where none but senseless trees and echoing rocks make answer to his heart-easeing mone. 'O,' quoth he, 'where am I become. Is this the place where those Reverend Preachers are fled, that Christ was pleased to make use of to rouse up his rich graces in many a drooping soule? Here have I met with some that tell mee, I must take a naked Christ.' — But 'what is the whole life of a Christian upon this earth, but through the power of Christ to die to sinne, and live to holinesse and righteousnesse, and for that end to

* "5 (9) 1646. It is ordered by ye Townsmen that there shall be fifty shillings payde unto Tho. Longhorne for his service to ye Towne in beateing ye Drum this two years last past."
† Chapter XLIII.
be diligent in the use of means.' At the uttering of this word he starts up from the green bed of his complaint, with resolution to hear some one of these able ministers preach (whom report had so valued) before his will should make choyce of any one principle, though of crossing the broade seas back againe. Then turning his face to the Sun, he steered his course toward the next Town, and after some small travel he came to a large plaine. No sooner was he entered thereon, but hearing the sound of a Drum he was directed toward it by a broade beaten way. Following this rode he demands of the next man he met what the signall of the drum meant. The reply was made they had as yet no Bell to call men to meeting; and therefore made use of a Drum. 'Who is it,' quoth he, 'lectures at this Towne.' The other replies, 'I see you are a stranger new come over, seeing you know not the man. It is one Mr. Shepheard.' 'Verily,' quoth the other, 'you hit the right, I am new come over indeed, and have been told since I came most of your ministers are legall preachers, onely if I mistake not they told me this man preached a finer covenant of workes than the other. But however, I shall make what haste I can to heare him. Fare you well.' Then hasting thither hee crouseth through the thickest, where having stayed while the glasse* was turned up twice, the

* The hour-glass. It was anciently the custom to have an hour glass by the side of the preacher, which he turned up on beginning his sermon, that he might know the length of his preaching. A modern audience would hardly tolerate a preacher, even were he a second Shepard, who should often "turne up the glasse twice."
man was metamorphosed, and was faine to hang
down the head often, least his watery eyes should
blab abroad the secret conjunction of his affections,
his heart crying loud to the Lord's echoing answer,
to his blessed spirit, that caused the speech of a
poore, weake, pale-complectioned man to take such
impression in his soule, by applying the word so
aptly, as if hee had beene his privy Counseller,
cleering Christ's worke of grace in the soule from
all those false doctrines, which the erronious party
had a frighted him withall; and now he resolves
(the Lord willing) to live and die with the Ministers of New England, whom hee now saw the Lord
had not onely made zealous to stand for the truth
of his Discipline, but also of his Doctrine, and not
to give ground one inch."

The second meeting-house was built, as I have
already mentioned, about the time of Mr. Mitchell's
settlement in 1650; and enjoyed the ministrations
of that highly-gifted and holy man for eighteen
years. In the summer of 1668, just after preach-
ing on the words, "I know that thou wilt bring me
to death and unto the house appointed for all the
living," he was suddenly seized with a fever which
proved fatal. He died July 9, 1668, in the forty-
third year of his age. He was succeeded, after
an interval of three years, (during a part of which
time President Chauncy supplied the pulpit,) by
Urian Oakes, a graduate of Harvard, but afterwards
settled in England, his native country, whither he
had returned soon after leaving college in 1649.
His high reputation induced the church and society
to send out a messenger to England to invite him to become their pastor. He accepted their invitation, and was installed in 1671. In 1675 he was chosen to the presidency of Harvard College, and continued to perform the duties of that office in conjunction with those of his ministry until his sudden death by a fever, July 25, 1681, in the fiftieth year of his age. Mr. Oakes was distinguished for his abilities and acquirements; for his pleasing eloquence; and for the uncommon mildness and modesty which adorned his character through life.

The next who officiated in the pulpit of the second meeting-house was Nathaniel Gookin; whose history and character seem now to be almost as obscure as the obliterated inscription on the tombstone which tradition has pointed out as his in our ancient burying-ground. We can learn little more of him than that he was a graduate of Harvard, was an assistant in the pulpit of Mr. Oakes after he was called to the presidency, was ordained November 15, 1682, and died August 7, 1692, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and tenth of his ministry.* From this time until 1696 the pulpit continued vacant. The society at length made choice of William Brattle, who accepted their call, and was ordained Nov. 25, 1696. He was the last of the four preachers who ministered in the second meeting-house. It was taken down in 1706, after having stood fifty-six years.

* His father was Major-general Gookin, a distinguished inhabitant of Cambridge, the friend of the Indians, and the assistant of Eliot in his labours for their conversion.
In the town records for 1705, I find the following votes relating to the erection of the third church:—

"At a Meeting of ye Inhabitants belonging to the Old Meeting-house in Cambridge orderly convened ye 6th December 1705. 'Voted, that ye sum of two hundred and eighty Pounds be Levied on sd Inhabitants towards ye Building a New Meeting-house amongst them.' 'Also Voted that ye committee appointed by sd Inhabitants 12th July 1703, viz. The Honble Andrew Belcher, Thos Brattle, John Leverett, Fra Foxcroft, Esqr, Dea. Walter Hasting, Capt. Tho' Oliver, and Mr Wm Russell, together with Mr Edm'd Goffe being joyn'd to sd Committee instead of Dea. Walter Hasting deceased agree with some suitable person or persons to build ye Meeting house and inspect ye workmen that so said Building may be done in good workmanlike order.'"

In pursuance of these votes the third meeting-house was built in 1706 a little in front of this. The first Sabbath service was performed in it December 13, 1706. In this house Mr. Brattle officiated until his death, February 15, 1717. He was greatly beloved and esteemed by his people and by the whole community. His manner of preaching (as described by Dr. Colman) was "calm, soft, and melting." "They that had the happiness to know Mr. Brattle," says another, "knew a very religious good man, an able divine, a laborious faithful minister, an excellent scholar, a great benefactor, a wise and prudent man, and one of the best of friends." — Mr. Brattle was succeeded in 1717 by Nathaniel Appleton, whose ministry is one of the longest and most
successful on record. The meeting-house, in which he was ordained, and which was nearly new at the time of his settlement, proved to be of frailer materials than its youthful pastor. He outlived it about thirty years. It was taken down in 1757, and the materials (as appears from votes of the town and parish) were given by the parish towards the erection of the court-house, which is still standing, and likely to stand for many years to come. Whether any part of the materials of the old church was actually used for this purpose, or whether they were sold, and the proceeds applied to defray the expense of building that house, I am not informed.

The house, in which we are now worshipping for the last time, and which is the fourth erected for the use of our parish, was raised November 17, 1756; and was first occupied for public worship July 24, 1757. There are still living among us four individuals, who were baptized by Dr. Appleton in the old meeting-house which stood in front of this. Three of them are members of this society; one of whom was the last person baptized in that house, on the last Sabbath on which public worship was attended in it, July 17, 1757. The rest are in the grave, and the places that knew them, know them no more. So will it be with us. O God, so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Let the remembrance of death keep us from sloth and sin; and quicken us in the performance of our duty to thee, and to the friends whom we must soon leave.
There are none, I believe, of the individuals to whom I have alluded who have a distinct recollection of the pulling down of the old house, or of the building of the new; so that the words of the text may be applied with almost literal propriety on the present occasion, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory?"

With the names and characters of the pastors who have successively officiated in this pulpit, most of you, I presume, are already acquainted. Dr. Appleton, whom I have already mentioned as the first in order, is remembered with affectionate veneration by many who are still left among us. He lived to the great age of 91, and retained his faculties in a remarkable degree till the last year of his life. I find a record in his own handwriting of several baptisms performed by him in public as well as at his own house, in 1783, the year before his death. But the crooked lines and the blurred and trembling characters betray the infirmities of the aged pastor. Dr. Appleton was very happily qualified for his office. His unfeigned seriousness and piety, the integrity and simplicity of his character, his wisdom and moderation, his active benevolence, his hospitality, courtesy, and kindness, together with his apostolic and patriarchal appearance and manners, gave him an almost unbounded influence over his people. With a competent share of the learning of his time he united strong common sense and a practical cast of mind which made his preaching profitable to his hearers. His discourses were marked with a pithy plainness of expression,
and a colloquial familiarity of language and illustration, which might sound strangely in a modern pulpit; but "the application was so pertinent, and his utterance and air so solemn, as to suppress levity and silence criticism." Towards those who differed from him in religious opinions, "he was candid and catholic. 'Orthodoxy and Charity' were his motto, and he happily exemplified the union of both in his ministry and in his life."* — On the 27th of October, 1783, the Rev. Timothy Hilliard, formerly minister of Barnstable, was installed as colleague with Dr. Appleton, who died the following February, after a ministry of sixty-seven years among this people. Mr. Hilliard died on the 9th of May, 1790, in the 44th year of his age, and the seventh of his ministry in Cambridge. He is remembered with much respect and affection by those of his congregation who are yet living, as a kind and faithful pastor, a serious and practical preacher, and a most amiable and exemplary man. — He was succeeded by the Rev. Abiel Holmes, who was installed January 25, 1792, and continued minister of this parish, until the unhappy religious dissen-

* Dr. Holmes's History of Cambridge. His portrait by Copley, now in the possession of Mrs. Appleton of this town, represents him holding a volume of Watts entitled "Orthodoxy and Charity."

† "He was not frequent in handling subjects of doubtful disputation. To inculcate repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a hearty conformity to the practical precepts of the Gospel he considered of the first importance; and such was the general tenor of his preaching." Like his predecessor, Dr. Appleton, "he was ready to embrace all good men though their religious opinions might in many respects differ from his." — President Willard's Sermon at the Funeral of Mr. Hilliard.
sessions, which have shaken the land for the last twenty years, led to a separation in 1829; an event greatly regretted by his old parishioners, to whom he had ministered in so long and happy a union, and among whom there is but one feeling of esteem and affection towards their former pastor. The present pastor was ordained May 19, 1830.

It appears from this statement that there have been two pastors of our church and society installed, and one ordained, in this house since its erection. The number of admissions to the church during the same period has been 476; of public baptisms, 1389; of which nearly one half were performed by Dr. Appleton during the last twenty-seven years of his ministry. Six of the sixteen Presidents of our University have been inaugurated in this place; and the oldest living graduate, the Hon. Paine Wingate of Stratham, New Hampshire, who stands on the catalogue a lonely survivor amidst the starred names of the dead, took his degree within these walls.

There are some other reminiscences connected with it, which give it an added interest and distinction. It was here that our beloved Washington, during his encampment at Cambridge in 1775, worshipped God in the Sabbath assembly, and with his brother-patriots in arms acknowledged his dependence on the Lord of Hosts with that piety which marked the character of our ancestors, and was ever conspicuous in that of the Father of our country. It was here that Lafayette, the surviving apostle of freedom, on his triumphal visit to our land, was so eloquently welcomed. It was in this
house also that in 1779 a State Convention, composed of delegates from the several towns of the Commonwealth, framed the Constitution of Massachusetts. This house then carries back our thoughts to many events and scenes of a political and academical as well as religious interest. There is, probably, no one now standing, in which so many of the distinguished men of New England, if not of the whole country, have, at one time or another, on the Sabbath or on other occasions, been present. Its antiquated construction and even some of its discomforts have their interest to the eyes of many, as they are associated with recollections of former days, or of the times of their youth. It is one of the simple but substantial structures, of which there are a few still remaining here and there, in defiance of time, the unclassical specimens of our homely New-England church architecture of the past century; and, in their durability and plainness, both the monuments and the emblems of the generation by which they were erected. And now, having reached the good old age of seventy-seven years, and twice seven days,—having withstood the winds and the rains, the snows and the suns of so many changing seasons, having outlived almost all who saw it in its first glory, it is no longer to bear witness to our vows and prayers in the solemn assembly. We are met here for the last time. Antiquated and uncomfortable as it now is, to many of my hearers it has been endeared by early associations and domestic remembrances, as well as by religious feel-
ing; and, in leaving it even for a more comely and convenient edifice, there are some who cannot but feel a kind of sadness like that with which we leave our father's home, the home of our youth. Many tender and solemn recollections rise upon their minds in the softened light of the past. "Here" says one, "my young mind received the glad news of the kingdom of God, and was awakened to a sense of its immortal nature, and its nobler duties. Here my good resolutions were stirred into life, and I determined to live as a Christian, and a child of God. Here my doubts and my anxieties were hushed into silence by communion with the Father, and by the cheering words of his truth falling from the lips of the preacher upon my open heart. Here my worldly desires, my worldly principles were rebuked; and better motives and higher objects impressed upon my soul." "Here," says another, "I sat for many happy years with friends now no more;—and, with them, enjoyed the pleasures of a devotion made holier by Christian sympathy. Here I dedicated my offspring to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here I celebrated the dying love of my Saviour, and gained new strength to follow him through the various duties and trials of life. Here my devotional feelings have been renewed and strengthened from Sabbath to Sabbath, as I have mused in these familiar seats on the works and the word of God."

—Thoughts like these must be passing through the minds of all who have worshipped in this place. We part from it as we do from an old friend. And
in parting from it, may God forgive us the sins which we have here committed in this His sanctuary; — forgive us our cold prayers, and the wandering, worldly thoughts which have too often mingled themselves with the religious meditations of the Sabbath; — forgive us the half-formed or broken vows which we have here made; — forgive us the low motives which have sometimes brought us to His house, and the unsanctified feelings with which we have sometimes listened to its services. — As we go hence, may we depart with a determination to make a better use than we have here done of our religious privileges; to dedicate our own souls to God, while we dedicate a new temple to His service; and to walk before Him in all his ordinances, holy and blameless.

And now, in the name of my brethren, I bid farewell to this house, sanctified and endeared to us by recollections of the past; the place, where departed friends have worshipped, where our own souls have ascended to God, where the good and the great of the land have been gathered, where the Father of our country prayed to the God of hosts in the time of our country's trial. We bid its well-known seats, its familiar walls, the worshippers' farewell.
APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

Upon Mr. Hooker's removal to Hartford in 1636, Mr. Dudley removed to Ipswich. He afterwards fixed his residence in Roxbury, where he died in 1653. He was a man of strong passions, rigid in his notions of discipline and government, and, like many of the early settlers, intolerant in his religious sentiments; but withal a man of great worth, integrity, and piety. The account in Winthrop of the misunderstanding and disputes which took place between him and Dudley, (partly in consequence of the Governor's removing his house from Cambridge) illustrates the different characters of the two fathers of Massachusetts. Mr. Dudley's "firm and robust constitution and vigorous mind, and his civil and military accomplishments rendered him conspicuously useful in the arduous enterprise in which he and his associates were engaged. He should be remembered with reverence and esteem though there may be some features of undue severity in his character. In his dread of toleration he was far from being alone. It was the prevailing temper of his age." "The verses following," says Morton, "were found in his pocket after his death, which may further illustrate his character, and give a taste of his poetical fancy; wherein it is said he did excel."

"Dim eyes, deaf ears, cold stomach shew
My dissolution is in view.
Eleven times seven near lived have I,
And now God calls, I willing die.
My shuttle's shot, my race is run,
My sun is set, my day is done.
My span is measured, tale is told,
My flower is faded and grown old."
My dream is vanished, shadow's fled,
My soul with Christ, my body dead.
Farewell dear wife, children and friends,
Hate heresy, make blessed ends.
Bear poverty, live with good men,
So shall we live with joy again.

Lest men of God in courts and churches watch,
Over such as do a toleration hatch,
Lest that ill egg bring forth a cockatrice,
To poison all with heresy and vice.
If men be left and otherwise combine,
My Epitaph 's, I died no Liberteine."

The dread of heresy and toleration here expressed was not peculiar to Dudley. Most of the early settlers of Massachusetts were opposed to an entire freedom of religious opinion and worship. "The men of God in Court and Church" wrote and spoke against toleration for some time after Mr. Dudley's death. Mr. Mitchell, in his Election Sermon at Cambridge in 1667, condemns a "licentious toleration", as he calls it, and Mr. Oakes speaks still more strongly against it in a discourse upon the same occasion a few years after. There are some lines however of Mitchell, preserved in Mather, which are sufficiently catholic for any age. They are from an elegy on President Dunster, whose heretical opinions on the subject of baptism had finally obliged him to resign his office. The lines to which I allude, from the pen of one of the earliest and most distinguished pastors of our church, are worth transcribing for the sentiment, if not for the poetry; though in this last respect they are quite equal to most of the doggerel written at that time, when rhyming seems to have been the fashion of the day among ministers as well as laymen. I therefore subjoin them.

Where faith in Jesus is sincere,
That soul he saving pardoneth;
What wants and errors else be there
That may and do consist therewith.

And though we be imperfect here,
And in one mind can't often meet,
Who know in part, in part may err,
Though faith be one, all do not see 't;

Yet may we once the rest obtain
In everlasting bliss above,
Where Christ with perfect saints doth reign,
In perfect light and perfect love;
Then shall we all like-minded be,
    Faith's unity is there full-grown;
There one truth all both love and see
    And thence are perfect made in one.

There Luther both and Zuinglius,
Ridley and Hooper there agree;
There all the truly righteous
Sans feud live to eternity.

NOTE B.

The following are the votes, relating to the erection of the second house of worship, as taken from the town records:

"At a general meeting of the inhabitants of the town 18. 12. 49. *
Voted and agreed by a general consent that the meeting house shall be repaired with a 4: square roof and covered with shingle, and the charges thereof levied upon the Inhabitants of the town by equal rate. Also Edw: Goffe, Tho: Marrett, Jno. Stedman, Robt. Holmes, and Tho: Danforth, are chosen by the town to oversee and carry on this work, to agree with workmen, and to levy the charge of their engagements for the work, upon the Inhabitants of the town.

"11th (1) mo. 1649-50. At a general meeting of the whole Towne, it was then voted and agreed that the five men chosen by the Towne to repayre the meeting house shall desist from the same and agree with workmen for the building of a new house, about forty foot square, and covered as was formerly agreed for the other, and levy the charge of their engagements upon the Inhabitants of the Towne. — It was also then voted and generally agreed that the new meeting house shall stand on the Watch house hill."

NOTE C.

An anecdote, related by Winthrop and Mather, of the preaching of Mr. Hooker in his old meeting-house at Cambridge, in 1639, while on a visit to Massachusetts, is somewhat curious. "On May 26, 1639,

* That is, the 18th of the 12th month, 1649; or, according to modern reckoning, the 18th of February, 1650. The year anciently begun on the 25th of March. This was called the first month and February the twelfth.
Mr. Hooker being here to preach that Lord's day in the afternoon, his great fame had gathered a vast multitude of hearers from several other congregations, and among the rest the Governor himself to be made partaker of his ministry. But when he came to preach, he found himself so unaccountably at a loss, that after some shattered and broken attempts to proceed, he made a full stop, saying to the assembly, "that every thing which he would have spoken was taken out of his mouth, and out of his mind also." Wherefore he desired them to sing a psalm, while he withdrew about half an hour from them. Returning then to the congregation he preached a most admirable sermon, wherein he held them for two hours together in an extraordinary strain of pertinency and vivacity." — Mather's Magnalia.

NOTE D.

The following notice from Winthrop of the final meeting of this synod, and of a little incident which took place in the meeting-house, is illustrative of the spirit of the times. "15 (6) (15 August). The Synod met at Cambridge by adjournment from June last. Mr. Allen of Dedham preached out of Acts xv. a very godly, learned, and particular handling of near all the doctrines and applications concerning that subject, with a clear discovery and refutation of such errors, objections, and scruples as had been raised about it by the young heads in the country. It fell out, about the midst of his sermon, there came a snake into the seat where many of the elders sate behind the preacher. It came in at the door where people stood thick upon the stairs. Divers of the elders shifted from it, but Mr. Thompson, one of the elders of Braintree (a man of much faith), trode upon the head of it, and so held it with his foot and staff with a small pair of grains until it was killed. This being so remarkable, and nothing falling out but by Divine Providence, it is out of doubt, the Lord discovered somewhat of his mind in it. The serpent is the devil, the synod the representative of the churches of Christ in New England. The devil had formerly and lately attempted their disturbance and dissolution; but their faith in the seed of the woman overcame him and crushed his head."— Savage's edition of Winthrop, Vol. II. p. 330.

* His attendance on this occasion shows the high estimation in which Mr. Hooker was held as a preacher;—as "the Governor (to use his own words) did very seldom go from his own congregation on the Lord's day."
A SERMON
PREACHED
AT THE DEDICATION
OF THE
NEW MEETING HOUSE
FOR THE USE
OF THE FIRST PARISH IN CAMBRIDGE,
On Thursday, Dec. 12, 1833.

BY WILLIAM NEWELL,
PASTOR OF THE SOCIETY.

Printed by Request of the Society.

CAMBRIDGE:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
1834.
DISCOURSE.

GENESIS, xxviii. 17.

This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.

It is true—we learn it from the Gospel of Christ, as well as from the teachings of reason—that "God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;"—that He does not confine the influences of His Spirit within the walls of any earthly sanctuary;—that "His temple is all space, His altar, earth, sea, skies;"—and that every part of His boundless dominion is filled with the glories of His power, and the brighter splendors of His goodness. We learn it from the Gospel of Christ, as well as from the teachings of reason, that God's eye of holiness and love is looking down upon us in the closet, where we pray to Him in secret, no less than in the public assembly;—that "He is not far from every one of us, since in Him we live, and move, and have our being;"—that it is only by faith, by an act of the mind, not of the body, that we bring ourselves into His presence;—that to the
holy all places are holy; — and that Jesus, when he lifted up his eyes to Heaven in the open fields of Judea, was heard with no less acceptance than when he spake and worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem. But, true as this is, it is equally true that, as men, as finite beings, creatures of sense, we all need certain times and places and forms to aid us in the fit expression and exercise of devout feelings; and that when such feelings have been repeatedly awakened in certain places, at certain times, by certain forms, they at length become strongly associated with each other in our minds, so that these outward circumstances have power to suggest and renew those inward affections and thoughts with which they have been so often connected, while, on the other hand, the sacredness, which belongs in fact only to the subject and the sentiment, is transferred in some degree by association to the spot and the occasion. This one obvious consideration, independent of all others, is sufficient to show, — if, indeed, it be not too plain to need any proof, — that it is not superstition, but the sound philosophy of the heart, which hallows and sets apart to religious uses some chosen place where, from Sabbath to Sabbath, God may be worshipped, His character and providence made known, the religion of the Saviour preached, defended, explained, and enforced; where, from Sabbath to Sabbath, we may assemble with our families and friends, and publicly acknowledge our common dependence upon the Almighty Father and our accountability to His laws.
For this purpose have we erected the house in which we are to-day met for the first time: — and we are now assembled according to ancient and appropriate usage to dedicate it to the worship of God and the teaching of Christianity. From the earliest times it has been customary to set apart the temples of the Lord by some special ceremony to the uses for which they were erected. This ceremony, like all others, has had its abuses and perversions. It has been made, in some countries, an occasion of priestly pomp, or of superstitious mummery. But, in the principle on which it is founded, it must approve itself to the feelings and the judgment of all; and when observed, as it commonly has been among us, it can be objected to only by those who are disposed to cavil at all forms however natural and simple. It is hardly necessary to say to any here present, that by this act of dedication we do not expect to invest these walls with any mystic and peculiar sanctity such as they would not have without it; — such as to make the prayers and vows of the worshipper more acceptable to God than if they were offered up in any other place with that spirit of faith, which alone can hallow them. The ceremony in which we now engage is simply a public and solemn declaration of the purposes for which this house has been built and to which it is hereafter to be appropriated; and a public and solemn expression of our dependence upon God, whose presence and blessing we now invoke for the successful accomplishment of those purposes.
To what purposes, then, and in what spirit, are we now, as Christians, to dedicate this house?

We dedicate it in the first place to the worship of the only living and true God; the King eternal, immortal, invisible; the Maker of heaven and of earth; the Preserver and Ruler of the universe; the Governor of angels and of men; the centre and the source of life, knowledge, happiness; the all-powerful, all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, all-good; whose tender mercies are over all his works, all his creatures, in the punishments of hell, as well as in the rewards of heaven; our greatest Benefactor, our everlasting Friend; on whom we depend for life, breath, and all things; by whose power, every moment exerted, we are preserved in being; by whose goodness, ever operating, we are surrounded with privileges and enjoyments; by whose providence all events are so ordered as to produce the greatest amount of happiness to each and to all; — the heart-searching Witness, and righteous Judge, to whom we are accountable for the deeds done in the body; whose will it is our highest wisdom to learn, to do, and to bear; whose favor is better than life, whose displeasure is more to be feared than death; — to sum up all in a few comprehensive names, our Father in Heaven, — the Father of Lights, — the Father of our immortal spirits, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this glorious and good Being we would henceforth unitedly offer in this place the sacrifices of love and faith; of thanksgiving for his mercies; of supplication for his pardon and guidance; and of
intercession for His blessing upon our friends, our fellow-citizens, our fellow-Christians, our brothermen of every name and nation under heaven.

Secondly, we dedicate this house to the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of the living God; that he was divinely authorized and empowered to teach us the most important of all truths; the character of the Supreme Being, the principles of His government, the conditions of His forgiveness, our relations to Him, our duty, our destination, our true happiness, the great objects of the present life and its connexion with the life to come. We believe that he was sent by the Father upon the most sublime and benevolent mission which was ever entrusted to any being who has appeared upon this earth; that he came to promote the everlasting happiness of the whole human family; that he came to educate us for God and for eternity, to qualify us for the nearer presence and enjoyment and service of the All-Holy Spirit, and for the exalted delights and duties of the second and of all future states of existence. We believe that by obedience to the laws of his Gospel, which are the laws of eternal right and eternal excellence, that by manifesting the spirit, forming the character, living the life which he taught and exemplified, we are saved, are made happy, are formed to the image of God, and prepared for the bliss of heaven. We believe that the principles and influences of his religion are, in the course of events, and according to the laws of
Divine Providence and of the human mind, to become yet more powerful, to spread from nation to nation, to reign over the hearts of mankind at some now distant age, and thus to establish the true and only Millenium, when God in his spirit shall establish his abode with men, and Christ in his gospel shall become the King and the Saviour of the whole earth. We believe that this Gospel has within itself the elements of progress; that as it opens to our view objects of pursuit and imitation, which are of an infinite character, as it is free from all those peculiarities and temporary and local forms which would limit its influence to any one age or nation, it will, in every advancing stage of human improvement, be still in advance of the human mind. We believe that Christianity is fitted and designed to promote the best interests of society as well as of individuals; and that in proportion as a community are penetrated with a sense of its value and truth, and are generally enlightened by its quickening doctrines and sanctified by its moral power, in the same proportion will that community be free, prosperous, peaceful and happy. We believe in short that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world;"—the Saviour of the world by his teaching, his example, and the various influences of that Gospel, which he sealed with his blood upon the cross.—We acknowledge it, then, to be the great duty and privilege of all in every station, be they ministers or laymen, to do what in them lies for the support and propagation of this Gospel; for fixing its prin-
ciples in their own minds and hearts, and for communicating them to others; and thus to be fellow-workers with God and Christ in sanctifying and saving immortal souls.

We therefore solemnly dedicate this house to the service of Christianity; to the preaching of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. Here may the truths of the Gospel, its precepts, its promises, its warnings, its motives, and its sanctions be proclaimed with faithfulness and simplicity; be received with attentive and understanding minds; and bring forth the abundant fruits of holiness and peace.

But in dedicating this house to the teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and the spiritual Saviour of man, it is well known that our views concerning the nature of Christ and the doctrines of his Gospel differ from those which are held by many of our fellow-Christians. Christianity, as we understand it, has been and is still connected with many and great errors.—Though it was established in the world by miraculous power, it was not exempted from the common influences and ordinary laws which regulate the course of events in the moral world. The good seed of the word was planted by the hand of God; but left to grow free and wild in the great field of human nature. It did grow and flourish, till it spread over the earth. But it was not preserved by a perpetual miracle from the changes and corruptions, to which all truth is liable in its transmission from one mind to another, and from one age
and nation to another. Hence, as might be ex­pected, it has been often disfigured and darkened in its progress through past ages by the false phi­losophy of the times; and is still, as we think, incrusted with errors of doctrine which grew up and gathered about it in the earlier and darker ages of the church. With the Reformation, indeed, we date a new and glorious era in the history of our religion, when the principles of religious lib­erty, the right of free inquiry, and the sufficiency of the Scriptures as a standard of faith and prac­tice, began to be understood and recognised. But the Reformation only commenced the work, which is yet to be completed. The Reformers were fallible men like ourselves. We would follow them only so far as they followed Christ. Our Puritan fathers, much as their memory is to be venerated, were fallible men like ourselves. And we would follow them, only so far as they followed Christ. We receive only those doctrines, which, with our means of information, and according to our best judgment, appear to us the doctrines of Scrip­ture and reason; and all others we reject, however venerable may be the names and the characters of those by whom they may have been held in past times. We trust that, were they now living, they would be willing to "receive farther light than that which they at first received;" and that in the world of spirits, where they enjoy the society and the instructions of Jesus, they have already received it.

A sounder philosophy, a more enlightened crit­icism, juster views of Scriptural interpretation,
deeper researches into ecclesiastical history, together
with the general advancement of all the branches
of human knowledge, have thrown new lights upon
the truths of religion. We enjoy greater advan-
tages than our predecessors, and those who follow
us will enjoy greater advantages than the men
of this age, for farther progress. We therefore
rejoice in the hope that religious knowledge will
continue to advance, as it has hitherto done, and that
men's views of God and of their relations to Him
will become more clear, and more spiritual, and
that this is more likely to be the case in our own
country, where the people are generally well in-
formed, and there are no unnatural restraints upon
free inquiry and the independent expression of
opinion, than in the old world. But even here in the
freest state of society, the truth as it is in Jesus,
if it differ, as we are convinced it does, from those
systems of doctrine which have been generally
received, has still many obstacles to encounter.
It must contend with ignorance and prejudice;
with misunderstanding and misrepresentation;
with the apathy of the indifferent, and the back-
wardness of the temporizing; with conscientious
opposition and interested hostility; with the errors
of early education, which linger about the minds
of the best men, and often make them violent,
though well-meaning, opposers of new doctrines;
and with wrong principles of reasoning, wrong
methods of studying the Scriptures, and wrong
maxims of interpretation, which, as long as they
prevail, must remain a fatal bar to the understand-

6
ing and reception of just views of Christianity. These are but a part of the many obstacles which lie in the way of religious truth, when it is at variance with received opinions. I have mentioned them only to show that we are called to exert ourselves in its defence and promotion. We are solemnly bound by our duty to God, to our Master, to our fellow-men, to expose and confute what we regard as important errors, connected with the Gospel, and to show that doctrines which have been hitherto considered as an essential part of Christianity are not contained in the New Testament, when it is interpreted and understood aright.

We dedicate this house, then, to the worship of God, and the teaching of the Gospel, in the spirit of a Christian zeal for those doctrines which we from our hearts believe to be the truth of God; in the spirit of a Christian zeal for what we deem to be just, practical, and evangelical views of religion and duty.

But earnestness in the cause of truth is not inconsistent with respect, kindness, and brotherly love towards those who differ from us in religious opinions. We would therefore dedicate this house to the worship of God and the teaching of Christ’s Gospel, in the spirit of an enlightened charity as well as of a sincere zeal. However firmly we may contend for our own faith and our own rights, however strenuously we may resist what we deem the mistaken measures and erroneous doctrines of our fellow-Christians, God forbid that we should do so in a bitter and intolerant temper. We are not
so ignorant, or so presumptuous as to expect a uniformity of opinion, which never has and never can be established while man is man. We see that religious differences and religious controversies are unavoidable from the very constitution of the human mind, the circumstances of our condition, and the nature of the subjects of religion.

While there exists so wide a diversity among men in their capacities, their acquisitions, their means of information, and the influences by which they are surrounded, it is not strange that their views and opinions should have a corresponding diversity. One man sees only a part of the facts on which another has built his opinion; or if his knowledge of facts be as extensive, his mode of reasoning upon them may be different. He may view them under different relations, and draw from them different conclusions. You therefore find two persons of apparently equal opportunities of information passing opposite judgments upon questions in history, in politics, in the science of education, in the theory of government, in the principles of political economy, in ethics, in metaphysics, in natural philosophy, in astronomy, and in all the thousand branches of human knowledge. If such a diversity of sentiment exists even among those who have been brought up under similar influences, similar associations, similar modes of instruction, whose habits of thinking and feeling are therefore similar, what else can we expect among those whose circumstances and opportunities have been entirely different? — What is true with respect to all other
subjects is true also of religion, and probably to a still wider extent. — For in this all men have an interest, and a deep one. It addresses itself to their strongest fears and hopes. It involves their welfare not only for time but for eternity. They are therefore more generally concerned in this than in any other subject, and more likely, not only to form opinions, but to lay stress on the opinions they may form.

Besides, the subjects of religious difference are often of an abstruse and metaphysical nature, requiring not only extensive knowledge, but deep thought, refined discrimination and subtle reasoning. The nature, attributes, and moral government of an Infinite Being, whose perfections we can only faintly conceive and imperfectly comprehend, the mode in which He operates on the mind, the character, the powers, the destination of the soul, the conditions and means of salvation, the future world with its shadowy scenes just glimmering on our eyes, its employments, its retributions, — all present topics of dispute not easily settled by the most acute and the most enlightened.

Again, if we direct our attention more particularly to the volume of revelation, new sources of doubt and difficulty are set before us. The oracles of divine truth are uttered by God's messengers in human language, and all human language is subject to ambiguity. You can hardly write or speak a sentence which is not capable of two or more interpretations. Usually, in the common intercourse of life, we have no difficulty in ascertaining which
of them is intended by the words used. It is determined by the subject spoken of, by the laws of mental association, by the circumstances of the case already known to us, by the character and conduct of the speaker, and by many little accompaniments of gesture, tone, and look, which aid us in at once fixing upon the true idea represented by the uncertain sounds of the voice. But in written language we meet with much greater difficulty, because we have fewer of the aids which have been mentioned in determining the meaning. It is on account of this essential ambiguity of human language as a medium for the communication of thought, that it has been found necessary to devise the technicalities and careful repetitions and minute specifications of legal documents and legal decisions. How much nice particularity of expression is required to guard the last will and testament of the dying man against the questions that may be raised upon it. A doubtful preposition or an equivocal adverb may give rise to a long and vexatious controversy among the interested heirs. Now the books of the New Testament, the Testament of Jesus Christ, sealed with the blood of its Author are written, not like a legal document, but in a loose popular style. Its propositions are not expressed like those of a statute book, but in the style of narrative and of moral discourses, in which a legal precision is not needed nor expected. They are liable, therefore, to be variously understood and misunderstood. They are often capable of two interpretations, and to decide which is the true one will require thought
and study; a consideration of many facts and circum­stances; and a comparison of the passage in question with many other passages, before we are properly qualified to ascertain the sense intended by the writer. — The difficulty is increased, in the case in question, by other circumstances, to which I can but briefly allude. The original languages in which the Scriptures are written are no longer spoken; and we are often thrown adrift on the wide sea of grammatical conjecture when we at­tempt to explore their obscurities by the faint lights of verbal criticism. The customs and man­ners too of the people among whom the events re­corded took place; the peculiarities of thought and expression which mark the style of the several wri­ters of the sacred books; the modes of reasoning which they employ, the figures in which they de­light; the character of their minds, the circum­stances of their situation; the state of opinion and feeling among those whom they addressed; the ob­jections and prejudices they had to encounter; — are all to be studied, understood, and borne in mind by one who wishes to enter into the true and full import of the Scriptures. I need not tell you how difficult it must be at this distance of time to ascer­tain satisfactorily all these preliminaries to a thor­ough understanding of the Bible. Is it wonderful, then, that it should contain much that seems ob­scure? or that it should be differently understood and explained by different individuals, according to the different degrees of information which they possess, their different powers of judgment and
discrimination, and the different principles of reasoning and interpretation with which they come to the examination of the Gospel? — In view of these considerations it is out of the question, — even supposing all to be equally desirous of knowing the truth, and equally anxious to obey it — it is out of the question to expect a uniformity of religious belief in the world. There must be variety of opinion on this subject as on every other. While this variety of opinion exists, there will of course be a variety of distinct sects. Those who agree on some leading points of doctrine will organize themselves into associations for the support of what they deem to be essential or at least important truth. Thus the Christian community has always been, and always will be, divided into conflicting denominations; and controversies will continue as long as the present nature and condition of mankind remain the same.

With these views of the origin of religious differences and controversies (which, with all their evils and abuses, are useful, as means of discovering and spreading truth, and keeping up an interest in the subject of religion) we would look with the spirit of an enlightened charity on all of every name who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; who have a true desire to promote his kingdom of righteousness in themselves and in others. However erroneous their theological opinions may be, they are disciples of the same Lord whom we acknowledge, worshippers of the same God, members of that one vast church which comprehends the good and the wise of all ages
and all sects. They are fellow-travellers to the same heaven, though by various paths, which seem indeed to those who are walking in them to be widely separated, but are in fact all converging to the same common point, where the divided followers of Jesus will at length meet in a harmonious and eternal union. — We consider the different forms of belief among Christians, as but so many different shapes in which the same spirit of faith may dwell; so many different moulds in which the same material is cast; so many different developments of the same universal principle. The truth is, that in all these systems of theology, various and discordant as they appear, a few great principles of morality and religion, drawn from the clear teachings of the Gospel, and too plain to be disputed, exert an illuminating and sanctifying influence amidst the jarring elements of error. A little leaven of Christian truth leaveneth the noxious mass of false doctrine and makes it nutritive and wholesome. The mind, with a moral instinct, fixes upon the vital and practical part of a creed, and slides over the speculative errors connected with it. It either regards them as mysteries, and so does not think of them at all, or carry them out into their mischievous consequences, or it so explains them away, as to make them consistent with the sound conclusions of reason and common sense; or else they are so modified by other acknowledged principles, that they do not produce the bad effects to which they tend.

Thus it happens, that doctrines, which, in speculation, involve the most dangerous and immoral
consequences, are often harmless in their practical operation upon individuals who profess them. And thus it is that many opinions concerning the attributes and government of God, the nature of man, and the mediation of Christ, which to us appear erroneous and unscriptural, have been firmly held by men who are entitled to our admiration and love; in whom, what we should think the natural evil tendencies of such doctrines, are counteracted by causes to which I have already alluded; and who show themselves in all their conduct and temper to be under the influence of Christian motives and principles. God be praised that it is so!—God be praised that amidst the manifold and multiplying varieties of worship, and discipline, and doctrine, the great, vital, saving, and sanctifying principles of religion rise, like the spires of our churches, above the mists and fogs of earth, seen by all eyes, and guiding us on our way to heaven! God be praised for the glorious instances of this cheering fact; for the multitude which no man can number of this and of past ages, who have shone alike in the splendors of goodness, but have been ranked under different names in theology!

On these grounds we would gladly hail as brethren all who call themselves by the name of Christ, in whom we find the Christianity of the heart and the Orthodoxy of the life. We would tolerate every thing but intolerance. That must be exposed and put down, an enemy and an outlaw, against whom even Charity must sometimes force herself to play the warrior that she may have a more lasting
peace. In contending, however, that the fundamentals of piety and true religion, the religion of the heart, are to be found in individuals of every sect, because every sect takes the New Testament for its rule of faith, and the moral, life-giving truths which are there written are too plain to be obscured by the errors of human speculation, it does not therefore follow that it is of no consequence what we believe, or that all systems of doctrine are equally well calculated to promote real godliness, and to advance the cause of Christ in the world. That of course must be the most powerful to this end, which approaches nearest to the truth of God, and to the faith as it was once delivered to the saints. It becomes my duty, then, and the duty of every Christian, to inquire by the lights which God has given us in his word and in his works, which of the religious systems proposed to us is the true one. In pursuing this inquiry, we are to consider which is the most reasonable, the most simple, the most easily understood, the most plain and practical; and again, which is most clearly taught in Scripture, which agrees best with the undisputed doctrines of the Bible, with its prevailing spirit, with the plain declarations of Christ and the Apostles, with their conduct and the conduct of those about them. Whatever may be the result of our inquiries, whichever among the various modifications of religious belief we are led to receive, that it is our duty, by all fair means, on all proper occasions, to maintain and to spread.

In being liberal, we are not to be indifferent to
the truth. While we joyfully acknowledge, that in many religious systems, which we on the whole condemn, there may be so much good as to overbalance the evil, and while we see that it is the practical part of a creed which is always the most efficient, we are not to forget that the errors, on which it is built, or which are connected with it, are so many clogs and hindrances to the power of true religion. Men become righteous and happy, not in consequence, but in spite of them; and by their removal, they would be enabled to go on with a more rapid and easy step, and ascend far higher in the scale of goodness.

Besides this, we are to remember that such errors have made in past times and are still making infidels and skeptics everywhere; and that the more clear and reasonable and consistent Christianity is shown to be in all its parts, the more readily it will be embraced, the more firmly it will be held, the more powerfully it will act on the heart and the life. As far then as, for these and for other reasons, the doctrines which we hold are important, and are likely in our opinion to promote the interests of vital religion and pure Christianity among men, it is our duty to contend earnestly for them. That there are good men in every sect is no argument for indifference, but only for toleration and charity. Although errors and absurdities have been neutralized and overlooked by some minds, they may not be, indeed we know they have not been, by all. And although the sanctifying influence of essential Gospel truth, which is in its
nature universal, and stamped with the eternity of the God from whom it came, has been felt in some degree of its power in all Christian denominations, we should wish to have it embraced in that form which will give it its most extensive and efficient influence. We are bound therefore to uphold and to diffuse, as far as we have opportunity, what we conceive to be truer and higher views than those of our fellow-Christians of other denominations; always keeping before us, as the great end and object of our endeavours, the promotion of vital piety and practical religion.

Entertaining such views of the course to be pursued amid the controversies of the present day, we now dedicate this church to the worship of God and to the teaching of the Gospel in the spirit of Christian zeal for the truth, and of Christian friendship towards all who differ from us. *

Henceforth then, my brethren, we are to assemble within these walls for the worship of God and the hearing of His word. Henceforth, with each returning Sabbath, are we to offer up in this place our spiritual sacrifices of thanksgiving and prayer. Here, with each returning Sabbath, shall the voice of supplication ascend to the Father of Lights and the Father of Mercies for the gifts of His spirit; for the blessing which He has promised to His believing children; for holy dispositions and Christian graces; for perseverance in duty;

* A paragraph relating to the several churches erected for the use of the parish is here omitted; as the facts stated in it are contained in the previous discourse.
for strength to resist temptation; for courage and
cheerfulness in times of trial; for resignation and
trust and the inward peace which the world can
neither give nor take away: — and these not only
for ourselves, but for others; for our friends, for
our enemies, for the whole family of man. Here,
with each returning Sabbath, will we sing with
one accord the praises of the Most High God, and
these walls shall echo back the strains of sacred
melody which sound forth from the pealing organ,
and the lips of the living voice. Here, with each
returning Sabbath, will we sit in solemn or joyful
meditations on the character and providence of the
Father; here renew the good purposes which have
been choked by the cares of the world; here
dedicate our children in baptism to the service of
God; here break the bread and drink the wine
of remembrance, as disciples of Him, whose body
was broken, and whose blood was shed for many.
Here, with each returning Sabbath, in the midst
of our kindred and friends, we will hallow the
bond of domestic love and the tenderness of do-
mestic sympathy by the mingled pleasures of de-
vo tion; here, with them, take sweet counsel from
the oracles of truth on the ways and works of
God, and the duties of man; with them, prepare
ourselves for death and for life, for the duties of
time and the higher duties of eternity. — And may
we never engage in the services of this house with-
out a solemn sense of our dependence on the
Almighty; a sincere desire to learn and to obey
His will; and such motives and feelings as can
alone make our worship holy and acceptable in His sight. Never may these pure walls be desecrated to any unholy or uncharitable purpose. Never may this pulpit be converted into an arena for the pugilism of theology; a show-place of polemical skill and vehemence; a rostrum for religious demagogues; a mount Sinai quaking with the thunders and earthquakes of denunciation. Let it be for higher and better uses. Let it be an altar of love to God, and love to man; hallowed by the incense of heaven-seeking and heaven-blest hopes, desires, and affections; an altar, over which the angels may sing their hymn of "good will to men," and hear no jarring notes to make discord of the music; where Charity wreathes her olive branch, and Faith kneels with upward look gazing after her ascended Lord, and the Holy Spirit breathes its still and dovelike influences; an altar, on which the name of the Prince of Peace is written in the blood shed for many for the forgiveness of sins, and He, who is over all and in all, the God of light and of love, even the Father, may dwell as upon His mercy-seat between the cherubims. — Holy Father, suffer us not to profane this thy dwelling-place by bitterness, or wrath, or evil speaking.

May this place be to each one of you the house of God and the gate of heaven. May you long enjoy its ministrations. May you never slight or abuse its privileges. May many of you live—if he who addresses does not—till the holy associations, which will gradually gather about this sanctuary, shall have given it a more peculiar sa-
credness. But it is not probable that many of those, who are now assembled within it as witnesses of its dedication unto God, will live to see another in its place. One by one, we are hastening in silent procession to the city of the dead. One by one, the frail worshippers in this earthly temple will be laid in the arms of the all-embracing grave. Ere many years shall have rolled swiftly by, another assembly, unknown to us, will occupy these seats, and the places that have known us will know us no more. Ere many years, or perchance many months, shall have been numbered with the past, the voices of some of those who have joined in the services of this day may be hushed in death. We shall pass away and be forgotten. As we wander among the tombs of this ancient burial-place, sunken monuments and obliterated epitaphs, telling of death, but not of the dead, give us sure warning of our own fate. We shall be forgotten by the busy actors in to-morrow's history; but our example and influence for good or for evil will live and act upon the generations that follow us. We shall be forgotten of men, but not of God; we shall be forgotten, but not dead. So live, then, mortal, immortal friends, that when this earthly sanctuary no longer hears your vows, and you can no longer utter them, — when yonder sun that now shines upon your living eyes, shall clothe your grave with funeral verdure, — you may dwell in your Father's house forever; where the sun of God's presence shall shine into your hearts; where the Holy Spirit of the Ever-
living One shall overshadow the pure soul, and fill it with such peace and joy, such power and love, as we can now neither conceive of nor describe,—where you will know Him better, and love Him more fervently, and serve Him more constantly and more acceptably forever;—even in that building of God, that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

ERRATUM.

In the first Discourse on page 6 in the note, for "since 1815," read "since the first Sunday in November, 1814."
THREE DISCOURSES
PREACHED BEFORE
THE CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
IN WATERTOWN:
TWO,
UPON LEAVING THE OLD MEETING-HOUSE;
AND ONE,
AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW.

BY CONVERS FRANCIS,
PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN WATERTOWN.

CAMBRIDGE:
FOLSOM, WELLS, AND THURSTON,
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.
1836.
TO

THE MEMBERS

OF

THE CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN WATERTOWN,

THESE DISCOURSES

ARE RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.
TWO

DISCOURSES

ON

TAKING LEAVE OF THE OLD MEETING-HOUSE

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN WATERTOWN,

DELIVERED

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4TH, 1836
DISCOURSE I.

Acts vii. 44.—“our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness.”

The ancestral remembrances of the Jews were of a kind peculiarly solemn. They were, in the strictest sense, religious remembrances; for it was religion that formed the central point of interest in the whole history of the nation. The leadings of God’s special providence might be traced, in lines not to be mistaken, along the track of the past. When the people were addressed, whether for encouragement or rebuke, the appeal was often made to the character and doings of their ancestors. It was thus that the martyr Stephen, in the bold words he uttered before he was stoned to death, called the attention of his enraged countrymen to the early days of their nation’s story, and said in this connexion, “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness.” *

These words may fitly suggest a portion of the reflections suitable to this day. It is a day of peculiar interest to us, as a body of Christian worshippers. It is the last Sabbath, which we shall spend in this sanctuary, where we and those before us have so often assembled for the most solemn purposes, that can

* In conformity with the Hebrew expression, of which the words in the original of this passage are a version, “the tabernacle of assembly” or “the tabernacle of instruction,” would be a more correct translation.
occupy the heart,— for communion with God and for the welfare of the soul. To no Christian can his customary place of worship be an object of indifference. No man even of common sensibility, I think, can take leave of it for ever, without feeling the occasion to be full of affecting recollections. If we have been accustomed to come hither with a spirit in any degree appropriate to the place, we cannot unmoved bid adieu to the temple, in which year after year we have offered our prayers to God, have sung his praises, and have listened to the counsels and warnings of everlasting truth. I cannot doubt that I shall have your sympathy, while I endeavour to direct your attention to some of the thoughts, which crowd upon the mind, when we are about to say farewell to this house of God, and to transfer our religious associations to another spot.

The occasion will require a few historical notices. On this subject, however, it will be unnecessary to go into details, since I have already embodied and published such particulars as could be gathered of our local story.*

When the fathers of New England came to the western wilderness, as the forlorn hope of freedom and religion, the worship of God was their main concern. They scarcely felled the trees and cleared the ground, to make room for their own dwellings, before they selected a spot, on which to erect the humble structure, that might serve as the sanctuary of God, in whose name they had undertaken their great enterprise. That fervent Christian faith, which had borne them up under the pressure of persecution

* See "Historical Sketch of Watertown," &c. 1830.
and privation at home, was transplanted as a vital principle of spiritual action, when they came hither

"To scatter seeds of Life on barbarous shores."

We have reason to be thankful, that the religious sentiment was thus brought to our land in fresh and strong power, and was interwoven from the first with all the principles, which lay at the foundation of the infant community. It created that feeling of deep interest in the sanctuary, which has hitherto been a trait in the New England character, and which, I hope in God, will never be effaced.*

We cannot ascertain the precise time, at which the first place of public worship in Watertown was established. But it was undoubtedly coeval with the original planting of the settlement. Cotton Mather, in his account of the foundation of our church, says, that the people here "resolved that they would combine into a church-fellowship as their first work, and build the house of God, before they could build many houses for themselves; thus they sought first the kingdom of God."† The earliest notice on this subject in our Records, occurs in 1639, (nine years after the settlement commenced,) by which it appears "the meeting-house was appointed for a watch-house to the use of the town;" — an order that suggests an idea of the danger and alarm, amidst which the little

* Kindred to this feeling, and alike worthy of imitation and transmission, was the pains-taking care of our fathers, even amidst the poverty and lowliness of their condition, to have a learned, gifted, and faithful ministry. It was, observes Johnson, "as unnatural for a right New England man to live without an able ministry, as for a smith to work his iron without a fire." — Wonder-Working Providence, Book II. Ch. 22.
† Magnalia, Book III. Ch. 4.
communities of New England were founded. This first house of worship stood in the eastern part of the town, towards Cambridge,* where, we may presume, the largest part of the population was then gathered. It was probably a rude and homely structure, such as the circumstances of the settlers, and the Puritan taste, allowed. But it was hallowed by the pious sincerity, the truthful devotedness, of those whom the Sabbath summoned within its walls. All the associations of architectural grandeur would be but a poor exchange for the recollection, that this forest sanctuary was reared and occupied by men, who, however humble their doings might then seem, were called to act their part in a signal work for the cause of righteousness and of religious freedom. As I have sometimes in my walks lingered around that spot, I have forgotten the present in the retrospect of two centuries, and have imagined the forms of those grave and faithful Puritans, as they came on a Sabbath morning from their lowly dwellings, accompanied by their wives in matronly decency and their children in well-ordered sobriety, their garb plain and their countenances stern, saluting each other, as they met, with stiff but friendly greetings, and directing their steps with pious joy to the place of their solemnities. How have manners and opinions changed since that time! How rapid has been the development of social progress among us! The simplicity of ancient days is not to be expected amidst the refinement, the bustling enterprise, the various improvements, of the present period; but may we not wish that we had retained more of

* On a little hill nearly opposite to the old grave-yard.
the devoted sincerity, the sentiment of reverence, which warmed and hallowed the hearts of those men of the olden time?

This first meeting-house remained the only one till 1696. But meanwhile an attempt had been made in 1654 to erect a new one. Arrangements for that purpose, in pursuance of an order passed at a town meeting, were entered into, and the plan and amount of expense agreed upon. But from some cause, which does not appear, nothing was done; and the people continued to assemble at the old house.

In 1692, another movement was made respecting the place of worship. At this time, the town was divided into three interests or parties, the East end, the Middle part, and the West end. After much discussion and agitation, a new meeting-house was built in the Middle part; and on the 4th of February, 1696-7, it was accepted by a vote of the town.

When the sum of two hundred and ninety-five pounds was assessed upon the inhabitants, in 1698-9, to defray the expenses of the last-mentioned house, "the Farmers," as they were designated, were exempted from the tax, "because," as the record expresses it, "they have built a meeting-house more convenient for themselves." By "the Farmers" were meant those, who lived in that part of Watertown, which is now Weston. From this notice it appears, that they likewise were engaged in building a new meeting-house, probably on account of their great distance from the other places of worship. It was not finished, so as to be used for religious services, till March 1700-1.

There were now three meeting-houses in the
town,—the old one at the East end, and the two new ones, of which one was in the Middle part, and the other in the West end among "the Farmers."

Weston was incorporated as a distinct town in January, 1712-13, leaving two meeting-houses in Watertown. Waltham was incorporated in January, 1737-8. Its boundary line on this side came very near to the meeting-house in the Middle part of Watertown, including a large proportion of those who worshipped in that house. The establishment in the Middle part was soon broken up, and a large part of those who had belonged to it were absorbed into Waltham, and worshipped at the house, which had recently been erected there, previously to its incorporation as a distinct town, in conformity with a report of a committee of the General Court, to whom application had been made by the inhabitants of the town for the purpose of settling a boundary line between the two precincts, and deciding with respect to their respective places of worship.

By the same report, the people of the East part or precinct, were required, within ten years, to remove their place of worship to the high ground called School-House Hill. This was accordingly done. The old church at the East end was abandoned, and a new one built on what was then called School-House Hill, but is now known by the name of Meeting-House Hill.*

The territory, which was left under the name of Watertown, had now but one meeting-house, situated

* It was first used for religious services in February, 1725-6, as I learn from the following notice by the Rev. Mr. Storer in one of his old almanacs: — "Feb'y 7: 1725. I preached all day at the new meeting-house from the 26 Psalm, 8 v., it being the first time we assembled there to engage in the public worship of God."
on the highest point of land in the town. Thus matters remained for about thirty years, when a warm altercation occurred in consequence of a proposal to remove the place of worship from the hill. This was finally effected; and the next change was to the present spot. The house, in which we are now assembled, was completed as early as February, 1755. With the exception of the part, which, as you recollect, was added in 1819, it is now something more than 81 years old. No person is living in the town, whose memory goes back to the time when it was built. This is the sixth Congregational meeting-house which has been built in Watertown since its first settlement, including those which were erected before the incorporation of Weston and Waltham; if we confine the estimate within the territory now included under the name of Watertown, this is the fourth Congregational meeting-house since the original settlement.

The brief retrospection, to which we have now been led, suggests a circumstance that ought to be mentioned, as bearing honorable testimony to the Christian spirit of the men, by whom our church was founded and continued. I refer to the character of the first covenant to which they set their names. That instrument of religious union, which on the 30th of July, 1630, as Mather tells us, "about forty men, whereof the first was that excellent knight Sir Richard Saltonstall, subscribed, in order to their coalescence into a church-estate," was expressed in terms sufficiently simple and broad to include the sincere Christian of any denomination.* It is wholly exempt from

* See the covenant in "Historical Sketch of Watertown," p. 134.
a sectarian spirit, introduces no disputed doctrines as the test of Christian fellowship, and expresses the engagement to cleave to the word of God alone, as "the infallible rule and all-sufficient canon." It is distinguished by an earnest tone of religious feeling, and by a hearty devotedness to the cause of Christ; but it betrays no disposition to impose articles of belief, or to insist on agreement in doubtful points as a preliminary to Christian association. They, who framed it, seem to have felt so deeply the practical importance of their work, that they thought only of the solemn obligation, by which they were bound to serve their God and their Saviour, in all singleness of heart and all purity of purpose. I rejoice to say, that, so far as I know, such has been the character of the covenants in our church from that time to the present day; and such may it ever be.

There are many instances of a similar kind among the earliest ecclesiastical transactions of New England. About fifty years after the landing at Plymouth, the church in Plymouth renewed their Christian engagements by a covenant, which they declare to be "the substance of that which their fathers entered into at the first gathering of the church:" it is as broad and liberal in its terms as any Christian of whatever name could desire. The same is true of the covenant adopted by the ancient church at Salem,—the first whose organization took place in this country,—and likewise of the original covenant of the first church in Boston. In the declaration of faith, they require nothing which may not be conscientiously professed by every sincere Christian. Thus faithfully do our fathers seem, in this respect at least, to have imbibed the
spirit of the admirable advice given by John Robinson, in 1620, to those of his congregation who were about to embark for New England. "I beseech you," said that excellent man, "remember it is an article of your church covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God."

It may be alleged, I am aware, that the conduct of our fathers on some occasions was not in accordance with the promise of Christian liberality, which these covenants would seem to hold out. I shall not enter on the discussion of "the vexed question" concerning the light, in which their persecuting spirit is to be viewed. The display of bigotry, which darkens the pages of their history, does indeed evince that they, like the rest of the world, had not reached the broad foundations, on which the true doctrine of toleration rests. But the principles, on which they formed their ecclesiastical organizations, are none the less worthy of praise, and prove that they, unconsciously perhaps, recognised a theory of religious comprehension, the true meaning of which was wider than their practice, and perhaps wider than they themselves, in the homogeneous character of their sentiments at that time, suspected. They had brought with them from their father-land a keen sense of the iniquity of tyranny over conscience, at least in their own case; and of this feeling, however imperfect as a principle of action, we find a manifestation in that disposition to lay a broad and generous foundation for their ecclesiastical associations, which we may observe in their church covenants. From whatever source this disposition emanated, it should at least teach us a good lesson
never to be forgotten; for, if on one occasion more
than another the narrow terms of sectarian exclusiv­
eness are out of place, they are so when set as a
barrier to repel a fellow Christian from the table of
Christ.

There is another remembrance, which it is pleasant
to connect with the history of our church,—I mean
the remembrance of its pastors. Its first four minis­
ters, Phillips, Knowles, Sherman, and Bailey, were
educated in England, and were men of very high
reputation for talents, learning, and piety. Had they
remained at home, and conformed to the Church of
England, their gifts and acquirements were such as
might have secured to them some of the high honors
of that rich and venerable establishment. But, firmly
and at the cost of all sacrifices, they adhered to what
they believed to be their duty; they paused not upon
the question, whether they should obey the voice of
conscience rather than the call of interest; in the true
spirit of self-denial and of unfeigned humility, these
distinguished men were content to leave all the ad­
vantages of their native land, and were happy in
spending their life and labors with this little flock in
the wilderness. They were no rude or ignorant fa­
natics, with whom banishment to a distant land might
involve no sacrifice of the pleasures of refinement.
They brought hither with them the ripe fruits of Eng­
lish learning, a love of English improvements, and the
blessings of English piety. We owe them that rever­
ent tribute of remembrance, which belongs to unques­
tionable piety, uncomplaining sacrifice of self, and
heroic devotedness to duty. It is a poor philosophy,
which would lead us, in the wild and vaporing boast
of modern improvement, to look back disparagingly on men like them, as if their virtues were but the twilight virtues of a dark and enthralled age. It is a false estimate. They were enlightened and holy men, of large and richly furnished minds. It will be well, if God grant us the wisdom to retain the good influences, which their principles spread amidst the forming elements of our social state. I love to contemplate the mild and faithful firmness of Phillips, of whom Winthrop has recorded, that he was "a godly man, specially gifted, and very peaceful in his place, much lamented of his own people and others," — the fervent industry and Christian simplicity of Knowles, — the profound learning, the hallowed talents, the rich eloquence of Sherman, "the golden-mouthed preacher," — the warm piety and irreproachable purity of Bailey. When I add to these, among their successors, the virtues and graces of Angier, Gibbs, Storer, and Adams, and when I look back to the earliest period of our story, and find among the laymen the highly and most justly honored name of Sir Richard Saltonstall, who made a bold and noble plea against the bigotry of the times, * I feel that our church can point, on the records of her history, to men, whose characters and abilities would grace the annals of any community, and I bless God for such examples of wisdom and of devoted piety.

On this occasion we must not forget, that there are patriotic as well as religious associations connected with the house, in which we are assembled. Amidst the opening scenes of our revolution, this place claims to be remembered with historical interest, as a

* See Appendix to "Historical Sketch of Watertown," p. 135.
place where counsel was taken in the hour of danger. In 1775, the second Provincial Congress of Massachusetts adjourned from Concord to Watertown, and assembled in this meeting-house. This was in April. Joseph Warren, Esquire, whom the cause of freedom numbered among its earliest and most lamented martyrs in the contest, was President of the Congress. In this session committees were appointed to collect evidence, and draw up an account, concerning the transactions of the 19th of April. The third and last Provincial Congress assembled in this meeting-house. A sermon was preached here before them by the President of the College, and the session continued till the 19th of July.

This body was succeeded by the General Court, or General Assembly of the Colony, who likewise convened in this meeting-house, and held their sessions here till they adjourned to the State-House in Boston. In 1776, the fifth of March was commemorated, by the people of Boston and others, in the Watertown meeting-house, on which occasion a much applauded oration was delivered by the Rev. Mr. Thacher of Malden. In 1778, this place became again the seat of government for a short time, in consequence of the prevalence of the small-pox in Boston. On the 2nd of June, the House of Representatives met here by adjournment, and held the remainder of their session.

Such is the connexion in which this house stands with a crisis of fearful interest in the history of our country. When we look back to "the times which tried men's souls," let us thankfully remember, that the walls, within which we are now assembled, echoed the voice of freemen, deliberating for the common good in the
dark hour of their country's struggle; that here they sat, day after day, with the awful uncertainty of a tremen-
dous contest before them, and a prospect on which the stoutest heart scarcely dared long to dwell. I repre-
sent to myself those honored men, as they entered at that door with countenances darkened by deep anxie-
ty, but full of unyielding resolution; I see them take their assigned places; I hear the voice which calls them to the business of the day; they seem like men who feel that the eyes of the whole Colony are upon them; I listen to the counsels of the wise, and the bold words of the ardent; and I remember that here were some of the doubtful beginnings of that great struggle, which, by the blessing of God, closed by adding another to the independent nations of the world. Let us rejoice that patriotism and religion have intertwined the associations, which consecrate the remembrance of this old church.

How soon does time give a peaceful and hallowed character to the past! We look back, as upon the olden days of our country, to the period when the venerable Puritans of whom I have spoken, with the generations whom they faithfully served, fell asleep in Jesus. We see, in the dimness of the past, the shadowy forms of a grave, thoughtful, stern race of men, feeding the flame of an earnest inward life amidst the stillness of nature around them, when as yet the sounds of enter-
prise and the rush of business rung not through the land, and binding fast to their hearts the everlasting hopes of the Gospel, while engaged in the quiet labors of the wilderness. Their dust is mingled with the earth, in which that of our own parents and our own children repose. Rapidly indeed do the generations
of men come and pass away. We need not go abroad over the world for illustrations. We find them near at hand. Limit your view, for instance, to this village during the two hundred and six years that have elapsed since its settlement. How many generations of your ancestors, or predecessors, in this place, have gone up to their houses of worship from Sabbath to Sabbath, as we now go, and have gone down to their narrow house in the dust, as we likewise shall soon go. They toiled for themselves and their families, one on his farm, another in his trade; they reared their children amidst the pleasures and disappointments, the hopes and trials, of parental anxiety, and sent them forth to take their places in society; then they silently dropped away, one by one; the old race was gone, and a new one came in their place, soon themselves old, to pass through the same round, and to descend at last to the same dust. When I have wandered through our grave-yards, where

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,"

and have marked the inscriptions, here a century and a half old, and there bearing date last year or last month, some grave-stones so sunken in the earth and so moss-covered, that the tale of mortality upon them is with difficulty legible, and others standing erect, with fresh earth around them and bright letters upon them; when I have bent over the tombs of the pastors of other days, surrounded now by the congregation of the dead, as they once were by the congregation of the living,—I have thought there was an emphasis I never before felt in the Apostle's words, "The fashion of this world passeth away;" and from this miniature picture of hu-
man decay, on a small spot in a single country, I have endeavoured to realize what would be the effect of the vast panorama of man's changes all over the earth, could they be gathered into a single view.

The thoughts, which hover around the recollection of ancient days, as suggested by the history of Christian worship, are numerous and affecting. We cannot recall or reproduce the outward or inward form of man's life in those days; nor ought we to do it, if we could, for it was a form which belonged to a generation long since gathered to their fathers, and which had its place then in the development of society, as ours has its place now. But we may and should seek to keep alive as much of the spirit of those times, as is congenial with new modes of thought and action; for, in its essential elements, it was a wise and holy spirit. We may contrast their simplicity with our refinement, their scanty means with our abundant resources; but we must remember, that the principles, which make their character venerable in our eyes, are the same at all times, however different may be the applications. The men of old days were poor and plain; but they were righteous and true to their God in the midst of their poverty and plainness. When I bring before my imagination the rude and simple building, where our predecessors worshipped their God two centuries ago, and compare it with that beautiful edifice, which we hope in a few days to dedicate to the service of religion, I am reminded of the remark made by St. Wulstan, bishop of Worcester in England, in the eleventh century, when his cathedral church was about to be pulled down to make room for one of larger dimensions and greater splendor. The bishop dwelt with sad
interest on the associations connected with the ancient cathedral, and said, “That happy age of the holy men, our forefathers, knew not how to build stately churches; but under any roof they offered up themselves living temples unto God, and by their examples incited those under their care to do the same.” God grant, that the devout spirit of primitive days may be transmitted to the latest generation who shall worship on the soil of New-England.

While, then, we prepare to bid farewell to this house of worship, let us cherish the recollection, that our church, built as it is “on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,” is no growth of yesterday, but is the church of the Pilgrim Fathers, planted in the midst of their sufferings, watered by their tears, and blessed by their prayers. Hallowed be their memory in this connexion! There is a moral dignity imparted to the history even of a village church, when we view it as marking the line, along which, year after year, by a silent transmission from heart to heart, the spiritual influences of God have been conveyed, in which comfort and edification have been carried to many a humble soul, in which the afflicted have been consoled, the weak strengthened, and the sinner brought to a sense of God and duty. Let us, on the present occasion especially, connect our church with the memory of the past, that our hearts may cleave fast and strong to its interests, that our best and purest affections may gather around it, that we may love it, not only for its own sake, but for the sake of the good men, who for two centuries have labored for it. Let it be a tie of union, a bond of blessing, between us and the congregation of the dead.
on the one hand, and the generations that are yet to advance from the depth of the future, on the other. Let us pray and labor for its prosperity. Never let its interests be late in our thoughts, or low in our affections. Let not the hurry of worldly pursuits, or the eagerness of selfish gratifications, banish from our hearts the house of God and the church of the Saviour; for, if such a feeling should prevail in our land, on our walls the hand of truth would inscribe with fearful meaning—"The glory thereof hath departed."

**DISCOURSE II.**

Psalm, xlvi. 9. "*WE HAVE THOUGHT OF THY LOVING-KINDNESS, O GOD, IN THE MIDST OF THY TEMPLE.*"

Some of the finest strains of Hebrew poetry were inspired by the reverent joy associated with the temple of God. No book in the world contains so admirable a treasury of the language of devotion, as the Book of the Psalms. It is full of the outpourings of gratitude and penitence, of love and trust, of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn." In the earliest ages, the patriarchs, in the simplicity of pastoral life, erected an altar on some spot, where the mercy or the glory of Jehovah had peculiarly rested, perhaps in the wilderness, or beside their flocks in the field, and there presented such offerings or sacrifices as nature furnished. After this remarkable people had gone forth from Egypt, the tabernacle was pitched, and an apparatus of religious ceremonies began to be formed, till in process
of time the son of David erected that magnificent temple, which was the pride, and the boast of every Jew, and where the music of praise and the voice of prayer rolled round the walls, and swelled forth to the Most High. Then might they truly say, in the words of the sacred poet, "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple." Our worship is attended with none of that imposing pomp of ritual service. But in forms more simple, yet not less affecting to religious sensibility, we have one day in seven, on which the thronging demands of the world may be dismissed from the heart, and on which the feelings, that had been heated by the contests or irritated by the mischances of life, may find repose. On the same day, perhaps at the same hour, thousands and ten thousands of our fellow Christians go up to the sanctuary, there to worship the same God, to cherish their reverence for the same Saviour, and to seek guidance and strength in travelling the same path to heaven. In a higher sense than the Jews of old attached to the words, may we say, "We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple."

In my morning discourse, I suggested to you some of those recollections and feelings, which the ancient history of our church should awaken, now that we are to take leave of this place of our solemnities. But there are other thoughts appropriate to the occasion, which should not be passed without notice; I mean the thoughts, which relate immediately to ourselves, or to those who, in our own day, have gone from their connexion with us here into the unseen world.

The monitions of human frailty need not be sought among far distant generations; they are near at hand,
and may be found among those, who walk side by side with us on the journey of life. Since we, who now live, have assembled from Sabbath to Sabbath in this house of God, how many of those, who were wont to meet us here, have passed from the worship of the sanctuary, and from the trials or enjoyments of earth, to the judgment of another world. How many of these very seats, which we occupy, have been emptied by death, and filled again by new actors amidst the busy scenes of life. Of those, who have thus disappeared from their accustomed places, many were bound to the hearts of survivors by the strongest and dearest ties. Children have been separated from their parents, and parents from their children,—the husband from the wife, and the wife from the husband,—the brother from the sister, and the sister from the brother. How often have we come hither to pray for the consolations of Christian faith, when death has taken away those, who, but a few weeks before, had sat by our side in these pews, and joined with us in these solemn services. The faces, which we have seen, we see no more; the hands, which have been reached forth in friendly greeting, have crumbled into dust. Truly, when you cast your thoughts back even for a few years, you find within the walls of the sanctuary a silent, but most affecting, testimony to the ceaseless fulfilment of the ancient sentence, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Others have gone from their places in the sanctuary to the grave, with whom we stood only in the common relations of social intercourse. We were accustomed to meet them in the transactions of business, in the pleasant interchange of daily courtesies or the civilities
of good neighbourhood, and here amidst the solemnities of God's house. They dropped away from the midst of us, and we have rushed on, and perhaps forgotten them. With others we were connected by the ties of peculiar religious fellowship. We met them at the table of the Lord, and joined with them in the solemn rite consecrated to the memory of him, who loved us and gave himself for us, till they passed, as we hope, to the communion of the just made perfect in the upper world. There were others again, towards whom, among the competitions and interfering interests of life, we had allowed ourselves to cherish less friendly and pleasant feelings; for sad it is to think, that our days, few and full of painful trial as they unavoidably are, will be sometimes embittered by unnecessary strife and by ill will, which can be remembered only with pain. But they too, on whom we thus turned cold or hostile looks, have gone the way whence they cannot return, and jealousy or enmity has been hushed in the dark stillness of the grave. "Death," says one, "imposes silence, and so at last these fierce passions of their minds, and these inveterate contentions, are composed to rest by the weight of a little dust thrown upon them." *

These are among the serious recollections, which throng upon the mind, when we are about to bid fare-

---

* Leighton's Works, IV. 296. Leighton here beautifully alludes to the lines in Virgil, Georg. IV. 86 and 87. The same passage is applied by Dr. Parr to the death of Fox and Pitt. See Characters of Fox, &c. p. 309. — Scougal (Works, p. 112,) expresses the thought as follows; "Naturalists tell us, that when swarms of bees fight in the air, they are dispersed by throwing dust among them. Did we in our thoughts often reflect upon that dust whereunto we must all shortly return, we should more easily lay down our quarrels and animosities."
well to our old place of worship. As it forms the rallying point of a common interest, so it admonishes us of our common frailty by reminding us how many of our fellow worshippers, during even the few years of our attendance in this place, have joined the vast congregation of the dead. There is a thoughtful sadness inspired by the rapid disappearance of the generations of men, unlike the feeling with which we contemplate other aspects of decay or change. The revolutions of things merely material do not affect us so much. Mountains have been rent asunder, or fragments have been torn from them, — rivers have been turned aside from their deep beds, — the restless ocean has beat and encroached upon the firm continent, — forests have gone down silently to the dust, and a new growth has sprung up in their place, to fall likewise in its own time, — the stately edifices, which pride or taste had reared, have crumbled down, and decay has sat in triumph over them till they are remembered no more. Thus desolation or change proceeds with a progress, that may not be stayed; and these things we regard with wonder or with anxious curiosity. But it is with a different and peculiar feeling, that we mark the wasting invasions of mortality among that company of beings of whom we constitute a part, that we see them move over the earth for their brief day, and then vanish into silence and death. It is with another kind of interest, that we witness the ravages of resistless dissolution among those, who, before time took its last step, were as busy and eager as we are now, whose hopes were as bright, whose feelings as warm, whose relish of pleasure as keen, as ours, — who were made happy by success and sad by disappointment, as we
are,—who enjoyed God's beautiful creation, and were chastened by his dispensations,—who breathed the fresh air of heaven with us, and over whom suns rose and went down. There is here a lesson healthful and quickening to our virtue. Heedless passion stands awe-struck before it; vice feels abashed at the contemplation of it; sensual indulgence is rebuked by its admonition; all serious, chastened, manly sentiments grow stronger by it; diligence in every good work is stimulated; the fever of earthly passion is cooled down; hope is regulated; fear is made more rational; and the whole moral man becomes more pure in desire, more elevated in purpose, more just in expectation.

But the view, suggested by this retrospection, must not be limited to the mere consideration of man's frailty. There is a higher and better thought. All those, our associates, who have passed from the house of God to the narrow house appointed for all the living, were immortal beings. The story of dust and ashes is not the whole of their story. The meaning of their existence was not limited by the grave. All was not over, when they had finished the routine of earthly cares, earthly hopes, and earthly fears. The same sanctuary, which reminds us that they have gone from us, likewise reminds us that they lived under the dispensation of that truth, which brings "life and immortality to light." If we say only, with the ancient proverb, "Man is a bubble," we make but a miserably defective, and therefore an untrue, statement. Man not only has a soul, but is a soul; and nothing connected with his existence has any real significance, except so far as it expresses or cherishes the action of his inward life. Till you have seen
eternity written on the whole frame of his being, you have not understood that being; nor, without this interpretation, can you ever understand it. He belongs to God; he belongs to the Saviour; he belongs to the spiritual world; he belongs to that law of duty, which is God's law,—to those hopes, and that improvement, whose objects are infinite, whose course is immeasurable. When, therefore, we think of the fellow worshippers, whom we have followed to the grave, let us think of them in connexion with that religion of Christ, those truths of the Gospel, to which they were accustomed to listen in this place. They have stepped over the mysterious line, which divides the form of existence we see, from that which we cannot see. They have passed to the other side of the dark curtain, which is dropped between the life that now is and that which is to come. We see them no more; we hear them no more; but life with them is still manifested in new forms, and has now grown into larger activity. Of many we hope and believe, that they have gone from the imperfect services of this place to the higher and holier services of Heaven,—that they died in the blessing of that hope which maketh not ashamed, and have exchanged the toils of probation for the rewards of glory. Perhaps they look back on the influences they found within these walls, as among the precious means, by which they were trained to a state of preparation for the joys that no eye hath seen, no ear heard, and no heart conceived. Here then, my friends, is a thought full of solemn interest to us. Be it our care so to improve the means of grace we are permitted to enjoy, that we may live the life, which we live in the flesh, by faith in the Son of God, and
that they who shall worship in our places, when we are gone, may have reason to say of us, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

But, my hearers, there is a still nearer application to be made of the thoughts suggested by this occasion. We have a personal interest in the recollections belonging to this house. When we are about to take leave of our accustomed place of worship, there are questions of solemn import, which press themselves upon our attention, and demand an answer from us as from moral and accountable beings. It is a time for that self-examination, which relates to the use of spiritual privileges. In the quiet atmosphere enclosed within these walls, I hear, as it were, a voice which summons us all to ask ourselves, what testimony has gone hence concerning us to the judgment seat above.

When we look back on the past, over the long list of Sabbaths, on which we have regularly assembled here, can we forget the purposes, which have brought us together, and can we fail to ask whether these purposes have been in any good degree accomplished? All that we can conceive as most holy in duty, most sublime in the tendencies or most elevated in the hopes of man, stands related to the sanctuary, as to a central point of interest. We come hither to worship Him, who formed man in his own image, and whose inspiration gave him understanding, to recognise and cherish that great distinction of our spiritual nature, our relation to the Infinite and the Eternal, to bow down before the throne of grace, while we present the sacrifice of the broken and the contrite heart, and
say, "God be merciful to us sinners," to bring our holiest affections to divine truth, as the soul's life, and as the source of wisdom unto salvation. What are the other objects we pursue, the other purposes for which we live, compared with these? Our attendance in the house of God is so much a matter of old custom, even from childhood, that the apprehension of its great meaning grows dull and dead. We need to be startled into a quickening sense of its true nature. During the past years in which we have been wont to meet each other here, we might have been addressed in the impressive words of one, whose name is held in hallowed remembrance by our churches, with the questions, "In whose presence are we assembled? Of a few friends only, who have chosen this mode of passing an easy hour; of a preacher, a poor mortal like yourselves, who is placed here to furnish something for your curiosity? Are these the only beings, that belong to this place? O no; here we stand before the Majesty of heaven and earth, whose presence fills immensity; we come to pay our homage to him, who liveth for ever and ever, the support of all nature. We stand before a God of purity inexpressible, and of mercy everlasting. We come to learn the will of Him, on whom our poor life every moment depends; we come to throw ourselves on his compassion, to confess our sins, to devote ourselves to his service through Jesus Christ, and to learn what he has revealed to us of himself, of ourselves, and of our destination. This is the threshold of a more glorious temple in the heavens; this is an entrance to the world, in which God discovers himself to the eye of man. In a few years, these privileges will have passed away; your prayers
will ascend here no more; no more will the word of God reach your ears from this place; the follies of your attendance cannot be retrieved; lost opportunities cannot be recalled; and all that ingratitude and neglect, to which these walls have been a witness, will rise up before you, and reproach you with unutterable sorrow.” *

And do these walls, my friends, now that we are about to bid farewell to them, signify this painful reproach against us? Let us consider the purposes of the sanctuary, as they have just been described, and then answer the question honestly, for it is no light or vain question.

When we look back on the time, during which our names have been connected with this place, as Christian worshippers, have we suffered ourselves, from indolence or indifference, to neglect the institutions of the Sabbath? Have poor and slender excuses appeared sufficiently weighty to satisfy rising scruples, or to sooth conscience, in the midst of such neglect? Have the claims of public worship and religious instruction seemed so old and hackneyed a theme, that it has been difficult for us to bring our minds fairly to consider the subject at all? Has it really been to us a light and trivial thing, whatever outward decorum we may have observed respecting it? Have the excuses, which have prevailed with us to desert the house of God, been such as would have induced us for a moment to abandon the pursuit of gain? Have we really thought it a matter of as much,—I say not of more,—but of as much consequence to answer the

---

demands of duty here, as to answer the calls of
business elsewhere? Perhaps the testimony of con-
science on these points may be the record of habitual
faithfulness, of watchful interest, in the public services
of religion. God grant it may be so to many. But
let those to whom it is far otherwise, pray and strive,
that, if lost opportunities of grace cannot be recalled,
yet future ones shall not be wasted to swell the fearful
account of neglected means.

Again, let us, while we review the past, inquire
whether we have here worshipped the Lord “in the
beauty of holiness.” Have we brought hither the
unreserved homage of the heart, the unpolluted devo-
tion of the soul? When we have entered these doors,
have we left behind the noisy or restless passions
which the pursuits and contests of life awaken, and
have we ceased to think of our gains, our resentments,
our schemes for pleasure or for profit? Have we found
by our own experience, that the worship of God is
something better than a heavy duty-work, that it is
the glad offering of happy souls, the pleasant service
of cheerful and heaven-aspiring minds,—that its pur-
poses are not to be answered by coldness or formality,
by bringing our bodies to the house of God, and leav-
ing our affections somewhere else? Have we felt, that,
in the presence of God, we stand in all the nakedness
of our real thoughts and feelings; and that no lurking
insincerity, no indifference or unconcern, can escape
the eye of Omniscience, whose glance measures the
universe? Have we drawn nigh to the sanctuary
with that preparation of heart and spirit, which gives
an animating and sanctifying power to the hours spent
here? Have we left the cares, the passions, the
tumult of the world behind us, when we have taken our seats in this place, and said to them,

"To-morrow will be time enough
To feel your harsh control;
Ye shall not violate this day,
The Sabbath of the soul."

In short, have we been persuaded that here was a concern of infinite moment between God and our souls? Let every one hear for himself what conscience has to say, as to these questions. If the report bear witness, that he has worshipped the Father in spirit and in truth, let him pray for still increasing purity in this respect. If the review should rebuke him with the remembrance of carelessness, coldness, formality, or hypocrisy, let him humble himself in prayer for mercy, and for more fervor and faithfulness in time to come.

Further; we must ask what fruits we have gathered during the years of our attendance in this place. Have we gone from the sanctuary with good influences about our hearts, with more love for our duty, and more strength for our Christian warfare? Has our sense of gratitude to the Saviour been quickened into the principle of obedience to his commands, and have we learned to estimate the spiritual benefits of his mission, who came to seek and to save that which was lost? Have we permitted the services of God's house to do something towards making us wiser and better,—or have we suffered ourselves to float along, from week to week, giving a careless attendance merely in obedience to custom, but leaving out of sight the great object of practical improvement, for which the public institutions of religion are professedly
established? You are accustomed to take an account of your worldly affairs, to review your business, that you may see whether you have gained or lost by it. Be at least as faithful to your religious interests. Do you fear that you should be going behindhand in your temporal concerns? And have you no fear of going behindhand in the things which relate to your everlasting peace? Consider, I beseech you, as those who shall give an account, consider what spiritual culture you have bestowed here, and what spiritual fruits you have reaped.

My Christian friends, I desire to take to myself a large part of the application of this subject. I desire to question my own heart, as well as exhort you to question yours. The review of our connexion with this house of worship cannot present a more solemn appeal to your feelings, than to mine. I have an affection for this old house; with all its defects of convenience or taste, I love it for the pleasant and sacred thoughts, which I am permitted to link with it. I remember, that here, in this pulpit, I was ordained to the work of the Christian ministry; I remember, that here I have engaged in the most solemn duties which man can discharge towards his fellow man, that I have stood here to present the truths of eternity to your minds, and to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ," — that here I have broken the bread and poured the wine, which commemorate a Saviour's services and a Saviour's love, — that here, in the water of baptism, I have dedicated your children to God and to Christ. Can I remember these things, and then leave this house with indifference? No, I should be ashamed of myself, if I could. There will always be in my
mind reverent associations with this place; and the
remembrances suggested by what has been done here
will linger around the spot, while I live. It is now
more than seventeen years since I was set apart to
the work of the ministry among you; and that, my
friends, is a large fragment even of a long ministry.
We are amazed, when we stop to measure the pro­
gress, which time in its never-ceasing strides makes.
When I review the years, during which I have minis­
tered in this church, I am reminded of many imper­
fections and deficiencies, of much unworthiness and
much failure. God forgive me that my labors have
been so poor, compared with the standard at which the
Christian minister should always aim. I can say, as
before the Searcher of hearts, that I have endeavoured
to do my duty; but the intention is all I can answer
for. I have sought to preach to you the truths of Jesus
Christ plainly, heartily, honestly. My heart’s desire
and prayer to God have been, that I might minister
to your Christian improvement and growth in grace,
and that I might be a useful friend to your families and
your children. I should fain hope that our relation to
each other has not been destitute of good fruits.
Would to God it had borne more! May He, whose
mercy is our hope, pardon the faults of my ministry,
and guide me to better light, and inspire me with more
earnest faithfulness, in time to come!

Brethren, by the blessing of God on your labors, you
have been enabled to erect a new, convenient, and
beautiful house for the worship of the Infinite Spirit.
You justly deemed that the time had come, when this
Christian enterprise ought to be undertaken; and you
have brought it to a close, well and nobly. I thank
you from my heart for the honorable perseverance, with which you have completed the work. I remem-
ber with deep gratitude the untiring industry and affectionate zeal, with which female kindness has so
honorably labored to embellish the new sanctuary. May God reward you by making the house, which
you have builded and adorned, a permanent bless-
ing to yourselves, and to your children's children. May your hearts be bound to it by holy and strong
ties; may you ever feel a deep interest in it, and love it as the hallowed place of your solemnities; and may
"holiness to the Lord" be inscribed on those walls, till they shall mingle with the dust of earth.

How strikingly, amidst the changes of life, are we reminded of the permanence, the sameness, of our blessed religion! One house of worship gives place to another, and that again to another, in the long course of years, as convenience, necessity, or taste may dictate; and the worshippers themselves, genera-
tion after generation, vanish from the earth. But the religion itself is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. In its essential elements it is always one, and, amidst the shifting scenes of man's customs and man's earthly life, is like the clear and steady light of the sun compared with the clouds, the shapes of which are continually changing and perishing. It may clothe itself in various outward forms; it may be connected with many unessential articles of faith; but in its great central principles, which are few in number and of vital significance, there is a power,—a life,—that no time and no circumstances can affect. Amidst the revolutions, changes, and downfall of particular na-
tions and particular churches, this remains the great,
enduring agent of the spiritual world. Here is one thing, over which time has no power. It stands ever erect, like some lofty column amidst a wide scene of general decay, the beacon of hope to the world. It gave its blessings to our fathers, whose dust is mingled with the earth around us; it gives them to us now; it will give them to our children down to the last generation who shall occupy our places. Shall we not reverence a power, which thus always speaks and breathes of eternity,—which thus plants the standard of its triumph on the very dust, into which the body of man, with all the forms of its kindred matter, crumbles? It contains, and ever will contain within itself, a refuge for the sinner and consolation for the saint. Wherever the weary and heavy-laden are to be relieved, wherever the sorrowful are to be comforted, the ignorant to be enlightened, or the wanderer to be guided aright, wherever there is a heart touched with penitence, a poor prodigal anxious to return to his father's house,—there the religion of Jesus Christ appears, and always shall appear, with the same life-giving energy, the same holy and happy influences, mighty to raise up and to save.

And now, my hearers, we must say farewell to this ancient house of God, where our fathers, our friends, and ourselves have for so many years sought the hallowing influences of worship and faith. It is worthy to be remembered by us with affectionate respect. We will remember, that it was consecrated as an offering to God by the men of other days. We will remember, that, in the dark hour of our country's trials, the voice of patriotic counsel was echoed from these walls. We will remember, that here the truth, as it
is in Jesus, has been preached, and the memorial of the Saviour observed, for more than eighty-one years. We will look back on the past with grateful recollections, and forward to the future with hopeful faith. May the blessing of God accompany us, when we go hence to meet in another temple. Farewell to this house! And when the history of the soul shall be revealed in the light of a better world, may it appear that in this place many have gathered such influences, as have prepared them for "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."
A DISCOURSE
PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION

OF

THE NEW MEETING-HOUSE

ERECTED BY

THE CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN WATERTOWN,

ON

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH, 1836.
DISCOURSE III.

1 Kings, ix. 3. “I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built.”

It is a great thing which man does, when he consecrates himself and his possessions to God. He recognises thereby a sacred relation, in which is written the explanation of his mysterious being. He signifies that he is overshadowed by the Spirit of love and truth, that he dwells with the Father and the Father with him, and that the inward life, which alone constitutes his true existence, is the token of his union with the Highest.

So when he attaches to the works of his hands peculiar associations with the Holy One, he makes the material minister to the spiritual, the transient to the everlasting, and elevates what is in itself poor or perishing into a glorious meaning that takes hold on eternity. It is thus that the very wood and stones, of which he constructs an edifice for worship, become beautifully significant; and the forms, into which his skill and taste have wrought them, are no longer silent, but speak of things beyond the outward world.

Shall such aids to piety, congenial as they are to the very laws of our moral nature, be set at nought? Shall we doubt that we obey a true and holy impulse, when we thus find in the visible a symbol of the invisible, and place among our dwellings, or beside our daily walks, the tokens of our connexion with the
spiritual world? The consecration of special places to a sacred service is so much a dictate of our nature, that the world over, in all ages, it has held a prominent position among religious ceremonies. However defective or gross may have been the worship, however enthralled among debasing superstitions the action of the religious sentiment, still men have felt, and have expressed the feeling, that there was a meaning in sacred enclosures, which might not be scorned with impunity even by him who scorned other things. The Roman poet did but give utterance to a natural suggestion, when he threatened his countrymen with the vengeance of the gods for the ruinous condition of their domes and altars.

To this spontaneous sentiment our religion has given a new and lofty direction. It would be little to the praise of Christianity, had it broken asunder all such associations, had it renounced for its spiritual service the aid of place and of externals; for this would be in ill accordance with the philosophy of our nature. At the centre of the Christian dispensation lies the purest form of spirituality, the most intense principle of interior life. These are the vital and characteristic elements of its being. But along with these, and as helps to these, it gladly allies itself to the decencies of outward attractions, and appropriates the instrumental influence that acts upon the senses. They mistake,

*“Delicta majorum immeritus lues, Romane, donee templa refeceris, Ædesque labentes Deorum, et Fœda nigro simulacra fumo.”

_Hor. Carm._ lib. iii. 6.

See likewise the account given by Tacitus, of the dedication of the Capitol, when rebuilt by Vespasian.—_Hist._ lib. iv. 53.
who suppose that they make Christianity any more a
religion of the heart, by denying to it all relation to
place and time.

It is interesting to contemplate the progress of
Christianity in respect to the external accommodations
enjoyed by its disciples, as well as in respect to its
moral power. We look back on the little and friend­
less band of the Saviour’s followers, just after they had
returned from the memorable scene, at which their
Master bade them farewell, to go to his Father and
their Father, to his God and their God. They turned
away, as we may suppose, with heavy hearts, and,
when they reached Jerusalem, assembled in “an up­
per room,” where they continued “with one accord
in prayer and supplication.” What holy and touch­
ing associations does imagination attach to that room,
where were gathered the small company of God’s
messengers, from whom the word of life was to go
forth subduing and blessing the world. Time rolled
on, and that little band grew into a large body of be­
lievers, holding “the unity of the spirit in the bond of
peace,” and carrying with them the power that was
to effect the greatest moral revolution in the annals of
the world. During this time, they had stated places
of meeting, though not such as were then denominat­
ed temples.* As their numbers increased, and as
they found periods of peace and favor from the civil
power, they built their churches. These were multi­
plied rapidly, insomuch that when the edict of Diocle­
tian went forth for the destruction of such edifices,

* The early Christians were reproached with having no temples: the
meaning of this reproach is explained in Joseph Mede’s Discourses and
Treatises concerning Churches, &c. See Mede’s Works, book ii.
334-336.
there were more than forty of these basilicae in the city of Rome alone. Christianity passed through its seasons of sunshine and of storm, ever growing, ever reaching forth to wider conquest, till a Christian emperor was seated on the throne, and the banner of the cross became the banner of empire. Then architecture, in its most costly and magnificent forms, was summoned into the service of the religion of Jesus; and, when Constantine had finished a church at Jerusalem, the bishops were gathered from the various parts of Christendom, to perform with due magnificence the solemn rites of dedication. From that time, the spread of the religion was accompanied by the multiplication of edifices adorned with solemn beauty, and consecrated to the services by which the soul, in visible forms, manifests its relation to the Infinite One and to spiritual being.

And now, instead of that one "upper room," where the little company of heart-stricken disciples met, surrounded by a hostile world, we look abroad on those parts of the earth, which are most distinguished by all the refinements of life, and in which the great intellectual power of mankind resides, and see them abounding in the splendid memorials of Christian worship, which echo to the prayers and praises of countless multitudes keeping the holy day of the Gospel. The traveller lingers with reverent delight among the venerable temples and time-hallowed cathedrals of the old world; and our own fair land, a new and glorious conquest for the Gospel, is covered with churches, whose towers and spires glitter in her crowded cities, or point peacefully to heaven on the hills and along the valleys of her beautiful villages.

Such has been the progress in the external appen-
dages of our religion. And is it not analogous to the progress of the same religion, as a moral power among mankind? When we revert to the humble and apparently feeble beginning of the Christian dispensation, it is wonderful to mark its widening and deepening progress, as it travelled onward through the ages, till it has become the great master power of the world. One, who might have observed those few disciples at Jerusalem, after the ascension of Jesus, in the light of common worldly wisdom, would probably have regarded them as exhibiting one of the most hopeless of the many delusions of fanaticism. "Soon," he would have said, "they will disband from the mere heart-sickness of disappointed hope, or with the levity of unstable men they will abandon a fruitless cause, or they will wither before the fierce onset of persecution, and be heard of no more." But was it so? No; these were the appointed ones to carry on God's great work among men; few they were in number, but stout of heart, filled with the strength, and inspired with the wisdom, of Heaven. They went forth to their task, as those who had been called by a voice they might not disobey, to be the heralds of salvation to a world lying in the shadow of moral death. They counted life a cheap thing, so they might but finish their work; and the word of God grew mightily. They gave impulses, whose strong vibrations are now spreading through the earth, so that the far distant islands of the ocean, and the tribes of barbarous shores, are listening to the sound as it rolls on. Since those humble men, scorned or hated by their age, spoke the words of life, the history of the world has become a far different thing from what it had been before. Since the disciples
gathered with timid steps into "the upper room" at Jerusalem, and looked upon each other in sorrowful perplexity, the religion they preached has, in various forms and by numerous collateral influences, become the mightiest power that moves mankind,—a power which marshals the world forward on the path of improvement, is down in the depths and abroad over the surface of society, kindles the light of spiritual philosophy, tasks the most gifted intellects to follow its far-reaching revelations of truth, and holds under its reign the nations who march in the van of the world's progress,—reminding us how truly Jesus spoke, when he said, "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

We have come together to consecrate, by the usual religious solemnities, to the service of God, this commodious and beautiful church, which by his blessing on our labors we have been permitted to erect. We would pray, that we may find fulfilled to us what Jehovah fulfilled to Solomon, when he said, "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built." I would therefore ask you to consider what this act means; or rather, I would propose, as the subject of your thoughts on this occasion, the significance of a Christian temple.

1. The sanctuary is a symbol of the Divine Presence. In saying this, I do not mean to be considered as uttering mere words of course, but as declaring a vital and precious truth. Nor do I countenance the old imagination, which assigned a local habitation to the Supreme Mind.

It is a poor philosophy and a narrow religion, which does not recognise God as all in all. Every moment of
our lives, we breathe, stand, or move in the temple of the Most High; for the whole universe is that temple. Wherever we go, the testimony to his power, the impress of his hand, are there. Ask of the bright worlds around us, as they roll in the everlasting harmony of their circles; and they shall tell you of Him, whose power launched them on their courses. Ask of the mountains, that lift their heads among and above the clouds; and the bleak summit of one shall seem to call aloud to the snow-clad top of another, in proclaiming their testimony to the Agency which has laid their deep foundations. Ask of ocean's waters; and the roar of their boundless waves shall chant from shore to shore a hymn of ascription to that Being, who hath said, "Hitherto shall ye come and no further." Ask of the rivers; and, as they roll onward to the sea, do they not bear along their ceaseless tribute to the ever-working Energy, which struck open their fountains and poured them down through the valleys? Ask of every region of the earth, from the burning equator to the icy pole, from the rock-bound coast to the plain covered with its luxuriant vegetation; and will you not find on them all the record of the Creator's presence? Ask of the countless tribes of plants and animals; and shall they not testify to the action of the great Source of Life? Yes, from every portion, from every department of nature, comes the same voice; everywhere we hear thy name, O God; everywhere we see thy love. Creation, in all its length and breadth, in all its depth and height, is the manifestation of thy Spirit, and without thee the world were dark and dead. The universe is to us as the burning bush which the Hebrew leader saw; God is ever present in it, for it burns with His
glory, and the ground on which we stand is always holy.

How then can we speak of that Presence as peculiarly in the sanctuary, which is abroad through all space and time? "Behold," said the king of Israel, following out this natural thought, "the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house, which I have builded." But here it should be remembered, that, when we speak of the presence of God in relation to the human mind, we suppose such a state of mind as may be fitted to apprehend that presence; without this, the tokens of the Infinite Spirit are as if they were not. We can draw nigh unto God, so as to realize that he is with us, only by coming into a state of spiritual union with him; and that spiritual union is the result of the action which carries our souls towards God. When our inward frame is in harmony with the Divine Nature, by being opened to the light of truth, which is the sun of the spiritual world, and by expanding into holy affections and heavenly aspirations; then, and not before, we are truly in the presence of God; then, and not before, there is a living relation between us and the Father of our spirits.

Now the process, by which this approximation to the great Source of moral life is to be effected, must be wrought out by the lifting up of our faculties and feelings out of dark and chilling influences into the broad, warm day of the upper world. The good man lives in the presence of God because he is good, because his spirit has an affinity for the divine and the infinite; he is not alone, for the Father is with him. It is indifference, or depravity, or earthliness, that carries the soul
away from the presence-chamber of the Almighty, that blinds the eye, petrifies the heart and shuts us up in a narrow prison, so that we live without God. What, though the agency of the Holy One is about us and within us, encompassing our paths at home and abroad, in solitude and in society? what, though it may be traced in the history of the world and in our own experience, in the beneficent arrangements of Providence and in the mysteries of our spiritual frame? So long as our minds are blind to its tokens, and refuse to recognise its doings by coming into that moral harmony with them, which constitutes the true vision, it is all in vain. It is as if we should stand in the midst of the outward creation, as it lies tranquilly in the beautiful sunlight, and yet see none of its glories, because our eyes are darkened by disease, or because we look down only upon the little spot beneath our feet.

The true presence of God, then, is that presence which the spirit of man seeks and gains, when it passes into a state of moral union with God. Now this is the development of our nature, which the temple consecrated to religion is designed to assist, and which it does greatly assist, unless the purpose be paralyzed by formality or crushed by worldliness. In the church, the willing soul may find such influences, as shall place the vital elements of her being in true correspondence with the Highest. It is there, that faith is nourished, hope kindled, and peace shed abroad in the inner man. It is there, that the icy indifference, the self-seeking which wrongs the soul, the hardened earthliness, the corrupt trifling, which separate between man and his God, may vanish before the moral power that constitutes, if I may so say, the genius of the place, and thus
the finite mind may be carried into intimate communion with the Infinite Mind. There we may be nourished in truth, wisdom, and love; and by these God is in us and we in God. The services of the sanctuary, and the thoughts that stir in the worshipper’s heart, may cause heaven to open in the silent manifestations of the Holy One; for, even amidst the imperfection and littleness of earth, whatever may be the measure of our progress in the true spiritual life, it will correspond to the vast expansion of the Divine Nature, as the shadow on the dial corresponds in its motion to the position of the sun in the heavens, though the shadow moves perhaps but a handbreadth, while the place of the great luminary changes by millions of miles.

The ancient Gentiles, we are told, supposed their deities to be enclosed within their temples by the efficacy of spells and magical incantations, so that they could always be found there when wanted by their worshippers. For this retention of the gods within the sacred enclosure, an idol was necessary as the central point of collocation. In their gross apprehension, this indwelling of the image of the god was essential to the idea of a temple; and because the followers of Jesus, guided by a better instruction, discarded these unworthy conceptions, and believed the mind of the worshipper to be the true sanctuary, they were represented as having no temples. In later days, the doctrine has received the countenance of learned Christian divines, that the presence of God in the place of worship is to be explained by the actual, though invisible presence of his retinue of holy angels,—the heavenly guard, stationed as observers of the conduct and the hearts of
the congregation.* But to the enlightened Christian, this subject exhibits itself in far higher and more spiritual relations. He knows that he can come into the presence of the Most High only by the elevating and sanctifying influences, through which his own nature passes; that he can rise to the true vision of the Divine only on the wings of faith, only by the upward progress of his inward being; that, as it has been well expressed, we can see God as he is, "no otherwise but by becoming deiform, by being changed into the same glory." † The real Schechinah,‡ or the special manifestation of God's presence, is in the human soul, in its exercises of trust, of love, of holy thought, of devout aspiration. It is because in the church these motions of the spirit are or may be warmed into strong action, and these tendencies towards heaven ripened into principles, that the church becomes significant of divine realities, and that God may be said to meet the true worshipper

† Bishop Rust's Funeral Sermon on Jeremy Taylor. This discourse, full of the rich eloquence of spiritual thought, may be found in the first volume of Heber's edition of Taylor. The following extract from it finely describes a great truth connected with my subject:— "There are several faculties in the soul of man, that are conformed to several kinds of objects; and, according to that life a man is awakened into, so these faculties do exert themselves; and though, while we live barely an animal life, we converse with little more than this outward world and the objects of our senses, yet there are faculties within us that are receptive of God; and, when we arrive once unto a due measure of purity of spirit, the rays of heavenly light will as certainly shine into our minds, as the beams of the sun, when it arises above the horizon, do illuminate the clear and pellucid air; and from this sight and illumination, the soul proceeds to an intimate union with God, and to a taste and touch of him. This is that ἔκτασις τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ τοῦ ἄνθρωπος, that 'silent touch' with God, that fills the soul with unexpressible joy and triumph."
‡ Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, p. 65.
there. He, who knows this by his own experience, who has found in the temple that quickening of the inward life which he finds nowhere else, will be ready to say, in the language of the patriarch when he awoke from the vision at Bethel, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not; this is none other but the house of God, this is the gate of heaven."

2. The sanctuary is the symbol of the purest and most salutary emotions of the human heart. It is the standing exhibition of the fact, that a refuge is provided from the wearisome toil and the wearing pursuits of a world, where are duties and disappointments which we may not avoid and should not wish to avoid, but which sometimes try the spirit painfully. It stands in the midst of our dwellings, surrounded by the scenes of our usual labor,—a tranquil and separated spot, to signify that there is a place of holy refreshment for the mind amidst its working-day cares.

I know that the reality of this view depends on the state of feeling with which we habitually visit the church and perform our duties there; but, in all statements of this sort, we presuppose a wise and conscientious use of the means of grace connected with our Christian institutions. Without this, they will sink among the dead things of form, instead of being instinct with a living power. But if, as a matter of sacred duty, we avail ourselves of those preparative influences, which tranquilize and purify our trains of thought by taking them out of their common tracks of worldliness, which give the mind a fixed, steady, religious tendency, and create an aptness for devout contemplation, a relish for Christian truth, then it may indeed be affirmed, that the house of worship is the scene of that healing power,
which is found in the best affections of our nature. I know not where we may look for calm and soothing influences, if not in those exercises and in that discipline of the feelings, which the sanctuary offers. The tribute which we there present, is a tribute of praise to the Presiding Mind of the universe; and even if it be not, as it should be, the outpouring of a heart filled with the love of the infinitely Good and True, still there is in the very nature of the contemplation to which for a while it fastens the thoughts, a power that must give a respite, at least, from the things which debase or grieve the spirit.

"Praise is devotion fit for mightie minds,
The differing world's agreeing sacrifice."

Not less is it fit for the humblest minds; and for all it has a blessing of elevated calmness like that which we find in looking, till we are lost in far-running thoughts, at the stars in the firmament. So, too, penitence has a subduing and refining efficacy for the heart. We stand in the presence of the holy laws prescribed by the Moral Governor of the universe, and conscience declares the verdict, that we are transgressors. The sentiment of unworthiness and of our need of mercy is a purifying sentiment. The sacrifice of a broken spirit is not only acceptable to God, but comes back in blessings on the heart of the penitent himself. Nor can the mind be called to the contemplation of religious truth, in all its vast relations to the present and the future, without receiving from the process an influence at least far better than that of the petty or agitating interests of the things seen and temporal. The gospel of Jesus Christ, even if it does not operate with a saving power
on the heart, will do much to redeem it from frivolity and debasement.

And so I might proceed to speak of all the modifications of tranquillizing influence, which the temple of God may furnish to the willing mind, the antagonist power which it supplies to the hurry and the worldliness, the heating and corrupting pursuits, that crowd around us amid our every-day scenes. May we not fitly call these, in the beautiful words of an old divine, "a sweet breathing of the Holy Spirit upon our passions, whereby it does, as it did in the beginning of Genesis, *incubare aquis*, move by a cherishing, quiet virtue, upon the sea of our passions?"

Now here is a soothing power, which every one will find occasions enough to wish for. Affliction in some of its various forms will cast its dark shade over his domestic circle; the hollow-hearted selfishness, the narrow views, the bigotry, the ingratitude of his fellow-men, will mingle many drops of bitterness in his cup; seasons will come when the spirit within him will be weary and faint under the burdens of life, and he will be ready to exclaim, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest;" seasons when temptations will press hard, when the voice of duty will be stern and her tasks severe; seasons when he will see the emptiness, the cheat of all that wealth or self-indulgence has to bestow, when the pangs of the last hour will come up in prospect, and the solemnity of death will press on his thoughts not to be turned aside. At such times will he not thank God for the privileges of the temple, which symbolizes the soothing influences of divine truth and of a better world, which is as "a refuge in the storm, a shadow in the heat?"
Even if the sanctuary could render no higher service than this recreation of the wearied spirit, it would amply repay the most liberal protection from the community. Among the various tribes of fishes, there are some that cannot live without occasionally coming to the surface of the water to breathe our air. Our condition somewhat resembles this. No one, who has any apprehension of better things than the pleasures of sense or the possessions that perish in the using, can live long without taking breath in the higher atmosphere of devotion and of spiritual truth. We are informed, that the primitive Christians built their churches, for the most part, in an oblong shape, so as to exhibit some similitude to the form of a ship; the emblematical meaning of this was, that mankind are cast upon a stormy and tempestuous sea, and that the church is the ship of safety to bear them to the haven of peace.* The device may be regarded as a quaint conceit; but does it not contain the germ of a significance, the truth of which every man of religious sensibility must acknowledge, amidst the wearisome struggles and the wasting labors, the sad hours and the trying duties, of life?

3. The sanctuary is the symbol of a provision for the best welfare of the civil community. It stands forth, bearing the silent testimony of respect paid to religion, as the essential foundation of the wellbeing of society. It is the monument of the incorporation of Christianity among the vital elements of that mass, which we call the nation. Thus understood, it represents a truth confirmed by the wisdom of ages, as well as proclaim-

---

* Cave's Primitive Christianity, p. 87.
ed by the voice of God,—a truth of noble meaning, but far from being generally appreciated as it should be.

Our churches, scattered through the land as a part of the institutions of social life, testify, that religion is not a selfish thing; that it belongs to the community as such, and blesses the community as such; that its province is not confined to the breast of the individual or to the joys of the family circle; that, when it has sanctified and made happy your own heart, or hearts dear to you as your own, it has not done all its work; that it goes forth through the length and breadth of your country's great interests, and scatters blessings from its wings over the land at large, as well as over your own dwelling. One of the remarks by which men contrive to wrap up, in a few words, much error with truth, so as to make the error pass under cover of the truth, is the very common one, that religion is a matter only between the individual and his God. So far as the personal responsibleness of the individual, as a moral being, is alone concerned, it is so; but it is likewise something more: it is a matter of vital interest between the members of society, a matter with respect to which they have deep and solemn obligations growing out of the compact and fellowship of civil life. There are few who appear to understand that human society is God's institution, and is imbedded in principles which presuppose the action of a higher power than that of mere expediency. Many persons regard the problem for the construction and perpetuation of a community as solved, when due provision is made for the regulated action of self-interest, ambition, and personal enterprise, by nice adjustments and under skilfully contrived forms of government. Society, they
think, is a machine which will work curiously and well when thus put together. But all such views of the subject are essentially shallow and false; the social state has higher and nobler ends than these to accomplish. It is not a mere trading company, a combination for mutual protection and mutual assistance in business; its true character and purposes are never understood, till it is considered as having its foundations in no mechanical contrivances, but in that spiritual law of God, which embraces all the intellectual and moral relations of man.* Every one in society is a constituent portion of a whole, which must be based on the unseen power and be penetrated by the living spirit of Eternal Truth. Yet how few are there among the members of any community, who look at the subject in this light. "Many persons, I am afraid," says an able writer, "have never found out that there were any bonds connecting them with the state, until they made the discovery in a prison." †

So, in our estimate of the prosperity and perpetuity of a nation, we are perpetually in danger of leaving

* "The State," says Edmund Burke, "is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place." — Reflections on the Revolution in France; Works, III. 116.

† Guesses at Truth, II. 73.
moral and religious considerations out of the account. We think of an extensive commerce beating its pathways across every ocean, lifting its white sails to the breeze in every quarter of the world, and gathering its contributions over every sea and from every shore. We think of a busy and well-conducted agriculture, subduing the wilderness and making it blossom as the rose, turning a whole land, as it were, into a fruitful garden, nerving the arm of the laborer with strength and breathing health into his frame, and forming the rallying-point of a people's dependence. We think of the vast operations of manufactures, in which mechanical ingenuity has created so mighty an auxiliary to human labor, and which, by the voice of the watercourses, proclaim the power of art in furnishing the commodities of comfort and elegance. We think of a system of government, of which the principles are theoretically just, which acknowledges and guards the inalienable rights of man, and leaves each one all the freedom not inconsistent with the safety of the whole. We think of the means of physical defence, of armies ready at the call of danger to repel the hosts of the foe, of fleets making the ocean tremble under their roar and teaching the foreigner to respect a nation's flag. These are the things of which we think, when we compute the elements of a people's greatness and prosperity; these are the brilliant points on which we fix our eyes, and the community, we say, which has such resources and such defences, is glorious and happy. But, we may depend upon it, if the estimate stop here, it is radically defective, for the whole vast consideration of moral influence and religious power is left out of view; and, if there be any truth in history, any truth in reason
or revelation, the estimate which leaves these out of sight is mutilated and utterly fallacious throughout.

Nothing can be substituted in place of religious principle, as the cement or the binding force of society. Mere knowledge will not answer the purpose; mere education will not do the work; for a people may be very knowing, without being truly wise. "I fear," says one, "there is a moment of broken lights in the intellectual day of civilized countries, when knowledge among them becoming all too much, wisdom becomes all too little." Even the fantastic forms and erratic courses of the religious sentiment will not be regarded with contemptuous severity by one, who remembers that they are but the extravagant or defective operation of a principle, which is as the very life-blood of the community. "Superstition," says Burke, "is the religion of feeble minds; and they must be tolerated in an intermixture of it, in some trifling or some enthusiastic shape or other, else you will deprive weak minds of a resource found necessary to the strongest." We are told, that in ancient times the Christian emperors, when they were about to enter a church, laid aside their arms, left behind them the guards by whom they were at other times constantly attended, put off their crowns, and appeared in the house of God simply as undistinguished individuals, standing in the presence of the common Father. In this reverent humility, which veiled imperial dignity before the King of Kings, there is an emblem of the profound respect with which every true-seeing patriot will regard religion in the state. Though this sentiment may be far less sincere and efficient among us than it should be, yet it is refreshing to contemplate our churches, scattered far and wide in
the land, as memorials of the persuasion, that religion must have a central lodgment among the elements of a people's wellbeing.

4. The sanctuary is a symbol of the advancement of that religious truth, to which Christ told the Roman governor that he came into the world to bear witness. Our temples signify that we feel the importance of Christian instruction. If their true purpose is understood, they are consecrated to the spirit of progress, to the enlargement of Christian knowledge, to the growth of spiritual wisdom. The pulpit, if it be faithful to its office, is to act as an opposing power to that dulness of apprehension, or that narrowness of soul, which would paralyze or bind in chains the expansive genius of the Gospel of Christ.

There is a state of apathy respecting Christianity, as a power of moral and intellectual life, which grows upon the soul, like a disease, from worldliness or sectarianism. We do not look to religion as giving our faculties the noblest and most generous task, on which they can be exercised. Amidst our cares and strivings, we hasten along with our eyes on the ground, and our hands busy among perishing things; and meanwhile the broad arch of Heaven in all its glory is over our heads, and beauty and light are bursting forth in the upper region, but we heed them not; for, if we did, no feeling of indifference, no unworthy thought, could be associated with a religion which ever beckons us onward and upward to the vision of truth, to the mount of God. Let the house, where the instructions of the Gospel are dispensed, be considered as bringing a strong power to bear against this unhappy tendency, and it will have a meaning in accordance with the call
DISCOURSE THIRD.

which God makes, by his providence and his word, on the activity of our spiritual nature.

The church, then, is significant of the duty of free and sanctified inquiry into religious truth,—a duty of much wider extent, and of more solemn obligation, than are commonly assigned to it. No one can consider this as a light matter, who remembers that God is our instructor, that the human mind is his inspiration, and that the great topics of investigation presented by religion are the points of contact between the Infinite Spirit and our spirits. We are shamefully false to the trust committed to us by our Heavenly Father, when we shut out Christianity from the action of our faculties, or lay it aside as a thing to be carefully kept, perhaps to be honored, but not to be received as a central principle of impulse to the mind's progress. This is treachery to our own immortal nature; it is ingratitude towards God. Religious truth is the soul's natural food. Will you starve this godlike power, or compel it to feed on husks, or to accustom itself to poisons? If you do, a fearful retribution will be found in its dwarfed, diseased, or shrivelled condition.

Consider what are the subjects to which the religion of Christ invites our thoughts. It tells us that over this scene of things, in which we live, there is a Presiding Mind, a Moral Governor, who takes charge of the interests of truth and righteousness, who has made the law of his service the law of our happiness, and who, in the word of revelation, has opened a pathway of communication between himself and the human mind, which is kindred to him in its origin and growth. It tells us that the moral life kindled up in our breasts is destined for a high and holy purpose, of which it can
fail only by our own faithlessness or folly, and that all things, if rightly used, have a meaning and a tendency towards the great aim of our existence. It tells us, that the mission of Jesus Christ was a mission of love, of peace, of pardon to a world darkened by sorrow and sin; that he came to bring, in the healing power of heavenly influences, an enlightening and regenerating agency for all the principles of our higher nature; that, by his ministry, God has brought fully to light those purposes of mercy which are commensurate with man's whole existence, and has imparted, in the fulness of its blessing, the inspiration of the life-giving doctrine of immortality, that grand keystone in the arch which supports human virtue. These are the leading lines of those truths, which the Gospel of our Lord arrays before us. It directs the seekers after wisdom to such treasures as the world giveth not and taketh not away; it speaks consolation, not elsewhere to be found, to the sorrow-stricken heart; it brings the message of forgiveness and reconciliation to the penitent and heavy-laden sinner. And shall these truths be a dumb show before dull eyes? Shall they quicken no life in our spiritual nature, excite no action of thought and inquiry, allure to no search, no questioning as to their meaning, their relations, their bearing on the present and future developments of our being? Shameful insensitivity if they do not; for all the objects of intellectual and moral research, all the higher forms of art and literature, all the manifestations of man's inward being, are allied to religion by close ties; and dull or hardened must be the mind that can slumber over such interests as these.

I am aware that the phrase *free inquiry* has become
too much a cant phrase, soiled by the handling of the ignorant and the reckless, by those who fall into the mistake of supposing that religion has its root in the understanding, and by those who can see just far enough to doubt, and no further. Nevertheless, the free inquiry, which the Christian instruction of the sanctuary demands, has a true and high meaning when it is understood to promote the earnest and unshackled action of the soul about the greatest of all truths. It stands in opposition to the narrowing and degrading tendencies of sectarianism. There are those, whose minds are for ever moving round in the little circle of their doctrines, imagining that the whole Christian world is pent up within these limits. There are those, in whom early associations have created a fond attachment to a creed in itself cheerless and barren, and who prefer it to the most genial and expansive views, because it is the native soil of their religious feelings,—just as the Greenlander loves his ice-clad rocks and his wilderness of snow better than the most sunny and fertile fields in the world. There are others whose fetters are more loose, though they still wear fetters, whose prison-house of the mind is of somewhat larger dimensions, but who still have a prison, who offer encouragement to the free action of the spirit up to a certain point and there stop, proclaiming those to be dangerous men who go beyond or aside from that point. So it comes to pass, that intolerance is still the besetting sin of man in questions of religious or social interest. In our times and in our land, it cannot immure the body in dungeons, or banish the individual from his country; but it can find other means of admonishing him, that it is necessary to walk within the prescribed
limits,—other modes of operation, which, as Jortin says, "resemble the method of Italian assassins, to beat a man with satchels of sand; no blood is shed and no bones are broken, but the patient dies by the operation."

Now the question, whether individual inquiry on religious subjects shall take place, is settled by a power higher than human. In this, as in other departments, thought is an irrepressible, unquenchable element. The walls of a dungeon cannot straiten it; many waters cannot overwhelm it; the fires of persecution cannot consume it; the foot of arbitrary power cannot trample it down. The only question is, whether you will allow it to move on towards its high objects with a straightforward, unembarrassed progress, or will drive it into by-paths and secret passages, and compel it to take a slow or circuitous course. The answer of Christianity is, Give it a free action and let it be glorified. "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" was the question of our Saviour to the men of his time. No man has ever contrived articles, however numerous, or words, however cunningly arranged, which will express all the meaning of Christianity. Every individual must dig in this mine of truth for himself, and find and bring out such treasures as he may. Here is the only just principle. Whatever restrains or dwarfs the spiritual individuality of any man, inflicts a cruel injury upon him, and is at war with the genius of our religion. An associated body of worshippers is not a community to be shaped by one standard of thought or feeling. The true glory of our Christian institutions is that moral glory, which consists in being the instruments of putting into active forms, and transmitting from mind to
mind, from generation to generation, the living spirit that animates the kingdom of Christ in the soul. We want that large and calm tolerance, which leaves to every mind its unmolested peculiarities of spiritual development; for thus, and thus only, the true church of Christ's believers is constituted. The soul is most quiet and peaceful when its movements are most free, as the motion of our globe, swiftly as it careers through the fields of space, disturbs not even the slender threads of which the spider weaves her web. We carry out consistently the principles of the Reformation, around which we profess to rally, only when we allow every one in tranquil freedom to concentrate upon the search after divine wisdom that attention of the soul, which is the soul's prayer for truth.* That portion of the internal life of religion, which is capable of being carried forth from one mind into another, is, by the nature of the case, the most uncertain and the least considerable; there should, therefore, be a conscientious reference to circumstances in the diffusion or expression of religious views, — for there are persons upon whom the beams of truth, falling directly and at once, may produce a fever. Let there be a wise regard, in each, to the dictates of enlightened prudence; but let a community of Christian worshippers be united on the large ground, which allows freedom to the manifestations of the individual soul. To such a community we may say, in the words of the ancient prophet, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

* "L'attention de l'esprit est la prière naturelle que nous faisons à la vérité intérieure, afin qu'elle se découvre à nous." — Malebranche's Conversations Chrétiennes, p. 3.
5. The sanctuary is a symbol of man's relation to the Infinite and the Eternal. This suggestion, though in some degree implied in my preceding remarks, deserves a distinct notice. I mean by it, that, wherever we see a church, there is a sign that we belong, in all that can truly be called ours, to that which is above the shadowy and changing conditions of time.

We have faculties and affections, that are ever running out into the unlimited in time and space. All religion presupposes, as a condition, this fact in our nature; the modes of being apprehended by our senses, or by the mere exercise of the understanding, are all limited and finite. Matter, in its various shapes and relations, is straitened within boundaries; it is fragmentary and depends on conditions; it decays, perishes, changes its forms. Every thing of this sort is mutable, transitory, in a state of flux and reflux. We see only a succession of effects and manifestations. We stand before Nature, as before a passing show. We ourselves, as well as the surrounding objects, are perpetually changing. Frailty is written on our frames. The bubble swelling and bursting on the surface of the water, the vapor ascending and vanishing in the thin air, the dust blown away by the wind, — these are the images by which man represents to himself his brief and broken life. Now there is a part of our nature, which all this does not satisfy. There is something within us, — call it a feeling, or call it reason, — which struggles away from these finite, these temporary things, and seeks to rise to some existence which is absolute in itself, and subject to none of these conditions. This process will be more or less adequately performed, according to the refinement of the individual
or of the community; but the germ of it is always in
man, and is always at work.

Aspirations towards the infinitely pure are also de-
veloped in the moral nature. In this world, good is
entangled amidst imperfection and struggle; tempta-
tions assail and sorrow wears us; the body environ
and sometimes weighs down the soul; we are compel-
led to do battle through sin and weakness; and the
excellence which we reach, we can gain only by con-
test or from opposition. But, at the same time, we
have a feeling which prompts us to look out beyond
this scene of feeble and thwarted efforts to that state
of calm, unmingled moral purity, which we can antici-
pate, though we witness it not. We ascend far above
the agitating hopes and fears, the toil and turmoil out
of which goodness is wrung on earth, till we come to a
Being, who, in the tranquil fulness of infinity, embodies
and personifies the perfect principle of moral rectitude,
and to a form of existence, in which the law of unvary-
ing right constitutes the line of spontaneous motion for
all thought and feeling, and obedience to it is ever the
central action of the soul. In short, we are carried
upward to a world, whose sun is truth, whose atmo-
sphere is love.

Such is the soul's tendency to the infinite and the
eternal. This is the side of our nature, on which its
ture sublimity appears; and on this side it is always
connected with religion. We live here as in a valley,
whose horizon is crowned with mountains that limit
our view within a space comparatively narrow; but,
between these mountains, vistas open here and there,
through which, as by outlets from the enclosure,
thought and imagination escape into the measureless
region beyond, where the blue sky ever smiles serenely, and the vast air is always filled with bland and pure influences. In all this there is a sober reality, which the spirit of man in its best hours of meditation recognizes and loves. Unless life is wholly enthralled in the servitude of sense and of animal appetite, we must feel, amidst our strait limits and narrow conditions, that it is refreshing to mount on the wings of that faith, which springs from the constitution of the soul, to the absoluteness, the repose of the Infinite. Our condition is like that of one, who should rise from troubled sleep, broken and disturbed by such dreams as are attended with a painful sense of frustrated effort, and should look out in the stillness of midnight on the clear, calm heavens, where the stars glisten in strange beauty, and, amidst a silence as of infinity, the vast firmament seems with loving gentleness to brood over the little spot on which we dwell.

Now this feeling is interwoven among the elements of all religion, or rather is itself the element of all. It ever struggles forth into some outward expression; it is rudely symbolized even among the uncultivated tribes of mankind, and in corrupt or darkened forms of the religious sentiment, by idols, altars, and strange services. The remark has been made, that it is because music and poetry awaken the feeling of the infinite, and owe to this a large part of their fascination, that they have been always associated with religion, and employed in worship by different nations and tribes.* There are some churches, the great monuments of architectural power, which call into strong

action this same far-reaching sentiment. Travellers
tell us, that, when standing under the dome of St.
Peter’s at Rome, they have been entirely subdued by
an indescribable feeling of the littleness of every earthly
thing, and have been awed into silent wonder by the
presence of a vastness, which seems ever expanding
into infinity.

But all the forms, in which this sentiment has ap­
peared, are shackled and stinted when compared with
that which it receives from Christianity. In the Gospel
of Christ, the infinite and the eternal are the pervading
and quickening influences. The pure spirituality of its
doctrines, the deep foundations of everlasting truth
on which its precepts are based, its “great and pre­
cious promises,” by which, according to the Apostle
Peter’s noble expression, we become “partakers of a
divine nature,” its warnings, which reveal to us the
fearful destiny of spiritual barrenness or corruption,
that constant connexion of all duties and hopes with
God, as the Fountain of life and blessedness, which
breathes a calm and holy spirit through its whole frame
and structure, its provisions for making the soul
“strong in the Lord and in the power of his might;”—
these characteristics of the dispensation of Jesus are a
pledge, that it is adapted by divine energy to give
endless expansion to the sentiment of the infinite.

It is wonderful how harmoniously the Christian sys­
tem has united the most practical with the most sub­
lime spirit. While its precepts are direct, plain, and
searching, so that no duty or crisis can occur in life, for
which you will not find a guide in the principles it
supplies, it suggests or discloses, at the same time, the
most lofty views of all that is exclusively spiritual, of
all that may truly be called eternal. Thus it provides most amply, on the one hand, for the moral, and on the other for the religious development of our nature. It is a mistake to consider these two as identical; but in their just and beautiful harmony may be found one of the internal proofs, that the Gospel of Christ is a system of divine wisdom, admirably fitted to elicit and cherish the full action of man's whole nature. The provision for the infinite, for the sentiment peculiarly religious, is that part of the beneficent power of Christianity which, amidst the downward tendencies of earthly things, we are most apt to neglect or undervalue. Yet it is here, that we most need its elevating and sustaining influence; it is here, that, by its holy truths, it dispenses the refreshment which the soul craves. "It seemed good to infinite goodness and wisdom, to form a noble piece of coin out of clay, and to stamp his own image upon it, with this inscription,—The earthly son of God."* But without those aspirations towards the eternal, which Christianity inspires, this divine image will lose its true expression, will be dulled and tarnished, if not broken into fragments. Without these, the spirit of man, hovering over the restless flood of perishing things, "like the birds in the days of the deluge, will seek a resting-place in vain, and at last sink in the waters."

Let us remember, then, that the temples which we build, by the purposes to which they are devoted, become significant of this high and holy tendency of our Christian faith. Amidst this limited and transient condition of being, they stand day by day pointing silently

---

* Leighton's Works, IV. 176.
towards heaven, as if to remind us that the home of the soul is in the infinite and eternal, as if to admonish us that all our best and most strenuous aims should be upward, ever upward, as if to keep in perpetual remembrance the beautiful meaning of those expressive words of the Saviour, “Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

I have thus attempted to set forth some of those objects or purposes, of which the sanctuary may be regarded as the significant symbol.

To express the whole in few words, a Christian temple is the symbol of spiritual life in the individual, heart and through the community. To the individual, it represents that power of devotion and of religious knowledge, which, being inwrought in the structure of the soul and laid deep among the materials of thought, calls into enlightened action the principle of earnest faith, on which our nature leans for its best support; furnishing strength in the hour of weakness and solace in the hour of suffering, protection amidst temptation and stoutness of heart amidst despondency; growing with the wants and exigencies of the free spirit, and helping it to go forth on its heavenward path and be glorified. To the community, the house of worship stands as the memorial of that moral power, which is the golden clasp of the great interests of society, binding together in salutary union the elements of all that is precious, noble, and life-giving. Loose this, and the parts, of which the frame-work of the relations of social
happiness is composed, fall asunder, and nothing is ultimately left to save men from themselves. The religious element hallows our relation to each other, by encircling it with our relation to the common Father. There is a more vital principle of the public welfare, than any which the shallow calculation of the short-sighted politician recognises; and that is a healthy spiritual life diffused through the different parts of the social frame, cementing them and breathing upon them a kindly influence as from heaven. The Bible is the true law book, and God the rightful legislator.

The occasion leads me to advert very briefly to the application of these views to the condition of our own community. We leave our religious institutions entirely to voluntary effort. Religion, as a public agency, must be upheld among us solely by such aid, as the conviction and the conscience of each individual may prompt him to bestow. We have refused to this vital interest the provision, which we extend to the functions of education and civil government; and, having adopted this course, we must now pursue it for better or for worse. But we should be reminded how weighty is the responsibility thus thrown upon individuals, who stand free to give or to withhold help for this great central interest of society. How vitally important does it become, that the public mind should be enlightened, and the public conscience kept alive on this subject; that an intimate and quickening persuasion of the necessity of religious institutions should be more deeply placed among the mind's most familiar convictions; and that the worship of God and the instructions of Christianity should be regarded as "part and parcel" of the social state. Wherever we see a church in our cities
or villages, let us hope that we see a pledge of affectionate respect for those sacred institutions, which maintain and stimulate, as a public principle, the sense of accountableness to God; which afford a holy ground of common interest, whither we can retire from the competitions and exasperations of life; and which exhibit the sanctions even of ordinary duties in a light, that shows them high as heaven and lasting as eternity. God grant that there may be all this meaning in the temples which we build; for, if any dependence is to be placed on the records of man's experience, or on the voice of divine truth, it cannot be questioned, that, when the appurtenances which dignify, or the guards which fortify the religious sentiment, are severed from the confidence and love of a people, there is rottenness at the heart of that people's system, there is a work of withering decay in progress, and on their walls may be inscribed, as on those of Babylon's monarch, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it."

And now, brethren and friends, let us turn our thoughts to the special interests of this occasion. By the divine blessing, you have been permitted to undertake and complete this edifice for the service of the Most High. When the progress of time rendered it necessary or expedient to leave the sanctuary, in which you and your fathers had so long worshipped, and which is remembered with affectionate respect for the many pleasant and holy associations that had gathered around it, you began the Christian enterprise of building a new church, having invoked the protecting care of Him, to whose honor it was to be consecrated. You have finished the undertaking in the most praiseworthy
manner. With judgment and taste, that are highly creditable to those who have superintended, and to those who have executed the work, you have erected a sanctuary, the chaste beauty and the comely dignity of which correspond to the honor due to religious institutions. God grant that the purposes, for which this house of our solemnities has been placed here, may be abundantly answered, that it may stand forth to us, our children, and our successors, as the symbol of that spiritual life which the Gospel of Jesus, when truly received, imparts to the individual soul and to the principles of a community.

We dedicate this sanctuary to the only living and true God, to the unrivalled, undivided Majesty of the Everlasting One, to the Universal Father, whose providence is our cloud by day and our pillar of fire by night, to Him who is light and love, to the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, whose power and godhead are manifested in the world about us, and in the spirit that quickeneth.

We dedicate it to Jesus Christ, the Saviour, to him who was sanctified and sent of the Father, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, the way, the truth, and the life, the Redeemer from sin and sorrow, whom having not seen we love, in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

We dedicate it to the Holy Spirit of grace and truth, to that spirit by which God imparts to his children the energy of enlightening influences and the peace of holy tranquillity, which is not the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind, and by which they who
receive it are made meet for the inheritance of saints in light.

We consecrate this house to the truth as it is in Jesus, to no human creed, no confession of faith devised by man, no form of words constructed to hold the mind in bondage, but to the free, broad, sanctifying truth as it is in Jesus, to the word of life which was taught by one who spake as man never spake, the word which liveth and abideth for ever, and maketh wise unto salvation.

We consecrate our church to the cause of good morals and of man's improvement, to that spirit of progress which respects the wisdom gathered from the experience of ages, and the distinctions established by God, to those principles which lie at the foundation of the true welfare of society, the principles of pure morality, of order, of justice, of peace.

We devote this pulpit to the ministry of reconciliation,—the ministry that breathes devotion and charity, that calls the sinner from the error of his ways, and directs him to the purifying fountain opened in the Gospel, that gives light to the inquiring mind, relief to the distressed, consolation to the sorrow-stricken, and leads forth the soul into the holy freedom of God's children.

We consecrate this communion-table to the blessed influences of the service, which commemorates him who said, "Do this in remembrance of me;" and the voice of music and the organ notes we would dedicate to the strains of holy praise, of heartfelt thanksgiving, and of the soul's purest emotions.

O Thou, who "dost prefer before all temples the upright heart and pure," accept this offering at our
hands. Let thy presence overshadow and hallow this place; and may the prayers and praises, which shall ascend hence, rise as grateful incense to thy throne in Heaven.

Brethren and friends, we have now given this sanctuary to God. Let us not forget, that we must give ourselves to him in faith, obedience, and devotion. "Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" From Sabbath to Sabbath we shall come hither to worship the Father of our spirits, and to cry unto him for mercy and pardon; may we bring none but that sacrifice with which he is well pleased, even the sacrifice of humility, of penitence, of thankfulness. We shall come hither to listen to the things that belong to our everlasting peace, to inquire after the wisdom of heaven, to wait for the light which breaks forth from the Scriptures of truth; may we attend as those who have a felt persuasion of a personal interest in the things of eternity; may the word be so dispensed from this place, and so received by you, that we may ever go hence wiser and better. We shall come hither to commemorate our Saviour at the table, which bears the consecrated memorials of his sufferings and death; may it ever be to us a service of Christian love, an excitement to Christian improvement; never may we pervert and narrow it into an occasion of exclusiveness; but may we regard it as the scene of fellowship with those of every name, who acknowledge the same Master. We shall come hither to consecrate our children to God at the holy font; may we feel that these objects of our affection are living spirits to be educated for Heaven; and may the baptismal water be the emblem of that
purity, to which it will be our fervent prayer that we may be enabled to train them in the Christian life. We shall come hither when our hearts are oppressed with the cares or saddened with the griefs of life, and when they are animated with prosperity and joy; may we find that relieving power which shall lighten the load of anxiety or sorrow, and may we hallow our blessings by placing around them the associations of religious gratitude. If such be the influences found here, then will it be well for us, that we have built and consecrated this house; then may our affections gather fast and strong to this spot, and our hearts cleave to the sanctuary with their purest and holiest love. It is a part of the gorgeous description of the New Jerusalem, in the sublime visions of the Apocalypse, that there was "no temple therein." Thus beautifully is it signified, that the aid afforded to our imperfection by the sanctuaries we rear will no longer be needed, when the soul shall be emancipated into that world where her whole action will be the true worship, her whole growth the true service. Let it be our prayer, that the power of inward life found here may be such as to prepare us for the time, when there shall be "no temple," but the spirit devoted to truth and to God!
I. ANTHEM.

Lift up your heads, eternal gates, unfold to entertain the King of glory: see, he comes with all his shining train. Who is this King of glory? Who? The Lord of hosts renowned: he alone is King of glory, he alone is King, who is with glory crowned.

II. INTRODUCTORY PRAYER.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH FIELD.

III.

SELECTION FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

BY THE REV. DANIEL AUSTIN.

IV. ORIGINAL HYMN.

BY MR. FREDERICK A. WHITNEY.

To Thee, great Spirit, by whose will Our labors have been blest,
Whose arm doth shield from daily ill,
Whose eye doth guard our rest;
We consecrate this chosen place,
An offering to thy name,
Here seek henceforth thy needed grace,
Thy glorious truth proclaim.

Nor only here the accepted strain
Shall rise, since not alone
At Sychar's mount, or Judah's fane,
Thou, Father, shalt be known:
But Nature is a temple now,
And all, who worship Thee,
In truth must worship, while they bow
The soul, as bow the knee.

Their service such, pure One, attend
Thy children's prayer above;
In gladness, grief, temptation, send
Thy counsel, strength, and love.

Guide thou his steps, who leads our way
To Thee and truth divine;
Let all his words Thy will obey,
And all his life be Thine.

As Israel came to dedicate
The latter house of old;
While holy priests were called to wait,
And clouds of incense rolled;
Thy glory sanctified the hour,
Thy spirit warmed each heart;
Thus ever, Lord, in love and power,
Thy spirit here impart.

V. DEDICATORY PRAYER.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL RIPLEY.

VI. ANTHEM.

And will the great eternal God
On earth establish his abode?
And will He from his radiant throne
Avow our temples as his own?
These walls we to thy honor raise;
Long may they echo to thy praise,
And thou, descending, fill the place
With choice and tokens of thy grace.
Here let the great Redeemer reign,
With all the glories of his train;
While power and love his word attends,
To conquer foes and cheer his friends.

Great King of Glory, come,
And with thy favor crown
This temple as thy dome,
This people as thine own.

VII. SERMON.

BY THE REV. CONVERS FRANCIS.

VIII. ORIGINAL HYMN.

BY MR. THEODORE PARKER.

The humble pile our fathers raised,
Has bowed beneath Time's weighty hand;
They too have gone, whose voices praised Jehovah in a savage land.
And now, O Lord, we build again,
To seek thy favor and thy face,
Another and a nobler fane,
And ask thy blessing on this place.

Here send thy Holy Spirit down,
With favors from thy throne above,
Our hearts to fill, our lives to crown;
O give us faith, and hope, and love.
And may there dwell within this place
Each pure desire and holy trust,
To fill our souls with heavenly grace,
When these walls crumble to the dust.

IX. CONCLUDING PRAYER.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL GILMAN.

X. ANTHEM.

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will to men. Glory be to God on high, peace on earth, good will to men. Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Glory be to God on high. Hallelujah. Amen.

XI. BENEDICTION.
TWO

DISCOURSES

PREACHED BEFORE

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
IN MEDFORD;

ONE

UPON LEAVING THE OLD CHURCH;

AND ONE

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW.

BY CALEB STETSON,
Minister of the Society.

Boston:
PRINTED BY ISAAC R. BUTTS.
1840.
A DISCOURSE

ON

TAKING LEAVE OF THE OLD CHURCH,

DELIVERED ON

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1839.
Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that he said to Nathan, the prophet, Lo! I dwell in a house of cedars, but the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord remaineth under curtains.

This is the expression of a very natural feeling. The minstrel king was fervent and imaginative, full of poetic inspiration and of holy zeal for the worship of the God of Israel. As he sat in his apartments, surrounded with all the magnificence of Eastern Royalty, he painfully felt the contrast between the grandeur of his own palace and the lowliness of the Tabernacle, that sheltered the consecrated Ark of the Covenant.

There are few persons of any devout sentiment, who do not sympathize with the feelings of David. We know indeed that there is a temple not made with hands, holier than any which is built of wood and stones. There the Divine Presence most intimately dwells; and there is the Altar of Sacrifice, that never moulders away by age nor is broken down by violence. The

* This Discourse, which was delivered in two parts on account of its length, is now printed as one.
visible Temple is the outward sign of God’s presence; in the soul of every pure worshipper is the Divine Reality. It is not then the costliness or beauty of the shrine, but the holiness of the offering, that the Father regards. But there is an instinct of the soul that will not thus be reasoned down. We feel somewhat of self-reproach, when we see our private dwellings fitted up more expensively and tastefully than the house of the Most High. We are like Hebrew worshippers, who should lead to the sacrifice, the lame, the sickly and the worthless among the lambs of their flock. Our pious forefathers, who founded our churches in the wilderness, and cherished them as their highest joy and dearest hope, had but small and mean buildings for their public devotions. But then their own habitations were smaller and meaner still. These warrior saints of New-England were content to live in rude cabins, inartificially constructed of rough logs. The best they had, they devoted to God. Their Meeting-house, — the erection of which was commonly the first enterprise that united their exertions — built with a substantial frame-work, and covered with unplaned and unpainted boards, rose amongst the humbler private dwellings, in comparative splendor; as the ordinary farm-house of civilized man would be a palace in a nation of savages.

The tastes and wants of man vary with times and circumstances. All the works of his hand wax old and decay. The noblest structures of one generation are superseded and removed as unfit to satisfy the wishes or necessities of another. “The fashion of this world must pass away.” Let it pass away then without complaint. Let each successive age be the judge of its own wants. Let the edifices, that begin to crumble
and totter under the heavy hand of time, be displaced by others which may better answer their end.

There are old things, however, from which we cannot disengage ourselves without painful emotion, though we know they are to be succeeded by something better. It is to me, my friends, a solemn and affecting consideration, — how much more so, to you, who have come up here to worship from your earliest years, — that this is our last meeting within these venerable walls. But we yield to the irresistible tendency of all things made by man; they gradually decay, crumble and moulder into dust. Our greatest care could only, for a few years, have put off the ruin to which this Temple of God is hasting, in common with all earth-made structures. Let it pass away then, this House of our devotions, round which holy remembrances and associations have so long been gathering. But not unregretted and unhonored can it pass and be forgotten. Not like a shattered and ill-favored shed, can we bear to see it broken down and thrust aside with cold indifference. We would give it a reverent and affectionate farewell. It may be interesting to employ the last hours we are permitted to enjoy here, in looking into some memorials of the past with which this edifice connects us.

The plantation of Medford was begun in 1630, the same year in which Boston was founded. It was at first called Meadford, probably from a fordway across the river in a mead, or meadow, a little above the place where the draw-bridge has since been built. Some however suppose, with equal show of reason, that it was named for one John Mead, who lived near the ford and occasionally assisted travellers in their passage. This important question I am wholly incompetent to
decide. Of the early transactions of the settlement but few and scanty notices are preserved, as its records, down to 1674, have been destroyed, it is believed, by fire. The present occasion, however, does not call for many historical details, except such as relate to the town in its ecclesiastical character.

Deputy Governor Dudley, speaking of the Colonists who came from England and arrived in Massachusetts Bay in 1630, says, "Some of us planted upon Mistic, which we named Meadford." This name was given to a considerable tract, lying along both sides the river, a part of which is now included within the limits of Charlestown. Within two years from its settlement, Meadford became so considerable as to bear its part of the public expenses of the Colony. Yet for more than eighty years it had no organized church or settled ministry. It is difficult to account for a deficiency so unusual at that period, when it was the first concern of our fathers, in their severest straits, to have a pious, gifted and faithful ministry. "It was as unnatural," says Johnson, in his Wonder Working Providence, "for a right New-England man to live without an able ministry, as for a Smith to work his iron without a fire." It would seem that Medford was not too poor to support the institutions of religion, which were then justly deemed of vital importance to the well-being of a Society; for the Colony Registers shew that it was superior in wealth,* within the first eight years of its

* The early prosperity of the plantation, may be inferred from the following Note to Gov. Winthrop's Journal, "Of a tax of £1500 levied by the General Court in 1637, the proportion paid by Medford was £52 10s. The proportion of Boston was £283 10s.; Ipswich, £180; Salem, £170 10s.; Dorchester, £140; Charlestown, £138; Roxbury, £115; Watertown, £110; Newton, £106; Lynn, £105.
existence, to several ancient towns which were furnished with regular ministers.

But whatever may have been the cause of the deficiency, it is certain that the consequences were most disastrous. The settlement languished for many years; its prosperity was checked, and its population increased but slowly; the inhabitants were much divided among themselves; and several times they were prosecuted and fined for not having a ministry established according to law. For in these early days, when the spirit of the puritans endeavored to embody, in this new world, its idea of a true theocracy, the province watched with parental solicitude over the spiritual well-being of her children,—now kindly encouraging and helping them to sustain the institutions of religion,—now severely rebuking them, punishing them even, for neglecting to help themselves.

Mr. Matthew Cradock, carried on the first plantation,* and he had also extensive fisheries in that part of Mystic, which is now called Medford, on the north side of the river. He is often called Governor Cradock; and his name appears in some of the Annual Registers, as the first Chief Magistrate of the colony. But this is a mistake. He was in fact only the head of a commercial company in England, nor is it known that he ever came to this country himself.

The first governor of Massachusetts Bay, was John Winthrop, called by Cotton Mather in his Magnalia, the "American Nehemiah," who came to this country in 1630. He was a man of wealth and education,

* Mr. Cradock's estate was in the east part of the town, including the beautiful farm now owned by Messrs. James & Isaac Wellington. After a few years he seems to have abandoned his establishments here.
equally eminent for his talents and his virtues. For
several years he resided during the summer at his house
on the south side of the river. "The Court of Assist­
ance in 1631, granted to Mr. Governor six hundred
acres of land, to be set forth by metes and bounds, near
his house in Mistic, to enjoy to him and his heirs for­
ever." This place he called the "Ten Hills Farm," a
name which it bears to this day. This great and good
man, who was loved and revered in his own time, and
is now honored in his descendants, may justly be re­
garded as the founder * of Medford, or Mistic as it was
also called from the river which runs through it. The
whole of this territory which lies south of the river, was
afterwards annexed to Charlestown, to which it be­
longed till 1755, when that portion of it, which now
belongs to Medford, was set off to it by an act of the
General Court.

This town had no representation† in the Colonial

* The following passages from Governor Winthrop’s Journal intimate his con­
nexion with this place. "Thursday, 1st June, 1630. We went to Massachusetts
to find out a place for our sitting down. We went up Mistic River, in a boat,
about six miles."

"1631, July 4. The Governor built a bark at Mistic, which was launched this
day, and called the Blessing of the Bay. Aug. 9, the same year, the Governor’s
bark, being of thirty tons, went to sea."

This arduous effort in the way of ship-building, was the first in the annals of
Medford, and, I believe, the first in Massachusetts Colony. It was, no doubt,
an enterprise of more difficulty than is now the building of one of those magnifi­
cent packet ships, which are so often launched in our waters.

"Oct. 30th, 1631. The Governor having erected a building of stone at Mistic,
there came so violent a storm of rain, for twenty-four hours, that (it being not
finished and laid with clay for want of lime,) two sides of it were washed down
to the ground, and much harm was done to the other houses by that storm."

† About the year 1689, the inhabitants of Medford petitioned the Legisla­
ture for an act of incorporation, with the privilege of being represented in the
General Court. The answer to the petition was, that "the town had been incor­
porated along with the other towns in the province, by a general act passed in
1630. And under this act, it had at any time a right to organize itself and choose
a representative, without further legislation." It seems, therefore, that Medford
was both a town and a parish in 1630,— about sixty years before it recognised
itself as such. Will not this neglect of organization account for its want of early
records, without the accident of fire?
Legislature until about the year 1690, "when Lieutenant Peter Tufts was chosen to that office, and it was voted to pay him eighteen pence a day so long as he shall attend the General Court." Nor does it appear that there was any public school till early in the next century, when "Mr. Henry Davison was chosen to keep school for said town for one quarter of a year. Voted also to allow Mr. Davison the sum of three pounds money for keeping school the time above-stated, and also to diet him for the same." This appears to have been the first germ in this place of the public school system, which has since grown into a matter of so much interest and importance to our community. It is amusing to observe, from this distance of time, the economical spirit indicated by these arrangements in behalf of legislation and good learning. We are apt, however, to underrate the liberality of our ancestors, when we take into account only the nominal pecuniary value which they set upon intellectual labor. It must be considered, that in relation to the means, wants and habits of life, money was then worth five or six times as much as it is in these days of opulence and lavish expenditure. Our ancestors were a frugal people; but there is a frugality that is not good economy. The community that withholds the means of culture from the rising generation, withholds the bread of life from the hungry. Let them be careful and circumspect in their outlay; let them save, pinch, stint themselves as they will; but let them not stint and starve the minds and souls of their children.

I make these remarks, however, with no intention to reproach the men of another age. If they had no public schools, I have no doubt that they supported private
institutions of learning according to their ability. The spirit of the age and country would not have suffered them to neglect this duty. The fathers of New-England in the seventeenth century made the education of the whole people their great concern. Their means were small, but their good will was great. They denied themselves, they haggled with their appetites, they drove hard bargains with their housekeeping, that they might have wherewithal to train up the young in morality, religion, and sound knowledge. They gladly threw their two mites into the treasury of wisdom when it was all their living. How resolutely, and with what heroic self-sacrifice did they exert themselves, in times of severest privation, to establish and endow the college,—which was so long the object of their prayer and hope,—"to the end"—as they beautifully said—"that good learning may not be buried in the graves of our fathers."

These early sacrifices in the cause of education were not acts of public bodies, or gifts of the rich from their superfluity, but free-will offerings of a whole people. The virtuous and enlightened poor came up with generous enthusiasm, bringing the products of their labor and self-denial,—often in shape of articles of furniture, which they could, or could not well spare from their poorly-furnished habitations. Often they contributed money, in sums so small that they would now excite a smile. But these lowly offerings of poverty indicate a noble spirit in men, worthy to become the fathers of a great nation. And while they so affectionately nourished the College, they did not neglect the humbler institutions of learning. In the midst of want and suffering, and surrounded by a savage wilderness and more
savage enemies, they laid the deep and broad foundations of that common school system which is the glory and hope of the country,—the nursery of intelligence, freedom and virtue.

It cannot be supposed that the inhabitants of Mystic, living hard by the metropolis of this wise and enlightened people, were indifferent to the great interest which lay so near the hearts of their brother colonists. They could not have passed the greater part of a century without any schools for their children. Undoubtedly they had means of education which do not appear in their records. The documents which have survived the waste of accident and time, show no want of practical ability, no deficiency in the accomplishments which a common school is expected to bestow. The leading men, who filled the various offices in the town, appear always to have been persons of more than ordinary capacity and endowment.

I come now to the period when the town of Medford assumes the character of a Parish, and its ecclesiastical history begins. Before the year 1690, the people, having no regular church or constant preaching, attended public worship in the neighboring towns. But from this time their records show that they were zealous and anxious to secure a settled ministry of the gospel; and they were willing to make liberal appropriations to maintain it. Cut off as they were from all convenient* access to the means of grace, they severely felt

* The following anecdote, related with much simplicity in Governor Winthrop's Journal, is an amusing illustration of the inconvenience of going out of town to attend public worship, especially when a deep tide water without a bridge lies in the way. "One Dankin and his wife, dwelling near Medford, coming from Cambridge, where they had spent their Sabbath, and being to pass over the river at a ford, the tide not being fallen enough, the husband adventured over and finding it too deep, persuaded his wife to stay awhile. But it raining very sore she would needs adventure over, and was carried away with the
the disadvantages of their condition. They could not enjoy the order and godly peace of a well-organized Christian people. A civil community without a church is a body without a soul. It is "without God in the world," when the Divinity is manifest in no religious institutions. The culture and salvation of souls requires some visible embodiment of the religious idea. The means of grace must be brought near, and made objects of our personal care and solicitude, or their influence will never flow through the great heart of society. If they must be looked for in other towns, beyond the sphere of our local interests and our social affections, they will be irregularly sought and unprofitably used. They should ever stand out prominently among the objects that most engage our attention and sympathy. Our children should be reared under the droppings of the sanctuary, that their earliest culture may be hallowed by devout reverence for God, His truth and His authority. They should see the venerable elders bowing in lowly and grateful worship to the Supreme Benefactor, and their whole being, mind, heart, speech, action pervaded and inspired by divine sentiments and principles. Then only will filial piety become an early habit of the soul, when religious establishments stand interwoven with the business and pleasure, the joy and sorrow of every-day life, and the genius of the place is instinct with the spirit of reverence and devotion. Thus a whole community is bathed in an atmosphere of holiness, and breathes in Heavenly influences. God is in the midst of His peo-

stream past her depth. Her husband not daring to go and help her, cried out and thereupon his dog came forth from his house near by, and seeing something in the water, swam to her, and she caught hold of the dog's tail, so he drew her to the shore and saved her life."
ple, bodied forth in their institutions, and manifest to their souls through the visible symbols of His presence; and they are brought up at the feet of Infinite Wisdom.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century the ecclesiastical history of this community began to develop itself. For many years from that time the town records are chiefly occupied with religious affairs, such as the employment of preachers, and the making of arrangements for the building of a meeting-house, and a parsonage. The town had never yet had a regular minister, though attempts had been made to settle one in its very infancy. Within four years after its first settlement, the celebrated James Noyes, afterwards minister of Newbury, preached in this place about a year. "He was born at Choulderton in Wiltshire, of godly parents, in 1608. His father was a minister in the same town. He was educated at Oxford University, and emigrated to New-England in 1634, and when he arrived he was immediately called to preach at Mistic, which he did for nearly a year. He was much beloved and respected, a very holy and Heavenly-minded man, and as much mortified to the world as almost any in it. He scarce called any thing his own, but his books and clothes. He was a man of singular qualifications, in piety excelling, an implacable enemy to all heresy and schism, and a most able warrior against the same. He was of a reaching and ready apprehension, a most profound judgment, a rare, tenacious and comprehensive memory, fixed and unmovable in his grounded conceptions,—sure in words and speech, without rashness,—gentle and mild in all expressions, without any passion or provoking language. He was of so loving, compassionate and humble carriage, that, I believe,
never any were acquainted with him but did desire the continuance of his society and acquaintance. He was resolute for truth, and in defence thereof had no respect for persons. He was courageous in dangers, and still was apt to believe the best, and made fair weather in a storm. He was much honored and esteemed in the country, and his death was greatly bewailed. I think he may be reckoned among the greatest worthies of this age." **

Such was the first preacher of the gospel in this town, and it does not appear that he had any successor for nearly sixty years. From 1693 to 1712, various ministers were employed; several of whom were called to a permanent settlement, and a provision made for their support, which, in those days, might be deemed liberal. None of them, however, accepted the invitation, on account of certain difficulties and dissensions hinted at, but not explained in the town records. The first of these candidates was Mr. John Hancock, grandfather to the celebrated John Hancock, so well known in the history of the Revolution. He received a call but did not accept it; and was soon after settled in Lexington, where he labored in the work of the ministry for more than fifty years, enjoying such consideration and influence among the clergy that he was usually called Bishop Hancock. In his own parish he was reverenced as the father and ruler of his people. He was in the habit of settling all manner of questions and controversies among them, such as are now carried into courts of justice, in the most summary way, with the authority of an absolute prince; and the parties cheerfully acquiesced

---

* See a long account of him in Mather's Magnalia, written by his friend, the Rev. Mr. Parker, and his nephew, Nicholas Noyes, minister of Salem.
in his decisions; for he was a good and wise man, and all the people loved and honored him.* The next preacher in this town, who received a call, was Dr. Colman, settled afterwards over Brattle Street Church in Boston. He became eminent in the profession, and was elected President of the College in 1724, but declined the office. He was succeeded by Mr. Simon Bradstreet, afterwards a distinguished minister in Charlestown. He preached in Medford about a year, but declined an invitation to settle here permanently. The Rev. John Tufts and several others were engaged as temporary preachers, and received calls, but yet no settled minister was obtained.

In 1698, Mr. Benjamin Woodbridge was invited to preach in Medford, with a view to a permanent settlement. He continued to supply the pulpit for nearly ten years. And he seems to have performed the duties of a pastor without being legally settled in the ministry, for I find his record of baptisms, running through the whole period of his ministerial labors. A dark cloud has settled over the memory of this person, which I am not able to penetrate. His connexion with the town seems to have been unhappy; his ministry was unquiet, and his reputation remains equivocal. There was much discussion about him in town-meetings, and evident a great deal of dissatisfaction. But no definite charges against him are recorded; and nothing appears by which he can be either acquitted or con-

* There are still traditions of him in Lexington, which show the veneration in which he was held. In his time disputes about the boundaries of land were not infrequent. When a difficulty of this kind arose between two neighbors, Mr. H. would call upon the parties and tell them to follow him. When he came upon the debated ground he would patiently examine the facts of the case, hear all they had to say, and then set up the landmarks with his own hand, and tell them “to go home and live in peace, and serve God.” His judgments were final; no appeals were made from them.

3
demned. Frequent attempts for several years were made to give him a legal settlement, but always some unexplained difficulty sprung up to prevent it. The town had voted him a salary from year to year, and raised a considerable sum by taxation to build a parsonage for his use. Then there were controversies, now unintelligible, between him and some of the carpenters, who were employed to build the house; and also between him and the town's committee, growing out of obscure pecuniary transactions. These seem to have embittered his connexion with the people, and prevented his ordination from time to time, whenever he or his friends undertook to urge it. Two or three times, a formal protest against his ministry was entered on the town books by some of the most respectable inhabitants. But in vain. They could neither settle him nor remove him. For several years meeting after meeting was held, and vote after vote was passed, now to dismiss him, now to ordain him; but always a resolute protest was entered against either measure. How strong the tie was between minister and people at that period, may be inferred from the fact, that Mr. Woodbridge's friends protested against dismissing him on the ground "that a town has no power to dismiss its minister," though as yet he appears to have been invited only to preach as a candidate. He often expressed his wish to be ordained, but the painful controversies which created so much uneasiness remained unsettled, and the people without a pastor.

The matter was referred to a council of churches, which decided that "Mr. Woodbridge should be dismissed and another minister obtained." From this result of council an appeal was made to the General Court,
which decreed that "Mr. Woodbridge was not legally the minister of Medford, and ordered the town to settle another without delay." Such was the authority exerted by the government of the province in the early part of the last century! The town immediately took measures to comply with the order; and meanwhile, "humbly begged the General Court not to impose a minister upon them without their consent!" Mr. Woodbridge was dismissed from his ministry, but never removed from the town. He died* here soon after in 1710.

Three candidates were then nominated to the town, of which one was to be settled as the permanent minister. They were Amos Chevers, John Tufts, and Aaron Porter. Mr. Porter was chosen, and was ordained, the first regular minister of this town, Feb. 11, 1713, about eighty-three years after its settlement. It seems strange to us that, in an age when the ministries of the Gospel were so highly appreciated, this town should have remained so long destitute of them. There were, however, in the Colony, other instances of the same kind. The ancient and important towns of Marblehead and Portsmouth, had no regular churches or ministers for about fifty years after their first settlement. To the want of religious institutions, the slow growth of Medford, its unprosperous condition, and the great difficulty it met with in obtaining a min-

* From the following extract from Judge Sewall's manuscript Journal, it would seem that Mr. Woodbridge did not lose his ministerial character by being dismissed.

"January 15 1709 Mr Benj. Woodbridge died at Meadford. Thursday 19 buried Mr Parsons at Malden preached the funeral sermon. Bearers, President (of College), Mr Hobart of Newton, Mr Brattle, Mr Bradstreet, Mr Parsons, Mr Ruggles of Billericay. By reason that it was lecture day and Mr Colman preached and the wind very high and blustering not one Boston minister was there." 

For some extracts from this Journal, relating to Mr. Woodbridge and Mr. Porter, I am indebted to Rev. Mr. Sewall, of Burlington, a descendant of the Judge.
ister, have been reasonably attributed. The beginning of a long period of harmony and prosperity had now arrived. During the times of three successive ministers, extending over more than a century, "the church had rest and was edified;" the people were in a thriving state, "and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

On the day of Mr. Porter's ordination, a church was organized and a covenant adopted, by which the brethren agreed to walk together, as disciples of Jesus, in Christian love and fidelity, "keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." This covenant was conceived in a spirit of liberality truly evangelical, making no mention of those points of doctrine, which have since been so strenuously insisted upon as conditions of Christian communion. It was signed the same day by fifteen male members who had all belonged to churches in the neighboring towns.

January 24, 1722, Mr. Porter died after a ministry of a little less than nine years.* He was graduated at Harvard University in 1708. What manner of man he was, what were his gifts, graces and attainments, there is neither record nor tradition to tell. That his short ministry was a happy and a useful one may well be supposed, for it has no history, save what was written in the souls of those who received from him the "words of Eternal life." His answer to the call of the town, and his account of the feelings and purposes with which

---

*I cannot ascertain when or where he was born. The following extracts contain all that can be know of him except his own brief records in the church books. "1721--22 Jan 24, Mr Brattle told me that Mr Aaron Porter ye desirable pastor of ye ch in Meadford was dead of a fever, which much grieved me." Judge Sewall's MS. Journal.

"1721--22 Jan 23 The Rev Minister of Meadford dies, Mr Porter, which married Unkle Sewall's daughter."—MS Journal of S. Sewall Esq., of Brookline.
he entered upon the work of the ministry, show him to have been a man of faith, of fervent piety, and of a sound and thoughtful mind. They breathe the very spirit of meekness, holiness and love. A dim outline appears through the mists which have gathered over the distant past; but indistinct and shadowy as it is, it reveals an image of great spiritual beauty.

Mr. Ebenezer Turell was ordained as successor to Mr. Porter the 25th of November, 1724. He was born in Boston in the year 1701, and graduated at Harvard College in 1721. His ministry was long and tranquil, disturbed by no divisions or tumults among his people. President Allen in his Biographical Dictionary says of him, "He was an eminent preacher, of a ready invention, a correct judgment, and fervent devotion, who delivered divine truth with animation, and maintained discipline in his church with boldness tempered by prudence." Of these great qualities, however, I can find no evidence. Many of my aged hearers remember him as he appeared in the latter years of his life; but there is no memory or tradition that he had any uncommon learning or endowments.* His orthodoxy, according to the received opinions of his time, was unimpeached and unimpeachable, but he was neither a bigot nor a fanatic. He was remarkable for personal beauty and the accomplishments of a gentle-

* A story is told of him from which it might be inferred that he was a gifted speaker. When Whitfield was preaching in this vicinity, and drawing multitudes after him, Mr. Turell, in common with the most eminent divines of the country, looked with distrust and apprehension upon his eccentric and tumultuous movements. One week a report was circulated that Mr. W. was to preach in Medford the next Sunday. He did not come; a stranger from Malden came to hear him, but instead of him, heard Mr. Turell, without knowing the person of either. Accordingly he went home exceedingly moved and edified, supposing he had heard the great Mr. Whitfield; nor did he cease to talk in raptures about his "wonderful preaching," until, several weeks after, he accidentally discovered his mistake. I suppose there is nothing very extraordinary in a delusion of this kind. When a man is in search of the marvellous, he is apt to find what he looks for.
man,—a social, vivid, genial man, who enjoyed society and contributed largely to its pleasure; yet nowise neglecting the duties of a devout, earnest and faithful minister of Christ. The society flourished and increased greatly during his time. He died in 1778, in the 77th year of his age, and the 54th of his ministry. For four or five years before his death, the town employed other preachers to supply the pulpit, whenever the infirmities of age rendered him unable to perform the services. And on the 14th of September, 1774, Mr. Osgood was ordained over the church and society as his colleague pastor.

David Osgood, D. D., was born at Andover, October 25th, 1747, and graduated at Harvard University in 1771. On leaving college he devoted himself to the work of the ministry, and pursued his theological studies at Cambridge. He was one of the most distinguished men of his time,—of a character so strong, decided and original, that for many years he occupied a commanding position, and exerted great influence in the community. He gave the best affections of his heart, and all the strength of his gifted and highly cultivated mind, to the cause of truth and righteousness. He was what may be called a whole man; there was no temporizing, or halfness in his soul,—none in his life. He was free from all guile. He followed with unconquerable firmness, the convictions of his own mind and conscience. So little was he disposed to disguise his sentiments or qualify the expression of them for the sake of pleasing, that not unfrequently he appeared abrupt and rough in his address. He was an honest man, sincere, simple, single-hearted,—often to the neglect of "those soft parts of speech," which serve
to give smoothness to the common intercourse of life; or to conceal the intrinsic harshness of contradiction or rebuke, under the forms of sweetest courtesy. Yet he was courteous in the best and highest sense of the word. However plain and uncompromising he might be in the utterance of truths, not always agreeable to those who heard them, he had great magnanimity and much genuine kindliness in his disposition. Accordingly, if his honest freedom of speech at any time wounded a feeling that deserved regard, he was the readiest of all men to heal it by a quick atonement. His stern integrity, and the directness and force of his remarks, which gave great authority and weight to his character, did not exclude the gentler qualities, which conciliate affection. Those who knew him best loved him as well as revered him.

"In the minds of all who enjoyed his acquaintance, there is evidence enough that his heart was the home of many of the kindest dispositions and tenderest feelings of our nature. His conversation was very often enlivened with innocent hilarity and playful cheerfulness; and few men have made their intercourse sought on these accounts more than he."*

He was a man of God, fervent, reverential and devout. His piety was not fitful and passionate, but the settled habit of his soul, imparting a savor of holiness to his life. He was indeed a good and great man, earnest, courageous, and high-principled. The elevation of his character and the unconquerable force of his will, gave him in all councils and conventions of clergymen, an authority which few ventured to resist. Everywhere he exercised among men that kind of sovereignty which

* Rev. Mr. Francis's Obituary Notice.
belongs, by divine right, to strong and great souls. As a theologian and as a preacher Dr. Osgood is placed by common consent in the highest rank. A large part of my hearers will need no description of his characteristics; for he was not a man to be forgotten by those who had enjoyed his ministration, even in their childhood. I never saw him but once. It was on an occasion deeply interesting to him, when he assisted at the ordination of a young minister, one of his own church, for whom he felt an almost paternal regard. More than twenty years have since passed away; but the earnest looks and thrilling tones of emotion, with which the venerable and eloquent old man uttered that solemn charge can never pass away from my memory. There was a current of strong and impassioned thought which bore his hearers along with him. His manner was unlike any other, and altogether indiscernible; it seemed to spring directly from his feelings, unshackled by any rules or precedents in oratory. His mind, originally vigorous, was enriched and adorned by a generous culture in the best classic learning. He was a scholar, "a good and ripe one;" for he devoted a long life to the acquisition of knowledge, which he knew how to employ in public discourse with singular power. In preaching, his method was natural and his conceptions clear; and his vivid imagination enabled him often to set forth his subject with great felicity and beauty of illustration. His professional studies were pursued diligently to the end of his life; and few men were so familiar with the Scriptures of the Old and New-Testament in their original languages. He never went into the pulpit without carrying with him the mature results of his best studies and thoughts. And yet perhaps the
power of his preaching was the power of a great character more than that of a great intellect.

He excelled in clear statements of moral truth and in strong appeals to the conscience. In his faithful rebukes and solemn warnings he is said to have been "truly awful." Yet in that strong and brave heart were deep fountains of sensibility. When he spoke of the Father's infinite mercy, the Savior's love, and the invitations of the Gospel to guilty and lost men, it seemed as if his whole being were melting in unutterable tenderness and pity. With a spirit so free, energetic, full of emotion and fire, and richly furnished with the best learning, he could not be other than a powerful preacher. He had not the fear of man before his eyes; he dared always to be true to his own convictions, and faithful to the souls of his people.

Still more interesting to us is his large and liberal soul, utterly incapable of a narrow sectarianism. He respected the rights of every mind and conscience in their fullest extent. The freedom of thought, which he claimed for himself, he granted to others. He suffered no expression of bigotry or intolerance to pass unrebuked in his presence; for he was as bold and downright in word and deed, as he was honest and true in heart. He was what is commonly called Orthodox in his opinions, yet no man in the community did so much, or could do so much as he, to restrain that spirit of exclusiveness, which in the latter part of his life began to create unhappy dissensions in the churches. He would never admit that any man should be denied the Christian name and fellowship on account of his sincere convictions, however widely these convictions might differ from his own. He would keep the unity of the spirit only by the bond of peace — of mutual
charity — of brotherly kindness. Hence his public life had a ministration of power and love, of truth and charity, in rare and beautiful union. The strongest sympathies of his heart, and the most intimate of his ministerial relations were with the most liberal of his clerical brethren. And to the younger among them, who revered him as a father, he was ever ready to afford aid and counsel from his stores of rich experience and solid wisdom. The following declaration of his Catholic sentiments is found in one of his sermons published a few years before his death. “Each of us ought to think and judge for himself, using the reason which God has given us, in searching and studying His revealed will. — From this unrestricted freedom variety of opinion may always be expected to follow. Principles may be adopted by some, which, in the judgment of others, seem to sully the glory of the Gospel. Under the influence of other principles, however, held in common by both parties, their hearts and lives may be conformed to the precepts of Christ. In this case, there can be no excusable pretence for either party’s excluding the other from Christian or ministerial fellowship. It is certain, that the spirit of Christ is not confined to any one sect, party or denomination of his followers. — “By their fruits shall ye know them, not by their doctrines, nor by their professions.”

“It is not easy,” — says one who was able to appreciate the great qualities of his mind and heart, — “to estimate the good influences exerted on the community by a powerful mind thus employed. We believe Dr. Osgood did much to stay the progress of an uncharitable and exclusive spirit, to strengthen a sense of the value of our religious privileges, and of the respect

* Sermon preached at the ordination of Rev. Mr. Francis, Watertown.
we owe each other as disciples of Jesus. He had a weight of character which made his influence felt in a remarkable degree in society." — With regard to the direct effects of his ministry, he had the satisfaction which must belong to a good and faithful servant of Christ. But he set up no fallacious standard of ministerial success; nor did he count any man a useless laborer in the vineyard, merely because he had not been able to stir up a spiritual commotion among his people, nor to raise that feverish excitement, which too often ends in spiritual pride, and consumes the true foundation of the Christian character. No man was more in earnest than he in the cause of religion; no man loved better to witness its progress, "pure and undefiled;" — he saw with joy every indication of the power of the Gospel among his people; his delight was to win souls to Christ. But he wished for no wild and violent efforts at religion; he sought not to produce agonies and raptures, but to place the hearts of his hearers under the tuition of the spirit of the Gospel, and to impress upon them that a good life is the best orthodoxy, and a bad one the worst heresy. He dwelt upon the consideration that a good minister at least prevents much evil; and therefore that he should not be wholly discouraged, though in looking around he should see but few palpable and direct effects of his exertions.”

The usefulness of Dr. Osgood continued, and the power and fervor of his preaching is said to have increased to the end of his long life. His last public services were on the day of the annual Thanksgiving, only a week before his death. He died the 12th day of December, 1822, in the 76th year of his age, and

* Obituary notice of Dr. Osgood, Christian Disciple, November and December, 1822, attributed to the Rev. Converse Francis.
the 49th of his peaceful and happy ministry. He was succeeded by the Rev. Andrew Bigelow, who was born in Groton, but had, from his childhood, been a member of this society. Mr. Bigelow had been before ordained as an Evangelist, and had labored with ability and success in the ministry at Gloucester in this State and at Eastport in Maine. He was installed as minister of this society on the 9th of July, 1823. In about three years he resigned his charge; and is now Pastor of the first Congregational Church in Taunton. The time for speaking of his character is, I hope, far distant. Yet my regard to his feelings need not prevent my bearing testimony, to the deep regret of his people, that any circumstances should, in his opinion, have made a separation from them desirable. He left behind him many aching hearts, and many warm friends, who will not forget how he labored among them as “a good minister of Jesus Christ,” in all faithfulness and love. The present Pastor was ordained as his successor on the 28th of February, 1827.

As long as Dr. Osgood lived the whole town of Medford was one parish, upon which the sectarianism of the times had made no distinct and manifest impression. It was its happiness never to have had an illiberal minister. The true spirit of protestantism seems to have presided over the dispensation of the word; and the free action of mind in search of truth had never been impeded by ecclesiastical or clerical domination. This freedom of soul, encouraged by a Catholic and beneficent ministration of the Gospel for more than a century, had gradually mellowed and softened down the harsher features of the ancient New-England theology, until a large majority of the Society had become decidedly liberal in their sentiments. This movement
towards purer and higher forms of spiritual truth, had been long observed by Dr. Osgood; but he had too much sympathy with the independence and progress of the soul, to feel any anxiety about the results of its free action, or throw any hindrance in its way. It could not be expected, however, that all would be equally satisfied; for where there is freedom of mind there will ever be diversity of opinion,—some having a natural affinity for religious views, which, to others, are altogether distasteful, and seem to have no foundation either in reason or in the revelations of God. It is not necessary to go into a detail of events so recent as the formation of two new societies, the one Calvinistic and the other Universalist, within the last sixteen years. A similar story may be told of almost every town in the Commonwealth. The elements of disunion, which had been long fermenting in the bosom of the community, at length broke forth, intimating that the time of division had come. For where the minority of a people, from irreconcilable differences of opinion, cannot worship with the rest with edification and comfort, they had better withdraw and provide for themselves a separate ministration which will satisfy their spiritual wants. I am not disposed to regard the dismemberment of our ancient parish as a calamity; for since the exasperation of sectarian feeling, usually occasioned by such events, has had time to subside, our community is at peace. The troubled waters of life have become clear again. Instead of one, we have three well filled churches, and three societies,—each, as we may hope, doing some humble part in the great work of humanity.

After the formation of a second society, the two streams of civil and ecclesiastical history, which had
long flowed on together, are forced into separate channels. I traced, as well as I could, in its scanty and meagre records, the course of the town, until it became a parish. I now leave it at the point where it loses its ecclesiastical character and ceases to be a parish. It may be well, however, to notice the several houses in which this Society has, in times passed, successively worshipped. The first was built in 1695 and 6,—a very humble edifice, thirty feet long and twenty-seven wide. It stood upon a rock beyond the brook, which runs through the valley a little to the west of the place where we are now assembled. "A committee was appointed by the town to seat the people in the new meeting-house," giving them precedence, partly according to the taxes they paid, and partly on some mysterious principle of social rank, not now understood among us. At first no pews were built; the men were placed on one side of the house and the women the other, after the present fashion of the Shaker Societies. The origin of pews seems to have been as follows. In January, 1701, on a petition of Major Nathaniel Wade, the town voted, that he have leave to build a pew for himself and his family in the meeting-house." Similar grants were soon after voted to persons of consequence; pews became fashionable; and at length nearly the whole house was occupied in this manner. The old system of seating the people was given up, and the pews became private property, either by grant or purchase. This house was soon found to be too small for convenience, and accordingly, in 1727, a little more than thirty years, a new edifice was built, and opened for public worship. It was considerably larger than the first, being fifty-two feet long and thirty-eight wide. It stood by the side of what was called Marrabell's brook, a
short distance to the eastward of the former house. In the year 1769, forty-two years afterwards, the town erected the edifice in which we are now assembled for the last time, before it is taken down, that a more commodious and tasteful structure may be reared on its site.

And now, my friends, we are to bid farewell forever to this temple of God, which, though time-worn and unsightly in its appearance, is dear and venerable to many of us for its holy remembrances. Not with unmixed pain, however, do we leave it, for we hope in a few months to see a more beautiful house of our God spring up on the same consecrated ground where we and our fathers have worshipped. The inspiring associations of the old temple we will carefully cherish and transfer to the new. Soon will the golden candlestick reappear in its wonted place, and we shall rejoice together in its light.

There are two aspects in which we may consider the building of which we are taking a final leave. We may look upon the old and decaying house as a sign of weakness and decrepitude, of the decline of the institutions and spirit of religion. The sentiment of religion is the tree of Life, mentioned in the Apocalypse, "and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." The "leaves" are institutions, houses of worship, all outward means and instruments of grace. They are not perennial; they all have in them the principle of decay. They "fall into the sear and yellow leaf of autumn;" they wither, moulder away, and mingle with dust from which they sprung. But the vitality of the tree is not impaired. It survives the severest winter of calamity and persecution; and ever does it clothe itself anew with the freshness and beauty
of genial youth. So our hope in human establish­ments,—the mere clothing of the religious idea,—
rests not upon their permanence, but upon their per­petual regeneration. The institutions and forms of
one age may be ill adapted to the spirit and wants of
another; then let them be reconstructed. The vast
and solemn cathedral and the lowly meeting-house
sooner or later will fall into decay; then let them be
rebuilt. Let the “Tree of Life,” have its roots in the
depths of our spiritual being; let its branches stretch
up towards Heaven, ever renewing its “leaves for the
healing of the nations,” and bearing fruits of righteous­
ness to nourish and bless the souls of men.

There is a deep and holy sentiment connected with
an ancient house of worship. We cannot give it up
without a pang. But the feeling may be indulged too
far. We may fondly cling to our falling house till we
are crushed and buried under its ruins. A Christian
society may reject the outward means of its renovation,
from a blind attachment to what is old, till its strength
and life are gone, and nothing old is left to them worth
preserving. The reverence which binds us to an an­
cient place of worship, had it been too tenaciously
cherished, would have prevented the building of the
edifice in which we are now assembled; and we must
have been at this day a feeble few, crowding into the
little and ruined meeting-house which our ancestors
erected in the time of their sore trials and straits.

And now, my friends, however painfully we may go
from this house, let us go cheerfully and hopefully.
We go to return again. This visible pile is to disap­
pear in a few days, but the temple of God is not to be
removed out of its place; here on this consecrated
ground it is again to stand restored,—a symbol of the
resurrection. With profound sensibility we go away, to come again and find a new temple, round which holiest affections may gather and kindle. And when the edifice, which is to rise on the ruins of this, shall in its turn grow old, and become unfit to satisfy the wants and tastes of some distant future, let that too fall, only to re-appear in a better resurrection. Thus may the frail house, built by human hands, become immortal like the spirit that hallows it. The ground it stands on is holy; we would never have it desecrated by meaner uses. The wood and stones thereof grow old and are changed, but let the temple forever be one,—the centre of the same inspiring associations,—a symbol of the presence of Him, who is One, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

There is another aspect, however, in which it may be regarded; not as an old thing to be removed, but as a holy thing to be venerated. The idea of a house of worship connects itself in our minds with the great purposes to which it has been devoted, the blessings and consolations of religion, the life and power of faith, and the eternal hope of souls. There is a sanctity in every structure, however humble and time shattered, that has been consecrated to communion with God, and to the regeneration of man. If a divine word or inspired thought has ever touched and quickened our souls in the sanctuary, it rushes upon us again at this parting hour. Here we have sat at the feet of Jesus, and heard his gracious words of wisdom and love, his lessons of justice, faithfulness, and charity, his revelations of hope and blessedness. Here most of you have listened to the reverend old man, "like an ambassador of Christ, beseeching you to be reconciled to God." You have seen his deep emotion, when,
And dear to your souls is the memory of these privileges, holy is the place where they have been enjoyed; it cannot seem old, but venerable,—the more venerable because your mind goes not back to its origin. You have never seen upon it the working of human hands; you have heard no sound of hammer or saw; to your imagination it is without beginning, and you would have it without end. I cannot but sympathize with the sentiment, though my own relation to this ancient structure is but of yesterday. It is honorable to human nature. I would that every Christian Temple could be built from the everlasting Rock, that it might be imperishable as the spiritual idea of which it is the visible sign. I would not abandon this frail edifice with heartless indifference. Let all its accumulated remembrances go with us. Let us linger, and look, and sigh out a last farewell. House of God farewell,—forever! From every part of thy old frame come melodies and counsels and warnings. The bell has tolled its final summons; in a few moments the organ notes will be hushed to their long silence; the clock, from its high watchtower, has just sounded out in our ears, its last solemn tone, as if time should be no more; the spire points upward to the serene Heavens, to shew us that our home and rest are there, in the bosom of the Infinite. The pulpit,—the altar of baptism,—the table of Christ, with its touching memories—all, with inarticulate, but thrilling voices, echo our last farewell! With mingled emotions of sorrow and gladness we go; we obey the voice of God, speaking to us through his Providence, and saying, "arise and depart for this is not your rest."
PUBLIC WORSHIP;

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION

OF

THE NEW CHURCH,

ERECTED BY

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN MEDFORD,

ON

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4th, 1839.
DISCOURSE II.

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH.

---

1 Corinthians iii, 16.

Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?

The soul that makes an offering is greater than the gift. No sacrifice is so noble as the spirit that halloweth it. No house built by human hands for the service of God, is so holy as that which He hath chosen and sanctified for Himself in every pure heart. "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

The building of a house of worship, however, is an act of deep spiritual significance. It is a sacrifice of the visible to the invisible, of the temporal to the eternal. There is a language of signs more impressive than any articulate speech. The house of God is an expression of the public faith and religious sentiment. It stands apart, a consecrated thing, among the busy throngs of men, and from its calm and holy retirement, ever come voices of counsel, rebuke and warning, as from the oracle of God. It intimates our connexion with a higher life, and directs our thoughts to nobler uses of our being, than we have yet acknowledged. A
new Temple, rising from the foundation of the old, may be regarded as a sign of the regeneration of the society to which it belongs. If it does not kindle up in our languishing souls a warmer and fresher interest in the ordinances of the Gospel, and breathe into them anew the breath of Divine life, it wholly fails to accomplish its greatest object. If it has any significance or value beyond our ordinary dwellings, it is derived from the act of faith which consecrates it; and by ever new and freewill offerings of faith, must it be kept holy. Henceforth this edifice is sacred to the interests and aspirations of the soul. It rejects all meaner uses. Every unchristian feeling or unworthy thought desecrates it. The visible beauty may remain, but no longer is it an expression of spiritual beauty in the invisible life of the worshipper. You cannot appropriate it to any secular object without destroying the sublimity of its idea, and the integrity of its impression. To come into it for the furtherance of worldly ends, or with minds occupied with selfish schemings, is to set up the tables of the money changers and stalls for the sale of oxen in the courts of God. The place is profaned by every thing that defiles the soul which enters it. No sanctuary can be holier than the hearts of its worshippers.

Let every thought then of this visible temple be accompanied with deeper thoughts of the invisible adorning of the soul with piety and faith and love. Let it shadow forth the rekindling of devout sentiments and all Christian graces in the heart of this people. If we allow ourselves to be satisfied by its outward ministration to our senses and tastes, it is no temple of God that we have reared, but an unhallowed monument of our pride and vanity, upon which no blessing descends. When we removed our ancient house of worship as no
longer worthy of its sacred service, and caused this new edifice to rise, in its serene beauty on the same consecrated ground, we were virtually pledged to build up the spiritual temple of God with a diviner beauty. The act implied a self-surrender; it signified that we here dedicate our whole being to God, with the inspiration of high and holy aims, and with the strength and earnestness of an unconquerable resolution. We would not exhaust our energies in rebuilding and adorning the outward while we leave the sanctuary within a mournful ruin. This new edifice speaks to us of a reviving sentiment of religion in the hearts of the people. Let us endeavor to fulfil the augury. Let it stand here ever more a holy and free offering of our souls to God and to the best interest and hope of humanity, undefiled by meaner motive or aim. May it be a ministration of love and grace, of peace and charity, and truth and holiness to the present and all coming generations. Ever may it be hallowed anew by the thronging in of devout worshippers, yearning for the communications of infinite wisdom and love.

We are here to-day to yield it up by acts of faith and devotion to Him, for whom we have built it. But by these religious ceremonies,—these prayers and spiritual songs and solemn organ notes, we do not hope to impart to it any mysterious sanctity, which it would not else possess; we aim only to express our sense of the great purposes, for which it has been erected, and our reverence for the living God to whose public worship it is devoted. This public worship is the subject to which your attention is now invited.

It may be regarded, in the first place, as a ministration to the best interest of civil society. By educating the will, the conscience, and the moral sentiments of a
whole people, it gives to human laws their highest sanction, and to social justice and order their best security. The value of religious institutions is underrated by those who have never known the want of them. They are a great conservative force, valuable at least for the evil they prevent. So much of their influence is expended in checking the downward tendencies of society, that we are not always able to trace it in any positive and strongly marked effects.

I was once in a condition to observe the habits and morals of a community, that had been several years without the ministry of the Gospel; and I hope never again to see so melancholy a spectacle of degeneracy. The coarsest vices corrupted the innocence and polluted the decencies of a rural life. It was difficult to find an example of moral purity. Youth even had grown old in sin, children were taking early lessons in profligacy, and fast ripening into unprincipled men, and lawless members of society. Every where a spirit of irreverence and profane mockery prevailed.

Wherever religious institutions have fallen into decay, we find society declining towards barbarism,—losing the virtues but retaining all the worst vices of civilized life. Its condition is more wretched and hopeless than that of a pagan state; for paganism, even in its lowest forms, still reveres and worships something. But here is no faith, nor worship, nor any reverence,—not even that superstitious dread of invisible powers, which in the utter absence of moral sentiment and principle, does sometimes keep in check the excesses of human passion. Let it not be thought that I would overlook or undervalue the inborn forces of man; God has always a witness for himself in the moral nature. The soul sits throned in its own sphere of activity and
power, able to rise, in the Divinity of its strength, and subdue and triumph over all untoward circumstances, nay, make them instruments of its own growth and elevation. And it never abdicates its sovereignty. The moral faculties are universal. But they are not universally awake and active. Too often they seem not to be the true guides of life, so much as blind instincts, tendencies, yearnings, which clearly intimate our need of light and instruction from a higher source. The revelation of God is a natural want of man.

In the worst state of society you may find here and there a religious family, and there you may see Beautiful flowers and fruits of faith springing up and growing under home culture, and changing the veriest desert of life into a garden of God. For He is present everywhere, — in the wild forest with the back-woodsman, or in the farm-house on the boundless prairie of the West, as well as in the thronged city with its hundred church spires pointing up to the Heavens — and everywhere the true worshipper finds His temple and His law in his own soul. But few will there be to worship the Father or reverence His just authority, where there are no visible signs of His presence, and no voice from the sanctuary speaks to man of his social duties or spiritual wants.

The institution of social worship is the embodiment of the public idea of God and His Providence; and it is a fixed and permanent centre, from which moral influences radiate in every direction. It forms the citizen as well as the Christian. It has a power to wake up in the soul a sentiment of its true good, and give it objects of thought and interest, which lie beyond and above the world of sense. In every Christian temple, stands the Pulpit, representing the ministry of Christ,
the Divine Teacher. How grievously this ministry, in the hands of men, has fallen short of its great aims; how unworthy it has been and is, of its sublime objects, I need not say. Whatever may be the organ of its utterance, still the pulpit is the visible sign of a communication of God with human souls. Here is the Gospel of reconciliation, peace, hope; here is the representative of divine truth, light and wisdom and mercy. You come up here from the fiery trials and temptations of the business world; from scenes of pleasure or pain; from the conflicts and vexations of many-colored life; from glad homes or sorrowful homes; from the sufferings of want and the dangers of wealth: and here you may find a power to bear and a power to resist. Miserably formal and heartless must be the ministration of the pulpit, if it has not a word of life for every soul that feels its weakness and wants. Its inspiration is the spirit of the living God; its field of action is the unfathomable heart of man. All human conditions and experiences furnish its themes. Life, and its ever changing aspects, its stern discipline, its pleasures, trials and sins, are its inexhaustible resources. Is the heart of man so dead that he cannot hear the voice of God in His sanctuary? Is the Divinity hid from him, behind the symbols of His presence? Whether in the market-place or in the temple, shall he live always in the same element of worldly interest or passionate strife? It cannot be. The moral power of the pulpit is felt; and I believe it is destined to be more and more developed, as it obtains a better insight into the elements and laws of the soul.

But it is not my purpose to speak of the instructions and warnings of the pulpit,—important as they may be,—but of the silent, mysterious influence of the house
of worship. Most of us have known what it is to feel a certain refreshment and elevation of spirit, in coming out of the mean tumults of the world, and the hot and stifling atmosphere of sin, into a serener region of spiritual purity and peace, where all selfish and rude passions are hushed to repose. We have advanced in our religious experience. We feel that God is there; for there our souls are tranquil enough to hear his still small voice. And we go away with a deeper veneration for His character and authority. He is present to our consciousness in shape of a command, a principle or a moral sentiment. The sense of His overshadowing presence will give nobleness to our aims, and sanctity to our every-day employments; and so idealise our life, that all its hard and dusty labors will become religious duties, instead of an unblessed sacrifice to the god of this world. The soul, thus filled with the sentiment of God, everywhere finds the aliment by which it lives and grows. Society, nature, books, human life, with its ever-changing aspects, are rich in lessons of truth and wisdom. Under this beneficent discipline, man becomes temperate, faithful and humane; a lover of order and justice. A profound sense of his relation to God makes him dutiful and beneficent towards all the children of God.

II. But again, the institution of public worship has a higher office than that of preserving the decency and order of society. It cherishes a healthy and devout inward life.

The efficacy of our religion resides not in external forms and ceremonies, but in its unseen spiritual energy. It lies deep in the unfathomable soul. Its power and life depend upon the profoundest sentiments and affections of our nature. Nevertheless, those outward
influences, which open our hearts to impressions of invisible reality, naturally dispose us to meditate seriously upon the great objects of faith. A house of worship, standing in its calm and holy seclusion, in the midst of our homes and places of business, and scenes of joy and grief and temptation, speaks to us continually of the ideal and infinite; of God to whom it is so nearly related.

God, indeed, needeth not a house made by men’s hands. The whole universe is His temple, filled and rejoicing with His presence. But men do need such edifices to touch their imagination and their sensibility. Venerable to the soul is the house consecrated to the expression of devout sentiment. If you would feel the whole power of the “genius of the place,” go into it alone, on a day when there is no gathering of the congregation; and if you have never had a religious emotion before, you will feel it now. There is a savor of Holiness and Divinity in the place. Its silence overawes you; its sublime associations subdue your soul to reverence as you walk along the solemn aisles. How different are these emotions from anything you feel when you enter a common lecture room or hall of justice. Such feelings as these we should carefully cherish, not at the time of our Sabbath worship only, but all our days; and wherever we go, let them go with us to guard the sanctity of our souls from the vanity and earthliness that would desecrate it.

We should not think lightly of a holy ministration to any faculty of our nature. Imagination, taste, the sentiment of beauty, all have their offices in our spiritual culture. Why should not piety avail itself of the law of association, which can be turned to account for every meaner purpose? If great men and great deeds
of other times may perpetuate their influence by festal
days and monumental structures associated with their
memory, why should not religion also have its sacred
places, where reverence may adore, and gratitude kin-
dle, and devotion bring its holiest offerings,—where
Christ dwells in the emblems of his death-sacrifice, and
God in the altar of His worship,—where the wounded
soul may give utterance to the sorrows of repentance,
or seek Divine relief in its heart-breaking agony?
Religion has a voice and a power in every house of
God, where the teachings of His wisdom and the mes-
sages of His love have often waked our profoundest
sensibilities. It needs no deep insight into the laws of
the soul to know that vital piety derives much of its
power and blessedness from its hold on the imagina-
tion. It will not do to strip it of all those significant
symbols, which are the clothing of the religious idea, and
leave it naked and shivering in the cold domain of in-
tellect. Religion belongs to the heart. "With the
heart man believeth unto righteousness." The faculty
of understanding is adequate to form the theologian,
but to form the Christian it is not adequate. A higher
wisdom than can be comprehended in logic forms is
imparted through direct impressions upon the soul.
There must be institutions and ordinances to nourish
the sentiment of piety, and keep alive the genial warmth
of the heart. The house of worship is a conspicuous
and venerable memorial of God,—a Book of Divine
Revelations,—lifted up on high, that "he who runs
may read," though he is disposed to read nothing else.
It is a point round which the religious associations of
every little community of believers cluster and grow,
and a power goes forth from it to "touch to healthful
issues" the deepest springs of life.
III. And again, I would speak, in this connexion, of
the worship of the sanctuary as the sign of public rever-
ence.

This is the seminal principle of all true piety, with­
out which the sense of duty is a bondage, and the fear
of God an abject superstition,—utterly incapable of
generous enthusiasm, or of a cheerful and filial worship.
Reverence belongs to pure and noble souls; it is the re­sult of that higher religious experience which changes a
mean, slavish passion into one of the sublimest of human
emotions. It is the humility by which man is exalted.
To revere God is to appreciate and love goodness in
its last perfection. It implies some worthy conceptions
of a Spiritual Being mightier than ourselves, to whom
we are attracted by a holy and mysterious sympathy.
Man becomes "One with God" when he enters into
spiritual union with Him, and is able to recognise His
presence in his own consciousness. Then he has a true
veneration for His law, His character and His authority.

The house of public worship is a visible expression
of this sentiment, and it also re-acts upon it and keeps
it alive in the heart of society. It constantly reminds
the young of the near presence of the Infinite Father,
to whom they see the good and the wise every­
where doing grateful homage. The spirit of rever­
ence communicates itself by natural sympathy from
heart to heart. They feel its power in the sanctuary,
and thenceforth the place is holy,—"none other than
the house of God,—the Gate of Heaven." It goes
with them into their working day employments, and
sheds over them all the beauty of holiness. This coarse
and ill-favored life is transfigured with a Divine glory.
"Old things have passed away, behold all things be­
come new." They ascend to a higher point of vision,
and lo, a new Heaven and a new Earth.” The visible creation is all radiant with God's presence; the serene skies, the growing of plants, the beauty and fragrance of flowers, the murmur of water-courses, the many voiced music of birds, all have a deep significance for the spiritual worshipper. All goodly sights and melodious sounds reveal the present Father. The Divinity breathes over him in the cool summer wind, descends in refreshing showers, shines down upon him in the bright, warm sun. The universe is full of holy mystery, and in the midst of its grandeur and beauty, under the shadow of God, he walks with reverent lowliness; and the spirit of mockery and unbelief, of contempt and hate, finds no place in his bosom. “He dwelleth in God,” and therefore “dwelleth in love,” for “God is Love.”

The homage which the soul pays to goodness is its greatest action. It raises man into communion and sympathy with what he reveres, and he becomes partaker of its nature. By humbling himself before the Highest, he is exalted. The attributes he adores, he appropriates. He seeks instruction from above. He listens reverently to the Divine will, which everywhere finds utterance in manifold voices of wisdom and truth. By his deep veneration of the holy and the perfect he is new-created in the Divine Image. He respects the nature which God gave him too highly to debase it by meanness or sensuality. He would keep the great trust unblemished, that he may render it back in faultless beauty. He has entered into spiritual union with God, and become godlike in virtue; above all things he loves and honors truth, benevolence, justice, and strong-hearted principle. This reverent spirit gives sanctity and elevation to a community, where God is honored in the sacred symbols of His worship.
A wise people will nourish this sentiment in the heart of society, by all those institutions and significant acts which are adapted to give it fit expression. In every town and city, so far as its means will justify, let the resources of wealth and taste be drawn forth to embody in forms of visible beauty, the true idea of worship. Let the temple rise ever, in the midst of our dwellings and scenes of labor, bearing impressive testimony, that God is here, reigning in the hearts and lives of a faithful people. And let the spire reach upward as if it would lose itself in the silent Heavens. The lofty steeple and solemn tower, unknown to classical antiquity, represent a great idea of our religion. They intimate the aspirations of the soul after the infinite; they are signs of its relation to absolute and Eternal Being.—They are not the mere outward decoration of a church, but an expressive language to those who can ascend by faith to the height of the spiritual fact they represent, leading their minds up to the region of illimitable thought, activity and progress in the bosom of Infinite Goodness and Love. They are the ladder in the vision of the patriarch of elder time, on which the Angels of the Divine Presence are ascending and descending. I can easily believe what is told us of the awe and veneration excited by the grandeur of ecclesiastical architecture in the old world. The vast Cathedrals, the paintings, the statues, the strains of sublime music which appeal so touchingly to the imagination and affections, seem to have had their origin in a profound insight into the wants and laws of the soul. We cannot transplant this exotic magnificence into the soil of New-England; we would not if we could. For notwithstanding its power of inspiring devout and reverential emotions, it would do violence to our habits of
thought and feeling. It seems to us to be too wide a
departure from the simplicity of Christ. May it not,
however, serve as a striking illustration of the aid,
which art may give to the impressions of truth, by
speaking through the senses to the soul? If we do not
aim at splendor, we ought not to be satisfied with
meanness or deformity in our sacred edifices. Bene-
ificent and far-sighted is the liberality, that imparts
grandeur or beauty to a public building, the very as-
pact of which may affect the character of coming gen-
erations. This sacrifice of faith to the best interest of
humanity, is the "casting of bread upon the waters,"
trusting that it "will return after many days." And
the trusting spirit is not disappointed. Never has a
generous outlay for the gratification of taste, or of a
higher sentiment, a better apology or a richer recom-
pense. Every noble or graceful monument of art, em-
bodying at once the idea of religion and the soul of
genius, is an important and permanent aid in the spir-
itual cultivation of a people. From the bosom of rest-
less and passionate life, the Temple of God, daily and
hourly preaches forth its Everlasting Gospel, kindling
the heart and the imagination. Its solemn stillness,
amidst the multitudinous sounds of business, is eloquent.
All the mightiest agencies in the Universe are mute,
voiceless. Yet they remind man, in language more
impressive than articulate speech, of his spiritual rela-
tions, which are adapted to fill his soul with humble and
holy reverence.

"The Heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament showeth the work of His hands.
Day uttereth instruction to day,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.
They have no speech, nor language,
And their voice is not heard.
Yet their sound goeth forth to all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world."

7
IV. Again, the institution of public worship cherishes the sentiment of human brotherhood.

We cannot have a true and loyal veneration for the Father without respecting the children whom He has created in His image; He has made us of one blood; we are all brethren. In the Sanctuary of His Presence our self-exaggeration is rebuked. However different our conditions may be in the world, we all stand on the same level before the Infinite, as frail, imperfect creatures; and we cannot but feel a deep sympathy with each other. In the Catholic churches of the West Indies, the master and slave are found kneeling side by side on the pavement. The instinct of religion overleaps earthly distinctions. Our souls kindle and glow with generous love as they pour themselves out in the united prayer that swells up from the beating heart of the great congregation. We come up here as disciples of one Master, children of one Father, looking for the same Eternal home and hope of all souls.

The conditions of human life limit our intimacies to a narrow circle. We are occupied for the most part with our private affairs. Every one is “seeking his own,” honestly it may be, in the fair and honorable competition of trade; — but from the very nature of most worldly enterprises, somewhat selfishly. To live is found to be a serious business, — so serious that the means of living are more regarded than the end. Men of thrift are anxious; they must make the most of time and opportunity, they are in a hurry; they wish well to their neighbor, but they cannot stop to consider his well-being. And often their self-love is an overmatch for their benevolent and social feelings. Unless it is kept in strict subordination to the nobler sentiments,
care, anxiety and the desire of gain will destroy or
greatly narrow down their kindly sympathies. To love
their neighbor as themselves is found to be the most
difficult of duties; brotherly kindness and charity have
no definite meaning. Such is the tendency of the
modern system of society to separate men widely from
each others' sympathy and regard—a tendency which,
undoubtedly may be, and often is successfully re­sisted; for the soul of a true man is superior to all cir­cumstances.

There is a tendency, moreover, in the artificial dis­tinctions of society, in fashion, in wealth and poverty,
knowledge and ignorance, to destroy the feeling of the
brotherhood of man. Nowhere perhaps has this ten­dency been more strongly developed than in our own
country and time. We reject all claims to consider­ation founded on hereditary rank, but the way is open
for every kind of ambitious pretension to put itself for­ward not less offensively. Besides, the too eager pur­suit of wealth, and the conflicts and scrambles of polit­ical parties, keep society in a state of hot fermentation,
and bring into activity all the meanest and most disso­cial passions. There is danger that a man's best social
feelings will languish for want of exercise, when he
comes every day into contact with so much that he is
inclined to hate or fear.

Christianity places us in another and higher point of
view. It contemplates man as a soul in his undying
nature and spiritual relations. It sees nothing high and
nothing low save what rises out of our own character.
The only greatness it acknowledges is greatness of
soul. Every good man is great in the kingdom of
Heaven—great only through his virtues, sacrifices and
disinterested services to his kind. We are all of one
family, of one rank. "He that is greatest among us is the servant of all." This is the lesson of the meek and lowly Jesus, and it is perpetually repeated through the institutions which visibly embody his idea.

But whatever we may look to as an ideal of society; we can never hope to see actual equality in the world. The constitution of nature and of man forbid it. The relation of inferior and superior is natural and intrinsic. Men are made for different labors and functions, and accordingly with different endowments. They can no more be equal in wisdom and greatness, than in strength and stature. Besides, by the law of our being we strive against such equality; we endeavor to raise ourselves above the common level of humanity; we would banish, if possible, our sense of inherent littleness by obtaining a great position. After all, our outward condition must be unequal, as it is commonly the result of different habits, activities and powers. The problem then is, how to banish the evils of inequality and make the best of that which no human arrangements can ever do away?

How shall we prevent pride and scorn, envy and hatred, from springing up to embitter social life and set man against man, and class against class, in mean jealousy or angry contention? No power can do this but the power of love.

When we habitually unite in the exercises of a religion, whose central principle is universal love, these jarring dissonances will cease; and we shall hear angel voices proclaiming "peace on earth and good will among men." The spirit of Christ subdues all discordant passions, and under his gentle dominion, there is the divine harmony of pure souls. We may cherish his spirit of justice and humanity by coming often together, as his disciples, and bowing humbly before his
Father and ours in His Temple where all earthly vanities and distinctions sink into nothing in view of Infinite realities. Here we shall learn to see ourselves as God sees us; and the false, the artificial, and the conventional will be stripped of their vain pretensions, and appear as poor and trivial as they really are. We are told that when the ancient Christian emperors of Rome were about to enter a church, they laid aside the pomp and splendor of royalty, dismissed their guards and stood, as little children, before the Infinite Ruler, on a level with His lowliest worshippers.

This abdication of earthly grandeur before God is the recognition of a great truth; we are all equal in his sight; we stand in this sacred place alike frail, erring creatures; all pretension seems impious. This house belongs to the Father of all, who sees nothing great on earth, but what He owns as such in Heaven,—a great and heroic soul. While we are before Him humbly seeking pardon and life, we obtain a deeper sense of the utter unfitness of pride, contempt, and envy and all uncharitableness, for such beings as we are. We learn to respect and love our fellow-man, as man; and these external circumstances and trappings, which have too often been matter of vain-gloryings and fierce heart-burnings, are divested of all their factitious importance. We are willing that another should rise above us by the intrinsic force of his natural superiority; and we feel no contempt for the inferior. Nor can we hate or scorn a wandering, guilty brother; all human conditions, all human experiences, are interesting to us. Whatever concerns the well-being of a man is our concern; if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. We feel that we are bound up, for weal or woe, with the destinies and hopes of humanity. We
would not separate ourselves from the great family. We learn to be helpful to one another. Our hearts yearn towards every human being because we see in him a brother—a child of God, created with capacities for great thought, great action and illimitable progress. And even in the lowest debasement to which sensuality and vice may have reduced him, he is still a man, bearing about him some portion of the Father's image though sullied and dishonored. Such fallen creatures Jesus came to redeem. He wept for them, prayed for them, died for them; but he never hated, never despised them, — never despaired of them. He saw more hope in the Publican than in the Pharisee. He "preached glad tidings to the poor, proclaimed deliverance to the captive, bound up the broken-hearted, called sinners to repentance." And here, in this house of his Father and ours, we would fill our souls with his divine spirit of love and pity. We would earnestly endeavor to feel the force of two great lessons taught by his pure and perfect life; — the one is, never to hate, — the other, never to scorn any living creature of God. The first is comparatively easy; the second more difficult, but not impossible.

What cruel wrong is often done to humanity by harsh and insulting denunciations! Cannot we bear a little while with those, whom the Father has borne with so long? "Shall mortal man be more just than God,— stricter to mark iniquity,— swifter to punish? Here under the shadow of His sublime presence, we gladly receive the lessons of that divine charity which "suffereth long and is kind, which beareth all things, hopeth all things." We would look with profound sensibility upon a fallen man, discerning in him something that lies deeper than his folly and sin; for under
these moral ruins are hidden the rudiments of a great soul, — buried, but not dead. We must not hate him nor despise him, — God’s workmanship, our brother,— for the man may outlive the sin that has so desecrated a noble nature. Some word of life may yet touch his heart, and save him from “the second death.” Melancholy indeed is the ruin of an immortal man; but more venerable still in his fallen grandeur than the ruins of an ancient temple, upon whose defaced and broken columns the traveller gazes with mournful admiration.

V. Finally, the worship of the visible sanctuary is an expressive sign of the worship of an invisible sanctuary holier than itself.

“Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” The worship He most delights in is the humble prayer of faith,— the yearning of the devout soul for union with the indwelling Father. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; it is within you; it has no visible throne. Wherever divine truth has touched and sanctified a living heart, there is the seat of His dominion. There He reigns by the everlasting constitution of the soul. And there is His temple, where He listens to the inaudible breathings of inward piety. The most acceptable sacrifice is a religious heart and an upright life, — the sacrifice of passion, pride and self-will to our sense of duty, — the “crucifying of ourselves unto the world and the world unto us.” In that living Temple, the deepest emotions of our hearts, in their remorse, or sorrow, or rapt devotion, are uttered in the ear of the Father alone. The sincerest and holiest of all worship is direct. It seeks no earthly channel of communication. The finite spirit mingles in closest
union with the very spirit of God; in the bosom of the Infinite is its home and rest. And not in tones audible to mortal ear do its deepest feelings obtain utterance; the stranger intermeddleth not with them; — they have found no articulate speech. "The spirit makes intercession within with groanings which cannot be uttered."

To such secret communings, that can be trusted to no third mind, are the children of God admitted. We may trust God with secrets of the heart, which may not be trusted to our dearest friend. The pure soul dwells in His sanctuary "a priest after the order of Melchisedeck," ordained to a diviner worship than that of the Hebrew pontiff, when he entered the Holy of Holies with the sacred emblems of office. The individual man does not lose himself in masses and congregations; for himself must he worship. Whether he is in the field, the market-place, the church, or in the closet with the door shut, the purest, freest offering comes ever from the sacred retirement of his soul. He stands as if alone with God in the universe,—not a part, not a fraction of a society,—but a whole,—an indissoluble unit, existing for his own sake, and working out of his own being, amidst these shadows of time and the smoke and dust of the finite world, his portion of the Eternal and Infinite Good.

The visible Temple then is the representative of something greater and better than itself. And he who ministers at its altar can be no more than the organ of your worship. He can be nothing, he can do nothing for you, unless he is one with you in sympathy, giving true expression to wants and emotions which you and he feel in common. Not for you, but with you, must he strive to give utterance to the inarticulate cry of the soul for relief in its spiritual sorrow or darkness. And
the pulpit, — an important element in the institutions of Christianity, — is but "your helper in the truth." It may give you light and truth and warning, but it cannot do the work of your souls. It cannot bring peace to the unrepentant sinner, nor deliverance to those who love their bondage.

It is not enough that we build and consecrate a house for sacred purposes. Not here alone must we seek the Divinity; in the secrecy of our souls we must find a holier temple, where our worship is in spirit and in truth. This inward worship is more spiritual than any outward act; for it brings us into divine sympathy with the Father. It is the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." "the pure in heart shall see God." He is here; above, around, within you. Him your hearts worship, not as a distant being throned in the far-off Heavens, without love or providential care of his creatures. O no; the irrepressible instincts of the soul cry out for the Living God. "Like a lost child, wandering and weeping in unknown tumults," it is alone in the midst of crowds, and longs to find its Father. And it finds Him, ever near, inexpressibly dear, blessing it with the boundlessness of His love.

"Ye are the Temple of God and His spirit dwelleth in you." Only as you contain Him, — the Uncontainable, in your very heart, does He exist for you. You know, you revere, you love so much of Him as you have taken up into your being, and made one with your inward life. Only as you have experience of the harmony of your spirit with the Divine Spirit, is there any true life abiding in you. Without this reverent feeling of His nearness, this devout surrender of your mind and will, heart and life to Him, you have no God in the world, nor true worship. In your public services
there may be the sign but not the thing signified,—"the form of Godliness, but not the life or power thereof."

You may build churches and adorn them with all the beauty of ancient and modern art, but there is no divinity to hallow them, unless He finds a holier dwelling there in the souls of His worshippers.

If you walk with Him in faith, feel His presence, love, adore and obey, then do you worship Him in the inmost Holy of Holies, where He ever makes the brightest revelations of His love. There to all holy souls, in the hour of inspired devotion, does "He manifest himself as He does not unto the world." Never is the good man so strong, so great, so free, as when he humbles himself before the Father with filial trust and lowliest self-abasement.

And now to the Father of lights and of mercies,—to his blessed Son and Representative, through whom God was manifest in the flesh to take away the sins of the world,—and to the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier and Comforter of souls, we dedicate this house which our hands have builded. We dedicate it to the same feelings and associations that hallow the place, to which you, and your fathers before you, have so long come up to worship. We rejoice to see it risen from the foundations of our time-honored sanctuary, a sign of the "repairing of old wastes in Zion." For it would grieve us sorely to see the ravages of decay upon the walls of God's house. "May the glory of this latter house be greater than the glory of the former." Here may we obtain a deeper sense of the significance, power, and inexpressible worth of sacred institutions and ordinances; may we feel also, that the soul is greater than all its instruments and aids. Here may our public worship become ever dearer and dearer
to us, as it becomes a truer expression of the holier worship in our hearts.

To this sublime homage of all pure souls, which the Father makes His chosen dwelling-place, we solemnly consecrate this house. We consecrate it to the communications of Divine Wisdom and Truth,—to a ministration of justice and order, of grace and love, of charity and mercy and peace. We consecrate it to the highest interests of the great brotherhood of man,—to the redemption of souls from sin by the Gospel of the crucified and risen Christ,—to the blessed hope and promise of Immortal Life, and to the pure worship of the One Living God.

"O Thou who dost prefer
Before all Temples, the upright heart and pure,"
deign to accept the gift. May Thy presence bless it. May Thy spirit hallow it. May a true religious loyalty bind us ever to thy worship and service. To us and our children and our children’s children may the place be holy. Here may we "dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Here may we commune with the Father in the Invisible Temple of our souls, where is the altar of holiest sacrifice, with its sacred fire evermore burning.
ORDER OF SERVICES
AT THE
DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH,
ERECTED BY THE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN MEDFORD,
DECEMBER 4, 1839.

I. VOLUNTARY ON THE ORGAN.

II. ANTHEM.

The Lord is King, and hath put on glorious splendor;
And girded himself with strength;
He hath made the round world so sure
That it cannot be moved—
Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared.
Thou art from everlasting—
The floods are risen, O Lord,
The floods lift up their voice,
The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly,
But yet the Lord that dwelleth on high, is mightier—
Holiness becometh thy house forever and ever—
Amen.

III. INTRODUCTORY PRAYER, By Rev. Nathaniel Hall.

IV. SELECTION FROM THE SCRIPTURES, By Rev. Edward B. Hall.

V. ORIGINAL HYMN, By Rev. Nathaniel Hall.

This house that we have builded, Lord,
We yield it unto thee;
Come, and thy glorious name record—
Thou, who art purity!
Our ready offering we surround,
And lift our eyes above;
Now, let accepting grace be found—
Thou, who art also, love!
Here be the world's attractions dim,
Its gold appear but dross,
VI. PRAYER OF DEDICATION, By Rev. Converse Francis, D. D.

VII. HYMN.

O, bow thine ear, Eternal One!
On Thee our heart adoring calls;
To Thee the followers of thy Son
Have raised and now devote these walls.
Here may Thine honor dwell; and here,
As incense, let Thy children's prayer,

X. CONCLUDING PRAYER, By Rev. N. Frothingham, D. D.

XI. ANTHEM.

And will the great eternal God
On earth establish His abode?
And will He from His radiant throne
Avoir our temples as His own?
These walls we to Thy honor raise?
Long may they echo to Thy praise—
And Thou, descending, fill the place
With choicest tokens of Thy grace.

Here let the great Redeemer reign,
With all the glories of His train;
Whilst power divine His word attends,
To conquer foes and cheer His friends.
Great King of glory come, and with Thy favor crown
This temple as Thy dome—this people as Thy own. Amen.

XII. BENEDICTION.
THE WORSHIP OF THE SOUL.

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED TO THE THIRD CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY

IN CHELSEA,

AT THE DEDICATION OF THEIR CHAPEL,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPT. 13,

1840.

BY SAMUEL D. ROBBINS.

PRINTED BY REQUEST FOR THE USE OF THE SOCIETY.

CHELSEA:
ABEL BOWEN, AT THE SUFFOLK LIBRARY.

BOSTON:
B. H. GREENE, NO. 124, WASHINGTON STREET.

1840.
INSCRIPTION.

To the Society, in whose service this Discourse was hastily prepared, and at whose request it is reluctantly printed, let me inscribe it as an expression of my sympathy in their struggles, and gratitude for their success.
THE WORSHIP OF THE SOUL.

DISCOURSE.

1st Cor. 3d Chap. 16v.—Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?

It is with no ordinary emotions that I welcome you this day to the new altar of your faith and hope. I feel that you have struggled long and well with your privations and necessities, and now that you have found a home for the ark of your God, and a house for His worship, I pray that you may be henceforth built up together in that unity and love and truth, and make progress in those gifts and graces, which should adorn and dignify your character as worthy disciples of Jesus Christ. Henceforward our Society will assume a more permanent form, and with the increased privileges we shall enjoy as a congregation, may we reap added benefits in the religious culture of our faith and our affections.

The occasion which assembles us is one of thrilling interest. At a day when the whole aspect of the church and the world seems to present strong tendencies toward revolution; while on all sides men seem to be outgrowing the tyranny of forms, and over­leaping all former barriers which have been raised between them­selves and perfect freedom, we come to consecrate this temple to the worship of the Father of our Spirits, and thus bear our humble testimony that we can find in Christian usages, and the
Christian's faith, all that we need for our mental and spiritual advancement in the path to Heaven. We feel, however others may consider the subject, that in the Bible and in the Saviour, are revealed to us Infinite Truths, which man can never outgrow, which as yet the world have scarcely imagined. And although we do not believe that the Christianity of Society, or the Christianity of the Church, as they appear in the present age, are by any means perfect, we do feel that the Christianity of Jesus is perfect, perpetual and eternal: that the age will never arrive when man cannot draw from the fountain of God's truth, the waters of life and salvation.

We dedicate ourselves and this sacred shrine to the worship of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We set apart this simple edifice, from all secular interests and occasions, religiously to be sanctified to the service of our souls. And dear to us all as the caves and catacombs where the earlier Christians assembled at midnight and amid martyrdom, and sacred as the very Gate of Heaven, let this hallowed temple be to all our hearts. Here in simplicity and sincerity, let us gather to our worship with devoutest love; here let us offer up together our fervent prayers; here let us break together the bread of Heaven; and long as our hills shall lift up their verdant summits, as altars, to the skies, or the sea as a font, shall bathe our shore, may this devoted spot be the happy home of kindred and Christian worshipers.

It is emphatically the end for which we assemble here to worship the unseen and Infinite Father of our Spirits: to hallow our souls by religious homage, to strengthen in us the powers of faith, love and pious thankfulness; to seek and receive pure influences from above, to learn and to obey the holy will of the Divine Being, to whom our hearts are indissolubly bound, by the most sacred ties. The worship of the true soul is undoubtedly the sublimest, the most solemn and beautiful of all duties. And this it is beyond
all things else which gives to this occasion its deep and thrilling import. The religious principle in man is the most deeply seated and most universal. In the darkest ages of the world, the dependence of the soul upon its Infinite Creator has never been lost sight of. Every where and always man has been conscious of the existence of a Power wiser and better than himself, and has clothed his image of this Invisible One, with the highest and holiest attributes which his mind could comprehend or hope. Before art had dreamed of the architecture of temples,

"Ere man learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them,—ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems,—in the darkling wood,
Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down
And offered to the Mightiest, solemn thanks
And supplication."

In the primeval ages of the world, also, in a thousand ways, ere the young dawn of science on the human mind, everywhere man recognised the agency of Providence in the affairs of men. The rude nations beheld the manifestations of the Infinite in the Sun, and the Thunder, and the Earthquake, in all things lofty and sublime, in all things unusual and eloquent. And by their belief in the flight of birds, and movement of the winds and the stars, testified their infant faith in an Omnipotent Love.

And just in proportion to the advancement which man has made in his idea of the Infinite, his worship has been more or less true and deep, and efficient. From the earliest Fetishism to the most perfect Monotheism, through all religious forms, through every theological symbol, from prostration before an image to the adoration of a Christian Father, by imitation of his holiness, the worship of man has been progressive. There has always been an inward struggle to attain God. Therefore it is that throughout all systems
of religion we find clearly marked a uniformity of character between the people worshiping and the Being worshiped. The dominant idea of the Divinity, in any age, is always the ruling feature of the religion and character of that age. The people, whose objects of adoration have been heroes, were warlike; those who worshiped the divinities which their own vices enshrined, were vicious; those whose ideas of Deity, as the Jews, were merely ritual, are formal; the true Christian is spiritual. Thus, divinities mark epochs in the world's history, and thus we might settle every period in the progress of man, by the data furnished by his religious symbols.

As the purer light of Truth dawned on the human mind, men ceased to worship the Divinity by outward acts and vain oblations, ceased to suppose that they could appease his anger with the steaming altar, and sacrifices of men and beasts, and learned the sublime doctrine that God is best worshiped by obedience to his will and the imitation of his character: that virtue and holiness were the only acceptable offerings which could atone for the sins or insure the happiness of his offspring. It is this idea which gives greatness and grandeur to this hour. We assemble to a simple house without a symbol or picture, or emblem to attract the outward vision, without anything external to appeal to the senses or excite the passions, but with the more sublime purpose of worshiping a Being Invisible, by the exercise of our thoughts and the service of our affections. As I look around me my eye meets none of those rites, which Providence in its mercy, in accommodation to the childish stage of the world, allowed the Jewish people; no robed priesthood, no gorgeous pomp, no bloody sacrifices pain my heart; nor do I behold here any of those ceremonies, which in the earlier ages of the Christian Church, weighed heavily upon its altars; no borrowed pomp of heathen sacrifices here obscures the simple and sublime majesty of Christian homage. I see around
me only earnest seeking human hearts, and I feel that unto us at least, the Kingdom of God is without observation, being deeply laid in our spiritual wants, hopes and aspirations.

As we observe the multitudinous and varied modifications in which religion has appeared to men, we shall remark how the majority have ever loved the outward, and overlooked or despised the inward. Amid the striking diversities of thought and feeling and custom with regard to sacred things, there has ever been one great leading feature characterising two opposite parties. On one side are those by whom the exterior and local, and temporary have been alone recognised and sought, and honored; on the other, those to whom the internal, the perpetual and Infinite are alone permanently dear. So in the Pagan nations, the highest and best men ever clearly perceived and adored the spiritual idea which was typed and clothed in the externals of their religion. So among the Jews, prophets and holy men were not wanting who clearly beheld and loved the mighty and sublime truths which were overshadowed by those pompous ceremonials in which the multitude beheld nothing, save the facts themselves. So has it been in the Christian Church. In the earlier ages of its promulgation, in the days of its poverty and persecution, Christianity was preached and accepted in simplicity and love, as a purely powerful, internal principle of spiritual growth and perfection. But when it was patronised by princes and sat upon the throne, men gradually lost sight of its spiritual and inward character, and began to array it in regal robes and build for it costly cathedrals, and overshadow its virgin purity with golden ornaments, and change its resting place in the heart, by enshrining it magnificently in the streets, to be seen by men. Thus by degrees did the marvellous love for the outward increase, till soon the beauty of its holiness was made to disappear amid Pagan rites and Jewish ceremonials. "Saints were multiplied to take the place of Heathen deities; a great machinery to operate
upon the senses and passions was set in motion; processions and pilgrimages; the crucifix and the frankincense, bowing and prostrations, made up the service of God; and from the beginning to the end of the year, was a scene of parade, which men will call magnificent or childish, according to the associations which they have connected with it.” Thus was it with the Ancient Church, and to some extent thus is it now with the largest part of the world, where Catholicism prevails. And even in the new, or Protestant Church, as it exists in our own times, the same disposition is developed, in other forms: not perhaps so palpable, but belonging almost as much to the outward and the material and appealing to the lower rather than the highest principles of our nature.

Thus from the remotest period, under every form of sacred things may be traced the wide distinction between those who recognize chiefly the outside and shell of things, and those who seek to penetrate into the depths of the inward spirit.

The worship to which we dedicate this house is an inward and spiritual worship. This is alone the worship which Christianity inspires. This is the great, distinguishing characteristic of the religion of the Son of God. It is purely an internal religion. Its kingdom is in the heart. Ye are the temple of the living God and the spirit of God dwelleth in you. Everywhere throughout the history of Jesus, this great leading purpose of his religion is shadowed forth, from his baptismal hour, when the dove from on high rested on him, to his ascension into Heaven, we behold him proclaiming to man, both in the sweetest words and by the most saving example, to worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth.

There is no aspect in which we can consider Christianity more beautiful, more touching, more sublime than this. And considered in this light, as the science of man’s inward life, as the Philosophy of the human soul, we see at once, its infinite character, and are led profoundly to revere it as the power
of God unto Salvation. There have been those in other times and there are many in our own day, who have dreamed that man might arrive at a period of refinement in the intellect and heart when he no longer would need the aid of the Christian system, having outgrown the idea of Jesus, and reached a higher revelation than he made unto the world. They who have held this belief could never have rightly distinguished between the Truth as it is in Jesus, and the feeble conceptions of him and his religion which have been formed among men; and by which the Christian world, from age to age, has been disturbed and deceived. For there is no height however glorious, into which the soul can by its virtue tower, toward which Christ has not pointed out the path; there is no perfection of heart or mind, or life, of which he is not the way. No, my friends, Christianity is the natural and spontaneous law of the souls existence, its happiness and its progress. Its foundation is in our highest and divinest nature; and as we shall grow up into its acceptance and obedience, as we shall ripen in our understanding of its hidden doctrines and higher principles, we shall clearly perceive that it is an infinite and fundamental element of the soul, that it is Spirit and Truth, that it is the mind and will of the Eternal Father: no more to be outgrown in this world, or in any world, than any of those immutable and everlasting laws of God, by which the planets are moved onward in their courses, and the Heavens and Earth held in the hollow of his hand.

I have said that Christianity is emphatically the science of the soul; and I regard this view of the religion of Jesus as infinitely important. We have our Universities and our Schools which are instituted for the purpose of teaching and explaining the natural sciences and the philosophy of the intellect. But the Church is consecrated only to the higher purposes of instruction in the knowledge of the human heart and conscience: in the mysteries of the soul, its laws and duties and destiny. We gather ourselves
into this holy place to learn those mighty truths which relate to God and man. We come up higher from the world and its trials and dangers to listen to the wisdom of Jesus, and learn those deep lessons of faith and obedience and love, by which we are to become ripened daily into the image of Infinite Holiness.

There is a higher life than that which most spirits live. A higher love than most spirits know. There is an infinity in the human soul which few have yet believed, and after which few have aspired. There is a lofty power of moral principle in the depths of our nature, which is nearly allied to omnipotence: compared with which the whole force of outward nature is more feeble than an infant's grasp. There is a might within the soul which sets at naught all outward things; and there is a joy unspeakable and full of glory, dwelling in the recesses of the good man's heart too vast for utterance. There is a spiritual insight to which the pure soul reaches, more clear and prophetic, more wide and vast than all telescopic vision can typify. There is a faith in God and a clear perception of his will and designs and Providence and Glory, which gives to its possessor a confidence and patience and sweet composure, under every varied and troublous aspect of events, such as no man can realise, who has not felt its influences in his own heart. There is a communion with God in which the soul feels the presence of the unseen One, in the profound depths of its being, with a vivid distinctness, and a holy reverence, such as no word can describe. There is a state of union of spirit with God, I do not say often reached, yet it has been attained in this world, in which all the past and present, and future seem reconciled, and Eternity is won and enjoyed; and God and man, earth and heaven with all their mysteries are apprehended in truth, as they lie in the mind of the Infinite. But the struggle with most beings is to spiritualize the actual, to make those things which are immediately around them subserve the higher interests of their
immortal nature; and finding that it is almost impossible to do this they faint in the way and postpone to a future life that higher being which their thought apprehends, and their hearts long for, but cannot reach. Hence it is that the advanced powers of the soul of which I have been speaking are not believed to exist for us, in this world at least; and therefore the few who will strive for them, because they dare not compromise their highest thought and life and love, are looked upon as spiritual star-gazers, as visionaries dwelling amid the beautiful creations of their own ardent hearts. Hence it is that in our age the Church and its highest influences is needed, to declare to the wide world those precious promises which are destined to carry comfort and peace to the deepest emotions of the struggling soul: to speak to all men everywhere in the name of Jesus, teaching them that the highest and loveliest visions which the human mind in its most rapt hour of aspiration, has enjoyed of Truth and Life, of Holiness and Love of duty and denial of growth and glory of Faith and God, are only the faintest sketches of that reality which Christianity has brought to light.

This then, if I apprehend the truth aright, is the very essence of all worship, to increase in the knowledge of God, and become more like the Saviour in our Faith and Love, and Life. Before this idea of worship, all forms of homage, all pomp of splendid ritual, melt away as the young dew of the day-break before the rising sun. Men have in all ages built altars to their idea of the Supreme One, and laid thereon what was estimable in their own eyes: and reared fanes amid groves and on the mountain tops wherein to bow down and adore the unknown God. But Christ reared himself into a living temple, and offered his life as an oblation of love and truth. As his followers then we should feel that we are to dedicate not this house, but ourselves, this day to our Maker's service. Service, did I say? No, man cannot serve God, though the language of common usage has called worship a service, the Christian feels it is not so. Worship is virtue, holiness, life.
It is the great spiritual attributes of our Heavenly Father, which constitute the chief glory of his nature; and it is by the culture of these attributes in his children, that they most truly and acceptably worship Him. This is the peculiar doctrine of Christianity, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." The character of his children, their virtue, their holiness are the brightest manifestations of the Divine Glory. Every one will readily acknowledge the superiority of this glory to any outward signs and wonders, or any loud ascriptions of homage from his creatures. And in this respect, Christianity shows itself in infinite advance of all other religious systems. In our virtuous affections, in the beauty of our holiness, the blessed Father of spirits views his own image reflected back to Heaven. And thus the Divine benignity is most beautifully attested in having rendered us capable of nurturing the Divine character, in our own souls; that we may be made partakers of even an Infinite Nature. And is not this a most cheering, a most sublime thought, that God is better pleased by the virtues of his humblest child, than by the most magnificent pomp of golden ceremonial! That the Infinite purity of Heaven rejoices more over the spotlessness of a single soul than over the whole universe, that revolves before his throne: that the noble spirit of the most obscure Christian is in his all perfect sight of more value than the countless brilliant worlds that move and shine by His bounty: that it is in fact a nobler creation, that it presents a brighter image of His own perfections. It is this capacity of gloryfying God, by imitating God, that entitles us to the high point we occupy in the scale of Being; and while this adds dignity to our nature by revealing to us its unspeakable worth, it adds also to the measure of our responsibility. God in these later times manifests not his glory, in visible appearances or audible voices. The local temple and the outward altar are forever overthrown, forever superseded. He now calls on us to worship Him in the culture of our own
souls. And in our hearts has he promised to dwell with a more excellent glory than ever shaded the Mercy Seat, rested between the Cherubim, or filled the Tabernacle, abode in the holy mountain or "hung in wings of light o'er Jordan's wave."

Man, before the advent of the Messiah, had praised the exceeding excellence of virtue; had taught the beauty of Holiness, and sang lofty hymns to the Deity; but all this was but an idle vision, compared with the more Godlike virtue of living out the great problem by which the soul is raised, refined and glorified. The world before Jesus, had discovered the attributes of the Divine mind, he not only discerned but manifested God's moral perfections. Moreover, men appreciated not the idea of the mightiness and responsibility of individual character, until Jesus illustrated in himself not only the true worth of a soul, but its duty, its powers and its surpassing interests. He hath showed us in his life, daily how to live, to act, to suffer and to die. He hath as it were sculptured himself into a perfect model, out of a living Rock, that we might fashion ourselves like him, into the image of the Perfect. He came not for the narrow purpose of establishing this or that creed, but to illustrate man's power to live out the unutterable, the everlasting Truth: to mature each power of thought, of heart, and hope by action; to do good, that we may both think wisely, and grow strong in holiness; to impart truth, that we may be filled with it, and to scatter light that our own orbs may be brimmed with light.

Seeing then that Truth is thus perennial, that it stands waiting always for us to search into its deeps, and be inspired with its spirit, let us throw open our souls to its freest action, without faltering, without fear; let us feel that our minds can never grow capacious enough to receive the full idea of the Divine mind, till the finite becomes the Infinite. Forms may grow old, altars decay, creeds change, but man shall always be prophet and priest so long as he
shall listen to the oracle of his own spirit, and fulfil the unwritten commandment of his Godlike nature.

You perceive my friends, throughout this discourse, I have made no mention of any of those distinctive features, or peculiarities of doctrine by which the several denominations among Christians, have been divided. I have not desired that this house should be dedicated to any sect, but to the soul. To the Holy Spirit, to Truth and to God alone. To faith in those universal realities which underlie all systems, and those eternal verities which are superior to all opinions. To an Infinite, which can be monopolized by no party; to the religious instincts which lie in every man's soul; to communings with the Lovely, the Beautiful, the Absolute and the Perfect. To meditations upon conscience, duty, holiness and Heaven. To the study of our wants and our affections, our capacities and our responsibilities. To the culture of our noblest powers and the perfection of our spiritual being. To such vast, free and glorious contemplations and interests should the Church and the Pulpit alone be consecrated. And as Sabbath after Sabbath we shall meet here thus to worship the living God, may we feel the sweet influences of His Love in our hearts, and know indeed that we are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us. Then long after this house shall have mouldered away, yes, when the universe itself shall melt in the last fire, these inward temples of the Holy Ghost will still shine brighter and brighter, illumined by God's own presence, more beautiful than the Heavens; more vast than the upper Firmament, enduring and glorious as Eternity.
The Union Society in Chelsea, now known as the Third Congregational Society, owes its origin to the efforts of Christians of different denominations, who united together early in 1837, for the purpose of enjoying the influences of Liberal Christianity. Their earlier meetings were held at a private dwelling house in Broadway. Rev. W. H. Knapp, who was then residing at Chelsea, was requested to take charge of the Infant Society, and first preached to them on the 8th January, 1837. The services of the Sabbath were there regularly administered until the 23rd of April, when the Society removed to the Union Hall, in Winnisimmet street, owned by Dr. Albert Guild, whose exertions for its welfare during the first period of its existence, as well as the efforts of many others of its earliest supporters, will always be remembered with gratitude. As the number of worshipers increased, the Society removed in January following, to the Hall of the District School.
In October, 1838, Rev. Mr. Knapp having received a call to become Pastor of the Church at Canton, the Society, at his request, released him from his labors, and engaged Rev. Mr. Austin of Cambridge, to preach for them, who continued in their service till the Installation of their present Pastor, which took place on the 14th July, 1839. Amid many privations and struggles, the Society persevered in its existence and united by a common bond received additions from time to time, as the population of the Village increased. On the 1st of July, 1840, being obliged to leave the District Hall, a resolve was passed to erect their present Chapel, and a Building Committee chosen for that purpose.

On leaving the District Hall, a kind letter was sent to the them from the Baptist Society, generously offering the use of their House of Worship, at such seasons as should be deemed convenient, which invitation was cordially accepted. The Chapel was raised on the 9th of July, and completed on the 9th of September. The building was engaged in, with a most earnest spirit, and many of the Society went forward with their own hands, laboring daily in the good cause; and those who were not able to labor contributed all in their power to aid in the erection of a place where they might worship God with their children according to the dictates of their own consciences.
THE CHURCH.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH

OF THE

FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD, MASS.,

DECEMBER 29, 1841.

BY BARZILLA FROST,
PASTOR OF THE SOCIETY.

Published by Request.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
1842.
DEDICATION DISCOURSE.

I. TIMOTHY III. 15.


We have assembled this morning, Christian brethren and friends, for a most solemn and interesting service. It is to set apart, by appropriate religious services, another house to the worship of Almighty God, to the promulgation of spiritual truth, and to the education of the human soul in righteousness, and true holiness. We may appropriately name it the house of God. So far as these purposes are fulfilled, it will be "The house of God, and the very gate of heaven." It delights the eye and gladdens the heart to see the noble edifice arise, for domestic comfort, for the diffusion of knowledge, for the work of legislation, and to commemorate the noble deeds and exalted virtues of departed worth. But that is a deeper want, a holier purpose, for which this building has been erected, and to which we would now dedicate it. It has been well said, "An humble spire, pointing heavenward from an obscure church, speaks of man's nature, man's dignity, man's destiny, more eloquently than all the columns and arches of Greece, and Rome, the mausoleums of Asia, and the pyramids of Egypt."* The erection of a Christian church is a new evidence of the living conviction

* Channing's Dedication Sermon at Newport, R. I. p. 4.
in a body of people of the truth of Christianity, of a settled purpose to cherish it in their hearts and in the world, and a readiness to make great sacrifices for that end. In this instance, it is not an evidence, it is true, that a new church has been gathered; that there is an accession of numbers to the universal church. But, what is not less interesting, it is an evidence, that one of the first churches that was planted in this Western wilderness, that has been watered by the tears, and hallowed by the prayers of many generations, that has been adorned by many of the noblest examples of piety and virtue, still survives; that its root is fresh, that it has now put forth, in this new building, a blossom of promise, more beautiful than any which has preceded it.

The analogy between the outward temple and the spiritual temple is so striking, and so often and beautifully described in the Bible, that the same word has been applied to both. The house, and the body of true believers who worship in it, are each called a church. In the text, the church is called the house of God. “It is the assembly, in which God lives and works—each member is a living stone—all of whom, fitly framed together, grow up into a holy temple in the Lord.”* The same spiritual purpose, the same symmetry and unity of parts, the same divine spirit characterize both.

The material church is but an incident and a symbol of the spiritual church, the true communion of believers. It is this latter of which I shall speak mainly, at the present time. “The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” Three topics are here suggested. 1. What is the true church? 2. What is the truth which it is to support? 3. *How* is the church the pillar and ground of this truth?

I. What is the true church? As simple as this question may appear to some of us, and as easy to answer, it has yet been found in practice to be one of the most difficult, that

*Adam Clark, on 1 Tim. iii. 15.*
has ever convulsed the world. Not to speak of the different
religions of heathenism, the Jew, the Catholic, the Protestant,
the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Independent, the
Quaker, the Baptist, have each given a different answer.
Each has been ready to make good his answer, by bloody
wars, by stakes and dungeons; or by fierce denunciations,
by middle walls of partition so thick and high, that no voice
of charity and love could penetrate them. Much of this evil
yet remains in the Christian world. But the wars, the
stakes, the pillories are removed. Nothing now remains but
a war of words, with passions much less excited, and much
more charity between different communions, than ever before
existed, since the little company of believers multiplied into a
host. This is the dawn, as we believe, of a brighter and
fairer day. Different communions are much less exclusive
in the answer they give this question; they shut out fewer
sects from their fellowship, and look with less unkindness
upon those who are excluded. I propose to give our answer
to this question, as I understand it. It embraces every hum-
ble seeker after truth, and would, if carried out, remove all
causes of unkindness for opinion's sake from the hearts of
Christians, and make the most opposite sects only so many
different companies of the same master, working in the same
spiritual vineyard according to their own modes of opera-
tion.

The word church is used in various senses in the Scrip-
tures. Sometimes it means a mere assembly, good or bad,
which is the simple meaning of the original Greek. Some-
times it means an assembly of Christians, united together,
and meeting in one place, for the solemn worship of God.
This is the definition given by the compilers of the "Thirty
Nine Articles," "A congregation of faithful men, in which
the true Word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly
administered, according to Christ's Ordinances." Again, the
word means the whole body of Christians on earth, who pro-
fess to believe in Christ, and acknowledge him to be the
Saviour of mankind. This is the sense of the text. Accord-
ing to Dr. Bloomfield, "Almost all ancient expositors, and many modern Protestant commentators, understand this passage of the church universal, administered under an external visible form of government,—and which, by maintaining the Revelation of God and his religion, upholds it as a foundation does a building, or as pillars support an edifice."* The word church is used in a still wider sense in the Scriptures. It includes all the faithful of whatever nation from the beginning of the world, who make but one body, whereof Christ is head or chief.† In all nations, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. And all who are accepted with God belong to the universal church. There is even a wider sense in which the word is used. Paul says to the Ephesians, "For this cause, I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth are named. All holy beings in heaven and earth are one family, make but one church. The same idea is presented in Hebrews. Contrasting the exclusive religion of the Jews with the universal religion of Christianity, the writer says, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and a tempest; but ye are come unto the Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;—and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the First Born, that are written in heaven." In these passages all holy beings in heaven and earth are spoken of as one family, one communion, one church. The real bond of union is not outward ties. It is not belief, nor ordinances, nor church constitutions. It is the spirit of God in the soul. It is a union of all holy dispositions. "As many as have the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

The universal church is made up of particular churches. Wherever two or three are met together in the name of Christ there he has promised to be in the midst of them. All such societies of Christians are called churches in the New Testa-

* See Dr. Bloomfield on this passage.  
† Col. i. 18.
meat. The Apostles went not only from province to province, but from house to house, and little companies gathered around them, received their doctrines, and united for social worship, for mutual sympathy and edification. These Societies, whether larger or smaller, were called churches. And hence we read of the church of God which is at Corinth, the churches of Galatia, the church in such and such a person's house. These little companies of Christians had no particular set of doctrines, or mode of government prescribed to them. They at first yielded to the personal influence of the Apostles. But even they disclaimed any right to lord it over their faith, but were only helpers of their joy. All stood on a perfect independence and equality with respect to each other. All regarded themselves, and were regarded by each other and by the Apostles, as belonging to one communion. This great community is called, sometimes, "The church of God," sometimes, "The body of Christ," sometimes, "The house" or "temple of God." These words are beautifully expressive of the harmony, oneness, and sacred union of the early Christians.

But as these separate communities of Christians multiplied, and increased in numbers and worldly power, a spirit of assumption and exclusion sprang up among them. Particular churches attempted to appropriate to themselves the name and authority of the only true church. The first, most remarkable, and successful attempt was that of the church of Rome. Becoming largest and most powerful, and taking advantage of the then universal belief of mankind in the right of hereditary descent of kingly and hierarchal power, she attempted to establish her claim to be the only true church, by showing that St. Peter was her founder, to whom all power in heaven and earth had been committed by Christ; and through him had descended by a kind of hereditary right to his successors. This claim was strengthened by the fact, that the priestly office was hereditary in the Jewish religion, as well as in many heathen nations. But unfortunately for their claim, this principle has been proved by the progress of truth
to be wholly unfounded. And the Catholic must now show, not only that all power was delegated to Peter alone, which is against the express declaration of two Evangelists, that the same power was given to all the disciples; but that Peter was expressly authorized to transfer this power to his successors, of which not a word is said in the New Testament. Nor can it be shown that Peter was ever bishop of Rome. All the earliest Christian writers, except one, say he was bishop of Antioch. Furthermore, Paul, being wholly unknown to the church at Rome, wrote to instruct them in the first principles of the Gospel. This he would not have done, if Peter had been their bishop. And in his letters from Rome, he sends the salutations of all the principal personages, but makes no mention of Peter. This he would not have done, if Peter had been bishop. But there is one argument against the claim of the Catholic to be the only true church, which of itself is conclusive. It is the corruption into which that church early fell. As if to prove to the world the pride and arrogance of this claim, God seems to have withdrawn his Holy Spirit from her, and given her over to ambition, to cruelty, avarice, and impurity.

And yet the claim of the Catholic church to be the only true church is, on the whole, the best, that has ever yet been set up. She can trace back her origin to the very days of the Apostles. She has held together eighteen hundred years. She includes in her communion about three fifths of the Christian world. She numbers in her ranks martyrs, confessors, and the brightest examples of piety and virtue, the world has ever witnessed. After this, we should have thought, that no other church would have ever set up the claim to be the only true church. But strange to say, almost every sect that has sprung up, however few, however illiterate, down even to the Shakers and Mormons of the present day, has set up this claim of being the only true church of God on earth, the only body who hold the truth, the only communion in which the spirit of Christ dwells. It is doubtless the most humiliating instance of human weakness and presumption, that is to be found in the history of our race.
But we rejoice to believe, that the view we have taken of the church is gaining ground, that it is confirmed by the Scriptures, that it results from the very nature of the truth, the soul, and God. All spiritual beings are of one family. All the good belong to one communion. There are no castes among God's children. Every true, loving soul is a member of this communion. Every one who has the spirit of Christ is a member of his body, the true church. Where two or three such souls are united, no matter how erroneous their creed, how rude their speech and manners, how borne down by ages of erroneous customs and opinions, there is a true church. And these separate churches, no matter by what mountains and continents and seas separated, nor by what continents and seas of prejudices and creeds separated, are all members of one body. So far as Christ is formed within them, and their spiritual natures are developed, they are of one heart, aim at one end, and are really working together for the establishment of the same truth. It is delightful to think, that all true Christians, while they are divided into a thousand sects, and seem even to themselves to be contending against each other, and are mixed up with hypocrites, as the wheat with the chaff, are yet really of one heart, and working to one end; that they have one faith, one Lord, one God and Father of all, who looks with equal favor upon all. O, that the walls of creeds and prejudices could be removed, and all the really good and holy could be brought near to each other! How would the scattered lights of wisdom and piety, that now burn dim and low in little sects and solitary souls, kindle into one broad conflagration, that would illuminate the world! These scattered links, if united, would form an electric chain of truth and love around the world. What assurance, what joy, what power would it not impart to each one! Before such a league the artificial combinations of wickedness would tremble and crumble. This is all that is necessary to usher in the millennium.
I have now sufficiently indicated my idea of the church of God on earth, which is the pillar and ground of the truth.

II. Let us next inquire, what is the truth which the church is to support. I answer, summarily, it is the Gospel of Christ. I have already stated, that the text, according to the best writers, ancient and modern, refers to “the universal church, which, by maintaining the Revelation of God and his religion, upholds it as a foundation does a building, or as pillars support an edifice.” Jesus said, to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth. And by his life, by his teaching, by his miracles, by his resurrection he did set forth, bear witness to, and seal that truth, on which man’s recovery from sin and spiritual regeneration depend. What before were scattered hints in the volumes of sages, he brought out in the fulness and unity of fundamental truths. What before seemed the dreams of an over-refined philanthropy, he introduced into common life, as the most simple and practicable of all things. What before were but the opinions of men, he has confirmed into glorious realities. What were only vague hopes, dashed with sad misgivings, he has erected into enduring truths. And the witness which Christ bore to these truths was threefold. It has all the force which the clearest statement can give, all the illustration which their living exhibition in the holiest life can afford, and all the confirmation that one could give, to whom God had not only given a deep insight into the spiritual world, but all power even over external nature. It is a striking illustration of the force and variety of this evidence, that it is sufficient to convince not only all sects of Christians, but even those who deny the historical truth of Christianity.

But that the Gospel contains all spiritual truth, we do not say. To say that infinite Wisdom cannot disclose anything more to his children, would be impious as well as absurd. John gives us to understand, that but a small part of what Jesus did and taught was recorded. And this relates of necessity to the first elements of truth. It is a book for spiritual
children, as all mankind now are. It is but a partial disclo-
sure of infinite truths, which eternity alone can unfold. And
even so far as they are stated in language, they are not prop-
erly revealed to the soul. They can be, only so far as the
powers of the soul are expanded, its eyes opened to take in
these truths. The same is true of the world. In proportion
as the spiritual element is awakened, and society becomes en-
litened and holy, the truths of Christianity will open in
new lights. What now seems impossible, will then appear
perfectly simple and practicable. We are then to expect new
revelations from the written word itself, much more from na-
ture and the soul. In proportion as our spiritual powers en-
large, our perceptions grow clearer, will the fulness and beauty
of divine truth open on us. There is a great truth in the
Quaker and Swedenborgian doctrine, that, in order to un-
derstand the Scriptures, we must have a portion of the same
inspiration by which they were dictated. We shall under-
stand Christ's teachings, only so far as we have his spirit, his
enlargement of vision, his insight into the true nature of the
kingdom of heaven. And as Christianity pervades society,
and the spiritual element is awakened, and the moral vision of
the world purified, Christianity will open in new and clearer
lights. What in the early and dark ages it was thought to
allow, it will be seen utterly to condemn. Wars, duels, slave-
ry, aristocracy, castes in society, will all disappear before the
increasing light of the Gospel, like unclean birds of night be-
fore the rising dawn. The Apostles at first thought, that the
kingdom of the Messiah was a display of princely regalia
and worldly splendor. When they were instructed farther
into the things of the kingdom, they saw that it was the real
kingdom of God, the reign of heaven on earth. As great a
change will take place in the views of the world in regard to
Christianity, as it is instructed into the things of the kingdom.
There is much land yet to be possessed. Let us then, like the
noble pastor of the Pilgrim church at Leyden,* look for new

* Robinson.
discoveries of divine truth in the written word. Let us look for the time, when the invisible things of God in the things that are made shall stand out, so as to eclipse the outward beauties of nature. Let us expect such a growth in the intellectual and spiritual man, that it shall be apparent to all that the kingdom of heaven is within us. Let us anticipate such an enlargement of vision, that we shall see, even in this world, into the deep things of God. Let us rejoice in the hope of that day, when the kingdom of our Lord shall absorb all outward kingdoms, and the reign of righteousness, the life of heaven, pure spirituality shall include all from the least to the greatest.*

III. But I must hasten to consider how the church is the pillar and ground of the truth. How has it, and how will it sustain and help forward spiritual truth? I answer, first, by preserving and circulating the Scriptures. The church has been the depository of the true word, through all the ages of darkness, corruption, and revolution of Christendom. Whatever the Bible has done for the world, is due entirely to the church. At first, the writings of the New Testament were written and sent to particular churches and individuals, to furnish them with a true record of the history and doctrines of Christ. These were transcribed and sent to each other, until every little assembly of two or three, on the hills of Judea, or in the cities of Asia Minor, on the plains of Syria, or in the regions of Africa, had a copy. With such accuracy were they copied, and with such fidelity preserved, that in the multitude of Manuscripts collected from the libraries of princes, universities, and monasteries, from the most different and distant parts of the world, from a thousand differing sects, although on comparison many thousand different

* This view of the discovery of new truth, from the enlargement of the spiritual powers and progress in holiness, is very different from the "emanation from God," the "inner light" "intuition," the "teachings of the spirit," as explained by the Mystics, the Swedenborgians, the Quakers, and many sects of the present time. According to these, every individual is made the subject of a special revelation.
readings have been discovered, yet the greater part of them make no material alteration in the sense. And the same is true of the Old Testament. The church of God among the Jews was to them, as the Christian church is to us, the pillar and ground of truth in this respect. Thus all have had in their hands the writings of Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles. In the Gospels, they have had a vivid delineation of Christ as he lived, taught, and died. In the Epistles, they have seen his great spiritual truths reflected from the simple hearts and the holy lives of those men of God, the apostles and pupils of Jesus. What moral power must these writings have had on the hearts of men! To this power is to be attributed the principal part of the moral change, that has taken place in the Christian world. Councils and Synods have made creeds, to be sure, and men have nominally assented to them. But the real creed of all true Christians has been the Bible. This has not only been doctrine, but spirit and life to them. It has brought them into communion with Moses and David, Jesus and John. It is the spirit of the Bible, that has produced such a moral change. It is not literature nor philosophy. Greece and Rome had almost as much of these when Christ appeared, as Christendom has now. But they were morally more corrupt, than the Scythian and Scandinavian tribes. To estimate the worth of the Bible to us, we must imagine ourselves deprived of it now, with all our knowledge and improvement. Supposing it was taken from us, and we were left to our own speculations, to the traditions of the church, to the thousand contradictory creeds of sects, to the bitter spirit of the world. Into what a limbo of theories, contradictions, and bitter contentions should we be cast? What solid foundation should we find? To whom should we go for the words of eternal life? This experiment has actually been tried by the church of Rome, and it is a most convincing proof of the worth of the Scriptures. When they were taken away from the people, into what ignorance, corruption, and spiritual death did they fall? And what was the great benefit of the Reformation? Simply in giving back to every Christian his Bible.
Again, the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, as a society for spiritual culture. The spiritual element is strong in the soul. The tender heart of childhood responds to love, pity, and goodness, and his mind believes instinctively in spiritual existences. The sentiment of reverence overflows in the hearts of all heathen nations, in the worship of every power of nature, every personified virtue. All that is wanted is culture, to make this part of our nature supreme. But in the world, all outward influences seem combined to chill the spiritual nature. The pursuits of life absorb attention and interest. The rivalries of the world alienate people from each other. The whole power of education is directed to fill the mind with a love of the world, and fit it for its attainment. The social intercourse of life is confined mostly to trivial objects and superficial sentiments. What need of a society, whose exclusive object is to awaken and cherish the deep sentiment of spiritual life in the soul; to unite the energies of different minds in developing the great truths of our spiritual nature; to kindle by sympathy the holy affections, and make all the love, the truth, the goodness of each, the possession of all? Such a society is the Christian church. How natural is it for all, who are filled with common sentiments and aim at one end, to unite? As kindred drops mingle into one, as aspiring flames unite and so rise higher towards heaven, so do kindred hearts. In every place where there are two or three holy and good souls, they will unite. The Christian church is not so much a positive institution, as the operation of one of the deepest principles of our nature. And so it was regarded by Christ. He took it for granted, that his disciples would always unite together. He gave no rules for the organization of the church particular or universal. He relied on the social principle. And this always has been and always will be sufficient. Wherever Christianity prevails, there must be a church. Those who fear the Lord, and yearn after holiness, and love Christ, will speak often one to another; and they will unite to promote these objects in their own hearts and in the world. And
what new impulses does this union awaken in each soul, and what combined power does it give to the whole! It was in the "upper room," where the disciples met after the crucifixion of their Lord, and were of one mind, and where their hearts burned within them as they communed with each other, that they gained faith and courage, to go out into the world and proclaim the religion of their Master, in the face of all opposition. It was in cellars, caves, and secret places, where the early Christians met for worship and social communion, that they gained such apprehensions of truth and such devotion to it, that they went cheerfully to the stake, and into the presence of wild beasts. It was in the solitary retreats and mountain fastnesses, where the Covenanters had fled from the arm of persecution, for prayer and praise, that their spirits were nerved for any sacrifices for the truth. And it is in the religious assembly, where holy sentiments are deepened by sympathy with members, and the truth seems more impressive from its application to multitudes, that all Christians have received their best influences. Where two or three are met together, there is a special presence of the Divine Spirit.

"His mercy visits every house,
They pay their night and morning vows,
But makes a more delightful stay,
Where churches meet to praise and pray."

Finally, the church supports the truth by sustaining religious ordinances and institutions. It is only through the church, that the Sabbath has been established in the Christian world. And who can estimate its effect on society? To form any conception of it, we must go into a place, where it is utterly desecrated, and then into one, where its purpose is fully realized. What moral power must there be in that day, which stops the wheels of business, hushes the noise of mirth, and, by its holy stillness and sacred associations, rebukes even the thoughtless and profane? What efficacy must there be in an institution, that sets apart, and consecrates entirely to spiritual uses, one seventh part of the time, and
gathers the scattered members of society into the bosoms of quiet homes, and brings them to the house of worship.

And this suggests another support of the truth, public worship and instruction. What effect must it have on the moral character of a people, to assemble weekly, in a consecrated place, for the worship of Almighty God, to exalt their apprehensions and deepen their love of his perfections, to bring before their minds the true end of life, and the promises and sanctions of the Gospel? And when we add, that they are assisted by an order of men chosen by themselves, who give their whole lives to this single end, what a reality, what a value, what a prominence must it give to spiritual truth!

And then there is baptism, that rite by which one consecrates himself entirely to God and spiritual excellence. What effect must it have for one after another of a congregation, after deep meditation, to come forward from deliberate conviction, and receive upon their brow the symbol of that truth, which is to sanctify them, and which they are henceforth to cherish as their highest good! And what effect must it have on education, for these parents to bring their tender offspring in their arms to the same altar, and there receive on their infant brows the symbol of that purity, which makes them fit for the kingdom of heaven, and in which they solemnly engage to educate them!

The communion is another institution of the church, which is second to no other in the moral influence it has exerted on the hearts of men. It not only sets the doctrines of Christ before the eyes, but brings his personal presence into warm contact with the hearts of Christians. It brings all Christians into the same relation with their Master, in which the immediate disciples stood. It perpetuates in the minds of Christians all the scenes of Christ's life, all the tender and personal interviews with his disciples in confidential privacy, the sublime spectacle of his dying love. And who can tell how much love to Christ, how much of the feeling of brotherhood, how much holy enthusiasm for the truth, how much of the spirit of martyrdom, which has sustained Christians, and
spread the Gospel through the world, has been kindled at the communion table?

Such are the means by which the church supports and spreads the truth in the world. By the Bible, which is the record of the teachings of inspired men; by the church, which is the union of all holy and good souls for the spread of this truth; by the Sabbath, which is one seventh part of the time given up entirely to spiritual uses; by public worship and instruction, where this truth is brought before the minds of all under the most impressive influences; by baptism, which is the entire consecration of the soul to spiritual improvement; and by the communion, which brings Jesus Christ into living union with the souls of men. Such are the means of spiritual truth, which the church employs. And whatever moral elevation, spiritual light, benevolent effort, there are in the Christian world more than among heathen nations, that now are or ever have been, it is owing entirely to these institutions. If it be asked, what has the Christian church done for the world? we have only to point in silence to these monuments of its influence, and their results in holy exultation, or rather in humble thankfulness to God, under whose Providence they have been established. And if it be asked, how is the world ever to be wholly redeemed from sin and ignorance? we answer, breathe a new energy into these means, and make full proof of their power, and they will accomplish, what they have already so triumphantly begun.

And what is the most beautiful feature in all these means of spiritual culture, and a proof that they are from God, is, that they are entirely free and open to every one. No sacrifice of independence or of conscience is required of any one, in order to enjoy them. In the New Testament no ritual of worship is prescribed, no particular mode of spending the Sabbath, organizing a church, or administering the ordinances is specified. No summary of technical doctrines is offered, as a condition of uniting with the church. Not only is each church, however small, entirely independent, but each soul is independent. He may receive the Bible, the church, the
Sabbath, the sacraments, according to the light which God has given him. All these means are offered unconditionally to each mind, and shed their influence freely on all, as the rain, sunshine, and dews fall on the earth. The plants of holiness are left to spring up, and bloom, and bear fruit naturally, according to the soil on which they grow.

I have spoken of this independence of the church, and of the individual Christian, and of their spiritual union, as exhibited in the New Testament. It was also the grand principle of the Reformation. Luther stood up at the Diet of Worms, and before the assembled authorities of Christendom, said, "I must interpret the word of God for myself. To act against my own conscience is neither safe nor honest. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise; may God help me! Amen."* And he, and every little company of his disciples formed churches, and administered the ordinances, according to their own views, not doubting that they were members of the universal church.

This was the grand principle of the Pilgrims, who came to New England. Hubbard tells us in his History, "none of the rest of the planters (except the Plymouth colony) came over in any settled order of [church] government, only resolving, when they came hither, to carry on those affairs, as near as they could, exactly according to the word of God." † These churches were at first entirely, independent of each other. And so jealous were they of this independence, the same author tells us,‡ that when "the ministers about Boston, being now increased to a convenient number, did use to meet once a fortnight at one of their houses in course, where some question of moment was debated, some took exception at it, prognosticating that it might in time bring forth a presbytery, or superintendency to the prejudice of the church' liberties." Would that this spirit had continued, and then the power, which large sects and ministerial associations have exerted

† Hubbard's History of New England, p. 64.
‡ p. 189.
over single churches and ministers, to awe them into exclusive doctrines and measures, would not have been witnessed.

And not only was there independence among the first churches of New England, but they allowed it to individual members. The majority did not attempt to force their opinions upon a minority, who could not conscientiously receive them. The first covenants of the early churches were very liberal. This is the testimony of those who have looked into this subject, and published Centennial and Dedication Discourses for the last twenty years. They inform us, that the first covenants of most of the churches of New England did not contain a creed. The first covenant* of this church contained no creed. It is as liberal as any Unitarian could now wish. It is delightful to see what a spirit of liberty and independence breathes in these early covenants. In the Covenant of this church, just referred to, it is written, "Whereas God hath, of his great goodness, brought us from under the yoke and burdening of men's traditions to the precious liberty of his ordinances, which we now do enjoy, we will, according to our places and callings, stand for the maintenance of this liberty to our utmost endeavors, and not return to any human ordinances, from which we are escaped."

This independence soon led to freedom of inquiry in doctrines, as well as church discipline. Those who had left their homes and country, rather than to submit to "men's traditions" in outward ordinances, would not be likely to submit without question in the more important matter of doctrines. Accordingly, the great controversy between the orthodox and liberal portions of the church, which many think has sprung up principally in our day, began almost from the very day the Pilgrims landed. The first point discussed re-

* This covenant is given in Shattuck's History of Concord, p. 150. He has given sufficient evidence, both external and internal, to show, that this was the first or one of the very first covenants of this church. "The early Records" are lost.

† History of Concord, p. 151.
lated to human agency. Those, who held that man had something to do in the work of salvation, were called Legalists, those, who held that it depended entirely on God's electing grace, were called Antinomians. This question, in the very first settlement of the country, produced great excitement and alienation, and all classes of society joined in it. As early as 1636, Neal, in his "History of New England," informs us, that even the soldiers, who went against the Pequots, had to stop in the wilderness and settle the question, whether they were under a Covenant of works, or a Covenant of grace, before they could proceed! Nearly all who first came to New England were Calvinists. But so much progress did this controversy make, that within a century, a very large portion of ministers and people had become Arminians. Some indeed had already taken the first step when they arrived in New England. Among them was this church and its pastor and teacher, Peter Bulkeley and John Jones. This church was organized at Cambridge, July 5, 1636, and was the thirteenth established in the colony. Winthrop says in his Journal,* "the governor, and Mr. Cotton, and Mr. Wheelwright, and the two ruling elders of Boston, and the rest of that church which were of any note did none of them come to this meeting." The public reason given was some informality in the invitation. "The reason was conceived to be," says Winthrop, "because they counted them as legal preachers, and therefore would not give approbation to their ordination." Legalists were those opposed to extreme Calvinists. They afterwards became Arminians, and finally Unitarians.f

* Vol. I. pp. 95, 189, and 217.
† I have before me a manuscript letter written by Rev. Mr. Bulkeley to Rev. Mr. Cotton a day or two before the ordination of the former. In it he complains of a want of brotherly love among some of his brethren of the clergy. "I have found," says he, "so much strangeness, alienation, and neglect from some, who would sometimes have visited me with diverse myles going, yet here will pass by my door, as if I were the man they did not know." He refers to a difference of opinion between himself and Mr. Cotton, and argues the point, whether sanctification, that is, a holy life, is an evidence of justification, or acceptance with God. Mr. Bulkeley argues for the affirmative,
This church then has been liberal from the very first. Such progress did liberal principles make in the society, that in the time of Rev. Daniel Bliss, the fifth minister, who was an extreme Calvinist, great dissatisfaction was manifested against these doctrines. Several Ecclesiastical councils were called, a division of the church took place, and a separate church and society existed fourteen years. A large mutual ecclesiastical council was called, in 1743, and it is remarkable, that the charges brought against Mr. Bliss, on the score of doctrine, were for preaching simple Calvinism. The following are a specimen. Complaint 10th. "Mr. Bliss said in a sermon, that it was as great a sin for a man to get an estate by honest labor, if he had not a single aim at the glory of God, as to get it by gaming at cards or dice."* This is simply the doctrine of total depravity. According to this all that an unregenerated man does is sin. "Complaint 6th. "Mr. Bliss hath asserted, that the main reason any man cannot enter in at the strait gate, is because he is not elected." This is a simple statement of the doctrine of Election, and Mr. Bliss so regarded it and defended it in his answer. The council voted, "The charge is fully proved." Complaint 12th. "He said, a person might go on in sins, in drunkenness, in sabbath-break-against Mr. Cotton, who places the evidence in the "witness of the spirit." I cannot forbear to quote one sentence from Mr. Bulkeley's letter, to show his beautiful spirit. "I do assure you, it troubles my spirit, yet I cannot go along with you in these things, yet show me the light that may help me to see. I trust the Lord will open mye eye and give me a heart not to detayne the truth in naughtiness." It is plain, that these causes of difference grew out of a greater freedom and liberty of opinion on the part of Mr. Bulkeley. And although he had not given up Calvinism, yet it is pretty evident he had taken the first step. Nor is the fact, that he was moderator of the Assembly of Divines in Cambridge, in 1649, and united with his brethren in opposing the heresies of Mrs. Hutchinson and other enthusiasts of the time, any evidence to the contrary.

I have been indebted for the letter, alluded to above, to the kindness of Lemuel Shattuck, Esq., of Boston, and also to his History of Concord, for many facts. This history is very trustworthy and valuable. The chapter on Ecclesiastical History is particularly valuable.

* Shattuck's History of Concord, p. 171.
ing even to rioting; but I must tell you for your comfort, if you belong to the election of grace, Christ will bring you home.” This is but a simple statement of the doctrine of final perseverance. And Mr. Bliss so regarded it, and vindicated it in his answer, substantially.* He was an honest and earnest man; he believed these doctrines, and he did not flinch from an open exhibition and application of them. The result of the council was very singular. It condemned the use of the doctrines, but not the doctrines themselves. “We judge this a very unwarrantable use of the doctrine, and of very dangerous tendency,” say they. But it is not easy to see, what other use can be made of these doctrines, if they are used at all. They ought to have condemned the doctrines and not the use of them. It is certainly a very novel spectacle, and a very hard case, for a man to be brought up before his peers, and condemned for preaching his own doctrines. Surely liberality must have made great progress in this town a century ago, when the preaching of simple Calvinism could be matter of grave charge before a large mutual council. And yet some would have us believe, that our fathers were all Orthodox, and that Unitarians have departed entirely from the faith. We are told by one who was present at the time,† that Mr. Bliss’s opposers were rank Arminians. We should have known it, if we had not been told. And many, who adhered to him on account of his piety and talents, must have been so too. For as soon as he was gone, the town united in settling Mr. Emerson, who was liberal.‡ And a few years after that, the town and church were unanimous in settling Dr. Ripley, who was known to be a decided Arminian. The principal change in the views of those, who became Unitarian, was on the Trinity, which before had not been discussed. Other doctrines the liberal clergy explained then very much as Unitarians do now, as Dr. Ripley has shown in his Half-

* Shattuck’s History p. 172. † Ibid. p. 173.
‡ He was liberal for the times, or the liberal party would not have united in his settlement.
Century Sermon.* But the difference between the Arminians and Calvinists is much greater. It relates to the moral character of God, to free agency, and indeed to the whole moral system of things. Those who have gone back to Calvinism have changed much more, than those who have gone forward to Unitarianism.†

Thus the views I have presented of the church are illustrated by the formation of the first churches, as described in the New Testament, by those of the Reformation, by the Pilgrim churches, and by the whole history of our own church.

I have trespassed longer on your patience on this occasion, because I was prevented by sickness from reviewing the history of the church on leaving the old house. You will bear with me, while I add one word in regard to the outward church. Our fathers were "right New England men," of whom it has been said, "It was as impossible for them to live without an able ministry, as for a smith to work without fire." Hence we find it recorded on a fragment of the

* Page 35.
† I said in my sermon at the funeral of Dr. Ripley, p. 17, that the church covenant, when he was ordained, embraced all the doctrines of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. This needs explanation, which I intended to have supplied in a note, but in my haste forgot it. The facts are these; — There is no covenant on the church records in the ministry of Mr. Emerson. It was on a separate piece of paper. When he went into the army, he carried it with him. He never returned, and the covenant was lost. The church, while without a minister, did not feel competent to make a covenant, and so took the one in use in the time of Mr. Bliss, with some alteration. The allusion to the doctrines of the Catechism is put in a parenthesis, and is a general adoption of it, as a good summary of Christian doctrine, without binding any to the belief of any particular doctrines. It could not have been inferred from that sermon, that Dr. Ripley assented to the Calvinistic part of the Catechism; for it is stated in the preceding sentence, that he rejected the five points as soon as he came to years of discretion. Nor would those, who had prosecuted Mr. Bliss before a council for preaching these doctrines, assent to them. There was a compromise in the way I have suggested. The very next year after Dr. Ripley was settled, the covenant was revised and altered in this respect. Since that time it has been revised from time to time according to the progress of views. These facts I had from Dr. Ripley verbally.
proceedings of the town, in 1635, — the very year they came into this wilderness; "Ordered, that the meeting-house stand on the hill near the brook." * It was a little east of this spot. In 1667, another house was built, standing between this, and Deacon Jarvis's house. In 1711 and 1712, the one of which the present house is but the transformation was built. So that this, considered as remodelled, is only the third house in this town during a period of 206 years. This house has undergone as many transformations as the infant in growing to maturity. At first, it was nearly square, three stories high, two galleries, long seats, the men on one side, the women on the other, and the children in the middle. The windows were made of sheet lead, with small diamond lights inserted. In 1749, it was repaired and glazed with sash glass "sevens and nines." In 1791, it was remodelled in the manner you lately saw it. Now the change is so complete that no vestige of the former house remains.

The ministers, who have occupied this house during its various stages, are Whiting, Bliss, Emerson, Ripley, Goodwin. Of Whiting it was said, "He was a man of singular hospitality and generosity, who never detracted from the character of any man, and was a universal lover of mankind." Of Bliss, Whitefield said, after hearing him preach, if he had given his life to study, he could not have produced such a sermon. Of Emerson it was said, "He was a star, to which nature and religion had given peculiar lustre." Of Ripley — but no language could deepen your impression of his apostolic gifts and graces. Of Goodwin an admiring people have inscribed on his tombstone, what was already deeply inscribed on their hearts; "Amiable in disposition, pure in heart, able and faithful in his office, he departed this life in the hope of a glorious resurrection." The voices and characters of such men would have hallowed any place, and made it seem the gate of heaven. Dr. Ripley was settled fourteen years before the former house was repaired, and preached

* Shattuck's History of Concord, p. 266.
through the whole period of that house, and finally took leave of it in a public address to the grandchildren of those who had erected it. He had prepared a sermon to preach in this house, and how would his voice and venerable face have added to the joy of this occasion! I have lately spoken of him. I will now only add, that the various transformations of this house are a beautiful emblem of the progress of his mind and character. The last change is still more strikingly emblematic. But a few months ago, and this beautiful structure was a shattered, weatherbeaten, and mouldering building. Suddenly it has opened like a flower into new beauty. How emblematic of his change, whose spirit has left behind a wornout body, the infirmities of age, the imperfections of earth, and has become an angel in heaven, clothed with immortal youth and beauty!

And now, my brethren and friends of this society, you have done well, that you have repaired the waste of your outward Zion, and rebuilt and adorned the temple of God. It is not meet, that we should live in houses of cedar, and bestow our treasures on our vain desires, and let the temple of our spiritual affections and hopes go to decay. We would not offer in sacrifice to God the lame, and the blind, and the diseased, even in outward things. It is fit that He, who has erected this beautiful world, and decked it with splendor, and "curtained it with morning light," as the temple of his worship, when he is "worshipped by men's hands" should have their best offering. It is fit that infinite truth, beauty, and love should be enshrined and worshipped amidst outward beauty and harmony. May the liberal sacrifices and the united efforts, which have reared this temple, be the omen of greater union and effort to build up the true temple of God in our hearts and in our church. May this house be consecrated from this hour forever entirely to holy uses. May no worldly purposes ever desecrate it. May the voice of contention never be heard in these walls. Here may the truths of the Bible be explained and urged, not in a literal or theological way, but in the liberal spirit of God's truth, and
in the liberty and love of the Gospel of Christ. Here may all hearts unite in the communion of the true church. Here may the worship of humble and devout hearts go up with acceptance to the one God and Father of all. Before this altar may each one receive on his or her brow the baptism of water, and in the spirit the baptism of the holy ghost, by which they shall be wholly consecrated to God and spiritual improvement. Around this table may every true believer meet in sweet communion, and not only commemorate Christ's outward presence on earth, but feel his spiritual presence in all its soothing and quickening power. As often as the Sabbath returns, may many souls turn hither, "as doves to their windows," as the thirsty to the cooling stream, and as the weary to his rest. May the spell of worldliness here be broken. May the sentiment of reverence here be awakened even in the profane. May the great purpose of life here be brought home, even to the thoughtless. May those, who are chafed by life's cares and disheartened by its disappointments, here be soothed and encouraged. May the mourner here catch a glimpse of that truth, which robs death of its sting, and the aged of that world, where he shall soon lay down his burden. And may many be made holier and happier by the services of this house, while on earth, and prepared for a purer worship in that temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The Parish were very much united in the erection of the new church. At a legal meeting, Feb. 4, 1841, they chose Messrs. John M. Cheney, Daniel Shattuck, Thomas F. Hunt, Ephraim Merriam, Joshua Brown, William Munroe, Joseph Derby, Francis A. Wheeler, and Nathan Barrett, a building committee, "with full power and authority to vary from their instructions, as they shall judge the interest of the Society shall require." They were not limited as to expense. The committee chose Richard Bond, Esq. of Boston architect, and Nathan Hosmer of Concord master-builder. No accident
occurred through the whole. The whole house, including a large vestry and two smaller rooms in the basement story, was thoroughly finished and furnished, warmed and lighted. The expense was about eight thousand three hundred dollars, one thousand of which was paid by the parish, and the rest assessed upon the pews. The pews were sold on Friday following the dedication. Every pew was sold, except those reserved for free seats. The sum given for choice of pews above the appraisal, was eleven hundred and seventy-eight dollars. The Parish voted, that this should be applied to carpeting and cushioning the pews, and hanging a curtain behind the pulpit. The organ cost one thousand and fifty dollars. So that the whole cost was about ten thousand and six hundred dollars.

There is a striking contrast between the manner of proceeding now and in 1712, when this house was first built. Although they then on the first ballot voted unanimously to build, yet five whole days were spent in town-meeting, and three different committees chosen, before they could decide upon the course to be adopted. Everything, down even to the dimensions of every stick of timber, was settled in open town meeting. So jealous were our fathers of their liberties, and so reluctant to leave anything to the discretion of a public servant. Now we have only to have a short Parish meeting and put the whole business into the hands of a committee, and the work is done. If we compare the latter house with the former, we shall see not only how much better a small committee can conduct the building of a meeting-house than the whole town, but we shall have a striking picture of the progress of the Arts. The building committee, in 1712, were Sergeant John Wheeler, Eliphalet Fox, Lieutenant Samuel Fletcher, Captain Prescott, Richard Parker, Jr., Joseph Dakin, Lieutenant William Wilson, John Heald, and John Hunt. Cost was £610 2s. 11d.
ORDER OF SERVICES

AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH,

ERECTED BY THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN CONCORD,

DECEMBER 29, 1841.

I. VOLUNTARY ON THE ORGAN.

II. ANTHEM.

Now elevate the sign of Judah, Now elevate the banner, call it forth in Zion, O desert us not, O Lord; Thou art always gracious to thy servants, Thou art our God, O Lord of hosts, so will we praise thee, O Lord of hosts. Amen.

III. INTRODUCTORY PRAYER.

BY REV. JOHN WHITE.

IV. SELECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

BY JOSEPH FIELD, D. D.

V. HYMN.

BY CHARLES SPRAGUE, ESQ.

God of wisdom, God of might,
Father! dearest name of all,
Bow thy throne and bless our rite;
'Tis thy children on Thee call.
Glorious One! look down from heaven,
Warm each heart and wake each vow,
Unto Thee this House is given,
With thy presence fill it now.
Fill it now! on every soul
Shed the incense of thy grace,
While our anthem echoes roll
Round the consecrated place;
While thy holy page we read,
While the prayers thou lov'st ascend
While thy cause thy servants plead,
Fill this House, our God, our Friend.

Fill it now — O fill it long!
So when death shall call us home,
Still to Thee, in many a throng,
May our children's children come.
Bless them, Father, long and late,
Blot their sins, their sorrows dry;
Make this place to them a gate,
Leading to thy courts on high.

There, when time shall be no more,
When the feuds of earth are past,
May the tribes of every shore
Congregate in peace at last.
Then to Thee, thou One all-wise,
Shall the gathered million sing,
Till the arches of the skies
With their hallelujahs ring.

VI. DEDICATORY PRAYER.
BY REV. CALEB STETSON.

VII. ANTHEM — (Dedication.)

And will the great eternal God
On earth establish his abode?
And will He from his radiant throne
Avow our temples as his own?
These walls we to thy honor raise;
Long may they echo to thy praise,
And thou, descending, fill the place
With choicest tokens of thy grace.
Here let the great Redeemer reign,
With all the glories of his train;
Whilst power divine his word attends,
To conquer foes and cheer his friends.
Great King of Glory, come,
And with thy favor crown
This temple as thy dome,
This people as thine own.

VIII. SERMON.
BY REV. BARZILLAI FROST.

IX. HYMN.
BY REV. JOHN PIERPONT.

O bow thine ear, Eternal One!
On thee our heart adoring calls;
To thee the followers of thy Son
Have raised, and now devote these walls.

Here let thy holy days be kept;
And be this place to worship given,
Like that bright spot where Jacob slept,
The house of God, the gate of heaven.

Here may thine honor dwell; and here,
As incense, let thy children's prayer,
From contrite hearts and lips sincere,
Rise on the still and holy air.

Here be thy praise devoutly sung;
Here let thy truth beam forth to save,
As when, of old, thy spirit hung
On wings of light o'er Jordan's wave.

And when the lips, that with thy name
Are vocal now, to dust shall turn,
On others may devotion's flame
Be kindled here, and purely burn.

X. CONCLUDING PRAYER.
BY REV. ISAAC ALLEN.

XI. ANTHEM.

The Lord is King and hath put on glorious apparel, and girded himself with strength. He hath made the round world so sure that it cannot be moved. Thy testimonies, O Lord, are sure, very sure. Holiness becometh thine house for ever and ever. Amen.

XII. BLESSING.
BY THE PASTOR.
DOCTRINES OF THE NEW JERUSALEM.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION

OF

THE NEW JERUSALEM TEMPLE

IN BATH, MAINE,

JANUARY 11, 1844.

BY SAMUEL F. DIKE,

PASTOR OF THE NEW JERUSALEM SOCIETY IN BATH.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

BOSTON:

T. HARRINGTON CARTER AND CO.

1844.
INTRODUCTION.

The view of the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, which is presented in this Discourse, must of necessity be limited, for it is not possible to give, within the limits of a single discourse, anything like a full view of an entire system of theology. But if this little sketch of our Holy Doctrines is the means of awakening an interest in a single mind, sufficient to lead to a more full study and reception of them, it will certainly not be without its use. The Doctrines of the New Church are as yet but little known in the world. The Waters of the River of Life, which John saw proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb, have but just begun to flow down to earth, and as yet only a few little streams are seen here and there, making a few hearts glad in the City of our God. But we desire that these waters may descend more abundantly to bless and render fruitful this barren world. We desire that the Fountain which has now been opened, may send forth its waters all over the earth, until all have that water within them which the Lord gives, which is a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

We are told that the Church of the New Jerusalem is to be the Crown of all Churches. It is one for which all others have been preparing the way—and it is to endure forever. It is said in Revelations, concerning it, that "the glory of God
is to enlighten it and the Lamb is to be its lamp. And the nations of them who are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, and night shall not be there. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." Our hearts' desire and prayer to God is for the fulfilment upon earth of these words of Divine Prophecy.

Bath, January 30, 1844.
AND I JOHN SAW THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN, PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND. Rev. xxi. 2.

The age in which we live is a very peculiar age, and one of the most interesting in the history of the world. It is the age of science, of the arts and of scientific discoveries. In no age that has preceded it, that we have any accounts of in history, have discoveries in the arts and sciences, and scientific truths and the application of these truths to the practical works of life, made such rapid and unheard of progress. Knowledge is now fast winging its way to all the kingdoms and nations of the earth, and to all classes and states and conditions of society. Witness how the Bible, the Fountain of all light and knowledge, is now being sent to the many nations that have hitherto been deprived of that Sacred Book. Witness, again, what a multitude of books containing knowledge of almost every description, society in our own country is now flooded with,—so abundant and so cheap that the poorest man, if he will, may satiate his mind with knowledge.

And yet mankind are only beginning to learn. This age in which we now live, is but the dawn of a day of whose meridian brightness no mind of man can yet conceive. It is true that the earth upon which we live, almost from the centre to the circumference, has gone
under the scrutinizing eye of science. But how much have we yet to learn about it, and about the things that exist upon it, and in relation to it. How many things are yet unaccounted for, and how many more lie unnoticed and unknown. It is true that a Copernicus, a Galileo, and a Newton, have arisen, who, not satisfied with the boundaries of this earth, have drawn down within their view and subjected to their survey, other and distant worlds. And concerning these they have revealed truths enough to overturn all the previous and then existing systems of philosophy. But how little did they know and how little did they reveal to mankind in comparison with what is unknown. In the language of one of them, he had only been picking up a few pebbles upon the seashore of a great ocean yet unexplored. How humble, and yet how exact and beautiful a description of the truth! The Fountain of knowledge is indeed inexhaustible, infinite as the Eternal. And hence the watchword of the human mind is onward — right onward.

But not only is there a great awakening in the minds of men, in regard to natural and scientific truths, but also in regard to spiritual and religious truths. There is, at the present time, a great awakening of the attention of the religious world. Some are gazing into the air, and daily expecting the external and personal coming of the Lord upon the literal clouds of heaven. Witness the multitudes that have been deluded with the views and pretended explanations of the divine prophecies of Scripture promulgated by Miller, who foretold that the Lord would come in this external and personal manner, in eighteen hundred and forty-three. But the sun has run its daily rounds, and finished its eighteen hundred and forty-third annual journey, and brought no extraordinary
natural appearances. Others, less enthusiastic and more calm and sober in their views, still see indications of great changes in society and in the world, but are uncertain what will follow. Others, again, comparatively a very few others, understand by the Second Advent of the Lord, not any literal and personal coming, but a coming for the purpose of enlightening the minds of men with rational truths, both of a religious and scientific character — thus a spiritual and not a natural and personal coming. But whatever may be the particular views of men, there is a very general waiting and expectation for something — the whole world is in expectation; and thinking men are convinced that something new must be given to satisfy the cravings of this newly awakened state of the human mind. They perceive that these earnest, bold, rational desires for truth must be gratified. For as the days of alchemy and mysteries in science have in a great degree passed away, so also mysteries in religion are fast passing away. The vail that has so long hung over it and shrouded it in darkness is being thrust aside. Men are beginning to want to see the truths of religion in as clear and rational light as the truths of science; and then they will be affected by them, and religion will once more gain its proper sway over the human mind. But men must understand — they must be convinced — they must know for certainty what is the truth — they must see through their own eyes, and not be compelled to see through the eyes of others; that is, they must act as free rational agents in the reception of all kinds of truths, spiritual, religious, moral, political and scientific.

We rejoice to see this great awakening in the minds of men. We rejoice to see this earnest, bold, rational desire for truth. We rejoice to think, and to have reason to
believe, that there are so many at the present day who are sincere seekers of the truth. We rejoice that men want to understand, to be convinced, to know the truth for certainty. We rejoice because we are assured that all who are sincere seekers of the truth—who wish to understand and be convinced of the truth, will yet be convinced—will yet receive the truth, if not in this world, in the world to come—if not from the mouths of men, yet from the mouths of angels. If, like Simeon of old, they wait for, they will yet receive, the consolation of Israel.

And we believe, too, that these bold, earnest and rational desires for truth are awakened only in connexion with a revelation to the world of new and great principles and truths. For the existence of any rational desire proves the justice of a proper gratification of that desire. We believe that the great progress of knowledge which is being made in nations and kingdoms, and in every rank and condition of society, is but the effects and first manifestations of the revelations which have been made to the New Church. What improvements are they working in the state and condition of society? Did man of himself, discover and reveal these truths—this light which is pouring in upon society at the present day? It may appear as if he did to the natural and sensual man. But, no, they are truths which have come down from "God out of heaven," again to create and to regenerate this world. They are the doctrines and principles and truths of the New Jerusalem. They are represented, as by a type or figure, by the "Holy City, New Jerusalem," which John saw coming down from God out of heaven. They are symbolized by the jasper walls, the gates of pearl, the golden streets of the Holy City; they are the graces and truths of the Bride, the Church, which is making herself
That the "Holy City, New Jerusalem," spoken of in our text, does not mean any natural city, may be evident to any one on a moment's reflection, from the mere description of it in the chapter from which our text is taken. It is there said, "the city is square, and the length is as large as the breadth." And the city measured "twelve thousand furlongs." "The length and the breadth, and the height of it are equal." Every one must see that it could not possibly be true that a natural city, with such dimensions, could come down out of heaven and rest here upon earth. The Lord also said at its descent, that He would "make all things new." And how can He make all things spiritually "new" except by the revelations of new doctrines and new truths? By these He re-creates or regenerates men, or makes them new men in Him. And that this "Holy City" does represent or typify the doctrines of the New Church which the Lord would establish upon the earth, when the first Christian Church had lost its purity and thus become consummated — is evident from the latter part of the chapter, where it is said, "the city had no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp of it" — and that "the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it" — that is, good men everywhere will live under the influence of the holy doctrines and truths, typified by this "City," which were to come down from God out of heaven.

It is the doctrines and truths, made known through the revelations of the spiritual sense of the Sacred Scripture, brought down to man's comprehension, and enlightening his mind in the way of life, which constitute
what is represented by the "Holy City, New Jerusalem," and its foundations and walls and gates and golden streets. These doctrines and truths are clear and luminous as the light of heaven, because the "glory of God doth lighten" them. And all who "walk in the light" of them, that is, live under the influence of them and according to their dictates, "are saved" — saved from the evils, the wickedness and the errors which would otherwise destroy their souls.

My brethren and friends, let us look into this "Holy City" — let us behold its walls, its gates and golden streets. Let us examine, briefly, a few of the principal doctrines and truths which have been revealed to the New Church, and which are destined to re-create and regenerate mankind.

We believe, in the New Church, that now is the time of the Second Advent of the Lord — of a coming, not external and personal upon the literal clouds of heaven, to judge the world, but a coming in spirit and truth — a coming for the purpose of enlightening the human mind in spiritual, religious, moral and scientific truths, and thus of bringing men into the internal and secret judgment of these truths. This is the coming which is figuratively described in various passages in the Gospels and the Book of Revelation. The end of the world, there spoken of, does not mean the end of the existence of this earth. For we learn, in the New Church, that this earth is to exist forever — that it is forever to be a seminary, a place of preparation for heaven; and hence that heaven is forever to be increased from the inhabitants of this earth as well as from the inhabitants of all the other earths in the universe. Hence we may see the immensity of heaven. It is said in the Ecclesiastes, also, that the "earth abideth forever." Again it is said in the Psalms, "and he built his sanctuary like high
The words which are commonly translated "the end of the world," in the common version of the Gospels, signify, in the original Greek, "the end or consummation of an age or period," that is, the end of an age or full period of the Church. And the descriptions which are apparently given in the literal sense of the Gospels, concerning the calamitous events that were to take place at the end of the world, or consummation of the age, are figurative descriptions of the states of men at the time of the end or consummation of the Christian Church, and second advent of the Lord. The truth of these predictions is now being fully verified. It is mentioned, as one of the signs of the consummation of the church, "and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Matt. xxiv. 12. What pious Christian does not lament that the truth of these words is now so fully verified? That men are destitute of real charity, regarded in the great mass, must be evident to every considerate mind. How does selfishness and dishonesty stalk abroad among every class in society, clothed at one time in the beggar's rags, and at another with silken robes, and putting on the outward airs of an angel of light! What outrages are committed at the present day against all laws, human and divine! They are committed not only by the man ripe in age, but by the child; "and even the infant, as soon as he begins to think and to speak, begins to show that he is a germ of a strange vine, and that he will in due time produce all the like fruits of his parent stalk." Surely men sin now with a high hand. They do not sin now as in the dark ages of society, ignorantly, but knowingly, with the broad light of heaven shining full in their faces. Who can be so blind as not to see that the truths of the Word of God have greatly lost their power over
mankind? The Christian Church, as to its doctrines, is destitute of every genuine Christian principle. The Lord, when speaking of the end of the world, that is, of the end or consummation of the Christian Church, predicted this fact when he said, "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." The stones, to which the Lord literally referred, were the stones of the beautiful temple of Solomon, at Jerusalem. But that temple, in the figurative and prophetic language of Scripture, represents the first Christian Church. The stones, of which that temple was built, represent the truths of which the doctrines of the Christian Church were originally composed. The stones being thrown down, means that the truths and doctrines of that church would become falsified and perverted. There being not one stone left upon another which should not be thrown down, means that finally there would not be one truth — not a single doctrine of that church which would not be falsified and perverted.

Because stones are used in the Sacred Scriptures to represent truths, therefore the Lord, who is Divine Truth Itself, is called the head stone of the corner which the builders rejected. For the same reason He is also called, in Isaiah, "a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation." In the Psalms it is said, "The Lord is my rock," and again, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." And when Peter acknowledged that Jesus was the "Christ the Son of the living God," the Lord's reply was, "and I say also unto thee that thou art Peter," that is, in the original, a stone or rock, "and upon this rock (Peter) I will build my church." Because Peter confessed that Christ was the "Son of the living God," which in the spiritual sense of the Scriptures
signifies the very Divine Truth Itself, therefore Peter represented Divine Truth from the Lord in the Church. And it was upon this truth which Peter had just confessed, that the Lord said that He would build His Church, and not by any means upon Peter as a personal being. Who does not know that the Church, the true Church of the Lord, can be founded only upon the Rock of eternal Truth? And while it is founded upon this rock of ages, the gates of hell can never prevail against it.

A little farther on, in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, it is foretold, as another of the signs of the consummation of the Church, that immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.

The sun is the Sacred Scripture, and the moon and the stars are the truths and knowledges derived from the Scripture. This sun becomes darkened to human minds when they cease to receive that truth from it which would enlighten their minds in the way of life. To those who are disposed to receive the truths of the Sacred Scriptures, and love them and obey them, they become the light of their minds; they enable them to make steady and orderly progress in spiritual life. They are the very sun of their minds. As the natural sun enlightens and animates this world, so this spiritual sun enlightens and animates their minds. But when this central luminary becomes darkened, and covered over by the opinions, the decrees, the false notions and creeds of men, then mental darkness, disorder and confusion upon all religious subjects, must of necessity pervade men’s minds. Then the human mind becomes what this world would become, if the natural sun had become darkened, the moon had
withdrawn her light, and the stars were blotted out from the sky.

That the sun and moon, mentioned in the above passage, do not refer to the natural sun and moon, may be evident from other passages in the Sacred Scripture, where similar expressions occur. Thus by the prophet Amos, the Lord says: "The end is come upon my people Israel," — evidently referring to the end or consummation of the Israelitish Church — "and I will cause the sun to go down at noon and I will darken the earth in a clear day." Again, in Isaiah it is said concerning Babylon, that "the day of the Lord is at hand" — "to lay the land desolate;" and in that day the Lord says, "the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." Now we know that we have no information that these prophecies concerning the sun and moon and stars, did literally take place at the destruction of ancient Babylon. But they did all spiritually take place. The pride and haughtiness of Babylon did finally become so great as to darken entirely the light of the truths of the Sacred Scripture. Thus this spiritual sun, and not the natural sun, did become darkened in his going forth.

The expressions, in these passages from the prophets, are almost exactly similar to that used in the above passage from Matthew; and as these did not have a literal fulfilment, so we infer that that passage will not have a literal but a spiritual fulfilment.

To those who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, we could name but few facts which would appear as more improbable or more incredible, than that the above words of prophecy are fulfilled in the present state of the
world. But it is the very nature of darkness to delude men with the imagination that they are living in an enlightened age, while yet their minds are in the darkest state concerning all spiritual truths. But if those words of prophecy are not applicable to the present state of the world, why is it that the church is so distracted in its doctrines or creeds and opinions? Why is it divided into so many sects? Why does it hold to so many widely different notions concerning what is revealed—concerning the Sacred Scriptures? Why is all this, I say, if those heavenly principles, which are so essential to the life and power of the Church, of a true Church, has not departed from it—if the Lord has not departed from His temple, as He foretold that He should depart from it? On account of this distracted state of the church, each one is left only in doubt and uncertainty, not knowing what to believe, for he finds himself in the midst of a multitude of discordant opinions, all viewed as the mere dogmas of men, and not as anything revealed from heaven. Consequently, whatever is asserted by any individual, or by any body of individuals, is not believed as truth, but as the opinion of some man. And thus truth has lost its power, and ceased to have its influence over the minds of men, because it is thought that no one knows for certainty what revealed truth is. And thus each sets up a standard for himself, and is led either by the simple light of nature, or by his own depraved will, and not by the truths of Revelation.

Such is the mental state figuratively described in those passages from the Gospels which we have quoted. In the midst of this mental state of mankind, the Lord, as the Son of Man, is represented as coming to judge the world. It is because the Lord is Divine Truth, and this His coming is a revelation of Divine Truth, that it is said that this
judgment is committed unto Him. The Lord says the Father, that is the Divine Love, judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that is, the principle of Divine Truth, because He is the Son of Man. Nothing but the Divine Truth could be capable of judging the multitudes of the human race, with all the endless variety of their qualities. The judgment is represented as being executed by the Son of Man, because He is the Word or Divine Truth. The Lord says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him. The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." The whole process of the judgment also is effected according to the laws or truths of the Word.

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and all nations shall be gathered before Him. And He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." The Son of Man in His glory, or on the throne of His glory, is the divine truths of the Word of God when they are exalted, or in a state of exaltation. His coming to judge the world, is the revelation of divine truths, or in other words, it is the revelation of what are called the truths of the spiritual sense of the Word or Sacred Scripture. When these truths are revealed from heaven, or when the Son of Man comes to judge the world, He rewards every man according to his works; for the quality of every man is according to his works. Every one is affected by these revealed divine truths either delightfully or miserably, according to the states and habits which have been formed by his works, so that
every one of his own accord, at this judgment of truth, takes his place on the right hand or on the left, in favor of the truth and of what is good, or of the false and what is evil, according as he is agreeably or disagreeably affected by the divine truths which are revealed from heaven, which is called the coming of the Son of Man in His glory. "Watch ye therefore that ye may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man."

It is because the Christian Church, at its end or consummation, was to be in such a state of darkness and ignorance of true doctrines and all spiritual truths, as has been above described, that the Lord said "in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." That is, the Lord will come revealing Himself or His divine truths, at such a time, at such a state, and in such a manner as ye do not expect.

Men are supposing that the Bible is to be understood as it is printed on paper, in its merely literal sense. Not thinking that the Son of Man is the spiritual truths of the Word of God, they have no idea that His coming to judgment, is to be in the form of the revelation of divine truths. They look for Him as coming only personally, scarcely at all thinking of Him as coming in His glory. And may not this be the reason why He asked this question — "When the Son of Man cometh, will He find faith on the earth?" There can certainly be no faith in His real spiritual coming, so long as His coming is thought to be only literal. If the phrase Son of Man, is thought to mean only the maternal human, which was derived from the mother Mary, instead of the divine truths of the Word of God, will there not, as a natural consequence be, as there has been through all the dark ages, a natural expectation that He will appear personally upon the literal
clouds of heaven? But as soon as you understand by the Son of Man the divine truths of the Sacred Scriptures, as the Word of God teaches, then the coming of the Son of Man is the revelation of these truths, and not a personal coming. And the clouds of heaven are the external literal truths of the Bible, the literal sense, through which all spiritual truths are revealed, and which, when compared to the spiritual sense, is cloudy and obscure — and His glory is the internal spiritual truths of the Bible, the internal or spiritual sense.

The judgment is not committed to the Son of Man as the Son of Mary, but as the Divine Truth of the Father, or the Divine Love. And it is in the light of this truth that "every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him." That is, even they who do not acknowledge Him, who reject Him, who despise His truths, who crucify Him afresh in their minds — for all these classes of persons who treat Him in this way, spiritually pierce Him, — even they shall see Him, shall be brought to the judgment of His truths.

Having now given briefly an idea of the views of the New Jerusalem Church concerning the Second Advent of the Lord, let us give a passing notice to some of the principal doctrines of faith, of life, and of practice, of this New Church.

The Chief Doctrine, the very corner-stone of the spiritual Temple, is its Doctrine of the Lord. We believe that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the only living and true God. "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt worship the Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." And again, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word." A little farther on in the
same chapter, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And again, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Again, in the first chapter of Revelation, it is said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." These words are a declaration of the Lord Himself. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and omega is the last; and the declaration that "He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending," &c., obviously implies that He is the Author and Preserver of all things, that He is Life and the Giver of life to all, and that from everlasting to everlasting He is God. It is added that He is the Almighty, which means that He has all power in heaven and on earth, agreeably to His own words to His disciples after His resurrection — "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth."

That He is thus acknowledged and worshiped in heaven, appears from what is written in the fourth chapter of Revelation. John saw heaven opened, and a throne set in heaven, and "He that sat on the throne was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." And round about the throne, and before the throne, John saw represented, by various forms, all classes, from first to last, of those who are redeemed, and he heard their worship—and with one voice they all worshiped the Lord Jesus Christ, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." They "worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."
Paul also says that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh, and that in “Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Consequently, if the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him, we know not where to look for any other God, and we see no necessity of looking for any other. Jesus Christ our Saviour is also called the only wise God: “To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.” In Isaiah He is also called “Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.” He is also called by the incommunicable name of Jehovah: “Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch, and this is the name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness.” And the angel foretold before His birth that He should be called “Immanuel,” which is, being interpreted, God-with-us, God-with-man.

The Lord also calls Himself “The Bread of God that cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world.” He also says that He is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” And again, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.” The Lord does not say that He received the “Bread” that giveth life unto the world, from another — He does not say that He received His Life from another. When we spiritually thirst, or desire to receive Truth into our souls, He does not tell us to go to another and drink. But He plainly declares that He is the “Bread” of God, that giveth life to the world. He says that He is “The Life,” and “if any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink.” He never calls Himself a recipient of life. If He did, He would make Himself a mere finite, created being. But no, He calls Himself “The Life.” And if He is the Life, He is the only Life. And
if He is the only Life, He is God, and the only God. How could He express His Divinity more plainly and fully than in saying, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life?"

But, lastly, we are taught that "all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." And why? — "I and the Father are One."

We believe, in the New Church, that in the Lord Jesus Christ there is a Divine Trinity — a Trinity of Divine Principles or Attributes, but not a trinity of persons. This trinity of principles is the Divine Love, called in the Sacred Scriptures the Father, or the invisible Deity; the Divine Wisdom, or Truth, called in the Scriptures the Son, or the manifested God, that is, the Divine Truth manifesting the Divine Love; and the Divine Influence proceeding from Love and Wisdom or Truth, called in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit. This is the Divine Trinity, and this trinity exists in the one Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This trinity may be illustrated by the trinity in man. Man loves, he thinks, and from his power of loving and thinking there is a proceeding influence or operation, commonly called action. In every individual also there is a soul, a body, and an operation of these in union. Or again, there is a will, an understanding, and action. And this trinity must exist in every individual in order that he may be a full man. And these three are one.

The Divine Trinity that exists in the Lord may also be illustrated by the heat and light and proceeding influences or operations of the natural sun. The heat of the sun corresponds to the Divine Love. Because heat corresponds to love, therefore when a man loves ardently, we say he has a warm heart, or is a man of warm and ardent feelings. Love is always said to be warm, while the
want of it, or the opposite feelings, are said to be cold. Again, the light of the sun corresponds to the Divine Truth. Because light corresponds to truth, therefore, in common figurative language, when we have got the truth upon any subject, we say that we have got light upon it. We say that we now see it clearly, our understandings have become enlightened, &c. And again, the influence or operation of the heat and light of the sun, in producing and sustaining animal and vegetable life in this world, corresponds to the influences or operations of the Divine Love and Divine Truth over human minds, in producing and bringing forth good affections and true thoughts, and from these just and good actions.

As there is thus a unity or oneness in the heat and light and operation or influence of the natural sun; or as there is a unity or oneness of the faculties that compose every individual, so there is a unity or oneness of the Divine Trinity of Principles in the Lord. As the heat is in the light and is one with it, or as the soul of man is in the body, so the Divine Love, or the Father, is in the Divine Truth, or the Son, and “He and the Father are One.”

These remarks concerning the Divine Trinity will help us to understand such passages as the following: “As the Father hath Life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have Life in Himself.” “Life in Himself,” denotes Life in its origin or Essence, and this God cannot give to any other person. For when He gives this He gives Himself, and He to whom He gives it can be no other than His own Form or Person. Again, “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.” By these words he teaches that His Humanity would have no power of itself, just as a man’s body would have no power if
the soul was not in it, but that His Divine works were all done in consequence of His having the whole Divine Essence dwelling in him. And again he says, “All things that the Father hath are mine.” And how could He assert more plainly that all the perfections and attributes of Deity dwelt within His own Person? And again He says, “The Son can do nothing but what he sees the Father do,” — “and the Son manifests or brings forth the Father to view,” — which passages are in exact accordance with the explanation just given above, that the whole Divine Essence was dwelling within Him, just as the soul of man is in his body, and as his body does what his soul first wills and thinks.

As we believe that there is one only God and Saviour, though He is called by many and various names in the Sacred Scriptures, to denote the many and various offices and works which He performs for men, so we believe, in the New Church, that this same Divine Being, Jehovah God, the Creator of the universe, did, in the fulness of time, descend upon this earth and clothed Himself with human nature. He spoke with a human mouth, and acted through a human body. He dwelt the Creator among His creatures, as a Man among men. Still He parted not with His Divinity, for it dwelt within Him. He was the “Word made flesh.” In the language of the apostle, “He was God manifested in the flesh.” “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.” And, though He spoke with a human mouth, yet He always spoke divine and eternal truth. Though He saw through human eyes, yet the infinite Spirit looked through them, and was able to penetrate the inmost thoughts and feelings of the hearts of men. Though as to the infirm human which He had assumed, and by
means of that human He was tempted in all points as we are, yet He was himself without sin.

Jehovah God, by assuming human nature, thus came into this world as Jesus Christ, for man's sake. Man had sinned against his Maker, and had come into a state to do evil, and only evil continually. He had fallen very far from a state of love to the Lord and love to his neighbor, that state in which he was created to live, and in which alone he can be happy. And the Lord, in His love and in His pity, came to redeem man from this sinful and miserable state. When He saw that no eye did pity, and no arm could bring salvation, His eye did pity and His arm did bring salvation. In His tender love and mercy He came to save man from eternal misery and spiritual death.

The redemption that He wrought by thus coming, however, does not consist in the pardon obtained by offering Himself as a vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the world. For such a doctrine makes it necessary that there should be at least two persons in the Godhead. One who is to atone for the guilt of men, and another to whom expiation is to be made, or whose justice is to be satisfied. And that God is one, both in essence and in person, is most clearly the scriptural doctrine, for we have the whole testimony of Scripture in favor of it, as well as all reason and common sense. But Jehovah God thus put on the form of a Man, thus clothed Himself with infirm human nature, that by means of it He might be subjected to the temptations or assaults of the hells, that He might thus reach, fight with, and overcome the powers of darkness and of hell, which were lifted up ready to destroy the whole human race. That the Lord did subject Himself to the temptations or assaults of the devil, that is of hell, is known; for it is said in the Gospel, "Then was Jesus
led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards an hungered. . . . Again the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and saith unto Him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, satan, for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth Him, and behold angels came and ministered unto Him.” In all these temptations or assaults of the hells, the Lord always conquered. Even in His last and most painful temptations in the garden of Gethsemane, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood, and in His passion on the cross, when He said, “If it be possible let this cup pass from Me,” even in these He was victorious, for He “rose from the dead;” and after He had risen He said, “All power is now given unto Me.” By His continued conquests over all His spiritual enemies, which He constantly wrought during His whole life on earth, He finally subjected them all to His infinite power. As he said, He had “all power” over them given to Him. He thus removed the influence which they had acquired over the minds of men, and thereby restored man to a state of freedom, and again rendered salvation possible to all. He met His spiritual enemies and the spiritual enemies of heaven and the human race, on their own ground, and there “He trod them in his anger and trampled them in His fury.” Thus “in His love and His pity He redeemed us.” After this work of redemption was wrought, infernal spirits had no longer such power to infest men, for with the finger of God the devils had been cast out. The
Lord "had taken to Himself His great power," and did reign.

This work of redemption was a work purely divine. It could not possibly have been effected but by Jehovah God manifested in the flesh. He says, "My own arm wrought salvation."

Moreover we are taught, in the New Church, that the Lord, by overcoming in the temptations induced from the assaults of the hells or the assaults of evil, finally glorified the humanity which he assumed, that is, made it Divine or at-one with the Divine, and with His Glorified Divine Body rose from the dead, ascended up on high, through the heavens and above the heavens; and that from thence, as God over all, He fills and governs the universe. This His final ascension was the completion of the work of the at-one-ment. For then His Humanity became at-one with his Divinity. His Divine Love became Divine Human Love, and his Wisdom or Truth became Divine Human Wisdom or Truth, and both existed in and composed His Divine Humanity, or His Divine Human Body. In His Divine Humanity is all power. By means of it He will forever be enabled to keep the powers of darkness and of hell in entire subjection. By it He gives us power to follow Him in the regeneration — to overcome as He overcame, until all our evil inclinations and propensities are brought into subjection to the Truth. From it He gives us power to make our external minds at-one with our internal minds — our understandings at-one with our wills. By means of it, He is still and continually carrying on the great work of the at-one-ment — He is reconciling the world unto Himself — He is bringing men into the at-one-ment. By it He can present Himself to the minds of men and of angels in a real and substantial Form, which they can comprehend and love and worship. He can be
spiritually present with them and flow into their minds with light and into their hearts with love — and thus make them blessed and happy forever.

It may here be remarked, that the true meaning of the atonement,* or more properly, as it used to be pronounced, the at-one-ment, is the removal of the evils of man, and not the appeasing of the wrath of God. For God is essential Love and Mercy Itself — He desires not the death of the sinner, but would rather have him repent and live. He never feels any enmity to man. But the object of Jesus Christ's coming in the flesh was that He might "reconcile the world unto Himself," and not by any means Himself unto the world.

Such is the doctrine of the New Jerusalem Church concerning the Lord. It is the doctrine of the Sacred Scripture, the doctrine of heaven, and should be the doctrine of men on earth. We can find it nowhere else clearly explained except in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, in which is a revelation of the doctrines of heaven. There we are taught who the Lord Jesus Christ is, namely, that He is the only God and Saviour of the world. He only has the "words of eternal life." "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Let us accept His invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Let us go to the Lord Jesus Christ as the manifested Jehovah, in all humility and reverence. Let us seek instruction from Him in His Sacred Book of Truth, and pray for His guidance in all that we feel and think and do. Let us yield our hearts and our hands to His

* The word atonement is compounded of the two words at and one. And to make an atonement is to make two parties at-one, or to reconcile them to each other.
service and devote all our powers to Him, for "He alone is worthy to receive glory and honor and power." Then will those words of prophecy receive their spiritual fulfillment in our hearts: "The kingdoms of this world are become our Lord's and His Christ's; and He shall reign forever and ever."

The Second great Doctrine of the New Church is its Doctrine of the Sacred Scripture. The Doctrines of the New Church teach that the Sacred Scripture or Word of the Lord is Divine Truth Itself. It is Divine Truth, because all its words were dictated or spoken by Jehovah God Himself. In the words of the Lord, its every word is Spirit and Life. "The style in which the Word is written is a truly divine style, with which no other style, however sublime and excellent it may seem, is at all comparable, for it is as darkness compared to light. The style of the Word is of such a nature that the holy is in every sentence, in every word, and in some cases in every letter, and hence the Word conjoins man with the Lord and opens heaven." The divinity and holiness of the Word consist in its spiritual part, from whence it is divinely inspired and holy in every particular.

The Sacred Scripture has an external meaning, and in its merely literal sense it appears very much like other books — just as the Lord, in His merely natural body, appeared like other men; and hence the world have generally been accustomed to regard it very much like other books. It is clothed in natural images and written in natural language. But to the New Church it has been revealed that it is so written that every natural image and every natural expression is made to correspond to a spiritual idea — that is, an idea which relates to the Lord, to
heaven, and to the minds of men. And these spiritual ideas are so connected together as to form one perfect series of meanings, which together are called the *internal or spiritual sense* of the Word. And this spiritual sense treats of nothing else but of spiritual things.

Swedenborg says, “In order that there might exist a conjunction between heaven and man, the Word was written by mere correspondences. All its contents, to the most minute particulars, are in such correspondence. Wherefore, if man were skilled in the science of correspondences, he would understand the Word as to its spiritual sense, and would thence be enabled to obtain a knowledge of arcana, of which nothing is to be seen in the literal sense. For in the Word is both a literal sense and a spiritual sense. The literal sense is composed of such ideas as exist in the world, but the spiritual sense of such as exist in heaven; and since the conjunction between heaven and the world is the result of correspondences, therefore a Word was given of such a kind as that every particular contained in it, even to the minutest iota, should have its correspondence.” See the Treatise on Heaven and Hell, n. 114, and for a more full explanation of this subject, see from n. 87 to 115.

We say, in the New Church, that the Bible is written according to *correspondences*. That it may be known what is meant by *correspondence*, we will quote a single remark from Swedenborg, to explain that term as it is used in the writings of the New Church. He says, “The whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual,” or what is spiritual, “both in the whole and in all its parts; and what exists and subsists in the natural from the spiritual, is called *correspondence*.” The science of correspondence, then, is the science which faithfully represents, by outward objects and natural images and natural language,
the spiritual states and conditions of the mind and life of God, of angels, and of men.

This science teaches us that all things that appear on the face of the earth, being objects that compose the great world, are corresponding emblems of all the various affections, thoughts, intellectual faculties and powers of man, whom the ancients called a little world. Consequently, not only trees and vegetables, but also beasts, birds and fishes of various kinds, with all animals down to the little worm and creeping things of the ground, correspond to something in the mind of man. “The animals of the earth in general correspond to affections, the tame and useful animals corresponding to good affections, and the fierce and useless kinds to evil affections. In particular, oxen and bullocks correspond to affections of the natural mind, sheep and lambs to the affections of the spiritual mind, and birds or winged creatures, according to their species, correspond to the intellectual faculties and exercises of both minds. Hence it is that various animals, as oxen, bullocks, rams, sheep, goats, &c., also pigeons and doves, were employed in the Israelitish Church, which was a representative church, for holy uses, it being of them that the sacrifices and burnt-offerings consisted. For when so employed they corresponded to certain spiritual things,” that is, to certain kinds of affections according to their character, “and were understood in heaven according to their correspondences. . . . . Man, too, as to his natural mind, is like the animals,” that is, has affections similar to theirs; wherefore it is usual, in common discourse, to compare him to them. Thus a man of mild disposition is called a sheep or a lamb, a man of rough or fierce temper is called a bear or wolf, a crafty person is called a fox, and so in other instances. H. and H. n. 110.
There is a similar correspondence with the objects of the vegetable kingdom. A garden in general corresponds to heaven as to intelligence and wisdom. Hence heaven is called in the Word the garden of God, and paradise, and is named by man the heavenly paradise.

Because all things in the animal and vegetable world correspond to something spiritual, therefore the various objects of these kingdoms are so often mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, where they all have reference to the mental properties or qualities of man. Thus by the prophet Hosea the Lord says, "In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground." Every one may here see that the Lord did not mean to promise to make a covenant with the unthinking beasts of the earth, but with rational and reflecting man, who is described in these words, as to his affections and thoughts, from their highest to their lowest forms, by the beasts and birds and creeping things. Again it is said in Isaiah, "The mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." These expressions would give us no meaning at all, if we understand them only in their literal sense. But in the writings of the New Church, we are taught that the ancient people, in the time of Noah, performed their worship on mountains and hills, and in gardens and groves, and hence the terms, in the passage of Scripture quoted above, are used to correspond to the glad and joyful and happy feelings and states of mind which man has when he is in the genuine love and worship of the Lord. It is the good feelings or good affections derived from the love and worship of the Lord, which break forth into singing or into expressions of praise to the Lord.
When the language of Scripture is describing the descent of the Divine influences into the human mind, which, when affectionately received, causes the life of man to become heavenly and fruitful, it utters such words as the following: — "The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God." Here the wilderness and solitary place are said to be glad, and the desert to rejoice with joy and singing, because they see the glory of Jehovah and the excellency of God. But it is evident that this is not literally true. In the language of correspondence, according to which the Scripture is written, the above words contain a beautiful description of the changed spiritual condition of man, when he warmly receives into his heart and life, those feelings, those affections, those influences which come from God. The over barren mind, symbolized by the wilderness, the solitary place, and the desert, then begin to bear fruits, the heavenly fruits of wisdom. It is thus that our spiritual desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose.

Again, sometimes the Scriptures speak of gardens, groves and paradises being watered by gentle rains or dews, or by a river winding its way through them. The garden of Eden is said to have had a river flow through it, parting into four heads, that it might water the whole. This, and all similar descriptions, are written to show, in emblems, that a high moral and spiritual state of man is represented — a state in which his mind produces the fruits of love and charity and wisdom — a state in which his mind blooms with many virtues and much moral ex-
cellence. On the other hand, when we read in Scripture of sandy deserts, dry places, wildernesses, the growing of thorns, thistles, briers, and such like things — as for instance of the garden of Eden we read, when Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, that it was to bring forth only thorns and thistles, — all such passages are descriptions of an unregenerate state of the human mind, in which the heart being evil, produces nothing in the outward life but injurious thoughts, unkind feelings, and wicked actions, which are symbolized by the desert, wilderness, thorns and thistles, &c.

If we had time we should be glad to quote numerous other passages from the Sacred Scripture, but the examples which we have already given are sufficient to illustrate how the natural images and natural language of the Word of God, are used to correspond to and symbolize spiritual ideas. We may thus see that while the Scriptures, in their literal sense, are treating of the natural world and natural things and the body of man, in their internal or spiritual sense, they are treating of the corresponding spiritual world, of corresponding spiritual things, and of the souls of men to which their natural bodies correspond. It thus becomes indeed a spiritual Book.

But in addition to those confirmatory passages, quoted above, the Scriptures themselves, in many passages, give incontrovertible evidence that they do actually have a spiritual meaning. Thus it is said in Deuteronomy, "The Lord thy God shall circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God in all thy heart and in all thy soul." Here circumcision is certainly not used in its literal, but in a spiritual sense, for it is applied to the heart or mind of man, which is spiritual. It refers to a purification of the heart or mind from all unclean or impure loves,
so that the Lord may be loved with all the heart and all the soul. So in Jeremiah, "Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns, *circumcise yourselves to Jehovah* and remove the *foreskin of your heart." This is evidently a spiritual circumcision, or a removal of all such things from our minds as would obstruct heavenly love. These passages most evidently show that the purification of the heart is the internal and spiritual thing represented and signified by external circumcision, or by the term circumcision, when it is used in the Sacred Scriptures. We cannot possibly understand the above passages of Scripture in any other than in this spiritual way. Again, in the Psalms it is said, "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God hath *anointed* thee with the *oil of gladness." Here *anointing* with the *oil of gladness*, can surely be only a spiritual anointing — for there is no such natural oil as the *oil of gladness*. But the term represents and signifies the Lord's love, which is the spring of all gladness in man. And every man receives this love, or is spiritually *anointed* with it, just in proportion as he "loves righteousness and hates iniquity."

That the apostles, in the early days of Christianity, understood the Scriptures spiritually, may be evident from the following passage, taken from the "Acts" of the Apostles. The occasion was the day of Pentecost, when Peter was preaching at Jerusalem, and there was a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On that occasion "Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words: this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my
spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.”

Nearly two thousand years ago, Peter declared that the above words, taken from the prophet Joel, were fulfilled. But it is absolutely certain that that prophecy was not fulfilled in its merely literal sense. For it is there said that “the sun should be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.” And we know that those signs never took place literally. And yet Peter says, “this is that which is spoken by the prophet Joel” — that is, this is the occasion to which the words of Joel’s prophecy refer — which in their merely literal sense appear to refer to the end of this world. The question then comes, how was the prophecy of Joel fulfilled? We know that it could not have been fulfilled except according to a figurative or spiritual meaning.

Those signs, mentioned in Joel, concerning the sun and moon, &c., which Peter declared to be fulfilled at the time of the First Advent of the Lord, are almost exactly similar to those which are mentioned in the Gospels, which were to be fulfilled at the Second Advent of the Lord. And as those at the First Advent were not literally fulfilled, so we see no reason why those at the Second Advent should be literally fulfilled. On the other hand, we suppose that they are not to be literally, but spiritually fulfilled. And that they are being fully verified in the present mental
state of the world may be perfectly demonstrated to the mind of any candid and rational man.

We might go on to add abundant other evidence, from the Sacred Scripture, to prove that it has an internal or spiritual sense, and that it must have, if it be the Word of God; but we have not now time to adduce more. What we have now said may show briefly what are our views concerning the manner in which the Sacred Scriptures are written and the proper method of the interpretation of them.

If, as has already been shown, certain portions of the Scripture are and must be written in a correspondential style and manner, we think it but just to infer that all portions are written in the same peculiar style and manner. For God would not have caused it to have been written, one verse in one style and manner, and another in a totally different style and manner. It must be the most rational to suppose that He followed some uniform style throughout. But more than this inference, we find it perfectly demonstrable that the Scriptures are written in this peculiar style throughout, from the first verse in Genesis to the last verse in the Apocalypse.

Thus we may see, under the light of the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem, how divine and infinitely full of meaning is the Word of God. It is, as the apostle says, "God-breathed," or "given by inspiration of God." It is God's Book given to man, to enlighten his mind in spiritual truths, and thus to instruct him in the way to heaven. It is the Fountain of living Waters, issuing forth streams which shall make glad the city of our God, and he who drinks of them will indeed drink of the water of the River of Life. We may go to it, and always find an abundance of truths, which will give us consolation under all our states
of adversity, which will instruct us to do our heavenly Father's will, which will by obedience on our part, wash us from our iniquities, and save us from all our sins. Its truths are indeed the blood of Christ, for by means of them only can we be redeemed and saved.

Since, therefore, the Sacred Scripture is a Divine Book, and infinite in its meaning, it is as much, and even far more, the subject of the close and prayerful study of the angels of heaven, than of the religious man on earth. They study to understand its more inward meaning and to apply it to their life, as the religious man on earth studies to understand its more outward meaning and to apply that to his life.

Since, again, the Word of God contains a spiritual as well as a natural sense; since it contains truths adapted as well to angels as to men, and thus like the ladder which the patriarch saw in vision, reaches from earth to heaven, upon which angels are ascending and descending,—it indeed becomes a grand chain which connects earth with heaven, and both with the Lord Himself. When we read it with simplicity and sincerity, and with the true feelings of devotion, God's messengers of love and mercy are present, and as it were reading it with us. "And," in the beautiful words of another, "as they read, they are breathing their gentle thoughts and sweet affections into our souls. And then, too, the Lord Himself is especially present with us, and though He reads not, for He knows all, yet He teaches us to read with new life and new spirit, and illuminates the page before us as we go."

We are also taught, in the doctrines of the New Church, that the spiritual sense of the Word is to its literal sense as the soul of man is to his body. This spiritual part is indeed the very life and soul of the Word. As the
soul makes man immortal, so this makes the Word of God Divine. Consequently when the spiritual sense of the Scripture is perceived and understood, it gives new life to all parts of the Sacred Book. "It makes clear what was before obscure — it enlightens what was dark and doubtful — it reconciles what appeared inconsistent, and makes all plain, true and beautiful. With this new light we go to the Word of God joyfully, and by its rays discover and draw forth new and precious truths which before were hidden from us — and we carry them away and apply them to the uses of life, and so make ourselves wiser and better and happier."

Such is the doctrine of the New Church concerning the Sacred Scripture. The revelations which have been made to us concerning this Sacred Book, and the truths which have been opened to us from its treasures, are indeed enough to re-create and regenerate mankind. These truths we believe to be eternal truths, because they are God's truths — and we believe that the world will yet receive them and be blessed by them. We believe them to be the light which is to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel. It is true that they are as yet but little known in the world, as such; but the New Jerusalem has commenced its descent to earth — the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed to open the Book and to loose the seals thereof; and so we rest assured that the world will yet receive, and believe in, and love, and do, the truths of the Opened Book of God.

The Third great Doctrine of the New Church is its Doctrine of Regeneration and Salvation. We are taught, in the New Church, that man is regenerated and saved only by living according to the commandments of God. The
Lord is the only Source of eternal life, and the condition upon which He gives His life to angels and men, is the obedience of His precepts. These precepts are to be obeyed by man as of himself, but with the acknowledgment that the will and power to do them are of the Lord alone; and thus men are regenerated and saved by the Lord by means of a life according to His commandments.

The views which have generally prevailed and do now prevail in the Christian world concerning regeneration or the new birth of the soul, are very vague and unsatisfactory. It is generally supposed, by a great portion of Christians at least, that regeneration, or the new birth, is an operation effected in the soul in a moment of time, by the irresistible influences of divine grace, as it is called, or by a sudden infusion into the heart of justifying faith. That is, a man may make his election and salvation sure, if he will have a strong faith enough that he may be saved and will be saved by believing in the sufficiency of the atoning merits of Christ. Such a view as this is as incomprehensible as it is vague and unsatisfactory to all real inquirers for the way of salvation. This view is consistent only with the doctrine that teaches that man may be saved by faith alone—a doctrine which is founded upon a few isolated passages misunderstood or misinterpreted, taken from the writings of the apostles and from the Gospels in which faith or belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is strongly insisted upon. Now it is very true that faith or belief, that is, an acknowledgment of the Lord and His power to save, is indeed a thing of the greatest importance—so important that we never can be saved from a single sin until we have this living faith and acknowledgment of Him. But then what is the end of this faith? Why did the Lord so strongly insist upon the necessity of our having faith or
belief in Him and in the Divine truths which He taught? Clearly in order that we might thus be enabled to obey Him in our hearts and in our lives—that we might live in the practice of His truths, and thus be happy—happy here and happy hereafter. And true faith is an acknowledgment of Him, with a confidence that He will save us, will deliver us, not merely from the punishment consequent upon our sins, but from our sins themselves, provided we on our part resist our evil propensities and inclinations in feeling, thought, and act, acknowledging that our power to do this is from Him, and that the removal of our evils and the implantation of heavenly feelings or affections and thoughts in their place, belongs to Him alone. Such a faith as this will lead us to live according to the truths of our faith. It will lead us to shun the evils which are opposed to those truths, and to do the duties which those truths prescribe. It is not faith alone, but faith united to love and charity in the life. It is faith united to love, because we must first love the Lord before we can have faith or confidence in Him enough to obey His truths as the truths of eternal life.

In regard to the opinion that men are made regenerate or spiritually born anew in a moment, while engaged in some serious occupation, this is contrary both to reason and to the Sacred Scripture. It is doubtless true that there are periods in the life of many, when their minds are elevated into states in which they are interested almost wholly in heavenly things. They feel and think almost wholly in relation to God and to heaven, and to the things of another life. Their affections then rest not upon earth, but upon heaven. But then such elevated states as these may be experienced by man many times in his life—for there are many and great changes of state to be under-
gone in our journey from Egypt to the land of Canaan, but in no one of these changes do we become fully regenerated. Some of these changes of state may indeed make very strong and lasting impressions upon us, but we should be careful not to lay too much stress upon them, lest we finally be deluded with the idea that we have already reached a heavenly state, when in reality we have made no progress towards it. It is true that if man is regenerated, there must be a time when heavenly loves and heavenly principles gain the ascendancy in his mind, and the change which then takes place must indeed be very great; but before this takes place there will be many manifested efforts towards it, and afterwards there will be so much of the natural man to overcome, that we never can point to any precise time in which this great change took place. We may perhaps feel satisfied, and others around us may feel satisfied, that our hearts have been changed, that we now spiritually live, but we know not when we began to live. The Lord says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit." That is, the process of regeneration, or the new spiritual birth, is a mysterious and hidden work, and it can be perceived only by its outward manifestations in the life of the man.

That man needs to be regenerated, or born again, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," in order that he may ever enter into the kingdom of heaven, is a doctrine most clearly and most forcibly taught in the writings of the New Church. Hence we are taught that man, at the present day, is born into propensities or inclinations to all kinds of evils. There is inherent in his very nature the love of self and the love
of the world above every other love. Indeed the manifesta­tions of society every day are enough to convince the most skeptical beholder that this, the natural mind, is at enmity with God, and with all good loves and principles and truths. The multitudes of examples of wrong and violence, of murder, adultery, theft and false witness, of fraud and treachery of every kind, are certainly sufficient to prove an evil bias in the natural constitution of man. And if we were willing to examine our own hearts in the light of truth, we should find that we had no need to look without ourselves to be convinced of the fact. We should find that a regard for our own selfish and worldly interests is continually influencing us, and leading us to regard but little the happiness, the interests, and the feelings of others. What religious man has not found such to be the state and condition of his own natural heart?

There is no doctrine more clearly revealed in the Sacred Scriptures, than the doctrine of the natural depravity of man, and the necessity of regeneration. In the Psalms it is said, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." And by the prophet Jeremiah the Lord says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" These passages show the naturally corrupt state of all mankind. That man must be renewed in the spirit and disposition and inclination of his mind, is most explicitly taught in the Word of God. Thus the psalmist prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." And by the prophet Ezekiel the Lord says, "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh." Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verily, verily, I say unto thee,
except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." These passages show us the absolute necessity of regeneration in order to our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

We are however taught, in the doctrines of the New Church, as well as in the Sacred Scriptures, that regeneration is not a sudden and instantaneous work, but a slow and gradual work. It is not accomplished in any one moment, or day, or month, or year; but if man is really advancing in the path to heaven, it is taking place in him every moment of his life on earth. The gradual nature of the work is shown by the Lord when He says, "The kingdom of heaven," that is the insemination of that kingdom, or the principles of it by regeneration, "is like unto a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it." Its gradual progress is beautifully pictured out in the world of nature before us, in the seed, the germ, and tree, in the bud, the blossom, and the fruit. Now these outward processes of growth in nature are not momentary and sudden, they are all slow and gradual. So is the kingdom of heaven formed in our minds. So do we grow into the knowledge and life of the principles of goodness and truth. It is also generally known and acknowledged that the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, and their passage to the land of Canaan, are a type of the deliverance of man from his natural, unregenerate state, and of his elevation to a spiritual state, that is, of his regeneration; and this journey of the
children of Israel is described as long and tedious, attended with many unforeseen difficulties, to represent the many unforeseen spiritual difficulties which we all have to encounter in our way to heaven.

We believe, in the New Church, that repentance is the commencement of the work of regeneration, and no one can ever begin to be regenerated until he first sincerely performs the duty of repentance. This duty of repentance consists in self-examination, in knowing and acknowledging our sins, in feeling guilty and confessing them before the Lord, and in imploring help of Him to resist them. It thus leads us to cease from them, in feeling, in thought, and in act, because they are opposed to all the laws and principles which God has taught us — because they are opposed to Him — because they are sins against Him. And it thus also leads us to live a new life according to the truths of the Sacred Scriptures. And when we do thus faithfully perform the work of repentance, "and cease to do evil and learn to do well," exploring at the same time the secret and hidden motives and intentions of our actions, then will the Lord by degrees impart to us the principles of His Love, and inspire us with motives of action diametrically opposite to our natural propensities and inclinations, and, operating in and by heavenly affections, will gradually deliver our souls from evil and finally effect their purification from sin and iniquity. But as our propensities and inclinations to evil are strong, as our sins are many, our purification from them can only be effected by a very slow and gradual process. We are not generally enabled to see many of them at once, so as to confess them and really to try to shun them as sins against God. And it is necessary for us to see them and see the nature of them, before we
shall ever see the necessity of putting them away. And hence there are many and various ways, under the operations of Divine Providence, by which our secret evils are brought forth and manifested to ourselves, and perhaps to others, in so clear a light that we cannot fail to see of what nature they are and that we ought to shun them as sins against God. But they are never manifested at any one time, only in some degree as we are enabled to overcome them by prayer and confidence in the help of the Lord. And by overcoming a small evil, by endeavoring to cast it out in the name of the Lord, we acquire power, with His help, to overcome and remove our larger evils. And so by persevering in this way — by praying to the Lord daily, and struggling against the evil feelings, the wicked thoughts and wrong actions, which we at any time see that we are guilty of — by Divine assistance our regeneration and salvation is finally effected. And thus the process of regeneration is regarded, in the New Church, as the work not of a moment, or of a day, or month, or year, but of a whole life. And after this life, those in whom the work of regeneration has commenced on earth, will continually go on advancing to higher and higher states of love and wisdom and happiness throughout eternity.

With regard to the nature and character of the regenerate life, we are taught, in the doctrines of the New Church, that love to God and love to all mankind are the sum of the Christian life. The Lord says that all the law and the prophets hang upon these two commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." But the only way in which these loves can be preserved and cherished is by bringing them forth into our words
and actions — into good works to our neighbor as often as opportunities are offered. If we neglect to do this, all good loves in our minds will soon become dissipated and lost. For they would be like souls without bodies. Good works are the bodies — the external form, which all our genuine love of our fellow-men puts on, and in them all our true neighborly loves live and operate, just as the soul lives and operates in our natural bodies. This is the reason why it is said, in the Sacred Scriptures, that at the final judgment, every one shall be judged and rewarded according as his works shall be; because man’s works are the expression and continent and only adequate measure and representative of his whole internal life. They embody all his affections, all his loves, and thus all his life.

We do not mean to say that man is saved by works alone. For the doctrines of the New Church teach us that man is not saved by faith alone, nor by charity alone, nor by works alone, but these must all be united together in the life. But what we mean to say is, that man’s works, when they are genuine good works, have charity or kindness in them, and they have faith or confidence or belief in the truths according to which they are done, in them, and then they are saving works. They are saving works because the Lord is in them, and they are done from Him and not from ourselves. His life flows into us and animates us to do them. We act only as his stewards, using carefully the goods which he has committed to us.

It may thus be seen what is the nature of that religion which the man of the New Church is taught that he must have in order that he may be saved. It is a religion which requires him to shun all evils as sins against God, and to live a life of love and uses to his neighbor. It is
one that must remain with him, not merely while he is assuming its outward forms and airs, but one that must have its home in his heart — which must go with him wherever he goes, and act in him wherever he acts, and which shall especially shed its kindly influences over and about him in his unwatched hours of every-day life. He must feel its angel-influences over him at all times and under all circumstances, when he buys and when he sells, when he works, and when he plays, when he talks, when he laughs, and when he sings, and when he prays. It must be one which gives him true neighborly love for every body — which will be all the time leading him forth on some heavenly errands to bless mankind, to make them better, and to make them happier. This is the only religion which he wants, because it is the only religion which God breathes into the soul of man.

The doctrines of the New Church do not teach us that religion is something that we shall only need to avail ourselves of at our entrance into the spiritual world, but that we need to be governed by its vital, living God-like principles here in the present life. We need it to make us happy now, here in this world, as well as in the world to come. The laws of heaven are revealed to us, and we are required to do the will of the Lord on the earth, as it is done in the heavens. Every doctrine and principle and truth, which God has revealed to men, is to be brought down into external works of neighborly love, or charity — into the daily duties of our life in this world — into all the intercourse of man with man, and there religion is to find its home.

It is according to the doctrines of the New Church, that man, while he lives in this world, is in a probationary state, and that he lives in entire freedom in regard to
spiritual things as well as in regard to natural things. The Lord never acts arbitrarily in relation to man, either in this world, or in the world to come. He exerts no arbitrary power over him—He leads him only in freedom. Every one who goes either to heaven or hell, goes there only by a voluntary use or abuse of the faculties which God has given him. For God has created man a rational being, from which he has the capacity of knowing the right and the wrong, and a free moral agent, from which he has the capacity of doing the right or the wrong. God never requires or compels any one to go to hell, or even to remain there after he has gone. He no more requires or compels him to go and remain in hell, than He requires or compels him to be a selfish and wicked man, while he lives here on earth. In both cases, in time and through eternity, He gives man his liberty, the great essential of humanity. He leaves him in freedom, but consistently with man's freedom, the Divine Providence does all that He can do to save man from hell, and to lift him up out of it. Still, if man's loves are good, he will hereafter associate himself and remain associated with those who are in loves like his, consequently in heaven; and if his loves are selfish and evil, he will associate himself with those who are in similar loves, consequently with those who are in hell.

With regard to heaven and hell, we learn, in the New Church, that they are not places distant from us, but principles and states of life, near to us in proportion as we are near to the principles and states of life which constitute them. While we are living in this world, they are therefore constantly acting upon us and affecting us; and we approach the one or the other, just in proportion as we adopt and live the principles of the one or the
other. If we live the principles and life of selfishness, we shall be miserable and unhappy, whether we are in this world, or in the other, and this constitutes our hell; and if we live according to good principles, and love our neighbors as ourselves, we shall be happy here, and hereafter, wherever we may be; and this will make a heaven within, and without, and around us. And we never can be happy except in living such a life as this.

We believe, in the New Church, that the inhabitants of pagan or heathen countries, as well as the inhabitants of Christian countries, may be saved, and are saved, if they live a life of charity, or in love one to another, and according to the truths which they know. We believe the words of the apostle where he says, "God is no respecter of persons — but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." The man who lives uprightly, who acknowledges a Divine, and endeavors to perform faithfully the duties of his life, and shuns the evils which he knows as sins, is equally acceptable in the sight of God, whether he be Jew or Mahomedan, Pagan or Christian. No one is to be blamed for the place of his birth — and every one is accountable for just what he has given to him. And all that is required of him, is, to live the truths which he knows, be they many, or be they few. One may know many truths, and another may know few truths, but each one is saved, not so much according to the truths which he knows, as according to the life which he lives. God has thus placed the means of salvation within the reach of all; for to every descendant of the human race, He has given truths enough to save him, if he will only live faithfully according to what has been given to him.

We also learn, in the doctrines of the New Church, that
all who leave this world in infancy and childhood, are received immediately into heaven. Natural death is to them a birth into the spiritual world. And as soon as they are born into that world, they are received by the angels with love far greater than a mother's love, with joy far greater than at their natural birth, and they are taken care of and watched over with the most tender affections. There are those in heaven whose employment it is to take care of infants and little children, and to bring them up and educate them in the wisdom of heavenly life. Those persons have a genuine love for the infants and children which are given into their care. All infants and little children who leave this world, are given into the care of some of these angels. They all have their spiritual mothers given to them, who love them far more than their natural mothers did, and with a far purer and better love. Their spiritual mothers teach them to live in the mutual love of one another, and never permit them to exercise any other feelings than those of kindness to one another. They instruct them also in the truths of a heavenly life; and as their minds increase in a knowledge of these truths, and in the love of them, and in the love of obedience, so their outward spiritual bodies grow. Thus they live and grow up on "angels' food." When they have thus been educated, and have grown up to the age of manhood, they are prepared to become angels themselves; and they then go and live in some heavenly society, and live on forever, being engaged in angelic employments. Thus does the Lord "suffer little children to come unto Him, and forbids them not."

Having now presented, for your consideration, a summary view of the fundamental and leading Doctrines of
the New Jerusalem Church, in as plain and comprehensive a manner as I am able, it only remains to say a few words in relation to the revelations which have been made to this Church concerning the spiritual world. We believe that there is a spiritual as well as a natural world, and that world has been as it were laid open to our view in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, the great herald of the New Jerusalem Church. His writings have drawn aside the vail that has so long hung over our eyes and hidden from our sight the future world. They have shown us the nature of that world — they have exhibited to us its true character, in a true light, capable of being seen in the eye of reason, as well as the eye of faith. And they have revealed to us the laws by which it is governed, the very laws of life there. They have swept away those mists that floated about it, and those phantoms that have peopled it, and have made it to us a world of life and realities, a world of usefulness and activity. We know now, that men live and act hereafter as men, and that the world in which they live has all things corresponding to a life of reality and activity that this world has. There is there a succession of times and seasons, of events and actions, as there is here. And its inhabitants are all engaged in some kind of useful employments. Those employments, among angels and good spirits, are generally very similar to the employments of good men on earth. We believe that in heaven all the inhabitants are arranged by the Lord into societies, in a most perfect and orderly manner, and each one has his distinct office and daily duties allotted to him, and these he faithfully performs, and thus lives in mutual love and charity to every one around him — and from hence is the happiness of the heavenly life. No one has any disposition to act
against the laws of order, the laws of charity, the laws of God's Word, and hence there is perfect harmony throughout the life of heaven. The law of God, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is in every feeling, thought and act of the angels' life.

Hence it may be seen, that under the light of the doctrines of the New Church, we do not believe that the happiness of the angels consists in surrounding the throne of God and singing psalms, &c., according to a very prevailing idea, but that their happiness consists solely in the faithful performance of the various spiritual uses of their life. This is the reason that they have employments given to them, because employments are means by which they can be useful to one another, by which they can do good to one another. They are the means by which their heavenly loves can be brought out into some active, living, useful form. Who can be happy and make others happy around him, without being engaged in some useful employment? And this is as necessary for angels and spirits in the other life, as it is for men in this life. It is as necessary for men's minds as it is for their bodies.

We learn, also, from the writings of the New Church, that the hells are composed of innumerable societies of evil spirits, whose loves, whose feelings, thoughts and acts are precisely opposite, in character, to the loves, the feelings, thoughts and acts of the angels. For as the angels are in the love of the Lord and the neighbor, so evil spirits are in the love of self and the world. Their minds are full of false and wicked principles, and are inflamed with evil lusts and passions. These lusts and passions are called, in the Sacred Scriptures, the fire of hell, and the fire that is not quenched. When man acts wickedly, he acts from the lusts and passions with which
evil spirits are inflamed. We believe, also, that all men are, as to their minds or spirits, intimately associated with angels and good spirits, or with evil spirits and devils, while they are living in this world. The character of spirits with whom they are associated is according to the character of their own minds — according to the character of their feelings, thoughts and actions. If these are good, then they are associated with good spirits, and feel and think and act under the influence of good spirits and angels. If they are bad, then they are associated with evil spirits, and feel and think and act under the influence of wicked spirits and devils.

When man leaves this world and enters the spiritual world, he comes into open and manifest association with those who had been his internal and spiritual companions while he lived on earth. He there manifests his true character, and if that character has been good, he finally becomes an angel in heaven; and if that character has been bad, he becomes a devil in hell.

We believe, also, that all who are now living either in heaven or in hell, once lived as men on earth, and that the character of their life now, is just what they then chose to have it.

We believe, also, that the resurrection of man takes place immediately after the death of the natural body, and that man then rises into the spiritual world a real, substantial, living man. This is evident from the Lord's words to the thief who was crucified with Him, to whom He said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." He also declares that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are now living. For He says that God is their God, and yet He is not the God of the dead. We believe, also, that man leaves his material body when he leaves this world, and
that he will never again resume it; for the world into
which he is then going is a spiritual world, and conse-
quently he could find no use for a material body in a world
where all things are spiritual. Furthermore, on his first
entrance into that world, he rises into a spiritual body, by
which and through which he is enabled to perform all the
uses which he then has to perform. This is the body to
which Paul refers when he says, "there is a spiritual
body" as well as a natural body.

In closing our brief notice of some of the leading
Doctrines and truths which have been revealed to the
New Jerusalem Church, let us notice one or two diffi-
culties which may perhaps arise in the minds of some,
about receiving these new revelations which have been
made to the world. And first, a difficulty may arise in
the minds of some in receiving these new revelations as
from heaven, on account of the improbability that any
revelation would again be given after the Christian Dis-
pensation.

They who believe in the Sacred Scriptures, who are
Christians in heart and in life know, or may know from a
little reflection, that all dispensations or revelations of
Divine Truth have been progressive. Look at the ex-
ternal character of the revelations which were made
to the Jewish Church, and compare it with the external
character of the revelations which were made by the
Lord to the first Christian Church. Hence, then, we
may very justly have reason to suppose that every dis-
pensation or revelation of Divine Truth will be succeeded
by another, unless we have direct evidence or assertions
from the Lord to the contrary. And before we settle
down in the assurance that any dispensation or revelation
is the last, we should be very careful to examine well our evidence. We should be careful, because in all cases where new truths are revealed to the world, as many truths are revealed as men are then in a proper state to receive, and as many as can be useful for them to have; and hence every dispensation may appear, to those who are living during its existence, as if it were to be the last. But if men settle down from such evidence as this alone, it would operate as a very serious obstacle to their reception of any more truths than those which they already know; and every true Christian would certainly mourn, to think that he was never to advance to any higher state of wisdom than that to which he had already attained. Is it not that our minds may be kept constantly open to a reception of more and new truths, that the fulfilment of the promises made in the Scriptures to good men, are placed so far forward, even into the eternal world? How far forward was Abraham bidden to look, for the fulfilment of the promises that God made to him? The Jews were taught to expect that in some future day, Shiloh would come. And Christians are repeatedly and most emphatically promised in the Gospels and the Revelations that a new Dispensation, a Second Coming of the Lord, a new revelation of Himself, that is of His Divine truths, would be given to the world. In the Revelation, it is said, "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." Here we are assured that the Lord would reveal Himself again to the world. And in the last part of the Book of Revelations He says, "Behold I come quickly," which means that he will come certainly. The only question, then, that can arise in the mind of the believer in Christianity, is, what is the form and the manner, in which this new revelation
of Himself shall be made to the world? And whether it be such as the doctrines of the New Church teach, I must leave it for every individual to judge for himself, taking the Word of God and the light of reason for his guide.

Secondly. It may be asked, and it has been asked by some, "if the doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church are true, why were they not revealed before? Why," say they, "has the world been permitted to go on so many ages without a knowledge of doctrines so important as you regard these?" In answer to such questions as these, we might ask again, "If the doctrines which were revealed to the first Christian Church were true, why were they not revealed before? And why has so large a portion of the world been permitted to remain without a knowledge of them ever since the First Coming of the Lord? But the doctrines of the New Church answer all these questions. The reason is, that when new truths are revealed to men, they bring men under obligations to obey those truths; and every one who has once learned a truth, and wilfully rejects or disregards it, is in a worse condition, throughout eternity, than if he had never known that truth. Our knowledge, then, places us under very solemn obligations. Hence it is that truth is never imparted to men only in such measures as they are in a state to receive—that is, no truth is given to men which they are not able, if they will, to be profited by. The Lord knows in what measures and in what quality it is best adapted to accomplish the purposes for which all truth is given; and hence He gives to this one much, and to that one little—not because He loves this one better and that one less, for God is no respecter of persons—but because He sees that it would be good, eternally good for the one to have more, and for the other to have less. Every one
has as much as he is prepared to receive, and use aright. And the only reason why more truth has not been given to the world, and why the heavenly doctrines and truths of the New Jerusalem have not been revealed ages ago, is because men have not used properly the truths which they already knew, and were not therefore in a state prepared to receive them. The Lord mercifully withheld these truths until, in His good providence, He saw that they could be safely given, _lest men should see_, and their condemnation should be the greater.

To those who are in heart disposed to receive the doctrines and truths of the New Jerusalem, there are not wanting evidence, abundant and irresistible evidences of their divine authority. But the evidence is not merely external evidence. This new dispensation or revelation of divine truths is not confirmed by external signs and miracles. Its evidences are almost entirely of an internal character. They are calculated to affect the hearts and the understandings of men. They are found, by the sincere seeker, _in what is taught_. If the goods and truths themselves are permitted to do their proper work in the _hearts of men_, _there_ may be found the evidences of the divinity of these revelations, and nowhere else. When the doctrines and truths of the New Jerusalem present themselves to the understandings of men, therefore, they can enter no claims for their reception by promising any blessings, except those which they themselves may be the mediums of, by working a change in the _heart_ and the _life_ of the man. But when they are received for the sake of the good which they will do, then they may be seen to be divine truths — they may be seen to be endued with power and authority from on High — then, indeed, the Lord Himself may be seen to be present in them, working with His
almighty power in the hearts of men — spiritually opening the eyes of the blind and unclosing the ears of the deaf, healing the sick and raising the dead, and bidding the lame go on his way to heaven rejoicing. Then may the Lord be seen working miracles in the souls of men rather than in their bodies.

I wish to make a single remark more, concerning our views of the proper manner of making the holy doctrines of the New Jerusalem known to the world around us, and then I close. We are not proselyters, or at least we know that we ought not to be proselyters in the common acceptation of that term. Still we would always endeavor to be ready to "give to him that asketh of us." "From him that would borrow of us," we would "turn not away." We would try to do what we can to prevent and remove error and misconstruction. We would, according to our ability, do what we can in a peaceful and orderly manner to provide the books and writings of the Church, and all other such means of instruction as would seem to be useful in directing the minds of those who are making, or who are disposed to make, honest inquiries in regard to our holy doctrines and truths; and we would turn away from no one who honestly seeks communion with us, but we would point him rather to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." And we would at all times be ready to give every man a reason for the hope that is in us. But we well know that the best way of teaching the doctrines and truths of the New Jerusalem is by practising them in our lives. They are far more useful and more beautiful in the life and in the practice of them, than in any other manner in which they can be presented to the world around us. So far, therefore, as we are selfish, and impure, or worldly, or proud, or resent-
ful in our feelings, in our thoughts, and in our actions, just so far we are not members of the New Jerusalem that is now coming down from God out of heaven — for all such feelings, and thoughts, and actions, are absolutely prohibited by the heavenly doctrines and truths of this Church, and so far as we entertain them in any form and measure, so far, though we call ourselves members of the New Jerusalem Church, we testify, by our principles and by our lives, against it.

But so far as we have been enabled, under its influences, to remove our selfish and worldly loves, and feelings, and thoughts — so far as we have been enabled to deny and put away our sensual appetites, and desires, and lusts, and passions — so far as we have become watchful against evil in ourselves and glad to do what good lies in our power to do, and to live in peace with all around us, and willing to labor humbly in the way of usefulness which Divine Providence appoints us, — so far and no farther do we follow the only manner of disseminating our doctrines and truths, which is sure to do no harm — so far do we present them to those around us in a manner which must receive the divine approbation. And this presentation of them is enough to satisfy, at least the candid and rational portion of the world around us, that these our principles are not of earth, but of heaven. And above all, so far as we do thus, we obey the Lord’s great command, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”
APPENDIX.

It has been desired, by some, that a notice of the order of services performed at the Dedication of the New Jerusalem Temple, in Bath, should be published, together with the Sermon delivered on that occasion; and we have thought proper, therefore, to give it in this pamphlet, in the form of an appendix.

The services were commenced by reading the forty-fourth selection in the Book of Worship:

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go to the house of Jehovah, &c.

This selection was then chanted; and the Lord's Prayer was afterwards repeated. Then followed the reading of pages of Scripture, from the eighth chapter of the first Book of Kings, by the Rev. Mr. Howard. After this, the twenty-sixth Glorification was sung:

Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Then was performed — by the pastor of the Society, and Mr. W. D. Sewall responding in behalf of the people — the following Dedication and Consecration Service:

Minister. Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets.

People. This God is our God! We have waited for Him, and he will save us. This is Jehovah! We have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.
Minister. Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the Truth.

People. Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions, the fruit of my body for the sins of my soul?

Minister. He hath showed thee, O man! what is good, and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to humble thyself by walking with thy God.

People. One thing have I desired of Jehovah, that will I seek—that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Jehovah, and to inquire in His temple.

Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. I will offer to the Lord the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, in the courts of the house of the Lord, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.

We will pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that do love thee. Peace be within thy walls, prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sake I will now say, peace be within thee. For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God, I will seek good to thee.

How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Jehovah of hosts: my soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.

Minister. Blessed are they that dwell in the house of the Lord. They will still be praising Him. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Him, in whose heart are the ways. They go from strength to strength. Every one of them in Zion will appear before God. O Jehovah of hosts, Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee.
People. We desire to worship the Lord in this temple, that is to be dedicated and consecrated to His worship and service.

Minister. The worship that exists in heaven, is the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Only God and Saviour. It is said, in Revelation, that they sing this Glorification in heaven: "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou alone art holy. For all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for Thy judgments are made manifest."

People. We pray that we may be enabled to worship this Lord, in His temple on earth, as our only Lord God and Saviour; as the Lord God Almighty, whose Name alone is to be feared and glorified. We would unite with the people in heaven in saying—Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God.

Minister. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

People. We desire that He may become such in our hearts. We desire to live in His worship and service. We desire that His kingdom may come and that His will may be done on the earth as it is done in the heavens.

With the desire that we might be instruments in the hands of the Lord, of promoting and advancing the worship and service and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, in our own hearts and in the hearts of our friends and neighbors, we have built this temple, and we would now solemnly dedicate it. And we desire to have it consecrated, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to His worship and service. We would acknowledge Him as our Great Master and Teacher. We desire to be guided by Him, as the Way and the Truth and the Life, into all Truth. We know and would acknowledge, that the Heavenly Doctrines and Truths of the New Jerusalem were revealed from Him out of heaven, and that He, and He alone,
can give us power to learn and do these doctrines and truths. In these heavenly doctrines and truths, we desire that we ourselves, and our friends and neighbors, and our children and children's children may be instructed in this temple. Here we desire to drink of the water of Life freely. Here we desire to receive the Bread that cometh down from heaven. Here we desire to feel the influences of the Lord's grace, His mercy and His peace. And finally, we desire and pray, that here the tabernacle of God may be with men; that He may dwell with them, that they may be His people, and that God Himself may be with them and be their God.

Minister. May your desires and your prayers be from a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and may it be unto you according to your prayers. This temple is hereby, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, consecrated to all the uses of worship and instruction, according to the Heavenly Doctrines of the New Jerusalem. Its altar is consecrated to the most holy parts of the worship. Its pulpit is consecrated to the uses of instruction in the Holy Doctrines of the New Church. Its seats are consecrated to the use of those who engage in the holy acts of worship, and who would hear and receive instruction in the way of life. And all things belonging to this temple are consecrated to the uses of religious worship and instruction. In this temple, which is now consecrated to the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, we place the Sacred Scriptures, which is the Divine Word of the Lord. When the teachers of Truth here endeavor to expound the Scriptures, and to show in them things concerning the Lord, may His Holy Spirit of Truth come down into them and guide them into all Truth. Here may the Holy Sacrament of Baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, be administered. Here may the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be administered, and may it be received worthily, and give Truly Human Life to all who eat. Here may prayers be offered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here
may the Lord's people express their heavenly affections in chants and songs of praise and thanksgiving and glorification. Here may the Holy Scriptures be read, and instruction given from them, which shall be the means of converting many to the Lord. And here may all the services of religious worship and instruction be performed; and here may the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be always with us. Amen.

People. Amen.

After the Dedication and Consecration Service was performed, a Chant was sung:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, &c.

Then followed the Sermon, which occupies the principal part of the pamphlet. At the close of the Sermon, the following Glorification was sung:

Thou wilt show me the path of Life —
In Thy presence is fulness of joy,
And at Thy right hand there are pleasures forever more.

The services were closed with the Benediction:

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.
AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE

OF A

HOUSE OF WORSHIP

FOR THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN SOMERVILLE,

September 28, 1844.

By R. M. Hodges.

CAMBRIDGE:

METCALF AND COMPANY,
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.
1844.
TO THE

INHABITANTS OF SOMERVILLE,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SACRED INTERESTS AND HOPES WHICH GAVE OCCASION TO THIS ADDRESS,

IT IS, WITH CHRISTIAN AFFECTION, INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.
ADDRESS.

It becomes a Christian people, at all times and under all circumstances, to recognize a Divine Providence. How much more so, when beginning a work, the result of which is to be the manifestation, the outward token, of their faith in God, and of their obligations to him, as the Author of their lives, the Source of all their blessings, and the Foundation of all their hopes, especially of those blessings and those hopes which concern them as a Christian people!

We have assembled, my friends, in the spirit of that gospel, all whose benign and hallowing influences it has been our privilege to experience, at least, if not to own and to bless, and, under a sense of our dependence upon God, and of our gratitude to him as our Father, and the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to set apart, by the solemnities of prayer and praise, this area as sacred ground, and to present for his
blessing, and dedicate to him, the earliest labors of a work, which, when done, shall be a building, all whose proportions, in symmetry and beauty, shall render it a temple alike worthy of the name of God, and of the worship that is due to him.

In making provision, as you now do, at this early period of your history as a distinct and separate town, for the erection of a church, where you and your children and your children's children may worship the God of your fathers and their fathers, you do well. Upon becoming a distinct community, exercising independent civil rights and immunities, you found yourselves the inhabitants of a township within which there was not a single house of public worship; a circumstance, I believe, without its parallel, in the numerous subdivisions, to which, for various reasons, but principally those which arise from increase of population and the spirit of enterprise, many of the New England towns have, in recent years, been subjected. In this respect, you were in a condition not dissimilar to that small but intrepid band of Christian pilgrims, who, in this Western world, laid the corner-stone of the temple of civil and religious liberty. They knew full well, that prosperity, in every relation of life, must have for
its foundation deep religious principle, and they had no sooner erected the humble dwellings which sheltered their heads from the storms of a strange world, than they built the house of God. But with the exception of this single, though singular, particular, there is a wide difference between your condition and that of those who first planted the American church. What they sowed in tears you reap with joy.

It has been said, that every action has its mission, either for good or evil, and that in the unceasing flow of events, in the order of Providence, its influence will be felt in perfect harmony with the spirit which first gave it impulse. The truth of this sentiment, in connection with the fostering care which our Pilgrim ancestors felt and manifested for the institutions of learning and religion, is forcibly brought to mind by the scene presented to our view from this delightful and commanding eminence. It is not a picture, but an actual scene. And who, that takes into his mental vision the beautiful and wide-spread prospect, with the various emotions which the different objects are calculated to excite, all suggestive of a beneficent Providence, and, through the influences of Christianity, of a proper regard for the
wants and weaknesses of humanity, nay, more, of that hope which extends beyond and above the marbled sepulchre and the gilded tomb,—who that looks upon the inspiring scene, here, speaking of peace and plenty, there, of sympathy and charity, there, of truth and wisdom, and from yonder consecrated hill, of faith and immortality,—who, I say, can resist the feelings of gratitude which he owes to God, and, through his beneficent smiles upon their exertions and labors, to the long line of the pious, the wise, and the good, from the days of the Pilgrim fathers to the present happy hour?

In selecting this spot for the shrine of your religious affections, let us hope that you cherish high conceptions of duty, and holy purposes of obedience. Let your improvement be as conspicuous as are your advantages. Every time you shall approach the altar which your hands shall have here raised, you will see outspread before you a book, from which you may learn many lessons promotive at once of wisdom and of happiness. The book of Nature, how diversified are its readings, and yet how different their meaning, as interpreted by minds sanctified or not by the power of religion! He who looks at nature through an atmosphere
purified by the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness from the mists of passion and of prejudice, of narrow views and selfish aims, has conceptions of truth and beauty worthy of an immortal mind. As often as you shall look upon this varied landscape, and trace its outlines, marked by a hand of power and of love, may your minds be in sympathy with the scene, and your hearts swell with generous emotions. Scenes of wide extent and beauty suggest alike expanded and expansive ideas of the character and providence of God; and under such circumstances, our powers and affections, if true to their own impulses, will have none other than elevated aims and an all-embracing charity.

As often as you shall come up here in the name of Him who went about doing good, your eyes will rest with delight upon yonder institution,* which Christianity has been the means of founding, testifying alike to its spirit and its power. And if you have, indeed, been baptized into the spirit of Christ, you will raise the fervent prayer, and, according to your ability, extend the generous hand, in behalf and for the benefit of every asylum of suffering and bereaved humanity.

* The McLean Asylum.
Knowledge is essential to virtue, and virtue to the existence of civil liberty. To the power and influence of this sentiment are we indebted for our colleges, academies, and seminaries of learning. And every time, my friends, you shall ascend this hill, henceforth to be sacred to your religious affections, you will be grateful for the influences which prompted the establishment of our own seat of learning, whose turrets adorn the western view. You will bless God that it was dedicated to Christ and the church, and that so many who have gone forth from its fostering care, by being the ministers of truth and the benefactors of their race, have done honor to themselves and to the cause of learning and religion. Let education, inasmuch as it is connected with refinement of manners, elevation of character, purity and dignity of thought, be united in your regards with all the hallowed associations belonging to the temple which shall be built on this foundation.

And yet another scene, resting darkly on yon horizon, the consecrated place of graves.* The lessons which shall be taught by that scene, as often as it shall meet your eyes from this hallowed spot, need be no other than those that shall give

* Mount Auburn.
efficacy to the lessons which the spirit of hope, that hope which religion inspires and blesses, shall teach you here. How beautiful is the spirit of Christianity! It dispels all fears, nay, more, it subdues, it hallows, it uplifts the affections of the soul, removing even from the home of the dead its gloom, and making it a place of thoughtful, of heavenly aspirations.

But it is time that your attention should be directed to the particular object that has called us together. This corner-stone, what principles actuate, what hopes excite you in laying it? You enter upon this work prompted by your regard for the gospel, your confidence in the efficacy of its institutions, and your own need of their salutary influence. You would that the consecrated walls which shall here be raised should resound with no other prayers and praises, should witness no other counsels or rites, than such as shall be in perfect accordance with the simple, the pure, the fervent, the earnest spirit of Christianity. You begin this house, to be the house of God, with high thoughts and enlarged affections; for only such are befitting the holy work in its progress and end. You enter upon this undertaking with the settled conviction, that it is not possible for the human mind to stay
the progress or set limits to the boundaries of truth, and in your religious sympathies and affections you would embrace the whole brotherhood of man.

The structure which you propose here to erect, it is pleasant to know, will be in true harmony with its sacred purpose. It will not boast of the magnificence and splendor of the cathedrals and minsters of an older and more luxurious age, but, in the simplicity, symmetry, and beauty of its proportions, it will speak, at least in a subdued tone, of the beauty and harmony which everywhere prevail in the great temple of Nature. Every age has distinguishing characteristics, indicative alike of its resources and its tastes. Our age, owing to the combined influences of an uncontrollable necessity and the power of habit, in its public and private exhibitions of architectural art, declares plainly enough, that it has hitherto been governed by principles of utility and convenience, and that mere outward adornment has had no place in its regards. I am happy to think that the severe simplicity of the past is yielding to a spirit more in accordance with the requirements of a true refinement. There is a beauty in proportion, not the less valuable because less obvious, and I would that
in all our buildings this form of beauty especially should be regarded; and a chastened adornment, always in place, and congruous with other circumstances, would tend, it is not to be doubted, to give a refined and graceful direction both to the intellect and the manners. This tendency, inasmuch as it agrees with the spirit of the gospel, should never be violated in buildings designed for the worship of God, however humble in other respects they may be. The place which we have consecrated as the home of our religious affections should never, by the incongruity of its proportions or embellishments, do violence to the higher emotions of our souls. A propriety, suggesting reverential and solemn thoughts, thoughts in accordance with the true dignity and divine spirit of the gospel, should distinguish our sacred edifices. Let there be nothing in them indicative of mere display. Gorgeousness, how inappropriate it is in our thoughts, in connection with holy altars and humble offerings! Let there be every thing in our houses of worship meet and consistent, noble and beautiful in greatness, harmonizing with all, in feeling and sentiment, that elevates and refines.

The building which your piety shall here erect, in proportion to its magnitude, will correspond to
these sentiments. The site itself, as has already been remarked, will suggest no other thoughts than those which will be in harmony with the holy purpose of the structure. And the structure, with its beautiful front and tall spire, will be an object alike honorable to you as Christians, and giving to the landscape viewed from the distance a new interest. Let its walls rise under the auspices of a smiling Providence. Let there be no associations with them but those which shall excite the most grateful emotions. And when the work shall be accomplished, may it be so truly, so spiritually, dedicated to the Father of an infinite majesty and an unbounded mercy, as that it shall be to you and your children, and your children's children, none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.

I congratulate you, my friends, on all the happy circumstances which have preceded, and on all the hopes which attend this hour. You have felt your wants as Christians, and in the spirit of Christianity you have done what you could to supply them. The generous friends who have manifested their earnest sympathy in this your undertaking, the liberal donors of this beautiful spot of ground, set apart henceforth from ordinary uses, and conse-
crated to things divine, will ever, I doubt not, be held by you in grateful remembrance.

Personally, I thank you for the Christian regards you have extended towards me, and the feelings of interest and affection you have allowed me to cherish for you and yours, during the short period that has witnessed our communion and worship as the children of a common Father, and heirs, through Christ, of an everlasting hope.* And I bless God, that, in his providence, and by your kind permission, it has been given me to offer the sentiments and congratulations appropriate to this occasion.

May the gracious Father, when the hopes of this hour shall be consummated, give you a pastor whose heart shall be true alike to the sentiments and affections of the gospel,—one who shall be anxious to receive the truth and to impart the truth in all its spirituality and power,—one who shall be in loving and trusting subjection to the spirit of piety and philanthropy. May the words of such an one, and of none other, living and breathing in the inspirations and aspirations of Christianity, be heard within the walls which shall here be raised.

* A congregation for public worship was first gathered in a small "upper room," on the 17th of March, 1844; since which time the services of the Sabbath have been regularly performed.
We have laid this corner-stone, and in firmness it rests, an index of our faith. It is probably in the order of Providence, that we, and generations yet to come, shall have passed away, ere it shall be removed from its resting-place. But though we and it should be removed, the faith, in the exercise of which it has been laid, is immovable. That shall never pass away. It is enshrined in that temple whose builder and maker is God. Through the power of a true faith giving spirituality to your religious affections and hopes, from becoming worshippers in the sacred fane which your hands shall have here reared, may you become worshippers in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
The ceremony at the laying of the corner-stone of the edifice now in process of erection by the First Congregational Society in Somerville took place last Saturday afternoon. A large number of people was present, chiefly of those who have residences in the immediate neighbourhood. The building is to stand upon a high stone basement, covered on the front by the steps. A delicate and well proportioned spire will rise to the height of one hundred and fifty feet. The front of the church will be very beautiful, relieved by architectural projections, by heavy mouldings, and by fluted columns.

ORDER OF EXERCISES

AT THE
LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE
OF THE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN SOMERVILLE,
September 28, 1844.

PRAYER, BY REV. H. LAMBERT, OF EAST CAMBRIDGE.
SELECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE, BY REV. WM. NEWELL, OF CAMBRIDGE.

HYMN.

This stone to thee in faith we lay,
We build the temple, Lord, to thee;
Thine eye be open, night and day,
To guard this house and sanctuary.
Here, when thy people seek thy face,
And dying sinners pray to live,
Hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling-place,
And, when thou hearest, O, forgive!

Here, when thy messengers proclaim
The blessed gospel of thy Son,
Still, by the power of his great name,
Be mighty signs and wonders done.

Hosanna! to their Heavenly King
When children's voices raise that song,
Hosanna! let their angels sing,
And heaven with earth the strain prolong.

But will, indeed, Jehovah deign
Here to abide, no transient guest?
Here will the world's Redeemer reign,
And here the Holy Spirit rest?

That glory never hence depart!
Yet choose not, Lord, this house alone;
Thy kingdom come to every heart,
In every bosom fix thy throne.

READING OF THE INSCRIPTION ON THE PLATE, AND REMARKS,
BY REV. G. E. ELLIS, OF CHARLESTOWN.

ADDRESS, BY REV. R. M. HODGES, OF CAMBRIDGE.

PRAYER, BY REV. G. E. ELLIS, OF CHARLESTOWN.

HYMN.

From all that dwell below the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
Through every land, by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord;
Eternal truth attends thy word;
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more.
The leaden box deposited in a cavity of the corner-stone contains several papers and documents relating to Charlestown and Somerville, their schools, churches, etc., together with the religious and secular journals of the week, and a silver plate.

COPY OF THE INSCRIPTION ON THE SILVER PLATE DEPOSITED IN THE STONE.

First Congregational Church, in Somerville, Massachusetts,
Erected for the Worship of God the Father.
“Built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone.”
The Town of Somerville was incorporated, March 3d, 1842.
The First Religious Society was constituted, August 22d, 1844.
The Corner-stone of this Church was laid with Religious Ceremonies, September 28th, 1844.
Jacob Mudge and Ezra Sleeper, of Boston, Donors of the Land.
Guy C. Hawkins, George O. Brastow, John W. Mulliken, Building Committee.
A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

THE DEDICATION

OF

THE FIRST MEETING-HOUSE

OF THE

FIRST CHURCH AND SOCIETY

IN

SOMERVILLE, MASS.,

On Wednesday, September 3, 1845.

BY GEORGE E. ELLIS,
 Pastor of the Harvard Church, Charlestown.

BOSTON:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
1845.
This question, asked in hesitancy, not in doubt, in amazement, not in derision, interrupted the succession of those sublime petitions by which King Solomon dedicated the most magnificent temple ever reared on this earth. "What was it for?" That was the question which the thought of his heart brought to his lips. Had it a purpose which might be fulfilled? Did the Temple rise upon its sacred summit as a toy for man, or as a dwelling-place for the Divine Majesty? The assembled multitudes of Israel declared the purpose of the edifice. It was the house of God, the place where the Invisible and Eternal One should receive homage, where to faith and devotion he should dwell near.

That gorgeous temple, once the only favored shrine, with its solid shafts and its golden architrave, with its white-robed priests and its solemn offerings of sacrifice and incense, has felt the weight of decay; it has perished from the hill of Zion. The God who dwelt there, is now revealed to us by one who taught words of grace and wisdom within its courts, as a Spirit, to be worshipped in spirit, everywhere. He still dwells there, but here likewise. And we have built to him a temple. Upon a hill-top where the sun in heaven shines with
its fairest light, and around which cluster the happy dwelling-places and fruitful fields of a Christian people, a new place of worship now stands. It is a landmark for those who see it from afar; it is a memorial of another world to those for whom it is to be a place of prayer and religious instruction. It cannot boast the grandeur and ornaments of Solomon's temple; it is not designed to absorb all the sanctity of other places and scenes, nor to demand the reverence of your hearts to the forgetfulness of your closets and your domestic circles as places of prayer. Still it is an ornament, and it is to be a consecrated place; henceforth a temple of the living God.

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth?" That is the question at which we pause. It interrupts the current of our thoughts; or rather, I should say, it at once turns our thoughts into the current which it is most appropriate for them now to follow. It stays the hasty and inconsiderate ceremony by which we would dedicate a new church, as a matter of course, and it bids us ask, what it is for? What great reality sustains this ceremony? What solemn truth gives life and power to the familiar words which we utter?

That question presents before us the most serious theme which can engage the minds of human beings,—the relation between earth and heaven, between man and God. The question asks, indeed, whether there be any such relation. It is a question which has its perplexities, its depths of unfathomable mystery. No philosophy of man can solve the problems which enter into it. It is a vast and awful question, suspending hopes and counsels, and duties which sustain the peace and virtue of all our race. And yet it is a question for whose affirmative decision many spontaneous convictions in our own breasts, many of the most living pages of man's experience, and many of the most actual necessities of life offer their help. The question asks, if there is on this earth any evidence or testimony for God, any way of approaching him, of holding intercourse with him; any place where he
may be addressed and adored? Can man so enlarge the sphere of his relations, and exalt the bounds of his convictions, hopes and trust, as to take in a world above this world, a life hidden with God, an Invisible Father, known only by the gifts and influences, which he bestows? Do we trifle with ourselves, when in each other's presence we bow as worshipers before the heavens which are not tenanted by one who can hear, or are we then a spectacle both to men and to angels? When amid the changes of each passing year, on our Sabbaths of pleasant weather, of summer shower, or of winter storm, we meet to pray and meditate, do we merely enact a nursery sport, a childish game, with only the unconscious elements of earth and sky to witness the folly, or are we then exercising the noblest privilege of human beings, borrowing wings for a heavenly flight, and sealing to our mysterious spirits the testimony of their everlasting relation to a God who reigns below and above?

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth?" The sentiment of devotion in the human heart lives upon that line; the history of all worship gathers around it. The most deep and the most extended examination which we could make of this question, would at last only lead us to a result which we may anticipate at the beginning of such an examination, and which may therefore be substituted for it. The result would be, that the answer to the question is left with ourselves. Man is always placed within view of the works of God, but never within sight of their author. Man receives the profound and solemn instruction of a universe, of a long experience, and of a significant existence, but no spoken oracles are addressed to him from the holy One. It is for man, in the use of his own powers, which are gifts and emanations from God, to assure himself whether there may be communion between him and the Divine Being. God will not descend, but we must rise. While heaven keeps its solemn silence, this, or like to this is the only reply which we can have, a reply
uttered by ourselves, when we ask, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?" It is for us to answer the question to our minds, and to assure the faith to our hearts.

Here stands the temple whose use is worship. It declares of itself this its purpose, as well to the stranger who sees it from a distance, as to those who shall, week by week, enter its walls to meditate and pray. Its spire points to another world than that upon which its foundation rests. It is too large for a human habitation; it is fitted for no other purpose than that of worship. And now we but ask the question, can we employ for a good use that which our hands have builded? As a general thing, it is observable that when men attempt to verify high religious truths to their minds, they are frequently led into error, or fall short of their purpose and endeavor, because they seek a kind of evidence, definite, positive and conclusive, which such themes do not admit. We cannot prove by facts of sense, or by arguments, which logic and philosophy may not dispute, that God may be approached or addressed by man. All the evidence which can substantiate that conviction is to be found in the deep sentiment which can lay hold upon it, in the experience which has received it as a truth, and in the use to which it may be applied in life.

There is the same indefinite and solemn haze of mystery investing all religious themes, which invests man, and that part of man especially which is engaged in religion. We are apt to suppose that mystery begins to enshroud our thoughts only when we begin to look beyond this world, and to meditate upon spiritual things, when we attempt to conceive of God, and heaven, and eternity. We delude ourselves when we thus transfer all marvel and sanctity, and all the effort of faith, to things without us and above us, and it is because of this that our faith is so very weak; that we conceive of all earthly things as so real, and of all unearthly things as so unreal; that we think God and eternity are mysteries, but that man and life are no mysteries. The mystery of religion begins not in
heaven, but in our own breasts. There man must find the assurance of faith, and of every article of faith. Each human being must make himself the point of union between the two worlds, the seen and the unseen, and must regard his position in life, with the furniture of his own breast, as the means for enabling him to look into both worlds. We speak very often of the horizon, as the place where heaven and earth meet; as if there were such a belt and boundary between the seen and the unseen, the real world where we live and labor, and where all is made bright by a shining sun, and the world above, in whose existence we can confide only by hope and trust. But there is no horizon anywhere, save that which is made by the eye of each observer. There is an horizon for every spot, and for every person, but it is always different for each successive moment, and for no two persons or places is it the same. So too is it with the mystery which hangs over the relation of man to God, of earth to heaven. It begins and rests with the thoughts of the reflecting mind, moving as the scene of life moves, as we learn wisdom and grow in grace. It is for us, then, with such powers as we have, to verify to ourselves the lessons of faith, to raise our convictions from matters of earthly moment and interest, to the higher contemplations which engage our own questioning spirits. It is for us, unaided, self-guided, and self-convinced, to answer among many other like questions, this question,—"Will God indeed dwell on the earth?"

And why do we desire that he should? Why hope that he will? Why believe that he will? What use can we make of the conviction, that there may be communion between man and God? In pursuing the train of thought, which in the question before us, as one which we are ourselves to answer, opens to us, we have, as has already been observed, many helps to aid us. Spontaneous sentiments of our own, the pages of human experience and history, and the practical necessities of life,—these are our helps when the vast subject
we are meditating employs our minds. The word *worship* expresses the communion with God which man seeks and believes that he may find by prayer, by reliance, by meditation, by those exercises of the mind and spirit for which this edifice is designed. That worship embraces for us sentiments, historical facts, and practical uses. To realize to our own minds, and to make very plain to ourselves, the truth, that there may be communion between man and God, we must inquire into the grounds or reasons, the assurance, and the use of worship. To give to any religious conviction a deep and strong hold upon our hearts and minds, requires of each individual an effort which tasks his best energies. The indefinite and vague sentiments of devotion, the perplexed and crowded annals of history, and all the mysteries and experience of life are to be compressed into the service of a religious faith. It is not strange that there should be such variety in the tenets and in the strength of that faith to individual minds and hearts. It is well that all may secure to it a stable and a deep foundation. Man on earth may invoke the presence of God; he may feel it; he may live and act as if it encompassed him.

Let us first examine the sentiment on which worship depends for its suggestion, for its life, for its exercise. The little infant of but an hour's life, if left upon the cold ground, deserted, would extend its arms and cry for help. This is but the first and lowest form in which humanity expresses its dependence; for as humanity develops its higher capacities of body, mind, and soul, it expresses by successive instincts, efforts and desires, that same dependence. Worship, which is the most exalted utterance of human weakness, is as natural as an infant's cry. Worship extends the arms to their utmost length in the space which is filled by an infinite presence of love, and fixes the raised eye in devotion to a Being invisible to sense, but supplied to the spirit's vision by faith. Man, in the development of his own nature, finds some witness of his
relation to God, and to super-earthly realities. Just as in every seed there are energies and elements, which will, under natural influences, produce a plant, that at length will bear its blossom and its fruit, as its very end and glory, so are there in man instincts and sensibilities, which, under natural influences, will tend to develop the ultimate end of his being, and sooner or later produce faith in invisible agencies. This fact has been attested through all human history. Worship has been a tribute paid to God ever since he had a child on earth.

This worship may be a blind and degrading service, as in too many lands and ages it has been; but it has been so only when extreme debasement has attached to the whole life, the whole intellect, and the morals of a people. The religious faith of an individual, and of a nation of individuals, will always partake of the good or bad state of feeling, of behavior and of living which may accompany it. A man's views of heaven are but a transfiguration of his views of earth; his religious faith is the result of the general constitution and exercise of his mind, and of the course of his life.

But man everywhere has sought communion with a Spirit above him, a Spirit possessing in a larger measure than himself, the attributes which distinguish him from all visible existences; a Being who is the source of the influences which beasts and elements obey, and which man observes. The idea of God has found its way into this world, and has become familiar to men's minds. If there ever was a time when that idea was not entertained by men, then we may say that history has forgotten that era. The oldest remains of the work of men's hands, are temples or altar-stones; and if time has spared upon them sculpture or inscription, their divine consecration is attested. The dead, crumbling stone, seems even to cling to its sacred record, and to strive that the name or attribute of God shall not be obliterated, when all other words have perished.
The venerable annals, which, with so crowded and concise a history begin the Old Testament Scriptures, and which contain the most ancient traditions of this globe and of our race, allow but one brief sentence in recording the origin of worship. It is in these simple words; "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord."* There was a time when from the green turf of the young earth, the first worshipper breathed heavenward the first prayer. But no pen has chronicled the petition or anthem which then broke the silence of the air for the first homage. Yet from that unmarked date in time, there has been perpetual worship. Before the richest altars of various religions, have burned lamps which were never allowed to wane or go out. With barbarous rites, and with dread sacrifices, or with the mind's own fruits, and the spirit's aspirations, the sentiment which prompts to worship has found its exercise. Amid all the variety in the religious practices of men, the sense of dependence upon a super-earthly power has been the life of all worship. Worship, then, springs from the sense of dependence in human breasts. This fact may well suggest to us how we may best retain among men the usages and the love of worship, by keeping it associated with the one chief sentiment which suggests and sanctions it. Worship as a duty is to be continually recommended and enforced, not by any arbitrary or authoritative injunctions, but by an exhibition of its affinity with the sense of dependence in man. The exercise of devout feelings is, doubtless, aided by the presence of sacred emblems, and by the help of those sensibilities in man, which feel most the influence of his spiritual nature. But worship is not taste, nor imagination, nor music, nor the love of beauty, nor the admiration of paintings. It is an expression of a deep, inward sense of dependence upon a super-earthly power. Let it not be dissembled from this its sanction, for then it will

deteriorate, it will part with its sincerity. Unless prayer goes forth from the heart, the heart will have no participation in the answer, but only taste and imagination will be refreshed.

And for this reason I love that simple mode of Christian worship which we have received from our fathers, and which they, as we believe, resumed, took up again, as that which belonged to the Apostolic age. It is simple, but it is engaging; and it is worship, nothing less, nothing more. Those who complain of this mode of worship as cold and barren, are dissatisfied with it, not because it is not worship, but because it is not something more than worship — pomp, ceremony, parade, formalism, or effect. It offers no agency either to help or to hinder the devotion of the soul; it puts nothing between the heart of man and the Holy Being whom that heart would adore. It leaves the kindling ray of inspiration within us, to trace itself back on its own line of light, to the far-off source whence it emanated. It is, indeed, a sublime and a quickening thought, that here, protected only by walls to guard from the weather, we come with the lowliest presence, to address with humble reverence, yet with filial trust, the God whom no mortal eloquence can honor. No picture, no statue, no incense mediates for us, to raise us upward, or to draw him down. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" The air which encircles us, which we breathe to live, is all that we need to aid us in our worship. By the voice which God has made articulate with speech, we may send up by the air the sounds of supplication and praise. When we ask, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?" we find that instinctive feelings, the tendencies of which man has ever obeyed, do something to assure us that worship is not vain. The sentiment which prompts it, enlarges and deepens its influence as human culture advances, and this is proof that the sentiment
is not a weakness of a rude and barbarous age. It is not then
to speak by metaphor or by superstitious sentiment, when we
say, that we feel that there may be communion between man
and God.

The second reflection which the question we have asked
presents to us, embraces the historical facts with which our
worship is connected. Ours is Christian worship, to which
is affixed an age, an age of about eighteen centuries, an age
like to that which measures the dates of institutions, govern­
ments and states. Our worship is associated with facts and
events, occurring at the beginning of this era. Over the long
line of ages through which we may look back, as displaying
in various ways the sentiment of reverence in human hearts,
we discern a pillar of memorial set up at the birth-place of
Jesus Christ. Through him we worship the Father. He
sat by a well at Sychar, and to a wondering female, holding
in her hand a chord and a pitcher, he spoke the sublimest
truth of revealed religion. We have, then, a revealed way
of worship, meaning by worship, all that is embraced in the
relation between man and God. And we are justified in
calling it a revealed way of worship, because it is an improved,
a pure, and a perfect way of worship.

It is one of the most remarkable facts of history, that what
is called natural religion had no tendency to advancement or
self-improvement, and made no progress of itself towards the
simplicity and the sublimity of our pure Christian faith. Jesus
Christ revealed to us a pure and perfect Spirit for our wor­
ship, and made the tie of union by which faith should rise to
him, and love be fixed on him, to be his paternal attributes.
Jesus Christ revealed a pure and perfect mode of worship­
ing that Spirit, without offerings or forms, but in spirit and
in truth. Now I have said that this is a revealed way of wor­
ship, because it is an improved, a pure, and a perfect way of
worship. Let me verify these epithets.

Heathenism never made any improvement in the objects of
its worship, nor in its mode of worship; its earlier idols received a more devout homage than its later gods; its barbarous rites had more power over the soul than its refinements; its superstitions and tremblings were more akin to spirituality than were its splendid offerings; its unhewn altar-stones better honored the unknown God, than did its gorgeous temples; the sighing breeze of the mountains, the solemn shade of the forest, were more living witnesses of him, than were the thousand marble statues. This is a most remarkable fact, that ages of human culture never offered to the mass of human beings any more just and sacred views of the Supreme Being, and his befitting worship, than grew spontaneously in the hearts of the early savage tribes. Let it be considered, that those beautiful statues of the Roman and Grecian gods, which are now so much admired as relics of the past, were chiselled at that very time when all faith in the deities which the statutes represented had died out from the minds of the people. No sentiment of super-earthly conception mingled in the work of the artist; he was content to copy a human form, and to express human feelings, in the cold representatives of the principalities above. The countenance of the Apollo, still so eloquent in its beauty, has made that statue, now to be seen at Rome, famous all over the world, and it is called a god-like countenance. It expresses grace, dignity, majesty, intelligence even, but where is the expression of that spiritual essence of holiness, tranquillity, love, and divine mystery of being, which is the only essence that man can truly worship with his heart? The shaggy locks, and the stern brows, of the numerous busts of Jupiter, the thunderer, show not even the presence of intellect, to relieve the unattractive features of mere strength and authority. And these were gods of the most enlightened ages of the most enlightened nations of antiquity. Milton, in his beautiful ode on the Nativity of the Saviour, has with a wonderful skill enumerated the deities and worships of heathenism, whether hideous or
lovely in their portraiture, and has made them to institute their own contrast with the simplicity and purity of faith revealed by Jesus Christ. Is it not refreshing to a reader and a thinker, to turn away from those cold forms of a civilized paganism, when it had reached its dotage, and to rest with something like approval upon the early shrines, where the fruits of the earth were laid as an offering, upon the prostrate homage which was rendered to the host of heaven, and even upon the childish incantations of our own Indian worshippers? Paganism made no advance toward finding worthier objects of homage, or a more excellent way of rendering that homage, and therefore our own pure and elevated faith can in no sense be called the offspring, the result, or development of any views or practices which prevailed in the ancient world.

We have then a revealed way of worship, a worship of the heart, offered to the Father above. Every edifice which, from time to time, is dedicated to Christian services and institutions, affords us an opportunity again and again to renew our offerings of reverence and gratitude to the Lord and Giver of Light to our souls, our Savior from sin and death. Jesus Christ revealed the Father; he brought God nearer to earth, as an object of human trust and love. All that has been added to our conceptions of God, beyond what nature and providence offer to the human race, comes through Jesus Christ. All that helps us to conceive of God, to bring him near to us, all that makes God a greater and a more present reality to us, than he was to former generations, is to be attributed to that manifestation of him which was made eighteen centuries ago in the person of Jesus Christ. Let an enlightened Christian confer with an enlightened Pagan, and let them compare together their views of God. All the advantage which the Christian will have over the Pagan may be traced to the fact, that Jesus Christ has in his life, his words, and his character, given vividness, reality, dignity and sublimity to the conception of an Invisible and Infinite Being.
He has rolled away the mist which gathered about the gropings of the unaided mind. He has transfigured the visible universe, sun, stars, and earth, with a robe of brightness. He has put upon human life a great interpretation. He has given to duty a solemn voice; he has connected a purpose with tears and pangs. He has brought before men the profound mysteries of the Divine government; he has lived on earth as God would live, and has spoken as God would speak, were he to take a shape and openly converse with men. The starry heavens do manifest the wisdom that doth compass them. We know that there is power, awful and limitless power, controlling this wide universe; and every arrangement on earth which is attended with happiness, is proof that love has its presence and its work all around us. But all this does not realize to us the God whom our hearts desire and long for. We wish to behold him more manifestly connected with human life, more near to us, in our very midst, speaking his will, causing long ages and perpetual experience to illustrate it, and doing good to man in a way which exhibits the doer in the deed.

And this wish is fulfilled to the true worshipper in the revelation by Jesus Christ. To all the light which nature displays of its sovereign Lord, to all the revelations of creative wisdom which are found in plants, in birds, in beasts, in insects, in the heavens, on the earth, in the seas, to all these tokens of a Divine Intelligence, Jesus added another, the best, the least bewildering, the most impressive. He exhibited all that can be made plain to sense or thought, of the Majesty of the Most High. He has introduced into this world a weight of moral evidence for the existence of God; he has made it easier for man to conceive of God’s attributes and perfections; he has poured additional light upon the mysteries of spiritual truth; and in the heart of every disciple he has inspired a deep and a dear conviction, that the epithet “Father” belongs to the author of our being. To all the
other tokens and testimonies that God will dwell on the earth, Jesus Christ has added another assurance, in that he himself has lived upon it, lived a life of sinlessness and of love, a life hid with God, displaying the attributes of a Spirit, and expressing the brightness of a Divine Glory. Through him we worship the Father, believing that God will dwell on the earth. This is to us a revealed and a pure way of worship. It is also a perfect way of worship. To all whom Jesus Christ fails to satisfy, and to guide to God, the question is not between his faith and a better faith, but between his faith and none.

I come now to speak of the practical uses to man, of thus recognizing his relation to God, and seeking communion with God. Every high hope which this allegiance assures, every sacred sentiment which it exercises, every inspiring, purifying and guiding influence which it works upon life, recommends worship to reasoning and responsible creatures. The temple is the earthly home of the soul, where it listens to oracles, and eats of its food, and finds its high fellowships, and consecrates its spiritual armor, and fits itself for a translation from mortal clay to a heavenly abode. All the growing tendencies and evils of highly civilized life, open new sources of danger and trial to man, he needs more direction, the wider the range of his existence becomes, and he needs a safer insurance of his best wealth, as it is gathered by larger labors. What shall be his growing security, but a growing faith and reverence?

Christian ministers, students, thinkers, and public teachers of all kinds, have now an arduous and perplexing task to perform on account of the activity of thought, and the wild and wayward conflict of opinions around us. They are expected to meet a state of things over which some rejoice, and others grieve; to reconcile the distractions of inquiry and enterprise with the received opinions and methods which it is thought essential to retain. And nothing could sustain, under
the pressure of such a work, but the visible evidence every­where appearing, everywhere acknowledged, that the great foundation pillars of a religious faith, are admitted to be all essential, as well in philosophy, as in every-day calls of duty.

I believe that every teacher and preacher, every statesman and moralist, has moments when he looks almost with despair upon society and upon the interests of his fellow-men; when he feels as if everything were unsettled, as if truth were all adrift, as if religion, principle, virtue, wisdom, made up, instead of an everlasting mountain of refuge, a mere sand-hill, scattered by the winds of confusion, not admitting of measure­ment or estimate, and of which the wisest and the best men only gathered up a handful, to let it slip grain by grain through their fingers. I, for one, confess to the feeling and to the momentary despair. But shall I yield to it? That is the question for a man to ask himself. And then something within my breast, as well as many excellent counsellors from without, addressing me, says—Confide in God, who rules and guides all things, trust in his entire control, leave the issues to him, admit in your thoughts that he has power on earth, and uses it wisely, and endeavor to persuade all men of that truth, for it comforts and cheers.

In one of the fairest and most fertile regions of our land, I have lately seen the earth all parched with a summer-drought, thirsting and languishing for the rain which would not come. The grass was almost as white as the locks of age. The leaves, smitten in the sources of their life, sickened upon the trees, and fell, yellow and withered, to the ground. The sultry locust seemed alone to enjoy the blazing intensity of the sun, and even by its provoking merriment in such an aspect of nature, that strange insect seemed to draw suspicion on itself, as if, like its ancient stock of the land of Idumea, it were the cause of the burning and thirsty desolation. Now amid the dryness and glare of such a scene, men look up with one accord and watch the heavens, for they know full well
that there is but one source from which help can come. Instinct, experience, teaches them that what the earth lacks, heaven alone can supply.

There was a time, too, when navigators made only short and dangerous voyages, when they feared to launch into the deep, yet ran upon the very perils which they dreaded near the shore. It was because they steered their course only by earthly signs. For, while they watched with anxiety the promontories and hill-tops, and boundaries along the coast, their keels struck in shallow waters upon the rocks and the sand. That science of navigation became a free and a safe pursuit for men, only when they learned to substitute an heavenly for an earthly guidance. Then the whole globe was circled, the island specks were visited, the hoary regions of perpetual winter were approached. From being once led only by land signs, men began to search for new land in the dreariest wastes of unfathomed seas. Peril, and fear, and ignorance, all vanished before the leadings of that needle, which follows a heavenly control. Man can know his place on the earth or on the seas, only by consulting the sun and stars. Are not these eloquent testimonies to us, that it is ever of use to man to divide his reliance and his interest between earth and heaven?

And if so, do we not know the uses of worship, do we not know why it is good for man to believe that God will dwell on the earth? Our admission or conception of that sublime truth, is our confidence, the effort and exercise of what the Scriptures call faith. All the experience of life helps to advise and to sustain us in that effort, and in various interests of our own, in small and great matters, we do all without effort, all that the effort itself requires; we rely, in our utter helplessness, upon the wise and beneficent appointments of heaven. To make that effort cheerful and complete, to cause it to extend its holy guardianship over the whole of life, is the use of worship.
A child that leaves his home without his father's blessing, and who is not cheered in his absence by renewals of affection to retain the household tie, and to give strength against besetting evils — that child may, or may not, for this cause alone, live unworthily and die in wretchedness, but he must lose and suffer intensely for the loss of one of the most effective influences toward a righteous and honored life. And where is our home? Whence shall we receive renewals of affection? Not here; not from hence. We are but travelers on our way. Because the bounty of our heavenly Father goes with us on our journey, we enjoy much of happiness, but it is amid fears and perils. He that says a religious faith is of no use to him, and that he will not seek to brighten and strengthen it in the house of worship, reveals an unfilial heart, and speaks a reckless falsehood even in his boast. There is a use in worship, in drawing nigh to God in the holy place, which, though it may not at every moment be present or intelligible to those who trust in their own strength or joy, will explain itself to all that live in the best moments of their existence, and will attach itself to the highest and purest, to the most sad, and the most momentous concerns of man. There is a use in worship; there is a need of it, which neither the sun, nor the rain, nor riches, nor health, nor the wisest lessons of our race can supply to heart or life.

It occurs to me, my hearers, that I am speaking to you words and reasons which are powerless to the end I design, compared with arguments which are addressed to your very senses from the spot whereon we are gathered. If there is a spot of common earth on which man may stand, and looking with the naked eye, may discern a reason why he should believe that God dwells with men, we are on that spot now. I speak after some acquaintance with scenes which comprehend much that is engaging and impressive to the human mind; I have looked from spots of earth over regions where empires have risen and fallen, and over crowded cities, where
all that virtue, and pleasure, and woe can offer to man, is embraced within the range of vision. Other spots there are which far surpass this in each single feature of it, but if there be rivals to it, they certainly are rare, in the combination of objects which speak most eloquently to the conscience, and heart, and soul of man. It is the very spot of earth where faith may find the least effort in connecting earth with heaven. It is the very spot on which, standing in the light of mid-day, or as the shades of night descend, all that is affecting, or deplorable, or hopeful in man's existence, will address the spirit within. It is then a spot where man may learn the uses of worship. Let the words of the preacher now be only as signs to guide your eyes from left to right, from right to left, around, beneath, and above you; while the scenes that are visible from this beautiful summit will all interpret to you the relation between man and God, between earth and heaven, and show you why it is good for man to realize that relation by worship.

Look around, then, when you go forth upon this terraced hill, and you will see with your eyes what will declare to you the uses of the worship of God in faith and fear. From this spot are seen the sites first occupied by the farms and humble dwellings of those who made this a Christian land. The sod beneath us was once moved, before it gave a foundation to this edifice; and then it was by the spades of soldiers, amid the miseries of war. The fortifications raised here were a favorite place of observation for Washington, — a name of all heroes' names least sullied by a soldier's work, — to look over the earlier and resolute scenes of that strife which made this a free land. The wide-spread scenes of civilized life before and around us, bear in their external features the full tokens of a singular prosperity. There is happiness in these extended circles of human dwellings, there is cheerfulness and industry in the occupations of every kind of labor, in commerce, science, and the arts, of which
we see the noble results. Yet we know that these are all scenes of temptation, and passion, and struggle, and of liability to grief. From heaven above can alone come the influences which shall reach and control them, which can keep the land free, and make it more a Christian land, which can consecrate human happiness, and sanctify human labor.

Beneath us, each with its own large pile of building, each with its fenced walls, and barred windows, and bolted doors, and confined inmates, are two institutions, agreeing together thus far, but for the rest how different in design, and in their occupants! The one is the State Prison, for the punishment of voluntary crime; the other is the Asylum of Christian philanthropy, for the relief and refuge of those, who, stricken in the faculty which makes us responsible creatures, can commit no crime. Sad and melancholy it is to look on either of those edifices; but still the eye takes them into the view, and how impressively do they declare the responsibility and glory of man's nature; speaking to us all the difference—and what a difference it is!—between crime and misfortune. Either edifice, in its walls or in its inmates, will teach us the uses of worship; for there is worship in them both, for penitence and melancholy do know the power of prayer. The prison, where sin is punished by man, where offences and outrages are visited, but with a merciful and tempered, not an inhuman punishment, and where by Christian counsel repentance and restoration are taught and favored, there is one witness that God dwells, and that Christ has spoken on earth. The Asylum, where the solemn mystery of the human mind reads to us its darkest lessons, where the intellect is clouded, where the reason is shattered, where conscience is confounded, there is another witness of man's heavenly relations; for there charity forgives all wrong, and mercy does its utmost, by tutored patience, and a law of kindness, to relieve so severe a visitation.

Then there is the first seat of learning in the New World;
ancient now, because all else is new; the first-born child of a Christian parentage; the wilderness-crown, on which were lavished all the jewels and metals of its founders, and whose hard gathered, through cheerfully rendered cost was not all paid in gold and silver, but helped out with pewter, and copper, and even by a commutation of flocks, and herds, and grain. How honorable is its history! How precious is its influence! In all of its associations and purposes, in all of its works and efforts, does it not show the uses to man of recognizing his relation to God? There the large treasures of wisdom are gathered, and a pure faith consecrates them. There the young are fitted for the mental tasks of life, and there a yearly tribute is made to supply the higher necessities of existence; and there are taught the uses of worship.

Yonder is another summit. Shall we call it sad or lovely to the eye and to the mind? That will be according as we value and have improved the uses of worship. It is a large garden of graves; already, though but so recently consecrated, it has given a resting-place to the remains of many of the wisest and best of those who have lived on this western hemisphere; and it contains the dust, common it may be, but no less dear to many of us, of those whom quiet virtue and household affection have sainted in household remembrances. There would we bury the dead, in hope; and though we weep while we bend over the changing clay, we would dry our tears when we raise our eyes. Can we thus follow the dead, here or elsewhere, to their rest, unless we believe and prove that there is a use in worship, in connecting earth with heaven?

Go forth, and look around upon these scenes, and as so much of nature, in sky, and foliage, and green earth, is yet left amid the works of art, so will you find that there is room still reserved for heavenly influences to work amid the toils and trials of man’s distracted life. At yonder point the ocean finds its boundary. Man does not fear to pass over its un-
stable waves; for he looks above for guidance. Here the firm land presents its barrier to the floods; but here, too, we are still upon our voyage, and the mysteries of life are not solved; our course will not be true, our haven will not be sure, unless we look above for guidance. Go forth, and gaze upon these scenes; glance thoughtfully upon them each Sabbath, as you enter, and as you leave this place of worship; think upon the temptations, the passions, the responsibilities, the woes, the hopes, which these scenes embrace for you and your fellow-men, and then you will know how profitable, how comfortable it is for man to seek communion with God, to worship by the Messiah's pattern, in spirit and in truth.

To these practical uses of worship we would now reverently and gratefully consecrate this new temple; not by the words which we speak with unholy lips, but by its own high purposes. We dedicate in the name of God, to whose service we bestow it. We set it apart from all uses of habitation, or labor, or pleasure, that it may be for its uses a holy place, where worshippers may feel that they are in communion with the Holy Spirit. Here may the high themes of religion, natural and revealed, be treated with becoming language and sentiment by Christian ministers. Here may a law of Divine authority — for there is such a law — be faithfully and powerfully applied to life. Here may the greater truths, of which there are so many, so full of interest to man, be expounded with sincerity and effect. Here may children imbibe holy impressions, and have their hearts wound around by sacred associations, which shall go with them through their days. Here may Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, be declared, be attested, and believed, till the Christian, having done his part in the work of faith, looks to his Saviour to fulfill his promise. Here may sin be rebuked, and the purpose, and the power be granted to renounce it. Here may contrition, working deeply in the heart, learn to de-
clare itself by real amendment in life. Here may holy ordinances offer their help to symbolize to the sense some touching lessons to the heart, to seal Christian vows, to bind believers in fellowship, and to retain the presence of the Master with his church. Here may that church, as a company of faithful men and women, united by affection for Christ, and for one another, and laboring according to his example in all things, find large accessions, and a new bestowal of zeal and power. Here may the woes of life receive a wise and a tender ministration; and the hearts which sorrow hath touched be turned to the all-pitying eye, to the home amid the mansions where Jesus awaits his followers. Here let fervent prayers desire conformity with the Divine will, and receive in answer with equal peace the blessing which is asked, or the resignation which yields it if denied. Here let praise combine its melodies to offer ascriptions and homage. Here let God be ever present, to every heart, in every service, and the house will be dedicated to a holy use. And when it shall cease to serve as a place of worship, when its spire shall fall, and its foundations be upturned, may it not be deserted without yearnings of heart; may it have gathered some sacred associations from your prayers, from your tears, and from your faith.
SERMON,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PROPRIETORS OF THE SECOND CHURCH,

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1845,

AT THE

DEDICATION

OF THEIR

NEW HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

BY THEIR MINISTER,

CHANDLER ROBBINS.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY ISAAC R. BUTTS.
M DCCC XLV.
Reverend and Dear Sir:

The undersigned have the pleasure of communicating to you the following vote, and of requesting that you will, at your earliest convenience, comply with the same.

"At a meeting of the Proprietors of the Second Church, held on Friday evening, September 19th, 1845, it was unanimously Voted, That the thanks of the Society be presented to our Pastor, Rev. Chandler Robbins, for the very appropriate and impressive Discourse delivered by him on the occasion of dedicating their new Church Edifice, and that he be respectfully requested to furnish a copy for publication."

They would avail themselves of the present opportunity to thank you for the truly Christian sentiments you so happily expressed, and to assure you that, in their judgment, the publication of your eloquent Discourse at this time, will promote the best interests and prosperity of the Society, and be conducive of much permanent good.

Respectfully yours,

S. W. Robinson, Henry Barry, James Tolman,

Committee.

Boston, September 20, 1845.

Gentlemen:

I thank you for the kind manner in which you have communicated to me the vote of the Proprietors of the Second Church, requesting for publication a copy of the Sermon preached at the dedication of their new house of worship.

It is highly gratifying to me that the Discourse, together with all the other services, satisfied the Society.

The personal interest felt by my parishioners in that occasion may have invested the Sermon with much of the impressiveness which they have attributed to it. I will not, however, be so unjust to the deep religious feeling under the influence of which it was written, nor to the estimate of those friends in whose judgment and candor I have entire confidence, as to fear that those who may read the Sermon, when the present glow has subsided, will find it altogether unprofitable.

With such feelings, and with earnest prayers for the prosperity of the Second Church, I place the manuscript in your hands.

Respectfully yours,

Chandler Robbins.
When Jesus uttered these words he was standing before Herod's magnificent temple. Its walls and columns of pure white marble, adorned with plates of gold, towered above him, glittering in the sunbeams with a dazzling splendor. The Gentile traveller came from far to look upon it, and Jewish eyes regarded it with exulting pride, mingled with superstitious awe. Tradition invested it with supernatural sanctity, and a popular legend asserted that during all the time occupied in its erection, Mount Moriah was reposing beneath a tranquil sky; neither wind nor rain disturbed the workmen in their labors, and all nature, under providential control, smiled upon the sacred enterprise.*

We, my friends, would not presume to appropriate to the far humbler temple we have builded, any extraordinary manifestations of Divine regard: though

* Josephus Antiq., b. xv., c. xi., sec. 7.
Roman superstition would have seen a splendid token of consecration, when the bird of Jove rested on its pinnacle, and Christian fancy might have found a more beautiful omen, when the dove which tenanted the tower of the old church, returned and laid her young under the half completed roof of the new.* But human vanity stands abashed before juster conceptions of that Infinite Being, who looks down upon countless systems of majestic worlds, which His own architectural skill hath fashioned, and upon grand creations, it may be, of archangels' art, compared with which the fairest structures of the earth are but poor and mean. And yet, when we look back upon the long period that has elapsed since we took leave of our former church; when we think that its compact walls and heavy rafters have been taken down harmlessly, and these more massive materials lifted up safely in their stead; when we remember that no hurt has befallen those brave and patient workmen, whose hands have piled these ponderous stones, raised that lofty spire, and hung these graceful arches; and whilst we see that so many of our congregation

*A few days before the Dedication, a large American Eagle (vultur leucocephalus) perched on the weather-cock of the church and remained for several minutes, pluming his wings, and looking down with apparent unconcern upon the crowd collected below. . . . A number of doves made their home in the spire of the old church, above the belfry. The night before the workmen commenced demolishing the building, an attempt was made to secure them, that they might be conveyed to a neighboring dove-cot. An old pair, more vigilant than the rest, made their escape. In the morning they were seen flying around their accustomed home, and were watched by some who recognised them, often returning and lingering near the spot, till the roof of the new building was partially completed—when they took possession of a sheltered place, built their nest, and hatched their young, unmolested. I speak from personal observation, having seen the squabs in the nest, just ready to fly.
have been spared, to meet on this day, with solemn gladness, and establish the foundations of our new Sabbath home within these stately courts — whose grandeur and beauty so far exceeds our hopes — we should be faithless not to see, we should be heartless not to acknowledge that Providential smiles have attended and crowned our work. "Except the Lord had built this House, they had labored in vain that built it."

But if a tinge of melancholy darkens our retrospect, and feelings of disappointment damp our joy, as we look around us in vain for some who would have rejoiced to have seen this day, and are forcibly reminded of the early death of one to whose zealous interest we are in part indebted for the spirited commencement of the work; let us not forget that in an hour of deep solici­tude, divine compassion hearkened to our prayers, and restoring another more valuable life, changed our mourning into joy.*

But what though our review of the past may not be altogether free from gloom; what though there may not have been that perfect unanimity of feeling which, in a matter involving so many different opinions and interests as the building of this house† — we had, perhaps, no right to expect; and what though a shade of suspense must still hang over the future, till

*C. H. Neally, a member of the building committee and a liberal subscriber to the new church, died suddenly of Typhus fever. His father-in-law, S. W. Robinson, Esq. was soon afterwards attacked with the same disease, and lay in the same chamber, at the point of death for several weeks. He was chairman of the same committee and Treasurer of the Society.

†See Appendix, A.
the final test shall be applied to the zeal, good feeling, and public spirit of the members of this Society — yet, this is no time for forebodings or regrets. They belong not to this hour. They would defile this service. Let this occasion be consecrated to gratitude, and joy and love. For myself, no sooner had I entered these doors to day, and found myself in the midst of my congregation before this new altar, than a load of indefinable solicitude fell from my heart, leaving it buoyant with thankfulness and love to enjoy these sacred rites.

Hail! holy and beautiful house! Goal of our long expectations, fulfilment of many a prayer! God be praised that our feet at length stand within thy gates! An atmosphere of sanctity suffuses thy walls! A hallowing influence floats over us in thy softened light! A promise of peaceful Sabbaths is spread over thy consecrated scenery! Let no ill-omened thought mar thine auspicious aspect: no uncongenial feeling spoil thy religious effect!

We have come together, my friends, to dedicate this house as a Christian temple. We do so in conformity to an established usage, commended alike by its intrinsic propriety, and by the universal sanction of the religious world. The service is significant and impressive. It is the duty of the preacher to open his soul to its spirit, and gathering from the broad field of thought and sentiment in the midst of which it lies, whatever seems to him most useful and interesting, to embody it, so far as he may be able, in appropriate discourse.
I have selected a text which, more than any other, concentrates the thoughts and feelings which this occasion awakens in my own mind. It is the title which our Saviour gave to the temple—"My Father's House." I take it from his lips. It falls upon the ear with the tone of his own filial piety. I hear in it the heart-breathing of the son of God. It has more significance, and more beauty, than all other names which have been given to the place of worship. It is the simplest, and the most sublime. The little child understands and feels it, and the heart of the silvery-haired saint thrills with youthful emotion, as he ponders and ponders it to the last. It speaks of no sectarian divisions. It draws attention to no disputed dogma. It has no narrowness in its sound. It is broad, and free, like the earth and the sky. It is, indeed, the same which Jesus applied to the temple of illimitable space, in which, he said, "There are many mansions." It addresses the heart of religious humanity.

If I were permitted to give a name to this edifice—in compliance with an old custom, which seems to be reviving in this community—I would cause to be inscribed in gilded letters on its front—"Our Father's House"—as I should be grateful to be the humble instrument of impressing upon the hearts of my hearers the true sentiment of that Christian superscription.

The text has a peculiar adaptation to this occasion, by reason of its embodying our Saviour's idea—
the Christian idea, of the value and uses of the place of worship.

It is sometimes said that Christianity, as a spiritual religion, makes light of the aid of externals, and undervalues the reverential associations which attach to time and place; that such feelings belong to a comparatively low stage of spiritual development; are amongst the childish things of the soul, to be put away in its manhood. And authority for this opinion has been avowedly found in the spirit and practice of Jesus himself. But a careful study of his whole conduct and instructions, as they bear upon this point, would establish a very different conclusion. In his often quoted conversation with the Woman of Samaria, a just criticism would understand him as implying no more, than that the hour was coming, when the rival mountains of Gerizim and Jerusalem would no longer exclusively circumscribe the worship of the Father: when the true worshippers should offer him a spiritual homage restricted to no particular spot. He felt that the soul was in danger, from the Jewish superstition which confined the idea of consecration to a single hallowed mount, and restricted the sentiment of worship to but one imposing edifice. He felt that God was wronged by those merely formal and soul-less ceremonies, which, having originally sprung from a feeling of real veneration, had at length overgrown and buried the sentiment and usurped its place. That God was weary of being served with such empty mockeries, and was seeking such to worship him as should worship him in spirit, freshness, and truth.
He saw that, for the disenthralment of the devotional spirit from the bonds of petrified formalities, it was necessary that the Jewish temple should be utterly demolished, with all the superstitions of which it had become the strong-hold. That, not until it should be levelled even with the ground, and the last traces of that gorgeous pile fade forever from the sight of man, could the true spiritual worship revive in newness of life. He foresaw that, when those lofty columns should no longer consecrate Mount Zion, the sentiment of worship, torn away from that single centre, would be free to expand over the wide earth, and to consecrate every valley and every hill.

But, notwithstanding all this, our Saviour evidently loved and revered these consecrated courts of Jerusalem; and prophesied of their downfall with tears. As was the case with all the prophets who preceded him; as has been the case with all the pure and deep-souled men of every age and clime, no sentiment was more marked in his character than that of veneration for every thing associated with the name and honor of God. His reverence had all the simplicity of a religious child's, with clearer intelligence than a seraph's. Hear with what profound seriousness he speaks of the "Law and the Prophets" — that venerable compilation of wise and sublime Old Scriptures, which, with insane arrogance, some who take his name have unhallowed and almost set aside. See him when he submits — sinless amongst the sinful — to the baptism of John — the Lamb of God, who hath no sins to confess, but taketh away the sins of
the world, to show respect for a sacred ceremony, coming to the Jordan's brink, where publicans and harlots, affrighted by the cry in the wilderness, are hastening to unburden their consciences by confessing their guilt, and, through the "baptism of water unto repentance," hoping to "flee from the wrath to come." And who can forget that burst of holy ire—that lightning-flash of purification in the calm sky of his life—when he saw the profanation of the sacred enclosure—the fervency of which was meant to startle from its lethargy the veneration of our race, as it ought to electrify Christendom with zeal for whatever is dedicated to God. What sensibility, what ardor, nay, what scrupulousness of reverence is here!

It is true, that he was always and everywhere a worshipper, and would have his disciples so—on the mountain-peak, and along the green by-path; looking upward to the stars, and downward to the flowers; in the thronged streets and in the silent closet. It is true that, wherever nature lays her beautiful pavement, and the groves and clouds hang their drapery, and the glorious dome of the sky arches, there he would have us find a temple—wherever space spreads and light streams, the curtains and cords of a sanctuary. It is true that he regarded his own body as a temple; more august, and more truly the palace of the indwelling Deity, than the gorgeous edifice on the sacred mount, before which he stood, when he placed his innocent hand upon his calm and holy breast, and prophesied of his death and resurrection. And yet, so delicate was his
sense of the sanctity of consecrated places, that the Evangelist, most significantly and emphatically, records concerning it, "neither would he suffer any man so much as to carry any vessel through the temple."

Not under the example of Jesus, can modern indifference to the house and ordinances of God find shelter; nor that spurious spirituality which, affecting to have invested the universe with sacredness, despoils the place expressly dedicated to holy rites, of its peculiar veneration and honor. Our Saviour had a deeper knowledge of what is in man, and a more careful respect for every sentiment and every symbol, connected with, or conducive to his spiritual aspirations.

The very institution of public worship implies the dedication of places and times; and the nature of the human heart instinctively invests them both with sacredness — intertwines them with sentiments of veneration and love. Our moral constitution must be remodelled, before the Sabbath will cease to be hallowed above other days, and the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Not until the home of our childhood, the place where our mother nurtured us, and our father carried us in his arms, shall be no dearer than the habitations of strangers: not until the ground where our kindred lie shall become to us as common earth, will the day which has brought heavenly rest to our fireside, and the church where we have worshipped God, be brought down to the level of other places and ordinary days.

And what were this mortal life? What the earth
through which we are travelling, were it not for this element in our nature, which thus consecrates and endears to us peculiar places and times? How much that is most beautiful and noble in the feelings and characters of men, springs from this native instinct! How much of our purest and sweetest enjoyment; how much of the harmony of social intercourse; how much of the attraction that holds society together; how much of the silent influence, that spreads around us like the air, for the exhilaration and sustenance of our moral affections; how much of the spiritual instrumentality that is everywhere at work, countering the polluting influences of the world, and the selfish contractions of the heart, is connected with this ineradicable disposition! Thank God, that there are some spots of earth, some epochs in time, which appeal to these holier and nobler sentiments—too often slumbering amidst ordinary scenes, or thrust aside by the pressure of interest and care! Thank God, that not all the floor of this His footstool is marked, or can be, with the foot-prints of Mammon! That there are reserves of holy ground—scenes of nature, and images of art, which speak to us of higher things than sensual pleasure and golden gains—spots consecrated by the toils and sacrifices of heroic virtue—the Gethsemanes and Calvaries of the uninterrupted succession of Christian saints—grand Cathedrals, which have been to our race like splendid stars, in ages of darkness; and humbler churches, in more enlightened times, no less dear, and reflecting more clearly the benignant radiance of Christian truth and
love. Aye, let them all be consecrated! "Call it holy ground," wherever they are seen.

And here, where we stand, is a consecrated spot. A hundred and thirty years of occupancy by a Christian Church — years marked by so many changes — entitle it to this distinction. The remembrance of the pious processions of former generations that have hither made their weekly pilgrimage, is enough to make it so. The long line of prophets who have spread it over with the breath of their prayers and bedewed it with their tears, has earned for it enduring veneration. And, my friends, whatever weighty considerations might have induced us to have rebuilt on another site — there cannot be one of us, who remembers that this was the ground on which our sainted Ware held up to you the cross which he bore so meekly himself — that it was here he won the brightest jewels of his heavenly crown, from amongst your own fathers, and mothers, and friends — who are now, we hope, rejoicing with him in glory — I am sure there cannot be one of us, who would not have considered it almost a desecration, to have not only demolished the house which he had endeared to us, but to have sold the very soil beneath it for purposes of residence or trade.

Yes! Christianity has its local attachments: Christian sentiment its sacred seasons and its hallowed spots. The vine of a true Christian's associations, in its ever widening spread, twines fondly and closely around the material symbols of spiritual facts. It enwreaths with its greenest branches the images of
the saints. It climbs over the city cathedral, and the village church. It encircles with undecaying verdure the monuments of ancient virtue. And ever, as it reaches towards the heavens, clasps more firmly and tenderly all that is hallowed and venerable on earth. But more than all, it loves our Father's House. For there, in that sacred retreat, close to the altar's side, in consecrated ground, its roots find shelter from the world's molestation; and, nourished by the dews of Heaven, and warmed by the Saviour's smile, and fanned by the breath of love, they spring, and thrive, and imbibe new life, till they are transplanted into the garden of God.

Verily, there is a blessing to the soul in the courts of our God, to every one who will devoutly seek it there. Although no stirring eloquence like that of Paul moves us; although no tender pleadings like those of John melt us to tears; although no far sought pearls of varied knowledge are scattered at our feet; although no ravishing descriptions of Heaven transport us to the skies—yet there, to his seeking children, the Father manifests his love, and there, upon his faithful disciples, the Saviour sends down his peace.

You have come to the house of worship, reverently asking for a clearer interpretation of truth, duty, life, and the mysterious providence of God. When have you ever gone back to your trials, without some brighter gleam of heavenly wisdom shining upon your path? You have come to the house of prayer, with a heavy, aching, bleeding heart, seeking from Jesus rest and balm for your soul. When have you ever
departed, without having felt the shadow of the Heavenly Physician moving over your spirit, and the hem, at least, of his garment touching your wound? You have come to the temple of God, with a burthened conscience, mourning in bitterness of spirit for your transgressions, longing to make confession and obtain forgiveness of your sins. Christian penitent, when have you been sent away with no whisper of pardon, no token of reconciliation and peace?

It is a poor excuse for indifference to the house of worship, that the services of the temple are inefficacious to move and interest the soul. It argues no less barrenness of devotional sensibility, than lack of generosity and candor, to cast the blame of coldness, and want of edification in the sanctuary, upon the institution, or the minister, or the assembly, or anything external to the heart itself. An angel from Heaven — the Saviour himself — might fail to kindle a holy fire in the breasts of those, who come into the temple without veneration or faith; bringing a sickly appetite for merely intellectual excitement; ready to criticise, or to cavil at the incumbent of the pulpit, however earnest and devout, if his manner be unengaging and his rhetoric poor; or equally ready, if he be popular, and one whom it is the fashion to praise, to extol the preacher to the skies, for the grace of his person and the vigor of his speech — though so far as any religious effect is concerned, that grace and that vigor have been but an empty show, a mere stage acting by an ambassador of Christ, with God and angels for witnesses, and immortal souls at stake.
No! my friends, the House of Worship is never a dull place, save to the dull soul — never unspiritual and unedifying, save to the proud, the vain, the worldly, and the lean in heart. Though sometimes the preacher himself may be dull, and the thinness or inattention of the audience give an air of coldness to the scene; yet to the humble, spiritual worshipper there is ever something in the service and the place, in the lessons of scripture, the hymns and the prayers, to nourish holy affections and refresh the soul with accessions of wisdom and love. Though there may be many times, when even those who love and frequent the church, may find but little to interest and improve them within its walls, and may think they could have benefited themselves more highly in the closet or in the fields; yet such can never forget for how many of their best thoughts and best feelings — for how much of their moral strength and spiritual growth, they are indebted to what has been communicated to them there — there, where on quiet Sabbaths, from childhood upward, the light of godly instruction has been shed upon their tranquil minds, and the healing unction of good men’s prayers diffused over their yielding hearts.

They who, in these days of self-conceit, profess to have outgrown the need, as well as the veneration of the institution of public worship, find but a feeble support for their claim to superior spirituality and intelligence, against the splendid array of sages and saints, philosophers, statesmen and jurists — men of the profoundest wisdom and unquestioned greatness,
who have given to the House of God the approving testimony both of their examples and their lips. Such men, to this very hour, have supported and adorned the church, by their wealth, their influence, their writings, and more than all by their reverential attendance at its altar. In foreign lands, by the gratitude of posterity, the tablets of some of them are hung upon the temple walls — their monuments shielded and mantled by the solemn shade. In our own country too, a richly merited veneration for his virtues, has recently designed to set up a similar memorial, in the beautiful chapel now nearly completed in the city of the dead, in honor of one, amongst the highest of whose claims to be mentioned in the sacred desk, is his reverence for the honor of God, and his respect for the worship of His house. Let those have their monumental effigies under the protection of the consecrated dome, whose lips have defended the altar, whose lives have been as pillars to the church! *

But, my hearers, if the effect of the true Christian spirit, intermingling with a beautiful instinct of our nature, be to endear and consecrate the place of public worship — does it not also, legitimately prompt us to beautify and give architectural dignity to our Father's House?

I know and feel that the Christian spirit delights not in pomp and show. I know that it loves simplicity — that it dwells with lowliness. I believe

---

* The trustees of Mount Auburn have, with great propriety, voted to erect a monument to the late Judge Story, in the chapel of the cemetery.
that if Jesus were now on earth, his preaching would be oftener heard in the dwellings of the poor than in Cathedral aisles. I remember that in old time, God often manifested his presence to them who worshipped at unhewn altars and in plainest tents. That he has shown himself well pleased with rudest churches and upper rooms. And I do not doubt that, in these modern days, the brightest visions of his smile are most frequently unveiled to the two or three met together in simplicity, beneath undistinguished roofs. I deeply feel the dangers inseparable from a splendid church. There is no other apprehension which oppresses me to-day, save that which arises from the contemplation of them. I know, that through the magnificence of churches, more insidiously and speciously than through any other avenue, the God of this world encroaches nearest to the spiritual dominion of Christ — mingling, in the sentiments of the worshipper, the pride of life with the honor of God, the mere excitement of the imagination with the glow of real devotion, so cunningly as to deceive even the elect. I feel, my brethren, that you have laid upon yourselves, and laid upon your minister, a new burden of spiritual difficulties, by the grandeur and beauty of this edifice; and that to bear it without moral injury, will demand our strictest watchfulness and our most faithful prayers.

But there are other considerations which give relief to this feeling of oppression. There is a reverse side to the picture I have drawn.

Though the Scriptures teach us that lowly places
of worship are beautiful in the sight of God; yet we may gather from the same high authority, the lesson,—the propriety of which our own reason confirms—that the style of temple architecture should keep pace with the advance of civilization and wealth—that there should be a correspondence between the improvements of our dwellings and the improvements of our churches—a congruity between the means of a community and the accommodation and beauty of its houses of worship. When the Jews were poor and few in number, wanderers from one nation to another people, “God,” says the prophet, “spake not a word, saying, ‘Why build ye me not a house of cedar?’” But, afterwards, in the days of their prosperity, the Word of the Lord came unto them, saying “Is it a time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house to lie waste? Go ye up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it; and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.”

And who that has a spark of gratitude in his soul, does not sympathise with the Son of Jesse—when, as we are told, “he sat in his house and thought how the Lord had given him rest from his enemies, and prospered him in all that he did, till his soul was moved within him, and he could not rest, till he had called Nathan the prophet, and said unto him—“See, now! I am dwelling in an house of cedar; but the Ark of God dwelleth under curtains.” The emotion was natural and right. And Nathan approved it, and said to the king—“Go, and do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee.”
And has not God implanted in pure natures an ardent love of the beautiful and the grand? And is he not ever calling it into exercise, by the exquisite loveliness and inimitable splendor of his own handiwork? And was not the very idea of the style of architecture we have chosen, borrowed directly from the solemn grandeur, the awe-inspiring shade, mingled with the delicate tracery, and relieved by the pendent boughs and graceful festoons of his own deep woods—his own forest temples? And, my friends, does it not strike us that there is a peculiar propriety in our having erected on this spot, a temple of fairer proportions than that which was placed here by our Fathers almost a century and a half ago? They built that solid edifice, when they were but a feeble company—a little band of North-end mechanics, whose gains were small, but whose hearts were large and strong. They built it amidst many discouragements, and not without personal sacrifices. And yet the renowned Cotton Mather, in his sermon at the consecration of that edifice, declares—"I suppose there is not a more beautiful house in all the land, built for the worship of God, than this, where you now appear to make a dedication unto the Lord." But how little did our eyes see in that plain old building—except when they looked at it through the all beautifying medium of the affections—that could justify the strength of his commendation? So it may be with the house we are dedicating to-day. Though it appears so beautiful in our eyes, the time may come, before it shall give place to another, when, in
the progress of architectural art, our children may smile to remember that their fathers thought it almost too costly and too fair.

Too costly and too fair it is, if a monument of our pride! Neither fair nor costly enough, as an expression of our veneration, as a symbol of the glory and the gratitude which are due from us to the name of God. But we trust it is not pride, that has prompted us to make this place of His feet glorious. We trust that He sees in our hearts a venerating love, which could not have been satisfied with offering him that which cost us less than we were able to give. We trust that he discovers not that arrogance, which under the pretence of devotion, could lavish the resources of a Christian society upon sacred architecture, to flatter the vanity of worldly minds. "But if, O God, through the infirmities of our nature, and the impurity of our hearts, thou discernest any unhallowed sentiments in these thy people, O let thy Grace pardon, and thy Spirit cleanse them away — if any sincerity of gratitude, any unfeigned reverence of thy great name; for their sake, O righteous and merciful Father, accept our offering, hallow and bless this house."

I have called this church our Father's House. I have done so in the spirit and by the authority of his Son, our Master and Lord. I have done so, as I believe, in accordance with the feelings and desires of those who have built and will worship in it. I have done so, because, neither when we laid its foundations, nor whilst its walls were rising, nor since it was com-
pleted, have our feelings towards the great Christian family of God been more exclusive than that title indicates, or have our thoughts been narrowed down by denominational distinctions. I have done so, because that simple sentence covers a world of Christian thought, and sentiment, and duty. Because it points to the great outer circle of eternal truth and love, within which the whole of Christianity revolves, and towards the fulness of which it is its blessed and sublime ministry to expand the ideas and the affections of God’s children on the earth. I have done so, in fine, because those few words, if faithfully taken home to the mind and the heart, will reveal to us all the feelings with which this church should be regarded; all the uses to which it should be applied; all the duties which attach to it; all the purifying, comforting, harmonizing, elevating influences which its worship may exert upon the individual spirits and characters, upon the associated condition and intercourse of those who may frequent it.

We consecrate it then, to day, as the House of our Father: — the One living and only true God — Who is a Spirit: — the Creator, Ruler, Sustainer of the universe: — Omnipresent, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Immutable, Eternal: — Holy, Just, and Good: — Who heareth prayer — Who comforteth the mourner — Who condescendeth to the lowly — Who forgiveth sins — Who restoreth the penitent — Who reneweth and sanctifieth, the nature of man — Who provideth for every living thing — Who loveth little children — Who is merciful unto all: — the righte-
ous Judge — the Avenger of guilt — the Rewarder of goodness: — Who is no respecter of persons: — Who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth: — Whose service is perfect freedom: — Whom it is our first duty to love, and trust, and praise, and fear, and obey.

We consecrate it as our Father's house — the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; by whom He revealed and manifested himself unto the world: "whom He hath appointed heir of all things: by whom He made the world: the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person:" without whom no man cometh unto the Father: whose name should be gratefully associated with every prayer we offer, with all the happiness we feel, with all the blessed hopes we cherish, through the knowledge of the paternal character and government of God: for whose teachings, and example, and sufferings, and death, and mediation, and intercession, and spiritual gifts, and innumerable offices of love to mankind, we can never sufficiently bless, or praise, or repay him — nor Our Father for sending us this Beloved Son, this unspeakable gift.

We consecrate it as the house of Our Father — to the spirit of the children of God — to the recognition, incalcation, and impression of this our high descent, our spiritual relation, and of all our filial sentiments and duties.

We consecrate it as our Father's house — to a spirit of good will, and peace, and brotherhood towards all mankind; — to the unfolding, incalcation, and enforcement of all our various obligations to our fellow-
men; — to the affectionate and faithful exhibition of their rights, their claims, their sufferings, their wrongs; — to heartfelt intercessions and appeals in behalf all who are darkened, and wandering, and desolate, and oppressed; — to kindly thoughts and benevolent plans for the widow and the orphan, the stranger, the captive, and the slave: — to no rude and passionate philanthropy; to no imprudent and fanatical mercy; to no spasmodic and one-sided benevolence; — but to that heaven-descending Charity, which cometh down hand in hand with Wisdom, and in whose celestial train, Patience and Zeal walk side by side, and Modesty is the handmaid of Courage.

We consecrate it as our Father's house — to the distinct, unqualified, earnest declaration of His whole counsel, as it has been made known to us in Holy writ: — to the faithful preaching and right dividing of the pure and authoritative Gospel, with all its invitations, warnings, promises, and threatenings; in all its bearings upon human life; as the sole and unerring standard of faith and practice; the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

We consecrate this, as our Father's house — to all brotherly affections amongst ourselves; — to the culture of Christian friendship; — to the joys of a confiding communion; — to the forgetfulness of all worldly distinctions, when we have entered within its gates; — to the forgiveness of injuries; — to the reconciliation of differences; — to smiles of good will; — to the study of the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.
We consecrate it as our Father's house — to happy sabbaths, and all the feelings, reflections, and purposes which will make them so; — to songs of praise, and the more melodious inward music of thankful emotions; — to the beautiful visions of the pure in heart, which can make it as the gate of Heaven; — to the gentle tones of a Pastor's love, and the earnest cries of a prophet's warning; — to the comfort of the mourner — to the cheer of the fainting — to the rest of the weary — to the returning prodigal's welcome: — to the rational and faithful observance of the Christian ordinances — to the dedication of infants, and the baptism of those of riper years — to public confession of the Saviour, and peaceful meetings around the memorials of his death.

To all the sentiments, and services, and uses which our Father has appointed for the religious improvement of his children, and upon which he condescends to smile, we do this day dedicate this house. And for all such we make an offering hereof to himself. Henceforth it is His own. Only ours to take care of and set in order, and use, and adorn, with sacrifices of righteousness, for His service and His glory.

As Our Father's House we now solemnly set it apart. As such and none other, be it kept, consecrated, devoted; intelligently, heartily, entirely; whenever we think of it; whenever we speak of it; whenever we occupy it; from this day forth, so long as one stone shall rest upon another.

And may the angels of His Providence encamp around it, by night and by day! May the light of
His countenance never cease to shine upon it! May His good Spirit breathe through its arches! May His presence and His blessing make it indeed the house of our Father to us and to our children.

It is a solemn, a sublime thought, that we are today opening these doors for the first time for the King of Glory to come in! With what a reverential feeling should we unbar these gates, to usher the Lord of Hosts into possession of another of His earthly palaces! Let the hands be clean that are bearing the ark into this new rest! Let the lips be purified that are breathing the first prayers upon this unstained altar! Let the hearts be sanctified that are sending up the first cloud of incense, from this yet unpolluted sanctuary.

[Note.—A paragraph omitted in the delivery of this Sermon at the Dedication, but spoken on the Sunday after, has been introduced into the printed copy.]
The project of building a new House of Worship had been the subject of conversation amongst the members of the Society for many years. It was found that the old edifice would need frequent repairs, requiring considerable expenditures, and, after all, be uncomfortable, and too small for the increase of the congregation. A large number of the worshippers lived at great distances from the Church, in the central, eastern, and western, and, some even in the southern wards of the city. It would of course have suited their convenience, and, as they supposed, the best interests of the Society, to have chosen for the new building a more central location. A suitable lot of land situated near the head of Hanover-Street, was long sought after in vain. Could the estate belonging to Dr. Shattuck have been obtained, it would have met the wishes of a very large majority of the congregation. It has always been my opinion that even those who lived at the "North-end," would have consented to have rebuilt on so commanding and central a site. After various unsuccessful attempts to procure a location other than that long occupied by the Society, the inhabitants of the northern wards became more and more earnest to rebuild on the old spot.

The clashing of these opposite interests and opinions constituted for a short time a severe trial to the Society—a trial that might have produced serious consequences upon its future peace and prosperity, had there been less forbearance, good sense, and Christian kindness amongst its members. It would be difficult to find a congregation that would have gone through such a crisis with less manifestation of ill-feeling, and less violation of mutual obligations. Though perfect unanimity of sentiment was impossible, yet this necessary difference has, in hardly a single instance, exhibited itself in any word or act of unkindness, or led, as I am aware, to any permanent alienation.
After several meetings upon the subject of the new Church, the proprietors at length assembled on Tuesday evening, Oct. 10th, 1843, and adopted the following resolves — viz:

Resolved,— That the best interests of this Society require that we should put at rest this long agitated question of building a new house, and that the prosperity and happiness of this Parish depend upon our united exertions in carrying forward and seconding all attempts that have this object in view.

Resolved,— That the Second Church and Society rebuild their church upon their lands in Hanover Street.

REMINISCENCES.

The last religious services in the old house were on Sunday, March 10th, 1844; in the evening of which day there was a Sunday School celebration by the teachers and pupils of the Hancock Sunday School.

The Pulpit with its drapery was purchased by the First Unitarian Society in Billerica, Mass., — and together with sixty-four of the pews, the chandelier, and stoves, was transferred to the interior of their Church.

N. B. I find amongst old papers belonging to the Society a document relating to the Chandelier, which may be thought of some historical interest. It was written by the Agent of the N. E. Glass Manufacturing Company, and shows that he felt a good deal of pride in this handsome product of the Company’s skill. It is addressed “To Future Generations,” and runs as follows.

“Should this scrawl escape a conflagration, or other accidents, the reader may learn that this chandelier was manufactured and placed in this Church, by the N. E. Glass Company, Deming Jarvis, agent — during the second year of their operation — to render us independent of foreign supply,” &c. &c. — “The finder will please to replace this scrawl, that future generations may learn who first patronised, to any extent, the art of glass-making in America; and your candor will supply any deficiency in workmanship, when you search into the records, the transactions, and the difficulties of commencing this new establishment at the present age. April 25th, A. D. 1820.”

As this paper has fallen into my hands, I have not the hardness of heart to resist such an appeal for its preservation. The original cost of the chandelier was five hundred dollars.
The Old Organ, which was built for the Society by Ebenezer Goodrich, was sold to the Unitarian Society, in Danvers, Mass., in whose meeting-house it now stands — as also the damask curtain which hung back of the pulpit.

The Mather Chair, with the Old Communion Table and its damask covering, were sent to the Pastor.

The Centre Post of the old Spire was sold to Mr. William Harris. It was of southern pine, forty-four feet long, and now stands as a flagstaff in the yard of his father’s house in North Bennett-Street.

The Old Vestry was sold to Mr. Thomas Herrick, and removed to West Newton, where it now stands, about an eighth of a mile north-west of the hotel.

The Hanging Lamps were sold to the New North Church — Rev. Dr. Parkman’s.

Monday, March 11, 1844. The workmen commenced the demolition of the Church at 8 A. M. — At 10½ A. M. the riggers delivered the “Old Cock” into the hands of the Committee. The next day, at 10 A. M., the whole spire from above the bell, was landed safely in the street, having been lowered in one mass, by means of a pair of sheers.

THE WEATHER-COCK.

As this relic of antiquity has excited a good deal of curiosity and been the subject of many stories, it seems proper for me to allude to it here. It is universally conceded that it was the original vane. Tradition says, that “he was made by a silver-smith, whose shop was in Ann-Street, and coppered with an old brass kettle.” His body is of wood and covered with pieces of brass. He appears to have been broken and roughly mended. He stands five feet and one inch high — is five feet two inches from the tip of his bill to the end of his tail, in a straight line. He has eyes of glass. His weight is one hundred and nineteen pounds.

It is said by some that he was put up at first, to taunt Rev. Peter Thacher, whose leaving his church at Weymouth, to settle at the New North, was the cause of the secession which resulted in the erection of the “New Brick.” This may or may not be the truth. I do not believe the story. The very word weather-cock used by several old writ-
ers shows, that this form of vane has been long in use. It was formerly common on old churches in New-England. It has sometimes been considered as peculiarly a Protestant emblem, designed to remind the Papist, that the rock of his church was not without variableness.

Some of our friends have indulged in pleasant raillery at our Society, for replacing the Cock on our New Church, and some, not unfriendly editors, have made use of this circumstance for the amusement of their readers. But there is something to be said in extenuation of our offence. An object so prominent, and which has been observed so many times with curiosity — and sometimes with anxiety, by those who have waited in suspense for the return of their friends from sea — an object which has been familiar to thousands, who have lived all their lives in the neighborhood of the Church, cannot be regarded without interest and attachment at the north part of the city. Moreover, it is not an ungraceful bird, nor altogether inappropriate for the purpose of pointing towards the wind; as any one may see, who will watch Chanticleer when a strong breeze sweeps through the barn-yard, where he stands, or walks, facing the point from which it comes — finding it difficult to keep his side to the wind, and more uncomfortable to turn his back. It is worth notice, also, that the spire of a fine gothic church at Oxford, (Eng.) — I believe St. Mary’s — is ornamented, or disfigured, with a similar Weather-cock.

When the Old Church was taken down, a great number of persons carried away bricks and pieces of timber as memorials. Canes, vases, and boxes, and various smaller articles, were made of its oak and chestnut rafters. A model of the building made of its wood was presented to the Pastor, which he will use as a ministerial transmittendum.

On taking up the floor, it was discovered that the furnace had set fire to several small timbers and burned them off, without the suspicion of any one at the time.

The Corner-stone of the New Church was laid, with appropriate solemnities at six o’clock, A. M., May 30th, 1844. The morning was bright and beautiful. Hymns were sung by the choir, Prayer was offered by Rev. E. B. Hall, of Providence, R. I., and an Address made by the Pastor — which was printed. The ceremony was performed by the speaker, standing on the south-west corner of the cellar wall — the largest part of the audience being collected in the bottom of the cellar.
A plate of fine silver had been prepared by the Building Committee measuring seven inches square, and weighing eleven and a half ounces, on which was engraved the following inscription, viz. — on the obverse side.

"The Second Church of Christ in Boston, was gathered on the 5th day of June, 1650. The first house of worship was built in 1649 at the head of North Square. Destroyed by fire on the 7th Nov. 1676. Rebuilt in 1677. The New Brick Church was gathered on the 22d day of May, 1722. The first House was built on this site in 1721, and taken down in 1844. This Corner Stone was laid with religious services on the 30th day of May, 1844. The Second Church and Congregation were united with the New Brick on the 27th of June, 1779, under the name of the Second Church and Society.

On the reverse: "The Pastors of the Second Church were John Mayo, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, Joshua Gee, Samuel Mather, Samuel Cheekley and John Lathrop. The Pastors of the New Brick were William Waldron, Ellis Gray, William Welsteed, and Ebenezer Pemberton. The Pastors of the Second Church and Society were, John Lathrop, Henry Ware, Jr., Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Chandler Robbins.

"Building Committee: — Simon W. Robinson, Enoch Patterson, Henry N. Hooper, Rowland Ellis, Jesse Knapp, James S. Wiggin, James Tolman, Charles H. Neally, John Simpkins, James W. Baldwin.

"Architect, Minard Lafever; Masons, Slade Luther and Smith W. Nichols; Carpenters, Isaac Towle and John D. Towle."

The Plate was fitted in a zinc case, and so arranged as not to allow either surface of the plate to come in contact with the zinc. The case was soldered perfectly tight, and placed in another case made of milled lead, measuring about seven and a half by ten inches, and six inches deep, which also contained the following articles — viz:

A copy of Rev. Henry Ware, Jr.'s Centennial Sermon, preached in the Second Church, in the year A. D. 1821. A copy of Rev. Chandler Robbins' Sermon preached on the death of the Rev. Henry Ware, Jr. A copy of the Rev. Chandler Robbins' Sermon preached on the Sunday preceding the taking down of the old Church Edifice. A copy of the Boston Almanac for the year 1843. A copy of the Boston Directory for the year 1843. A copy of the Reports of the Exhibition of the Mechanic Arts in Boston in the years 1837, 1839, and 1841. A copy of the Acts of Incorporation with the Rules and Regulations of the Second Church and Society. Three specimens of Daguerreotype — being transfers of proclamations for the usual Public Fasts, by Governors Edward Everett and John Davis, and a transfer of a number of the Boston Transcript. A copy on satin and paper of President Harrison's Inaugural Address, and various specimens of the Art of Printing. Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital. A small package containing paper currency, from one shilling to Thirty Dollars, issued by the Congress of the United States in 1776 called Continental Money or Currency, presented by Thomas G. Atkins, Esq. A Parchment, on which is recorded the
names of all the Proprietors of the Second Church and Society. Names of the gentlemen composing the Standing Committee; names of the ladies and gentlemen comprising the Singing Choir. A copy of the inscription on the silver plate. Statistics of all the Religious Societies in Boston, some interesting statistics of the City, State, and the United States. And a Memorandum of all the articles deposited.

This lead case was soldered perfectly tight, and placed within a granite stone, being a part of the foundation-wall, and placed four feet from the upper course, at the south-west corner of the building near the front buttress.

COURTESIES TO THE SECOND CHURCH.

The members of the Second Church can never forget the many acts of Christian courtesy experienced by them during the season of their dispersion. These are the green and sunny spots in our journey from the old house to the new. They have taught us to regard our fellow-christians of other names, with new sentiments of affection and respect.

It is the dictate of gratitude to give to these tokens of hospitality and kindness a more enduring memorial than they can have in detached papers, subject to various accidents. Therefore, and also that they may serve to convey to our children an always valuable lesson of Christian love, I have made a particular record of them here.

The following letters were received by our Standing Committee.

FROM THE NEW NORTH.—(DR. PARKMAN'S.)

GENTLEMEN:

A meeting of the members of the New North Religious Society was held after divine service this morning at the request of our Standing Committee, who represented that the Proprietors of the Second Church contemplated speedily commencing operations, for the purpose of erecting a new and more spacious house of worship.

The N. N. Society deem it a suitable moment to express themselves as rejoicing with the brethren of our sister church, in their determination to rebuild on the same consecrated spot, where, in their present ancient edifice, we have so often participated with them in an offering of prayer and praise to that Supreme Being, whose divine benediction we now supplicate upon their undertaking.

Under the influence of those feelings of fraternal friendship, which have so long existed between our societies, it was Voted, that we do most cordially invite your Rev. Pastor, and the Church and Congregation under his charge, to unite with us in public worship, so long as you may be detained by your intended improvement from again assembling for a separate service.

Be pleased, gentlemen, to communicate the foregoing sentiments and vote of invitation to your Society, as may be most expedient.

In behalf of the N. N. R. Society,

JOHN B. TREMERE, Clerk.

Boston, Sunday, Feb. 11, 1844.
GENTLEMEN:—

At a meeting of the Proprietors, of the First Universalist Society in Boston, held on the 4th inst., the following resolutions were unanimously adopted, which you will please communicate to your Society, viz:—

1st. That an invitation be tendered to the members of the Rev. Mr. Robbins' Society, to worship with us during the erection of their new house; also, that we offer them the free use of our house for public worship when not wanted by our Society.

2d. That the use of our Vestry be tendered to them to hold their evening meetings, or for such other purposes as they may want, during the erection of their new house.

Respectfully yours,

Henry Turner, Clerk.

Boston, February 12, 1814.

FROM THE BULFINCH STREET SOCIETY.—(REV. MR. GRAY'S.)

GENTLEMEN:—

The Standing Committee, in behalf of the Society worshipping in the Bulfinch Street Church, most cordially invite the Second Church and Society to unite with them whilst their new Church is being built.

The Committee offer the Second Church and Society the use of their Meeting House, the morning, afternoon or evening, of every Sabbath; also the use of the Vestry any evening during each week (excepting Thursday,) as will be most convenient and agreeable to them.

Per order,

George C. Stearns, Clerk.

Boston, February 12, 1814.

FROM THE BALDWIN-PLACE BAPTIST SOCIETY.—(REV. MR. STOWE'S.)

GENTLEMEN:—

At a meeting of the Baldwin-Place Baptist Society, held February 18th, 1844, the following preamble and vote were unanimously adopted.

"Whereas, we have learned with pleasure that the Religious Society, under the Pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Robbins, are about to erect a new and more spacious House of Worship at the North part of the City, and may in consequence be deprived of a regular place of worship for some time, we are happy to reciprocate the kindness shown us by them, on a similar occasion. Therefore,

Voted, With perfect unanimity and cordiality, that the use of our Meeting House, be offered to said parishioners, whenever unoccupied by us, and that they be invited to worship with us, whenever agreeable, during the erection of their House."

Attest, Levi Conant, Clerk.
ALSO, FROM THE SAME.

My Dear Sir:—

In answer to your inquiry in regard to compensation for the use of the Baldwin-Place Church for your Society to hear an evening lecture from your much respected Pastor,

I am authorized by the Standing Committee to say, that the pleasure derived in being in a situation to accommodate your people is ample compensation without pecuniary consideration.

 Permit me farther to add, that it gives us peculiar satisfaction to witness the liberality of your Society, in erecting a structure which will afford such spacious accommodations for your people, and at the same time add a public building which will be an ornament to the north section of the City.

I am with sentiments of respect and esteem,

Your humble servant,

Nathan Gurney, Chairman of Committee.

Boston, January 18, 1815.

FROM THE NORTH UNION SOCIETY.—(REV. MR. TOWNE’s.)

Gentlemen:—

The North Union Church and Society return their thanks to the Second Church and Society, for their courtesy in granting the use of their Vestry for some weeks past, and would take this opportunity to reciprocate their kindness, by offering them the room they now occupy in the Tremont Temple, at any hour on the Sabbath which may suit their convenience, not taken up by the regular services of the day.

In behalf of the Church and Society,

Ezra Palmer, Chairman of Standing Com. of N. U. Church.

Henry Clark, Chairman of Standing Com. of Society.

Boston, Saturday, March 16, 1845.

THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH.

To this ancient and respected Church, our Society are under peculiar obligations. By a unanimous vote of the Standing Committee, the Chapel in Spring-Lane was granted to us for religious uses, free of expense, for as long a period as our wants required, and was occupied by our congregation for about seven months.

Such liberality demanded a more substantial acknowledgment than a merely formal letter of thanks. Our Standing Committee, therefore, voted, that the Pastor, with their Chairman, H. N. Hooper, Esq., and the Clerk of the Parish, Mr. J. L. Bates, be appointed a Committee to provide a suitable token of the gratitude of the Society, to be presented to the Old South Church. This Committee decided in favor of a Communion Cup, which was accordingly procured by voluntary contributions, and presented by the Pastor of the Second, to the Pastor of the
Old South Church, in the Study of the latter, and in the presence of the
Standing Committees and Deacons of the two Societies and Churches.

The Cup bears the following inscription: — "To the Old South
Church, Boston, — in memorial of their Christian hospitality to the
Second Church and Society, A. D. 1844."

The presentation of the gift was accompanied by the following re­
marks: —

Reverend Sir and Gentlemen: —

We have asked you to meet us, this afternoon, that we
might discharge a duty which has been committed to us by the Second
Church and Society.

We have been directed by our Standing Committee to express to
you, in the name of our whole Congregation, our sincere gratitude for
the liberality and kindness of the Old South Church, in granting to us
the use of their convenient Chapel — and this too, free of expense —
during the time we have been destitute of a place of worship of our
own. Be assured, Gentlemen, we consider ourselves as under great
and lasting obligations for this act of truly Christian hospitality. We
had not even the claims of neighborhood to urge — but your considerate
generosity has made us neighbors in the Christian sense, since we were
in need, and you, who had the power, had also the will to relieve our
necessities.

We shall not only preserve a memorial of your beneficence on the
records of our Church, but in all our hearts. You have taught us a
lesson of respect for our fellow-Christians of different denominations;
you have given us an example of the value and beauty of Christian
courtesy, which I trust we shall always imitate.

We were also instructed to prepare a proper token of our gratitude,
to be presented to the Church which you represent. We have thought
that no memorial would be more suitable, — none more emblematical
of the feelings which prompted the act which we wish to commemorate,
and which are heartily reciprocated by ourselves, — than this simple
Communion Cup. We hope that it will be agreeable to you and your
Church to accept it, and that it may sometimes find a place on the table
of our common Lord, — who taught his disciples to love one another,
and who doubtless approves every expression of good will amongst
those who call themselves Christians. May the Church under your
charge enjoy peculiar tokens of his favor, and may the overflowing cup
of his blessings be the portion of its Pastor, and every one of its mem­
bors, forever.
On receiving the Cup, the Rev. G. W. Blauden, Pastor of the Old South, responded as follows:—

My Dear Sir:—

As the organ of the Old South Society, I receive with pleasure the very valuable and appropriate gift you have now presented, in behalf of the Second Congregational Society; and beg leave to express to you our thanks for the gift itself, and the kind and friendly sentiments with which you have accompanied it. It is a subject for congratulations, that our differences of Religious Faith have not availed to check the expression of mutual kindliness of feeling.

And we rejoice that, when you and your Society were deprived of a place of worship, during the erection of the beautiful house to which you have now returned, we were able to extend to you such accommodations as our Chapel afforded.

As the Second and Third Congregational Societies in the city of Boston, we can never be wholly disunited in its history, or fail to feel an interest in each other; and surely nothing can be more likely to unite us in our mutual conclusions respecting eternal truth, than kindness to one another, on all occasions, and in all forms, consistent with our respective principles.

Such kindness we mutually feel. The token of it you have now presented is associated with a scene of love, which impresses on us lessons, I trust, we shall never fail to regard in practice. May the Saviour, in commemoration of whose death for man, it is now destined to be used, bless you and us; — and lead us into all truth.

The Vestry of the new church being finished, was first used for worship on Sunday, January 12, 1845.

The Dedication of the New Church took place on Wednesday, Sept. 17, 1845, at eleven o'clock, A. M. The following was the Order of Services.

Prayer, by Rev. S. D. Robbins.
Selections from the Bible, by Rev. Dr. Pierce.
Hymn, written for the occasion by Rev. N. L. Frothingham, D. D.

Thy way is in unbounded space,
In air, and earth, and sea; —
Thy way is in the holy place
That man doth build to Thee.
The soul thy temple is, O Lord,
And thy true service pays:
Yet here dost Thou thy name record,
And here accept our praise.

To us, as to thy prophet, deign
To speak thy word and will;
And let the glory of thy train
This house of worship fill.

The vision on his eye that broke
Here pour upon the soul;
Thy people's prayer the censer's smoke,
Thy love the altar's coal.

And when to Thee they humbly cry,
Or gratefully confess,
O hear them in thy dwelling high,
And when Thou hearest, bless.

Prayer of Dedication, by Rev. F. Parkman, D. D.

Chant of Dedication.

Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee,
In heaven above, or on earth beneath;
Who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants,
That walk before thee with all their heart.
Who hast kept with thy servant David,
That thou didst promise him:
Thou spakest also with thy mouth,
And hast fulfilled it with thine own hand as it is this day.
But will God indeed dwell on the earth?
Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee,
How much less this house that we have builded!
Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servants,
And to their supplication, O Lord our God;
Hearken unto the cry and to the prayer,
Which thy servant prayeth before thee this day.
That thine eyes may be opened toward this house night and day,
Even toward the place of which thou hast said,
"My name shall be there."
Hearken thou to the supplication of thy servants,
And of thy people Israel,
Which they shall make in this place.
Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place,
And when thou hearest, forgive.
Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting-place,
Thou, and the ark of thy strength;
Let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation,
And let thy saints rejoice in goodness.

Sermon, by Rev. C. Robbins.
Hymn, written for the occasion by J. Thornton, Esq.

Great God of holiness and love,
Enthroned in majesty above,
With humble heart and bended knee,
We dedicate this house to Thee!

May the bright star, whose lucid ray
Lighted the Shepherds on their way,
To seek the Babe of Bethlehem fair,
Guide many to this house of prayer!

Teach us, who worship in this place,
And ask for mercy and for grace,
To bow in reverence, and adore
The God whose favors we implore!

Warm our cold hearts with love divine,
To kindle on devotion's shrine
A bright and consecrated flame,
In honor of a Saviour's name!

Lead us, on earth, in paths of peace,
Our Faith and Christian love increase;
Then freed from sin our spirits raise,
In heavenly courts to sing thy praise.

Prayer, by Rev. Samuel Barrett.

The corporate name of the Society has been changed from "Second Church and Society," to "Second Church," by an Act of the Legislature, passed during the session in 1845.
A DISCOURSE

DEDICATED AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE

Church of the Saviour.

Boston, Mass.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1847.

BY THE PASTOR,

R. C. WATERSTON.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

BOSTON:

WILLIAM CROSBY & H. P. NICHOLS.

111 Washington Street

1847.
DISCOURSE.

1 CORINTHIANS, 3: 11.

FOR OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO MAN LAY, THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.

Assembled as we are to consecrate with solemn and impressive rites a new edifice to the cause of religion, we are naturally led to reflect upon the purposes of Christianity and the Church; which suggests the subject I propose at this time to consider, — The true Position of the Christian Church, in its Relation to the present Age.

The prediction respecting Christianity, from its introduction into the world, was, that it would finally prevail over the whole earth, and bring every thing into subjection to its divine power. Before the advent of Jesus, the world knew little of what was to be accomplished by its promised Redeemer. Ushered into the world by the angelic host, there were few among men to give it welcome. Surrounded by innumerable obstacles, with the powers and the passions of earth sternly arrayed against it, it yet struggled and triumphed,—conquering or converting its most
malignant foes, and establishing in the place of prevailing evil, its own beneficent principles. Thus, from the commencement, it has been constantly spreading and deepening in its influence; and in proportion as it has been received, it has refined the manners, purified the tastes, and regenerated the souls of men; and thus, through all the periods of its past history, it has poured ever-increasing blessings upon the world. Christianity is the gift of God. It is the knowledge of the divine will, made known through a heaven-appointed Messiah. It is a work of redemption, fulfilled by Jesus. It was a message given, not simply by words of wisdom, but through the life, sufferings, and death of the Son of God. It was foretold by inspired prophets; it was established by superhuman works; it was illustrated by a character of matchless grandeur; it was sealed with blood on the cross.

Christianity came from heaven, and was given for the regeneration of the world. All its principles and promises were at first embodied in Jesus. At his death the disciples became its promulgators; and from that time the Christian church has been avowedly the channel of its influence and the living manifestation of its power.

Christianity in itself is perfect; but the church is human, and is therefore only a true representative of Christianity in proportion as it is faithful to its great head.
Christianity is as wide as the ages, and enduring as the soul. It is adequate to meet the wants of all coming time. It is for the church constantly to rise to a higher apprehension of its divine greatness; to grow more and more up to its requirements; to try itself and the world by its lofty standard, and to cherish and proclaim its heavenly truths; believing that other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

The church is the acknowledged representative of Christianity; and the world feels that in looking at it, it has a right to judge of Christianity itself. With the progress of the world, the church should make progress, and shine more and more brightly with celestial light. The church is the active medium through which Christianity is given to the world. The ministers of the gospel, and the professed followers of Jesus, come forward as its living witnesses. It is, then, through their remissness or fidelity that Christianity is to be chiefly retarded or advanced.

Christianity is of universal application; and while it is adapted to the wants of all ages, it is also adapted to the particular wants of each age. In every period of the world, Christianity has found some one to apply it to the wants of that period. Even when evil and error have crept over some portions of the church, Christianity has proved that it has within itself a reformatory power; and when the whole church would not be faithful, portions of it have taken up the work.
Thus did Luther, and Melancthon, and Zwingle, rise in their giant strength, and unlock the Word of God, that it might pour forth fresh floods of light upon the world. Thus did the Puritans, when they were oppressed by the formalities of the dominant church, crave and claim a simpler and purer worship; amid imprisonment and banishment they asserted their rights, and through their fidelity they became the honored champions of civil and religious liberty. Wesley, too, felt the need of a deeper devotion and piety; and by his direct application of Christianity he worked a mighty revolution in the church. At a time when the writings of Tindal and Shaftsbury were widely circulated, when Bolingbroke and Hume were diffusing their skepticism, when the people had lost their zeal, and the clergy had lost their faith, he stood forth to regenerate the world.

And thus has Christianity ever found some, in all past ages, to receive and apply its higher truths; and, whatever the condition of the age may have been, there has been a power in Christianity, when thus applied, adequate to meet that condition. So it will ever be.

We come, then, to the question with which we started: What is the true position of the church in relation to the present age? The work of the church, to-day, is not precisely what it was in the middle ages, or in the days of the Puritans. What is its true work now?
And first, it will be perceived that the term Church, as here used, is not applied to any particular division of the church, but to the church universal. To that great body of believers who take the gospel as their guide, and look to Christ as their supreme head. The various sects of Christendom are all parts of one great whole. They each represent, according to their own idea, some view or sentiment of Christianity. Christianity itself seems so wide and glorious that few minds can grasp it in its sublime completeness; and in looking upon its divine beauty, each mind becomes enamored with that portion of truth which has first attracted its notice. Many have been taught to look upon Christianity from particular positions; and all their better affections and aspirations have become associated with the views thus given them. From constitutional differences, from mental peculiarities, from education, as well as from the vastness of Christianity itself, minds naturally differ in their religious views; but there are common hopes, and affections, and principles, binding them all in one.

Such men as Leighton, Hooker, and Baxter, and Doddridge, and Scougal, and Fenelon, and Penn, and Ware, and Channing, belong to the whole brotherhood of man. One might as well hope to claim the sun in the heavens, as to shut up such minds within the limits of a sect. Every generous heart throbs at the thought of their memory; and their very names float like music through the soul. Their difference as
well as their similarity, shows the richness and pro-
lific fertility of religion. As the life-giving principles
of the earth nourish alike the rose and the cedar,
and put themselves forth in infinite variety of form
and color, so the principles of Jesus, rising up through
a myriad of souls, bloom out everywhere in individual
beauty.

Looking thus around upon the universal church,
what are its duties in regard to the present age? We
would consider the answer to this, first in reference to
Theology. What, then, is the true position of the
church, in reference to Theology, at the present time?

It will be acceded by all, that correct opinions are
of inexpressible value; that error is an evil; that truth
is of God, and therefore to be sought and loved.
The church, then, throughout the world, should look
beneath technical terms and received dogmas, and
honestly ask for Truth:—looking to that, under all
circumstances, as the desired result. The intelligence
of the age demands that all opinions shall be brought
to the most severe scrutiny. The diffusion of knowl-
edge in every branch of science and learning, makes
it a matter of imperative necessity, that all views upon
subjects of vital interest should be deeply and can-
didly considered. Old foundations are breaking up.
Denominations are changing ground. Rays of light
are falling everywhere upon the human mind; and
amid these movements, it is especially important to
ask, What is truth? The people need a clearer and
more accurate knowledge; and the church, the universal church, in meeting that need, should ask, what is truth? and desire to seek for and promulgate that only.

And where is the Source of truth? The source of geological truth is in the earth; of astronomical truth amid the stars; and of Christian truth in the revelation of God. The church should search that Revelation, and seek to know clearly what it teaches. Not bending it to formularies and creeds of human invention, as if they had more of inspiration than the Bible itself; but having confidence that when the Almighty made a revelation, he knew how to make it; and that his children should go to that as the fountain-head.

Why should frail and erring men seek to lay foundations of their own? There can be, but one sure foundation, which is Jesus Christ. If our Heavenly Father has given us a Revelation of his will,—not in the Thirty-nine Articles, nor in the Confession of Augsburg,—but in the Bible, then let not these, nor any thing like them, stand between us and the Bible; but let that be held up everywhere, as the ark and the oracle! If the whole church could go in a perfectly untrammelled spirit to the Gospel itself, and ask for simple scriptural truth, who can doubt that more clear and consistent views would prevail, and that many differences which now exist, would vanish away?
We see some going back into ancient mysticism, and bowing reverently down amid the shadows of the past. And we behold others tearing themselves away from what has been held sacred for ages, and dwelling in the region of doubt. These movements towards two extremes are not a little remarkable. The one often leads to the other.

If some believe every thing, and lean wholly upon authority, others question every thing, and as utterly reject authority. Nothing with them is too sacred to be denied. If there are those who publicly reject the authority of the Gospel, what, in regard to them, is the true position of the church?

Will any one affirm that those who receive the Bible, as containing the message of salvation, should encourage others in rejecting its authority? If the church of Christ looks to him as its Divine Head, and honors his Word as the word of life, then must it not necessarily do all in its power to establish his truth, and extend his kingdom?

But there are peculiar cases where, as in Germany, England, and America, there are those who would receive the Scriptures as a book containing much remarkable truth, but who would reject all that it contains of a miraculous character. What is the church to do here? Strange as such a supposition would have been a few years ago, it is brought before us now by the actual state of things. The Gospels are declared to be a singular combination of truth and
falsehood. Its recorded facts are pronounced fabulous, and its word is asserted to be no special message, and of no binding authority.

Are not these views, first held and published in Europe, as inconsistent as they are extraordinary?

Look at the recorded life of Jesus, and you find that his words and his deeds are given on the same authority. Open that record where you will, and where is the page which records not a miracle? Consider the life of Christ, his birth, baptism, ministry, and crucifixion, and where do you not find miracle? Look at the example of Christ, and where does not its beauty and glory shine through miracle? Ponder the teachings of Jesus, so comprehensive and grand, and where are not his immortal truths interwoven with miracle? How can you dissever the two? How can you consistently receive the one, and reject the other? And yet, an ingenious German shall lay this subject upon his table, displace the nerves and sinews, and, thrusting in his knife, cut out the very heart, and looking calmly up, shall say, "This, gentlemen, is Christianity!"

It is said, that the teachings may be received without the miracles. But, if the record is false in one case, why not in both? It should be remembered, that Christ, in his teachings, claimed miraculous power; and to reject this is, therefore, in this respect, directly to reject his teachings. And, if we reject his teachings here, why may we not in other places, also?
Sweeping declarations may be uttered in a sentence. The fact of the Resurrection of Jesus may be denied in one line. But that simple statement cuts off all that is recorded after. Shuts up the sepulchre; erases the closing and most affecting interviews between Christ and his disciples; the parting blessing, and the ascension to heaven. It is in opposition to the words of Christ, where he predicted that event, and appealed to it as a proof of his authority; and it also questions the validity and propriety of the reiterated passages in the various Epistles, where the apostles refer to it in their recorded preaching, as well as in their writings. Thus may even one brief sentence intimately affect truths, which are scattered through the whole Gospel.

Erase the miracles, and what injury is done to the Character of Jesus! The most beautiful and heavenly manifestations of his life shine out from those portions of his history.

When, therefore, we see that these sacred narratives are throughout incorporated with the supernatural; when we behold the truth and the miracle interwoven and interlocked; when, out of the miracle, the matchless excellence and divine majesty of Jesus shines most brightly; and when the one stands as the seal and signet, the complement and the counterpart of the other; shall not this be avowed?

The dome of St. Peter's is secured by a vast iron chain, which encircles the base; the stupendous structure would not hold together without it. Even so is
Christianity encircled and bound together, by the miraculous events which are identified with it; and you might as well sever the chain that girdles that massy dome, and shatter the very walls that support it, and expect to leave the dome itself floating in the air, as to tear away the superhuman characteristics of Christianity, without injury to the religion itself.

In regard to Theology, then, what is the true position of the church? The deepest recesses of sacred knowledge are to be penetrated; there must be acuteness and discrimination; a masculine strength of mind to grapple with and conquer difficulties. Conflicting opinions must be searched and sifted; and all questions fairly met and weighed. The light of science and philosophy are not to be feared, but welcomed. The same God who sent us a Saviour, created the earth and the heavens; and whatever, therefore, is connected with the economy or fabric of nature, can never, in reality, be at variance with religion. The church should search for truth, with large and comprehensive mind; rising superior to all narrow prejudice, and hailing joyfully the light, from whatever quarter it may come. Where there are many opinions, all cannot be right; but all may be nearer right than would at first appear. Sects may often have more errors in their books than in their hearts. Their terms may be farther from truth than their thoughts. A true theology will not put things upon a false issue. It will not forget the ninety and nine just
thoughts, while it follows the one that has wandered into the wilderness.

With an enlarged charity, and patient and laborious thought, should the church study for truth. For the simple truth of God; for scriptural truth, as it is found revealed in the sacred pages; for divine truth, as it flowed from the lips of Jesus; assured that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Nothing is more needed, at the present period,—nothing can be more needed, in any period,—than a living faith in Christ Jesus. The church should welcome his words with profoundest gratitude; and bow in reverence before him, as the perfect Incarnation of Wisdom, and Love; diligently and devoutly searching the grand purposes of his mission, in his teachings, his miracles, and his cross; looking at the Saviour himself as the best interpreter of his religion; and believing that in him is an inexhaustible fountain of spiritual life. In proportion as the church is thus faithful, the truth will shine more and more fully upon the world. Not bursting upon it, perhaps, at once; not indeed to be ushered in, as amid the thunders of Sinai, or with the trump of the archangel; but it will be spread abroad like the morning light, and the world will rejoice in its beams.

Having thus briefly considered the true position of the church, in relation to the Theology of the age, let us consider its true position, in relation to the Civilization and Philanthropy of the times.
We have already seen that the grand peculiarity of Christianity is, that it is adequate to meet the demands of every era of the world's history, and that it is one of the chief duties of the church to make this application of Christianity; that thus its principles may be brought directly to bear upon the errors and sins of each successive period. Christianity was intended to extirpate sin; and, if properly applied, it has power to accomplish that for which it was sent. Its truths were given to be the guiding principles of actual life; to form human character; to become the firm basis of private and public duty. The church, therefore, is placed amid the stirring events of the present time, that it may apply to all the plans and actions of man the principles of eternal truth.

What, then, are the facts, respecting the Civilization of our period? Perhaps nothing is more marked, than its general activity and excitement. Mechanical ingenuity is everywhere seen, and physical agencies are called into action. We see, on every side, improvements in the arts, and new applications of science to create means of comfort and luxury. Mountains are levelled, valleys filled, cities built, wastes cultivated. All sections of country are intersected, and bound together, by iron roads, bearing men and merchandise with fearful rapidity; while Thought, borne upon electric wires, flies, as on lightning's wings, from city to city. These splendid discoveries, these magnificent enterprises, occupy the mind of man; and marvellous
as they are, and leading a true mind up to the fountain of good, they yet have upon multitudes an earthly and material tendency. They fasten the thought upon the outward.

It is for Christianity to lift the veil which may hide from such a period the spiritual world. It is for Christianity to hold up immortal hopes, grander than all physical greatness. It is for Christianity, which has been at the head of this Civilization, still to lead it forward and direct its course. Never was there a time when all its spiritual influences were more needed than now. And how elevated would be our condition, if, with all these wonderful advantages, we were faithful to Christianity; consecrating every means of physical good, every discovery of science, and every achievement of art, to the highest interests of man and the service of God!

What are the present tendencies of society? The activity and enterprise of our period is often turned to a merely material end. There is a general desire for wealth, a passion for accumulation, a tendency to extravagance and display. Multitudes, with untiring avidity, seek the means of costly indulgence. A spirit of emulation is engendered. The mind becomes absorbed in worldly care, distracted by worldly anxieties, debased by worldly passions. Wealth often becomes, with us, one of the chief avenues to station, which by no means lessens the prevailing love of gain; while feelings of envy, covetousness, ambition, and
pride, are liable to be fanned into a flame; and worldly aggrandizement is considered, by many, the supreme good.

Christianity and the church have a labor here. What shall be said of the church, if it fosters these passions? What shall be said of it, if it does not strive to counteract them?

Wealth may be a means of inexpressible good. But what is all outward accumulation, if a plague-spot is upon the soul; if the love of money leads to the neglect of God? Avarice may corrupt the public heart; and, elated by success, man may violate the laws of Heaven, and prosperity become his ruin. It is for the Christian church to urge the great principles of the Gospel; to strengthen humility and devotion; and awaken throughout society a true spiritual life. The whole history of the world proves, that there is no sure and solid basis for Civilization, but that which has been laid by Jesus Christ.

Connected with our social condition are alarming evils, which Christianity must meet. There is among us, in our towns and cities, an increasing Profligacy. It infests the land. It is eating away the foundations of our strength. The Christian church should breathe forth a spirit which will counteract this dreadful wickedness. The appalling facts which those who have investigated the subject have disclosed, should awaken the church to a deeper consciousness of its accountability.
Intemperance is around us; and those who labor for its suppression are engaged in one of the mightiest enterprises of humanity. When will the church, generally, throw its whole influence upon the righteous side, and shelter those who suffer, and reclaim those who have fallen, and invoke those who encourage the evil, as they hope for the mercy of Heaven, to desist? Has the church here yet discharged its whole duty? It has done much; but can it not do more?

There is among us Pauperism and Crime. We need not go to the extremities of the earth, in order to find scenes of wretchedness and woe. In the narrow and thronged street; in the secluded lane; in low, dark dwellings, ignorance and degradation exist. The church should be to such as an angel of mercy. There is no depth so low, that the light of Christianity should not be made to penetrate it. We should send forth missionaries, we should go forth ourselves, in the spirit of the lowly Jesus, to reclaim those who are lost. The Christian church should labor with untiring diligence, to elevate the degraded, and to scatter in the waste places the seeds of good. She should send forth everywhere apostles of love, to carry to the children of want the glad tidings of salvation.

But, connected with the Civilization and Philanthropy of our day, there are two monstrous iniquities which, above all others, lift their hideous heads: Slavery and War. What is the true position of the
church, in relation to these two great evils? Socially, morally, religiously, this is the great question of the age: What other can surpass it in importance?

In 1620, two vessels crossed the Atlantic, bearing that which was to effect the coming destinies of the New World. The one was the memorable “Mayflower,” which landed the Pilgrims at Plymouth. The other was a Dutch ship, which brought to Virginia the first slaves that ever trod these shores. Could we have seen those two vessels as they struggled amid the waves, we might have heard from the one sighs of agony, and from the other anthems of praise. The influence which came from the former, has made New England what it is: — the latter laid the foundation of an evil, which, from that day, has been spreading, until, in the place of twenty slaves, we have three millions.

Those two vessels, coming to this country in the same year, brought with them the conflicting principles which never have been, and never can be, reconciled together. They are principles which are now in conflict; and the conflict waxes warmer, and it never will cease until the one or the other is exterminated.

Two hundred years have rolled by, and this wrong has been permitted to increase, until through the whole land is heard the bitter cry of the oppressed.

We are treading on the verge of a moral revolution as great as any the world has ever known; and the liberties of millions are at stake. Has the church
nothing to do? This question cannot be put down. The spirit of the age is concentrated within it. It is asked by the voice of the civilized world, Has the church nothing to do? Every day the evil accumulates; and, as the time of reckoning is postponed, there gather over us more fearful retributions. There are in this country no less than three hundred thousand slaveholders. There are slave-prisons, and slave-markets, and slave-drivers, and slave-laws. There are unutterable cruelties and wrongs. Has the church nothing to do? Who can forget the memorable words of Jefferson, himself a slaveholder, when, in speaking of this evil, he said, "I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just. The Almighty has no attribute which can take sides with us in such a contest." Yet many churches, through a large portion of this land, have publicly declared that there is no wrong in slavery. Clerical conferences in Georgia, and South Carolina, and elsewhere, have maintained that slavery is right. Ecclesiastical bodies have issued proclamation that the gospel laws of matrimony are not binding upon slaves; and Christian ministers have published volumes, in which they assert that slavery is not opposed to the principles of Christianity. Is this the true position of the church? Such is the declared opinion of a part of the church,—is it to be generally responded to, or opposed? If this system is one of justice and love, then let the church uphold it. If it is based
upon brotherly affection, then the church may advocate it. If it accords with that honoring of all men, and preferring one another, which the Gospel inculcates, then it should be defended. But if it is unjust and inhuman; if it is opposed to the spirit of Jesus, and his doctrines, then, in God's name, the church should so declare it.

The foreign slave-trade has been justly pronounced by our laws piracy; and he who is engaged in it is branded as a felon. Is not the domestic slave-trade, in every respect, as bad? Yet this is carried on through a large section of the country; and thousands of men, women, and children, are driven in herds every year, to be sold in the south and southwestern market. Is such a traffic in harmony with Christianity? Upon southern statute-books, there are laws pronouncing the severest penalties upon those who shall be detected in teaching a slave to read, or in giving to him the Bible. What can be said of the prevalence of Christianity, where these enormities are tolerated? That slave, so oppressed, is a fellow-creature, and a child of God; he has feelings and rights,—can the church do nothing in his behalf? The slave-master is an immortal and accountable being,—ought not the most solemn testimony and urgent appeals to be brought before him respecting this fearful wrong? If there is any respect for Freedom, Civilization, or Christianity, any love for what is
good and just, let something be done commensurate with the magnitude of the evil.

This country stands before the tribunal of Nations; while, in their sight, this system of oppression becomes daily more hateful. They plead with us now; and if we are not faithful, we shall soon bring upon us the execrations of the world.

This country stands before the tribunal of Heaven; and if we go on in the perpetration of this wrong, how long will its righteous judgments be withheld? To what are we, at this moment, indebted, but the loving mercy of God, that the earth has not already opened, and the clouds shaken fire from their folds?

Are we not justified in saying that the Christian church has a weighty responsibility in connection with this subject? With her calm and gentle spirit, she could guide the public thought; and if she rose in the majesty of her power, she could arouse the conscience of the land, and liberate the people from a fearful curse. Let it be remembered that there are nearly fifty thousand churches in the United States, with from three to four million members. What might not such a body accomplish in the cause of justice and truth? Great as the evil is, let but the Christian church be faithful, and it would be like the visitation of the Angel to Peter in prison, when a light shone round about him, and the chains fell from his hands.
We behold, also, our country at this moment voluntarily plunged into all the horrors of War. An army of occupation has become an army of invasion; and a passion has been awakened for blood and for conquest. Millions have been expended, and thousands of lives sacrificed, that we might overrun and desolate a neighboring nation. Villages have been swept away; cities bombarded; and mangled bodies scattered over the plains. Think of a populous town surrounded by death-dealing engines, raining down upon the inhabitants horrible destruction; bursting shells falling through their house-tops; and amid the shattered ruins, women and children, torn and bleeding, in the fearful agonies of death. Who would believe that such guilt could be perpetrated by a civilized people? And yet, this very thing we have lived to behold; and, at this instant, the savage and bloody work is still going on.

At a period when we were enjoying the infinite blessings of peace; when we were crowned with the favors which she had showered upon us; when the philanthropist felt his heart kindling with joy at the prospect of universal harmony; and when the predictions of ancient Prophecy and of Christianity seemed verging towards their fulfilment, our country has willingly plunged herself into all the atrocities of war, and is still pursuing her course with unabated vigor. This country stands before us with her garments rolled in blood! Has the church nothing to
do? Aside from motives which may add to the guilt, what can be more revolting than the fact of war itself? What can war accomplish, in settling questions of equity? What is there noble in brute force? How can the good rejoice in the destruction of cities and the murder of their fellow-men? Is not war, murder on an extended scale? We are not yet free from barbarism. What is the sword, but a civilized scalping-knife? The Gospel of peace is not yet wholly respected. How can we love those whom we shoot and stab? When will the Christian church be faithful to Jesus? When will ministers of the Gospel cease to lend their influence to support and advance the institution of war? Ought not the church now, as in the days of the early disciples, to carry out the principles of forgiveness and mercy?

If war is in accordance with Christian love, let the church plead for it. If one can pray for the forgiveness of a foe and then destroy him, let the church advocate it. If one can do to others as he would that others should do to him, and, at the same time, burn his dwelling and slay his children, let the church defend it. If one can be a lowly follower of the peaceful Jesus, and still carry ruin and desolation over the earth, lifting his hand in deadly hate against his brother, then let bishops, with solemn prayer, unite in the consecration of banners; and ministers of the Lord pay homage to military prowess, and kindle the love of military glory! But if the spirit
of Jesus was averse to this; if his religion is one of mercy and forgiveness; if it would unite mankind in love, and lead them to acts of beneficence, then, in the name of the holy Jesus, the church should so declare it, and should be faithful, in all its labors, to such declaration; knowing that the customs of the world are not to be judged by the passions of man, but by the standard of the Gospel; and that the true basis of action is not any code of worldly honor, but the immaculate word of the Lord. For here, as elsewhere, other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Having first considered the true position of the church in relation to the Theology of the age, we have now looked at it in connection with the Civilization and Philanthropy of the age — with intemperance, profligacy, pauperism, and crime, with slavery and war.

We have seen that Christianity was sent for the removal of all error and sin; and with an adaptation to all ages. And that it is the duty of the church to make the application of its truths and principles in each particular age. That this age has its errors and sins, and that it is the duty of the church, according to its best wisdom, to meet them.

We do not say that the church must meet them in any specified way; — that any man, or any body of men, has the right to dictate the precise methods of action. We do not say that individual churches
should take up these subjects, and act upon them, as such, collectively. Each branch of the church, and each individual of the church, must use whatever light may be obtained, and walk according to that light. But in some way,—directly or indirectly,—the Christian church should oppose existing evils, and show that it is in earnest in opposing them. The church has no right to sink into a mere formality—an empty show. It has a high vocation. God intended that it should be for the redemption of the world; that it should interpret his righteous laws, and so apply them to existing wrongs as to establish holiness and truth. There are radical evils in society. Private and public wrongs are openly upheld. Are these to be overlooked by the church? Never; if it is true to Christ. Never; if it is to accomplish anything useful. The spirit of universal humanity would cry out against it, as false to its God-given trust. In some way the church should recognize its high duties to God and to society. It does so to a large extent now. But might it not do more? Not necessarily by forming particular organizations, or joining such. But by awakening within the mind itself a deep sense of responsibility, and by bringing the mind into that condition which will lead it to be opposed to all wrong. Let but this state of feeling prevail, and means of extended usefulness would soon be found. Multitudes are rushing in to remove the evils which exist. Some with no very loving spirit. There is a philan-
thropy which cuts itself off from Christianity — which is often arrogant and bitter. What we need is not a philanthropy divorced from humility and religion, ready to revile things sacred as well as things corrupt; but a philanthropy tempered and sweetened by Christian affection, a philanthropy speaking in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and baptized into the spirit of the gospel.

When archbishop Leighton was censured for not preaching up to the times, he answered: "If all of you preach up the times, you may surely allow one poor brother to preach up Christ and eternity." We would have Christ and eternity brought to bear upon the sins of our times; and by eternity and Christ we would eradicate and extirpate them. They confront Christianity. They prevent the establishment of Christ's kingdom; and a voice comes even now, like the voice of John the Baptist, over the wilderness of sin, saying: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."

The great spiritual advent of Christianity awaits but this preparation. When the way has been prepared, it will be ushered into the world. Let the church make proper effort, and the promised kingdom will be established in the minds of men. Let the church throughout the world make adequate preparation, and Christ's kingdom would come everywhere with power and great glory.

But let us look a little deeper, and we shall see one
of the greatest wonders of Christianity. We shall see that it is exactly fitted to accomplish the desired end, and that nothing else could accomplish it.

What is this outward evil which exists? It is the legitimate consequence of inward evil. The stream rises no higher than the fountain. The evil in society indicates an evil in the soul. When we behold profligacy, intemperance, slavery, war, we see the hands on the dial-plate, which inform us how the machinery goes within. These outward evils prove to us visibly how far the country is from being Christian. They are the result of sin in the individual soul. The worldly reformer may hope to strike off sin as if it were only external, but the root is in the heart. Abolish implements of war, says one. But we must not rest here; for if you should take away from some men weapons of war, they would pluck up the very pavements from the streets. The wild passion within, is the evil. Some look upon social mechanisms and external arrangements, as if these were the worst things. Outward evil no doubt increases the evil of the mind; but still the main source is within the mind itself,—the selfishness, worldliness, wickedness, of the individual soul. And this is where Christianity meets the evil, and meets it on its true ground, and with a power which is able to accomplish the desired end.

Christianity would reform society by reforming the individual soul; by eradicating the evil desire and
awakening a new life. The church engages not in the evils of society in their political relations, as such, but in their moral relations. Here it has a right to speak; and here it is bound to speak. All sin is at variance with God, and Christianity came to remove it; to remove it from the world by removing it from the soul; to win individual minds to Christ; to lead them to a sincere repentance of sin, and to the service of God. Christianity would thus remove the very source of wrong, and spread those principles before which all outward evil must inevitably melt away.

If the outward wrong is only the index of the inward condition, then to effect much good there must be a change within; and this is the fundamental idea of Christianity. The kingdom of God on earth is to be established in the human heart. Christianity is to call forth within the soul new hopes, and affections, and motives. Perverted thoughts and desires, worldly tendencies and selfish passions, must give way to high and noble feelings. The conscience is to be quickened, new aspirations called forth, and the soul to be made pure, and generous, and holy. How can it be done? This is the great work of Christianity. And the Almighty has made abundant provision for it. He has sent prophets and apostles,—but especially has he sent his Son as the representative of himself and the Redeemer of the soul. He sent Jesus to open for us the gates of salvation. He sent Jesus, filling him with divine wisdom, and clothing him with super-
human power; one who spake as never man spake; who died upon the cross for us, and was raised from the dead, bringing life and immortality to light, and was afterwards exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high. It was man's necessity that such a Saviour should come, and God's mercy sent him. The words of Jesus, and the life of Jesus, were ordained by Heaven, as a spiritual means for the elevation and redemption of man.

The true position of the church then, in relation to the age, is upon society, through the individual. To rescue the mind from personal sin; to open out of it the principles and promises of the Son of God; to pour the light of the gospel over the path of daily duty; to lift up the curtain between time and eternity, that the eye of faith may descry the wonders of the spiritual world; that the soul may be supported amid trial and sorrow; clothed, as with heavenly grace; made alive to every noble and generous feeling; and prepared for the life to come.

Thus the church, by the power of Christianity, should be the means of diffusing truth, and renewing the mind of man; and Christianity, in this respect, is peculiar. It was not a discovery, but a revelation. It was not an achievement of human power, but an offering of infinite mercy. Nay, more; it was not simply a statement of truth, it was a combination of heavenly instrumentalities, for the redemption of the soul. There was not only a message, but a messen-
ger; and that messenger was the appointed Mediator between God and man. He was the true Vine. He was the Door of the sheep-fold. He was the Corner-stone of the temple. He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Thus was the Saviour inseparably connected with his religion; and the message he delivered, the works he wrought, the life he lived, and the death he died, form together the harmonious whole, which are the offered means of salvation.

We have thus looked upon Christianity and the Church, in its relation to the present age,—to theology, civilization, philanthropy, and the wants of individual man. We have seen that the great brotherhood of churches throughout Christendom, who look to Jesus as their head, have, in many respects, a common interest. They should search for truth; truth upon all the great themes connected with God, with Christ, and with man. They should apply truth, and grow in the image of Jesus; cherishing his spirit, and becoming constantly more like him. They should seek the removal of sin, and the establishment of virtue and holiness; and they should look to the spiritual wants of the individual soul, leading it to communion with the Father of spirits, and to a devout and godly life.

If this is the true position of the church, is there not abundant necessity for such a church? Can any one say, that the world has become so good that there
is nothing left for the church to do? Is there not
great and varied labor to be performed, of the most
momentous character? And is there not reason for
solemn thought and prayer, as well as for joy, when a
new temple is dedicated to God?

This church is but one of the great brotherhood;
one branch of that, whose members encircle the world.
We would let our sympathies go widely forth in
Christian love. We would rejoice in the welfare of
all who honor the everlasting gospel, and have faith in
the Son of God.

We have our peculiar views. They are precious to
us as life. They are glorious to us as the light of
heaven. The Bible is the rock upon which we build,
with the foundation of apostles and prophets; Jesus
Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. The
gospel is our hope and our guide; and we would look
unto the Saviour as the appointed messenger of the
Almighty, to lead us in the way of life.

A little band of worshippers, we have often met
in our pleasant chapel, where our hearts have
glowed with affection, as we have taken counsel to-
gether. We have looked with interest upon this
place, from the time that, with prayer, its foundations
were laid, until now, that with joy the temple-gates
have been opened. We would be grateful to that
kind Providence which has, thus far, graciously blessed
us; and we would pray that his Spirit may still be
with us, to crown our efforts with continued success.
We dedicate this temple to the worship of the only living and true God, the Omnipresent and Omnipotent One,—Holy and Just,—who heareth the prayer of his children, and looketh upon them in love. We dedicate it to Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our Faith, and the hope of our Salvation; the Prince of Peace, the Messenger of the New Covenant, the Revealer of the Father’s will. In him do we put our trust, assured that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. We have called this the “Church of the Saviour;” because we would consecrate it to his cause, we would acknowledge him as its supreme head. Here, around his table, we will commemorate his death, and the waters of baptism shall be poured in his name. Here may our hearts be full of love and gratitude to him; and, as our morning and evening hymns ascend, this very air shall be vocal with his praise. At all times we would desire to walk in his steps, and to obey his righteous commands. We dedicate, then, this temple to him, as our Teacher, Redeemer, and Lord. We dedicate it to the influences of the Holy Spirit; to the emanations of celestial wisdom and love; to the vivifying and sanctifying power of Heaven; by which the human soul is strengthened and illumined, and brought nearer to Christ and to God. We dedicate it to the best interests of Humanity; to justice, freedom, and love; to mercy and truth. Here may prayers ascend for the afflicted and the oppressed, the tempted
and the tried. Here may souls be converted from sin; and the purifying, comforting, elevating principles of religion be diffused.

When we shall have been called to our final home, other generations will come up hither. May this consecrated place be, both to us and to them, as the house of God, and the very gate of Heaven.
APPENDIX.

This Society was organized in the spring of 1845. The first sermon was preached by the present pastor, and the communion administered March 2, of that year, when between eighty and ninety communicants were present. The first social meeting took place on the evening of March 20. On Sunday, March 23, the Society organized itself into a Branch of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches. The Sunday School was commenced April 6. The first church meeting took place at the house of the pastor, April 22, at which sixty-two communicants were present. From the beginning our number has been composed of representatives from many churches. With remarkable variety of thought and feeling we have been bound together by strong affinities, and all our intercourse has been of unmixed harmony and increasing interest. In the summer of 1845, the estate in Bedford Street, belonging to the late Judge Prescott, was purchased, and arrangements were at once made for the erection of a chapel and church. The church to be for the stated religious services of the Sabbath, and the chapel for the Sunday School, and for the evening meetings connected with the Society. The chapel, which now adjoins the larger edifice, was first opened as a place of worship and dedicated, on Sunday, April 26, 1846, from which time the Society met there on each Sabbath, until the church edifice was completed. The corner-stone of the church was laid on the morning of May 27, 1846.
The services at the laying of the Corner-Stone were as follows:—

Prayer.
BY REV. MR. HOSMER, OF BUFFALO.

Selections from the Scriptures.
BY REV. MR. CORDNER, OF MONTREAL.

Address.
BY THE PASTOR.

Prayer.
BY REV. DR. GANNETT.

Hymn.
Written by a member of the Society for the Occasion.

No houses made by hands, we know,
The Christian's God contain,
Yet holier thoughts, we trust, will flow
Within this sacred name.

When' er with grateful hearts we send
Our children to this shrine,
Bless us, O God, while here we bend,
And consecrate them—thine.

When Sorrow's cup with grief o'erflows,
Or Death our home invades,
Here may we find a balm for woes,
A Light that never fades.

Here, at the table of thy Son,
We'll meet, with hearts to prove
Our thanks to thee, O Holy One!
For thy unbounded love.

And when life's journey we have trod,
May we be all thine own,
The Temples of the living God,
And Christ the corner-stone.

Concluding Prayer.
BY REV. MR. FARLEY, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Benediction.

The principles upon which this church was established, may
be understood from the following expression of sentiments made
by those who were earliest interested in its formation. This
letter, to the pastor of the church, was dated February 19, 1845.

"Having recently come together to compare our religious
views and feelings, and consult upon our common duties and
welfare, the result of our deliberations has been great unanimity
of sentiment upon religious subjects, and a deep conviction that
our own spiritual needs, and the good of the community in which
we reside, demand of us united action. We have accordingly
agreed to unite together for the purpose of forming a new Chris-
tian church, and have taken the necessary legal steps to organize
ourselves as a corporation, under the name and style of the
'Church of the Saviour.'

* The services taking place on the week of our religious anniversaries, several clergymen from
a distance were invited to officiate.
"Our object is not to promulgate any new or peculiar doctrines, but rather, by the exhibition of an humble, free, earnest, and yet consistent spirit, to impart such characteristics to our religious services and other matters connected with the church, as shall render them practically useful to ourselves and the church.

"We do not mean by this to deny the importance of religious doctrines, or to express any unwillingness to hear them preached from the pulpit, but only to declare that our main design is not sectarian, or the maintenance of peculiar religious tenets.

"We wish to give greater prominence and effect to acknowledged Christian truth and precept. We desire not so much to seek after new and doubtful views as to apply old and established ones to the heart and conscience in all the spheres and transactions of life. Spiritual life is our chief aim. We would infuse new vigor into the services of the sanctuary, and call upon the congregation to join in the prayers, responses, psalms, and singing, and so make them to feel that we are to act, as well as to be acted upon. We would therefore use forms, but with such variety and freedom as to avoid formality.

"We desire particularly to bring about a greater degree of sympathy and interest in each other than is usual in our congregations; and would therefore encourage frequent meetings for conversation and friendly intercourse. We would have a special care of the young, and desire to see them gathered into a Sunday School, and to enjoy occasionally appropriate instruction from their pastor. For our own spiritual benefit, as well as for that of others, we would wish to have special and stated meetings for devotional exercises and the expression of religious sentiment. Such meetings, if the zeal which is apt to abound in them be tempered with moderation, may be made highly useful. In short, we wish to learn to practice Christianity, and to have its blessed spirit infused into all the thoughts and actions of our daily life.

"With regard to preaching, we have nothing further to say
than that we desire it to be sound, earnest, practical, and pungent; to feel its power, rather than to perceive its beauty; to be made good by it, rather than to be made satisfied with it.

"We have founded our church upon Christ, the Saviour, the author and founder of Christianity, the Divine teacher and messenger specially sent from God, on an errand of truth and mercy, and endowed by him with special powers and authority for this purpose. On this Rock we intend to build. We have our own belief upon all subjects connected with his truth and mission, but we maintain no written creed. We receive the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the true guide of faith and practice, and we desire to have Christian fellowship with all men who admit its authenticity and acknowledge its binding authority."

Such were the principles upon which this Society was commenced, and to which it has faithfully adhered. The reply to the above was in part as follows:

"The exposition you have made of your views meets my hearty approval. To establish such a church, on such a foundation, I will willingly devote whatever powers God has given me.

"I can conceive of nothing more holy on earth than a band of Christian worshippers united in love, laboring for the good of man and each other, looking to the Scriptures as the guide of life, and to Jesus as the Author and Finisher of their faith.

"I shall rejoice to unite with you in establishing a society which shall be characterized by mutual affection, extended benevolence, and sincere piety. It shall be my prayer to God that this may be our abiding wish, and finally our accomplished end."

The principles and feelings then expressed remain the same, and our labors have thus far been crowned with success.

Our Sunday School, at the present time, embraces persons of every age, from childhood to those in the full maturity of years. There are classes for the study of Scripture, and for mutual religious improvement. At the chapel, there has been a regular meeting on Tuesday evenings, in which the brethren present
have taken part; these services have been sustained with excellent expressions of thought and feeling. At our social meetings the questions proposed have elicited interesting debates. A Service Book, with responses, has been carefully prepared, and has been in use for more than a year. The singing is conducted wholly by the congregation, and in this interesting part of Divine worship all who can participate are invited to unite.

The designs of the church edifice were by Mr. Hammatt Billings, of this city, and do great credit to his taste and skill as an architect. The chairman of the building committee, Henry B. Rogers, Esq., has watched over and directed the work through its whole progress, and to his taste and unwearied zeal this church is under great obligation, both in regard to the building and the more spiritual interests of the Society. The following is a brief extract from his report to the standing committee of the church at the completion of the edifice.

"The early English style was adopted, in the language of the designer, 'not because it was ancient, not because it was severe, not because it was early English, but because this style, more than any other, was simple and unpretending, at the same time that it was solemn and dignified.' So far as we have been able we have endeavored to be faithful to this idea, and at the same time to exercise as much economy as was consistent with its proper execution."

The report then goes on to state that the erection of the edifice is but a small part of the work which it was proposed to accomplish, and that "the most interesting and important duty remains, of building up a spiritual church, animated by Christian principles, and devoted to a Christian life."

Such have been the views of the Society, and such is a brief history of its growth. The walls of our temple have gone up until the top-stone has been laid, and this work can now be looked upon as done; but the most perfect proportions and exquisite finish of any outward temple are not to be named with
the Spiritual Church which bears the image of its Master. For this we should now strive. We feel that the perfect harmony and consistent devotedness which has thus far existed among us, is the surest pledge of our future prosperity and success.

The Dedication of the church took place on Wednesday, November 10, 1847, on which occasion the services were as follows:

1. Introductory Prayer.
   BY REV. F. PARKMAN, D.D.

2. Selection from the Scriptures.
   BY REV. F. D. HUNTINGTON.

3. Chant.

4. Service with Responses.

5. Dedication Prayer.
   BY REV. E. S. GANNETT, D.D.

6. Dedication Hymn.
   Written for the Occasion.
   BY WILLIAM C. BRYANT.

Ancient of Days! except thou deign
Upon our finished task to smile,
The workman's hand has toiled in vain,
To hew the rock, and rear the pile.

O, let thy peace, the peace that tames
The wayward heart, inhabit here;
That quenches passion's fiercest flames,
And thaws the deadly frost of fear.

And send thy love; the love that bears
Meekly with hate, and scorn, and wrong;
And loads itself with generous cares;
And toils, and hopes, and watches long.

Here may bold tongues thy truth proclaim,
Unmingled with the dreams of men,
As from His holy lips it came,
Who died for us, and rose again.

7. Sermon.
   BY THE PASTOR.

8. Hymn.
   BY REV. N. L. FROTHINGHAM, D.D.

O Saviour! whose immortal Word
For ever lasts the same,
Thy grace within the walls afford,
Here builded to thy name.

No other name is named below,
No other sign unfurled,
To lead our hope, or quell our woe,
Or sanctify the world.

Here, many-tongued, thy truth be found,
And mind and heart employ;
Thy Law and Promise pour around
Their terror and their joy.

Here may thy saints new progress make;
Thy loitering ones be sped;
And here thy mourners comfort take,
And here thy poor be fed.

May God, thy God, his Spirit send;
The Word is else unblest:—
And fill this place from end to end,
O ark of strength and rest!

   BY REV. S. K. UOTHROP.

10. Doxology.
   "From all that dwell below the skies!"

   BY REV. JOHN PIERCE, D.D.
Unitarian Christianity, its Object and Influence.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH

IN

ATHOL, MASS.,

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1847.

BY SAMUEL F. CLARKE.

PRINTED BY REQUEST.

BOSTON:
WM. CROSBY & H. P. NICHOLS,
111 Washington Street.
1848.
"Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." — Galatians vi. 9.

We have assembled to dedicate this house to the one only true God, our Heavenly Father, and to the teaching of the religion of his dearly beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

By this act we profess to impart no mysterious influence to these walls. By these rites we do not expect to make this place more holy than any other spot in the creation of God. The universe is his temple, consecrated to his worship by the same Almighty fiat which called it into existence. By these services we do not expect to render this house, as a place of worship, more acceptable to God than the domestic fireside, or the secluded chamber. Where breathes one human soul in prayer, there is a spot most sacred in the sight of God.

By dedication we understand only a solemn expression of the purpose for which we have reared this
building, joined with prayer to God that he will smile upon our enterprise, and crown our efforts with success.

For these religious services we claim, indeed, no authority from the New Testament. But on this account we deem them none the less useful or impressive. We rest our authority for these rites on their own intrinsic merits. We value the religious services of this and similar occasions for the serious impressions which they make upon our own minds, and the holy influence which they exert on our own hearts. It has been long the custom of enlightened people, when any important public edifice, designed for any particular purpose, is reared and finished, to dedicate and set it apart for such purpose by some appropriate exercises. Especially is this the case when buildings designed for religious worship are completed. May the custom long continue! To me there is a deep meaning in these exercises,—a solemnity becoming the occasion.

The edifice where we now meet is not, indeed, wholly new. This house has been long devoted to religious worship; its external remains the same; its inward structure is changed. By the change you have made it a far more pleasant and more convenient place of worship. By the alteration our worship here has been interrupted; and now that it is finished, it is fitting that our first meeting here should be to dedicate this house anew to religious worship
and religious teaching. May ours be no mock service! We have reared these walls for a sacred purpose. Let us remember that they are holy only as they are consecrated by holy thoughts and affections. We dedicate this house to prayer. Here may the finite rise to the Infinite. Here may the human soul hold sweet communion with the Divine. Here may many hearts be led to God. May this be none other than "the house of God, the gate of heaven."

On an occasion like this, when the alteration in the structure of the house renders it proper to consecrate it anew by appropriate religious exercises, it is natural for the mind to revert from the present through the past, and dwell for a moment on the changes which have taken place in this society since it first worshipped here.

But on this point we need not dwell at length. To most of you the changes which have happened are better known than to myself. They do not differ essentially from the changes which have taken place in very many societies in New England during the last thirty years. A division has been made. A new society has gone out from this; but the parent church remains. The same society who first reared and dedicated this house have remodelled it, and now consecrate it anew. The doctrines now taught from this desk are essentially the same as when it was first reared. They may have taken a more definite form, and received a more specific name. But in
principle they are not changed. We still believe in
one God, our Father, the creator of heaven and earth,
who is above all and over all,—we believe in Jesus
Christ, the Son of God, whom the Father commis­sioned to make known his divine will among the
children of men. In short, we believe, with St.
Paul, that "there is one God, and one mediator be­tween God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* We
wish it to be distinctly understood, that we cling fast
to this faith, as it was proclaimed by the Saviour him­
self, and taught by the greatest of the Apostles. And
to the further teaching of this faith we would re­
dedicate this house. Here may the simple truth, as
it was proclaimed by our Divine Master, continue to
be taught and cherished in its original simplicity and
in the beauty of holiness.

I need not tell you, my hearers, that the society
who worship in this house hold opinions in common
with that denomination of Christians called Unitar­
rians, and that the Gospel will here continue to be
taught as understood by that body of believers. In
every particular we may not agree with them; for we
acknowledge no human creed, written or unwritten.
We try our belief by no authority but the word of
God. This we consider an infallible rule of faith
and duty; and we wish no other. We believe that
human creeds serve no higher purpose than to dwarf

* 1 Timothy ii. 5.
the mind, fetter thought, and check the progress of
the human soul. We are seeking higher excellence,
and would not be hindered by them. And this, in­
deed, is one of the distinctive characteristics of the
denomination to which we belong. Let us hold fast
to this principle of freedom; it will help us on in
Christian progress,—it is the only safeguard against
bigotry and intolerance, both of which only serve to
corrupt the purity of the soul. We dedicate this
building, then, to intellectual and religious freedom.
Here may the untrammeled mind seek truth from the
great fountain of truth.

It is not my purpose at this time to dwell at length
on the particular doctrines which we hold in common
with other Unitarian societies. They have been so
frequently preached to this people, that a repetition of
them on this occasion is uncalled for. Besides, teach­
ing mere doctrines is not the highest end of preach­
ing. To be sound in theological opinions is well;
but to be true in Christian practice is better. Belief
alone does not constitute one a Christian. We may
believe in the absolute sovereignty and simple unity
of God, in the "Five Points" of Calvinism, or the
"Thirty-nine Articles" of the Episcopal Church, and
yet in our daily walk and conversation fall far short
of the true Christian life. The real Christian has a
far higher end in view than to attain to a belief in
certain peculiar doctrines; namely, the practice of
true Christian principle.
But that we desire to extend to others the doctrine we embrace, we do not deny. It is a treasure which we would not confine to ourselves alone. It has given us higher and nobler views of God, a deeper knowledge of our own souls; it has revealed to us the unrivalled beauty and surpassing loveliness of our Saviour's character, and given us a truer love for his holy religion. It has done much for us; and we wish it to do the same for others. We would not lock it up in our own breasts. We should rejoice to spread it through the length and breadth of our vast country, till every town and dwelling in our land should be quickened into a new and holier life by its genial influence.

In thus speaking we do not mean to claim for our denomination higher excellence and purer virtue than we concede to other Christians. We only mean to assert, what we feel to be true, that, by the aid of the doctrine we profess, we have risen to a higher point in Christian progress than we could have otherwise attained. Nor do we mean, that we regard our peculiar views as essential to salvation. As a good man has said, "Far from us be this spirit of exclusion, the worst of all the delusions of Popery or of Protestantism. We hold nothing to be essential, but the simple and supreme dedication of the mind, heart, and life to God and to his will. This inward and practical devotedness to the Supreme Being, we are assured, is attained and accepted under all the forms
of Christianity. We believe, however, that it is favored by that truth which we maintain, as by no other system of faith. We regard Unitarianism as peculiarly the friend of inward, living, practical religion. For this we value it. For this we would spread it; and we desire none to embrace it, but such as shall seek and derive from it this celestial influence.”

The dedication of a new place of worship is an interesting event in the history of any society. It is particularly so with us. For a few years past, my friends, as is well known, this society has labored under unavoidable difficulties, which have in some degree impeded its progress; — difficulties such as are common since the multiplication of sects has so divided the Christian Church. These difficulties, though discouraging to some, have not proved serious. Your perseverance has met and overcome them in a great degree, and we trust will turn them into aids to help you on in your efforts to promulgate the great principles of Christianity. Your meetings on the Sabbath, which for some time you were obliged to suspend, have been resumed with an interest and earnestness on your part which need only to be continued to insure success. The church has been remodelled to suit your convenience, as it never has before. The dedication of it, we trust, will prove a happy era in your religious history. On this day may former obstacles and discouragements cease to impede
your progress! May the present prove an epoch from which you will date your future prosperity! Doubt not, that, if you are faithful to the work you have undertaken, your labors will be crowned with a success such as the most sanguine have never anticipated. Do not stop where you are. You have done much, but you have much more to do. Let us go on with a firm and decided step in the course upon which we have entered. If unforeseen obstacles shall chance to rise up in our way, let us have the resolution to overcome them; and in the conflict we shall gain new strength for further action. Let what we have gained be an impetus to urge us on to something higher. "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

It is proper, my friends, on an occasion like the present, when our society is starting from a new point, and under favorable auspices,—it is proper that we consider well the course of action which it becomes us, as Unitarian Christians, to pursue. That it is our desire to put our society on a permanent basis, and make it an efficient means of promulgating Christian truth, we have no wish to conceal. We feel that the wants of the community demand such service. We know of no duty more incumbent upon Christians, than that of extending the influence of our holy religion. We know that there are many, very many persons, in a community like this, who do not sympathize with that system of theology which repre-
sents man as a being by nature totally depraved, and incapable of any good act,—that he is born to sin, and sin only, till he is regenerated by the special favor of God. These views are honestly entertained by many sincere Christians; but there are many more no less sincere who shrink with pain from such degrading views of human nature. There are many more who love the Lord Jesus Christ, who are seeking light from his word, and who are striving to live as he lived, and yet who are excluded from the church, and denied the name and fellowship of Christians, merely because their religious convictions of truth and duty forbid them to subscribe to a certain creed of human origin, maintaining doctrines which they consider derogatory to the sublime character of the Almighty, and directly at variance with the whole tenor of Christ's preaching. Under such circumstances, we know of no more valuable service which we can render the cause of Christianity than that of building up a church and society where all shall be free to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Hence we believe that Unitarian Christians have a higher and more important mission to accomplish than that of enlarging the numbers of a particular sect. What, then, shall Unitarians do? This is a question which it may be profitable for us to consider.

The great purpose of all Christian sects, by whatever name they are called, should be the same; name-
ly, to cherish in their own hearts, and kindle in the hearts of others, that same spirit of love towards God and man which formed so distinctive a feature in our Saviour's character. The true Christian is not he who labors merely to build up this or that sect, to inculcate this or that peculiar doctrine,—who abides rigidly by this or that creed, or unites with this or that church,—but he who strives after purity of heart and life, and manifests Christ's spirit of love towards God and his fellow-men. This is the all-important attainment. This is the only essential thing. Let this, my friends, be the object of our highest efforts. To this end we dedicate this house. Here may Christianity be cherished in its purity, independent of sectarian feeling or party prejudice.

He must be a very narrow-minded man who can perceive no true and vital religion except in his own particular church or sect. He has yet much of Christ's spirit to acquire who denounces as heretics all who do not subscribe to his particular creed. Strange, that after eighteen hundred years of experience men can be so ignorant of Christianity! But, my friends, such ignorance is around us, and calls loudly upon us for the exercise of charity. We lament this spirit of exclusion which is manifested by many of our churches; and we lament it not so much for the injury it does others, as for the narrow, bigoted, egotistical influence it has upon themselves. Here is the great evil which the spirit of exclusion is working in so-
ciety; it shuts out those who entertain it from an intercourse with more enlightened and spiritual minds, and thus checks their progress in Christian excellence. They bind themselves down with a man-made creed, which had its origin two hundred years ago; and thus they are compelled to remain stationary while the world moves on. The more earnest and inquiring Christians are very little affected by this narrow spirit. They go on attaining new light and higher purity, while the self-satisfied remain the same.

What though forty or fifty Catholic laborers on our railroad do form themselves into a church, and exclude from their fellowship all the other Christians in this town, because we do not admit the infallibility of the Pope? What though they do claim to be the only true church, and deny to us and our sister church-members the opportunity of communing at their table, because we do not believe that the bread and wine there offered are actual portions of the veritable blood and body of Christ? What though they do deny us the Christian name, and denounce us as the children of the Devil, because we find truth in the Bible which militates against their creed? We lament this state of ignorance, superstition, and bigotry; but we lament not so much the injury it does the more enlightened followers of Christ, as its evil influence on the minds of those who are subject to it. Their denunciations do not trouble us, only as they reveal the ignorance and superstition from whence they come. And, for
the same reasons, we lament this spirit of intolerance as manifested by some of our Protestant churches. We can perceive no difference between that spirit of intolerance which denies the name of Christian to all who do not believe in the infallibility of the Pope, and that which denies the same name to all those who do not believe in the equality of the Son with the Father. We would as soon be excluded from Christian fellowship on account of our disbelief in one dogma as the other. We lament this spirit of exclusion in the Protestant as much as in the Catholic Church. We know that, wherever it manifests itself, it retards the growth of the soul in Christian excellence.

Let us, my friends, avoid it. Let it not be cherished in our hearts. Let us strive not so much to build up a particular sect, as to extend those great principles of Christianity in which all sects agree. It matters not so much what a person believes as what he does. Christ will judge us, not by our doctrines, but by our deeds. Let us not imagine that none are true Christians except those who belong to our particular church. The church is of importance to the Christian only as it ministers to Christ's spirit in his heart. And, as a distinguished writer observes, "Every church which so ministers is a good one, no matter how, when, or where it grew up, no matter whether it worship on its knees or on its feet, or whether its ministers are ordained by pope, bishop, presbyter, or people; these are secondary
things, and of no comparative moment. The church which opens on heaven is that, and that only, in which the spirit of heaven dwells. The church whose worship rises to God's ear is that, and that only, where the soul ascends. No matter whether it be gathered in cathedral or barn; whether it sit in silence or send up a hymn; whether the minister speak from carefully prepared notes, or from immediate, fervent, irrepressible suggestion. If God be loved, and Jesus Christ be welcomed to the soul, and his instructions be meekly and wisely heard, and the solemn purpose grow up to do all duty amidst all conflict, sacrifice, and temptation, then the true end of the church is answered." The character of the church is determined by the character of the individual souls who constitute it. If they be pure, devout Christians, then theirs is a true Christian church; no matter by what name it is called, or to what particular creed its members subscribe. Those things are of little consequence in the sight of God. I wish to unite with that church whose members manifest the most of Christ's spirit in their daily business intercourse with their fellow-men. That is the church which will most help me to become an earnest, devout, practical Christian; and it is for this aid that I desire to join any church.

We should lament this spirit of exclusion much less, were its evil influence confined merely to our houses of worship and our tables of communion. But it does
not stop here. How often does it enter the abodes of private life, and disturb the social intercourse of near neighbours and friends! How often a division in the church makes a division in the town,—arrays one portion against the other,—kindles and keeps alive the bitterest feelings of party jealousies! And would to God we could trace its feudal influence no farther! But, alas! there is no spot so holy as to be secure from its intrusion. It enters the family circle, and destroys with its sectarian bitterness the peace and sanctity of the most sacred relations. How often does it sunder the tender ties of parental affection and fraternal love, separating those sacred bonds which God alone has joined together, leaving none other than a cold and formal union between husband and wife! O, can it be, my friends, that God looks down with pleasure upon the workings of such a spirit? Is such the influence of Christ’s love in the human heart? Is this the “peace on earth” and “good-will towards men” which our Saviour came to establish? Is this religion? Be not deceived, my hearers; be not deceived. It is none other than the worst spirit of Antichrist,—a very viper in the human bosom. Guard, O, guard against it, as the bitterest foe to your present and everlasting happiness!

Why, my friends, should different religious sects be at variance with each other? What if we do not think alike in some particular points of doctrine? Why should that circumstance in the least alienate
our personal friendships? What if we do not all go to the same church? We may nevertheless interchange with each other the civilities of Christian fellowship. We may still meet as neighbours and friends, and sympathize with each other in our joys and our sorrows.

It gives me pain to see one sect of Christians arrayed against another. It is so contrary to the spirit of Him whom we all profess to follow! Hence, I have no sympathy with these "Evangelical Alliances," as they are called, of Protestant sects to put down the Catholic Church. Far better would it be for them to form a Christian alliance against the Popery that is in their own midst. I abhor as much as any one the sectarian spirit of Rome. But, nevertheless, I do not shut my eyes to her many virtues, or to her noble efforts in promulgating Christian principles. Her gloomy convents have often been cheered by the truest manifestations of fervent love to God and man. Her missionaries have carried the light of Christian truth to the most benighted heathen. Her "sisters of charity," by their deeds of love, have banished wretchedness and pain from the most hopeless suffering. Even in the Catholic Church the Spirit of God has found a home. And shall I lend my aid to crush it? Shall I join an "Evangelical Alliance" against a church which has nourished and matured such sainted spirits as Massillon and Fenelon, and which is now honored with so noble a head as Pope
Pius IX. In the Catholic, as in all other churches, the spirit of Christianity often breaks away and rises above the narrow bigotry of a sect, and makes individuals who embrace it far better than their creeds would allow. Indeed, wherever Christianity is preached, though corrupted with the grossest errors, there noble virtues spring up, and devout Christians are formed. No, my hearers, though I were clothed with the power of Omnipotence, I know of no Christian sects which I would raise my arm to annihilate. While I rebuke their vices, God grant that I may cherish their virtues!

Let us, then, my Christian friends of this society, let us strive to walk in peace and love with all religious denominations of Christians, and, as far as they will allow, extend to them our friendly salutations and Christian fellowship. Doubt not that a friendly spirit will, in due time, meet with a friendly response. Already we see an inclination, on the part of several different denominations, to break down the sectarian barriers which have so long kept them apart. Already we know of numerous instances of Christian fellowship between Methodists, and Christians, and Baptists, and Unitarians, and other liberal sects. And we rejoice at it. We rejoice to believe that we see indications of a closer bond of union between all sects of Christians than the world has ever yet known. The rigid theology, which has prevailed so long in our churches, is gradually yielding to the milder sway of
Christian truth. The influence of Unitarian Christianity on the stern theology of New England, for the last thirty years, has been too evident to be mistaken or concealed. Not only has this denomination increased, till it numbers in its ranks a large portion of the most distinguished minds and the most eminent Christians of our country, but it has also breathed its own genial spirit into all other Christian sects. By its enlightening influence, the dark clouds of superstition have been in a great degree dissipated, and the warm sunlight of Christian truth has been allowed to shine down more clearly and steadily upon all our churches. Bigotry, unable to withstand the new light, has gradually withdrawn from the strong glare, and sought to carry out its blind zeal in some more obscure corner. The old and prominent doctrines of Total Depravity and Infant Damnation, which, once, to deny was counted the most damnable heresy, have passed, like the belief in ghosts and witches, to be numbered with the superstitions that were; or, like the latter, are held only by the blinded few whose minds have been clouded with ignorance too dark for the light of science or religion to penetrate.

Nor has this influence ceased to operate. Never was it more steady and effective than at the present time. It is silently pervading all ranks of Christians, gradually penetrating, and softening, and moulding their creeds to a still milder form, and warming their
hearts with a more generous spirit of benevolence, humanity, and love. The dignity of human nature is beginning to be more truly felt, and the progressive power of the human soul more generally acknowledged.

It is for these effects that we prize the efforts of Unitarian Christians. We rejoice, not so much that they have been successful in building up a large and enlightened sect adorned with the brightest names in the catalogue of philosophers, statesmen, scholars, poets, and Christians, as that they have been successful in exerting this enlightening and progressive influence on the various sects of Christians which surround them. This is a nobler work than to build up a party.

These influences, it is true, do not make their way without opposition. We do not expect they will. But these notes of opposition, which are every year sounded, show us that the work is going on. How lately has the Christian world been agitated by the appearance of a little work on "Christian Nurture" by so distinguished an Orthodox divine as Dr. Bushnell of Connecticut,—a work embracing and reasserting some of the most important and distinctive doctrines of our denomination! We hail with joy the appearance of such a work, emanating from so respectable a source, and given to the world by the committee of the Orthodox Sabbath School Society; but we lament
that spirit which has induced the same committee to suppress its publication in so summary a manner. But committees cannot long suppress truth. It will make its way. God so ordains. Dr. Bushnell's little book has reappeared from his own publishers, and will yet be read with eagerness and profit by the denomination to which he belongs.

Yes, the influence of Unitarian theology is of wider import than any particular sect or party. It rises superior to creeds, and extends itself to all denominations, gradually infusing a truer spirit of love into the whole family of churches, and drawing all sects into a closer union on the great principles of Christianity. Let us, my friends, cherish this same influence. Let us shun the spirit of mere sectarianism, as detrimental to the heavenward progress of the soul. Let us not imagine that God's love or his divine blessing is confined to any party or sect. Let us think no man better for belonging to our communion, no one the worse for belonging to another. But let us strive, while here, by a holy life and generous spirit, to elevate and purify our Christian characters, and thus fit our souls for a higher and holier union with Christ's Universal Church in that peaceful world where party names shall never be known. Let us not flatter ourselves that we have yet fathomed the depths of divine truth. But let us remember the parting words of the immortal Robinson to our Puri-
tan fathers, as they, for the sake of religious freedom, were about to embark on their perilous voyage to the wilds of New England. "There is more light yet," said that venerable apostle of the Puritans, as he gave his last farewell, — "there is more light yet to break forth from the word of God." And, my friends, let this be our motto: — "There is more light yet, — more light yet to break forth from the word of God!"

I cannot conclude this discourse without reverting once more to the object for which we have assembled here, — to offer up this house to the only living and true God. We offer it as a pledge of our love for our Creator. We have fitted it anew for sacred worship and serious meditations; and we re-dedicate it to the King of kings and the Lord of lords; to the supreme and undivided Majesty of Heaven. We dedicate it to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the teaching of his holy religion, to the love of his pure and spotless life, and to the dissemination of his high and lofty principles. We dedicate it to the Holy Spirit,—that divine influence which emanates from the Father, which was given to our Saviour without measure, which sustained him in his trials and sufferings, lifting his soul in prayer to God while expiring on the cross, and which will sustain his most humble follower whenever he is called upon to bear his cross or drink his cup. We dedicate it to fervent prayers
and devout aspirations for a holier life, which we trust will here rise from many hearts to be registered in heaven. We dedicate it to free and earnest inquiry, that love of truth which finite minds can never satisfy. Here may no narrow creeds be drawn round the fountain of infinite wisdom. We dedicate it to peace and harmony; to Christian fellowship and unconfined love. Here may all who own the Lord Jesus Christ as their divine master, and who seek to know and follow his teachings, ever meet in one united bond of universal brotherhood. We dedicate it to the culture of an enlarged and truer spirit of benevolence, goodness, and piety; to the unfolding of all those sublime virtues of the human heart, whose germs, if nurtured on earth, will blossom in heaven. In a word, we dedicate it to every noble cause, true reform, or benevolent enterprise, which has for its object to alleviate human suffering, restrain the angry passions of men, and hasten the progress of Christ's kingdom on the earth. Finally, we dedicate it to the great work of winning souls to God; of quickening their inward springs of devotion, and drawing them nearer to the throne of grace. Here may the finite bow before the Infinite. Here may the penitent sinner seek the pardoning mercy of heaven. From this altar may the grateful prayers of thanksgiving and praise for unnumbered blessings and unutterable goodness long continue to rise as burning incense to the throne of God. And,
when time shall be no more to successive generations, may each, in turn, bequeathe this house to those who shall come after them, as a holy mansion where the spirit of God dwelt with their fathers and gave them assurance of an “inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading in the heavens.”
The Church.....as it was, as it is, as it ought to be.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE CHAPEL,

BUILT BY THE

CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES,

WEDNESDAY, March 15, 1848.

By JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE,
Pastor of the Church.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY BENJ. H. GREENE,
124 Washington Street.
1848.
ANDREWS & PRENTISS, Printers,
No. 11 Devonshire Street.
DISCOURSE.

Matthew xvi. 18.

On this rock will I build my church.

It has lately been remarked by a continental writer, that the great Theological Question of the present century will be the Church Question. "For," says he, "it is the only one which remains. The first three centuries were occupied with questions of Theology proper; that is, concerning God—his nature, attributes, character—the Trinity, the Incarnation. The succeeding centuries were occupied in discussing the question of Anthropology; that is, concerning Man—his condition, sinfulness, weakness, limitations, and needs. With the Reformation came the question of Soterology; that is, concerning justification, regeneration, salvation. Now," says he, "there remains but this question of Ecclesiology; that is, concerning the Church—its idea, methods, and organization."

Whether this mode of proof be convincing or otherwise, the fact I believe to be certain. The Christian
Church—as it was—as it is—as it ought to be;—this subject becomes more and more interesting every year. The tendency of the age draws our minds toward it; for in all things the present century tends toward union, harmony, synthesis, as plainly as the last century tended to division, individualism, analysis. We see this in the material world, in those inventions which make the inhabitants of the Atlantic coast a neighbor to the dweller on the Andes. We notice it in science, in the universal disposition to look at the analogies and harmonies of the Universe, and to trace one Plan running through the thousandfold varieties of Nature. In industrial life we seek for Combined Labor, where formerly Division of Labor was the watchword. So in religion, the Church Question; that is, the question of Christian Union and Cooperation is beginning to have an especial interest. Men are growing weary of an excessive Individualism. They feel the loneliness of a merely independent thought and action. They say with the Poet,—

"Me this unchartered freedom tires."

They feel also the need of sympathy and support under the responsibilities of life. So some would turn back to a Mother Church, and sit at her feet, and rest their overstrained conscience by accepting duties from her hands, instead of seeking them for themselves. They find a pleasure in limits instead of liberty. Others, again, taking up this Church Question, on the
other side, seeking a larger union than that of any existing denomination, would make a new Church out of the whole Human Race. All Christian Churches which exist are so inadequate, that they will not allow that they are even steps, by which to reach a better, but regard them rather as impediments and stumbling blocks, to be removed as soon as possible.

Let us also look at this question. First, Historically; then, Critically; then, Prospectively.

Jesus is reported to have referred to a Church, by name, only on two occasions—once when speaking of difficulties between brethren, when he says, “Tell it to the Church”; and again in our text. Here he places the Confession of Peter—the deep conviction which Peter had and uttered, that his Master was God’s Christ; he places this as the solid foundation on which his Church should rest. He therefore believed that his disciples were about to constitute an Association—a united body, whose principle of union would be faith in him; and his prophetic mind looked down the far distances of the future, and saw this Association deepening its roots and spreading abroad its branches until the birds of the air—the wandering and homeless spirits—should find a home in it.

Instead of asking whether Jesus founded a Church, ask whether he did not evidently foresee that his disciples would unite together in an Association, the object of which should be to spread his gospel from
land to land. This question is easily answered—answered by his sending them out two and two, by his parables of the mustard-seed, and of the net, and by a multitude of his discourses. Jesus foresaw that this would be the case, he intended that it should be the case—for such an Association was a necessary means to his end, and such an Association lay as a necessity in the very nature of the gospel.

And when it came, it came as a necessity. The apostles and disciples did not found a Church, but they found themselves in a Church. They were driven together by outward persecution—they were drawn together by an inward impulse. Read the first chapters of the Book of Acts and see how the Church of Christ was formed. Those disciples and women who had attended Jesus in his journeys and constituted his family, kept together after his resurrection. One great thought filled all their minds, one commanding truth ruled their lives. They had known Jesus, and the memory of his life and truth filled to overflowing their intellect; the influence of his wonderful character was stamped upon theirs forever. Another and more mysterious influence had changed them inwardly—had given them courage for cowardice—heroism for weakness—a commanding eloquence in place of a stammering timidity. "We cannot but speak of the things that we have seen and heard." Herein lay the necessity of the Church. The Church at first was an Ecclesia Docens very literally,
a missionary Church altogether, a Church devoted in every member and person to preaching Christ, the Saviour, the Redeemer of men.

Men under the law of such a necessity as this must keep together, must work in union — how could it be otherwise? Gathered out of a social life composed of the hard bigotry of the Pharisee, the cold scepticism of the Sadducee, or the desperate sensuality of Heathenism — and finding within their souls such a faith in an entire salvation from sin — a new life of love — free, earnest, ennobling — having such a sympathy, and such a common aim — here was laid the basis of the most noble friendship. Well might each repeat to the rest what Christ had said to them all: “Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever will do the will of God, the same is my mother and sister and brother.”

The early Church was thus a household of faith; a family of brothers and sisters. How touching the description of that first love! “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; neither said any of them that aught that he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”

The favorite idea with the first Christians of the work of the Church, was this: that it was to replace Christ’s body — it was to be the earthly body by which his ascended spirit should still speak, teach, and act in the world, still heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, and bless mankind. Every Christian
was a living member of this body while in communion with the rest, and his life was received from Christ—“he lived by faith in the Son of God.” The Lord’s Supper was the bond of union and brotherhood. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we all are partakers of that one bread.” Hence the argument for mutual toleration. As the foot and hand and eye and tongue have each a different office, yet all are necessary to the integrity of the body, so may the various tendencies of character and opinion among Christians be controlled toward a common aim by that living faith in Christ which is the principle of life in all.

The organization of the early Church was partly adopted from that of the Jewish synagogue worship, and was partly originated as any necessity occasioned it. We happen to have an instance of this in the origin of the office of deacons. “In those days (we read in Acts vi.) when the number of disciples increased, there rose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude together and said: It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, look out men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. And the saying
pleased the whole multitude,” and so they chose certain persons.

We see, in this instance, how gradually the organization of the early Church arose. It was not fixed immutably from the first in Canons and Rubrics by the apostles — but each part of it came when it was wanted, and was based on the reason of each particular case, and was confirmed by the assent of the whole multitude.

Such was the Church of Christ at first — simple in its organization, noble in its aim, full of a profound life and an immense energy. Its only Creed was Faith in Christ. Its organization was flexible, enlarging as its wants were multiplied. It was a living, loving, and working Church.

Now let us pass on. Many centuries go by, and instead of that simple body of earnest believers, we now find an immense and consolidated Organization — a powerful Hierarchy — spread through many lands, but bound together by the cohesive attraction belonging to a sacred order of persons. It had noble Cathedrals, every stone of which was carved with reverence, and laid with religious awe.

“The hand that rounded Peter's dome,
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome,
Wrought in a sad sincerity,
Himself from God he could not free.
He builded better than he knew;
The conscious stone to beauty grew.”
So that we repeat to-day, in these our edifices, the ideas of those Mediæval Christians; and until we can build something to express the Christian ideas of our own age, we cannot do better than repeat theirs. This Church had a solemn ritual, adapted to every part of human life. It met the newborn babe at its entrance into the world, washed from its brow the taint of hereditary evil, and placed those tender feet in the way of salvation. It blessed the marriage vow of love, and invested the earthly tie with the sanctity of a diviner meaning. It opened its solemn Cathedrals, as sanctuaries for the sinner—it opened a listening ear for the confessions of the penitent, and gave him pardon—it gave in the Eucharist a present God as food for the soul—it brought to the sick bed a sacred comfort, touched the forehead of the dying with the sign of safety—it laid the dead in a consecrated grave. Did youth grow sick of youthful folly, did the maiden long for more than a virgin sanctity—it opened its Religious Houses, where in the calm pursuits of piety life might move upward as it moved onward—upward toward an eternal joy. Thus beneficent and tender toward its children, the Church was awful in its rebuke of the tyrant and the oppressor. It planted its foot on the neck of the despot, and restrained him whom no other force could check. It collected libraries, and opened schools, and taught sciences to a barbarous people, and stood a beacon light of knowledge in a benighted age. Such was
the aspect of the Christian Church in its second principal epoch.

For many centuries this great Organization was the efficient instrument of spreading Christian truth through the world. Never realizing its Idea, it often approached it; and its essential defects long lay concealed. But at last it appeared that the Catholic Church, in working out the formula, "Many members but one body," had caused the unity of the body to oppress and destroy the individuality of the members. The Catholic Church in attaining union had lost freedom. And with the loss of individual freedom also went sincerity and depth of intellectual and moral life. Force and fraud usurped the office of reason. The teaching Church, instead of convincing men of the truth of its doctrines, cheated them into an outward conformity or burnt them at the stake for a sincere utterance of their unbelief. Outward pomp and power took more and more the place of inward piety and love. All felt that something was wrong—none knew how the wrong was to be righted. Then God sent the Reformation, as he sends a storm to purify a stagnant and corrupting atmosphere.

In the Protestant Church the principle of individual conscience, personal freedom, and independent religious life again found its utterance. The idea of individual responsibility was revived, and with it came a new moral life—pure and healthy as the breezes which sweep over the hills on an October morning.
This idea was salt, to save the world from corruption. The Protestant Reformation was as necessary to renew the moral life of mankind, as Christianity was at first. Without Christianity, the world was going to ruin. Without the Reformation, the Church was going to ruin.

I know the defects of Protestantism. They are apparent. In working out the formula—"Many members, but one body," Protestantism saves the variety of the members, but loses the unity of the body. In attaining Freedom, it loses Union. Hence narrowness, ultraism, bigotry, sectarianism. Hence weakness, and inefficiency in every part, according to the law, that "if one member suffers all suffer,"—if one member is isolated, and rejected from the communion of the rest, the life of all is weakened and impaired, for each need all, and all need each.

These evils are now seen and felt by all Protestants. All feel that our disunion will be sooner or later our destruction. Various remedies are proposed, most of them sufficiently superficial. The most common is the sectarian prescription—"let all other sects join mine—all other denominations be merged in mine." This we need not dwell upon. It is not only impossible for all Protestant denominations to be merged in one, but if it could be, it would bring only a swifter destruction. If the whole body were the eye, where were the hearing? Nor need we dwell on such shallow devices as the Evangelical Alliance. Two main
tendencies have resulted from the divisions of Protestantism; one, a backward tendency toward Romanism, the other a forward tendency toward a yet greater Individualism. Let us dwell for a moment on each of them.

In individual instances where our friends and acquaintances join the Romish Church, there may be reason either to be glad of it or to grieve. If they join the Church of Rome because they need its peculiar influence for their own good, if never having found peace in Christ elsewhere they do find it there, ought we not to rejoice in such a result? Why should we doubt that some minds are better fitted to find a personal union with God by the methods of the Catholic Church than by any other? But there are other cases for which we may well grieve, in which these methods are accepted as substitutes for an interior faith, and a partisan rancor and proselyting zeal are the bitter evidences of their wilfulness. In such cases the proselyte is made ten-fold more a child of hell than before. The sense of truth is blunted, the conscience is seared, and the inward eye closed against the sight of God and the Saviour.

Meantime, the main tendency toward Romanism must be regarded as only an eddy in the stream of the Church's progress. Rome has tried its experiment—tried it under the most favorable circumstances, tried it when it had the whole world for its theatre, when it could silence every voice of opposition—it
tried its experiment and failed. Its claim, then, to be the only true Church, the only way to God, the only medium of the Holy Spirit, has been denied by God, and can never be established. To prove that out of its communion there is no salvation, it must also prove that out of its communion there is no goodness. It must prove that the piety which in all Protestant lands has sweetened life, and made death full of peace, is no real piety; that the humane and benevolent enterprises which have sprung up in Protestant lands have no Christian element in them. It must prove that Taylor and Milton, Baxter, Wesley, Penn, and ten thousand more, were neither Christians nor good men. For there is no real goodness except from God, and if these men had no legitimate access to God, their goodness must be false and unreal. It must also prove that the moral condition of those countries in which the Catholic Church has always been the established religion, and from which Protestantism was originally extirpated, and has been always excluded, is infinitely better than that of those lands where Protestantism has always prevailed. That is, it must prove that Italy, and Portugal, and Spain have a higher moral life than Prussia, England, and New England. But the lessons of History and the facts before our eyes are not thus to be set aside. God has judged the Catholic Church by his providence, which called up Protestantism; — He weighed it in his balance, and found it wanting. The world will not
go back to Romanism, therefore, nor renounce Freedom again, even for the sake of Union.

The other tendency of which I spoke is toward a greater Individualism. There are now among us religious men, who think that no visible Church is needed; who think that Churches are of no use; that they rather hinder than help the Progress of Humanity. They would abolish all Churches, and substitute for them Reform Associations, or solitary religion. They accuse the Church of being the bulwark of Slavery, the support of War, and as stupifying men’s consciences toward the great moral evils of the age. I do not wonder that these charges are brought against the Church. I wish there were less foundation for them than there is. The Church, in past times, has thought its especial business to be to promote piety, not to promote humanity. It has attempted that which the Apostle John pronounced impossible —to love God, whom it has not seen, without loving Man, whom it has seen. It has suffered enormous social evils to spring up and spread and corrupt the heart of Society, without exerting its great influence to remove them. Every Lord’s day twenty thousand congregations assemble to worship God, and listen to Christian instruction in these United States. Twenty thousand ministers stand up to teach the people their duties to God and to man—to explain the Christian law of love. And yet this Christian people, with a Bible in almost every house, with a
minister within reach of almost every family, holds three millions of men in bondage—in a bondage which turns man into a brute, which deadens the intellect, depraves the heart, promotes the foulest licentiousness, educates white men and women to habits of tyranny and cruelty. More than this. By the natural advance of moral convictions the human mind is led to see the iniquity of this system—the heart of the age begins to cry out against it in all civilized lands. What do the American clergy? They begin, many of them, to find excuses and justifications for it. They search the records of history to find examples in a superseded dispensation, and precedents in the childhood of the race, by which to uphold its practice in the full light of Christianity. They

"Torture the pages of the blessed Bible,
To sanction crime, and robbery, and blood;
And in oppression's hateful service, libel
Both Man and God."

Nor is this all. Slavery, weak through its inherent corruptions, and feeling its power giving way before the advancing tide of public sentiment, determines to seize a new and virgin soil to contaminate with its varied pollutions. The majority of the American people assist it to accomplish this design. Intoxicated with success, the nation grasps at more of conquest, and using the flimsiest pretexts, invades the territory of a feeble sister State, overruns its soil, defeats its
armies, batters down its cities, and finally compels it to yield a third of its territory by which to purchase a peace. A vote of thanks is proposed to the Generals who have led these piratical expeditions of blood and ruin. In the American Senate but one man is found to say No to this proposal! But the friends of freedom say, “One thing, at least, we may do — this new territory can be protected from the inroads of Slavery. None is there now — none need come.” In the American House of Representatives, this last feeble attempt at freedom is lost by a vote of one hundred and five to ninety-two; a large number of Northern men voting against it. And this is the nation which listens every Lord’s day to fifty thousand sermons! A nation, whose two great parties resemble in their behaviour the two sons in our Master’s parable, the one of whom flatly refused to obey his father’s order, and the other said, “I go, sir, and went not;” but with a difference — for the one party boldly advocates and actively supports an unjust war, and does not afterwards repent, the other denounces the war in words but supports it by its actions. The one maintains that it is right and glorious, the other maintains that it is unjust and wicked, and then proposes to take the General who has carried it on and make him President. What has the Church been teaching for these two hundred years, that these are the results of its teaching? I will tell you what. It has not been explaining the Sermon on the Mount,
nor the parable of the Good Samaritan. No. It has been proving the doctrine of the Trinity or Unity, arguing for and against Vicarious Atonement, for and against Total Depravity, for and against Infant Baptism. The weightier matters of the law, the real substance of the Bible, have been postponed to these debates. It has been building its house with wood, hay, and stubble. Otherwise such an amount of moral blindness and sin in our people were impossible. And why has this been the case? Because the Church has been always a Church of the Clergy, not a Church of the People; and because the clergy, as students and thinkers, will always lay a disproportionate stress on mere matters of theology.

Now I do not wonder that good men, seeing this result of Churches, should say—We were better without them! But not so. The need of Church union, Church action, is rooted in man’s nature. Overthrow these Churches and you must provide others in their place, or men will make themselves others. But the Churches have not been without their useful action. Let us be just to all. The most sectarian, the most bigoted, the most antinomian Church does something to awaken the sense of responsibility in the human mind. It does not direct it, but it rouses it. The fault of the Church is that it has taken the first step, but stopped there. It has called up in man the sense of his infinite obligations, of his awful capacities, of his great dangers and his greater hopes. It has taken
him up out of a sensual life, immersed in things, to a life of ideas and principles. Destroy the Church, and you must still do this work before you can go any further. The Churches arouse the conscience, arouse the sense of religious obligation, and till that is awakened, vain would be the attempts of Reformers to promote a right moral feeling on particular subjects. I do not therefore sympathize with those who say, We want no Churches. My hope is not in the destruction of the Churches but in their advance, in progress to something better. I never hope anything from destructive and negative methods. I never look for any good in going backward. Let us ennoble, purify, reform and carry forward what we have. Let us accept what the Past has given us, and do what we may to improve it. Even Christianity, a supernatural religion and the beginning of a new order of life, did not fall out of the skies unprepared for. It grew out of the soil of Judaism, which had been made ready for it, and took up into itself the life and truth of all the Past. Every truly progressive movement must do the same.

This brings us to the third and last division of our Discourse, which is Prospective. The Church as it is to be. What will be the elements of the Church of the Future?

We have asserted that our Protestant Churches cannot go back to Romanism, nor forward into Individualism and No-Churchism. Nor can they remain
where they are, in their present state of division and opposition. Sooner or later they must come together. The Church of the Future must therefore be a comprehensive Church, taking into itself as independent but harmonizing elements all the tendencies which now appear embodied in separate sects. But they cannot unite on any narrow ground, nor upon any compromise or concession of their particular ideas. They must become large enough to admit, each its own limitations, each to confess its own narrowness, each to own a peculiar excellence in the others which may meet and supply its own deficiency. They must understand the deep meaning of the Apostolic Idea—"many members, one body." They must believe in Providence, and if a movement comes, bending the minds of men in one direction, as the ripe wheat bends before the breeze, they must accept in this movement a Providential meaning, instead of rejecting it as a new outbreak of heresy. They must be able to distinguish such a movement, coming spontaneously and universally, from the effects of human wilfulness, brought about by artificial combinations and manœuvres.

Guided by this spirit, the Future Church will receive into itself the three leading parties of our own community. I mean the Orthodox, the Unitarians, and the Spiritualists. Each will find in the others a peculiar element in which it is itself deficient. Each
will retain what is positive and peculiar to itself, but give up what is merely negative and antagonistic.

Shall I say now what Orthodoxy has, in which we, as Unitarians, are deficient? It understands the meaning of the Gospel, as differing from the Law, better than we do, and sees its special adaptation to the needs of the sinner, as we have not generally apprehended it. It sees that God actually came into the world in Christ, infusing a new life-element, commencing a new movement, beginning a new series of influences. Hence it perceives that Christianity is really a supernatural gift, coming from above the natural order of things, and that those who receive it are actually born into a higher life. Thus it transforms duty into love; instead of a conscientious effort to do right, it creates a grateful affection, which carries us forward, as the advancing tide bears a navy on its bosom. It animates man with the power of faith in unseen and eternal things, and so gives an energy and force which no merely earthly considerations can produce.

Shall I as frankly speak of the defects of Orthodoxy — defects which the Unitarian movement was sent to supply? Orthodoxy undervalues man's nature and capacities; exalting the Son, it does not worship the Father; it does not see God in Nature, God in History, God in Providence. It creates a fervent piety, but is deficient in conscientiousness, in truthfulness, in a regard for man as man. Unitarianism, with all its
defects, can teach Orthodoxy a lesson. If it learns of Orthodoxy to see God in Christ, it may teach it to see man in Christ. It may teach it humanity while it learns piety, may teach it conscientiousness while it learns penitence and faith. And if that seems a small matter, remember that Christianity did not differ from previous religions by creating a more fervent piety so much as in creating a deeper and purer humanity.

So, too, the Transcendental or Spiritual Movement of our day must be accepted and received by the comprehensive Church. It will be received, not for its denials or negations, but for its noble sight of an infinite worth in man, of a divine power in the human soul. Man, trampled into the earth by the crushing heel of the tyrant, is lifted up and placed a little lower than the angels as soon as God’s ideas are found in him. That God is now in the world, that he is now in our hearts, that he is ready now to inspire us by his Spirit, that he is uniformly near, the light within us, the life of our life — these are the teachings of Transcendentalism, for the sake of which we can easily overlook its extravagant opposition to miracles, and what seems to me its unreasonable denial of the supernatural element in history.

Does any one think it impossible that the Church shall ever realize in its large hospitality such diverse doctrines? I say that if the Jewish Prophets, hundreds of years before Christ’s coming, dared to predict an age in which the sword should be beaten into a
plough-share and the spear into a pruning-hook and nations no longer wage war together,—we Christians, nearly two thousand years after Christ may dare to anticipate a time in which Christian sects may be comprehended in one fold, and cooperate toward a common end. If Isaiah could say that the lion and the lamb should feed together, we may say that at some indefinite period of the future even the Unitarian and the Trinitarian may stand together on a common platform.*

That common platform is indeed already laid—that foundation was placed when the words of our text were first spoken. "Faith in Christ" is the bond of union—the one article of the Church's creed. This was the basis of the Apostolic Church, and to this basis we must return. That stone, so often refused by the builders, who have despised it for its simplicity, must become again the head stone of the corner. Whatever sect, whatever individual, accepts Christ as the Master, stands on the foundation and is within the limits of the true Church.

There can be no union among Protestants till they agree to this as the one basis of union. No Protestant sect, as a sect, does now agree to it. The Orthodox demand, not only that we Unitarians should take Christ for our Master and go to him for truth, but that

* The leading idea in the preceding train of remarks corresponds with that of Dr. Bushnell's late admirable Essay on "Christian Comprehensiveness."
we should agree to accept certain doctrines as truth which they call the essential and peculiar doctrines of Christianity. But this is virtually substituting themselves in the place of Christ as our teachers, and shows that either they have no faith in the power of their doctrines to convince an honest seeker, or that they do not believe in our honest intentions—i.e. they want either faith in God, or faith in man. Nor are Unitarians, as a body, willing to take faith in Christ as the basis of union, for many of them insist on knowing the grounds on which a man believes before they will accept him as a Christian. If he does not believe in Christ, on the basis of miracles, having doubts of their reality, though he may believe fully in Christ on the ground of the truth which he taught, and accept him as a perfect teacher, many Unitarians will call him a Deist and Infidel. This is giving to outward miracles an importance which neither Augustine, the father of Catholic theology, nor Luther, the father of the Reformation, ever gave to them, and which even the Jewish Rabbins would not ascribe to them.*

* In the Talmud is the following story, to show that miracles are not to be regarded as legitimate evidences of Truth.

A violent debate arose in the Rabbinical school between Rabbi Eliezer and an opponent, concerning the doctrine of clean and unclean beasts. Rabbi Eliezer brought all possible arguments to support his opinion, and at last, finding them ineffectual, cried, “May this apple tree show that I am right.” Whereupon the apple tree moved, and left its place, and was thrown to a distance.

“Well,” said the opponent, “What does that prove?”
Faith in Jesus as the Christ is therefore to be the basis of the Future Church? What is to be its office?

It will be a Working Church. It will be employed, not in circulating a creed, not in building up a sect, not in going through with religious forms, but the

"Then" returned Rabbi Eliezer, "if you believe not the tree, may this brook show that I am right."

Whereupon the brook stopped, and began to run backward.

"But what does water, running backward, prove?" said the unconvinced opponent.

"Then may the walls of this room prove that I am right," said Eliezer.

The corners of the house were shaken and the walls began to totter.

But Eliezer's opponent cried, "Walls! walls! why do you interfere in the discussions of the wise?" And the walls, bowing in obedience to one wise man, rose again and stood firm out of reverence for the other.

"May then the voice of God decide between us!" said Eliezer. And from the depths of the Heaven a voice was heard to speak, and to say, "Why contend against my servant Eliezer? He alone is right!"

But Rabbi Joshua arose, and replied to the voice, "It is not in Heaven!" quoting from the passage in Deuteronomy, which says, "My word is not hidden from thee, nor afar off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up to Heaven for us and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it."

And God was pleased with Joshua, who believed in the inward word of God in his heart, more than in outward signs and wonders.

This story I find in "Engel," quoted as from the Talmud. I believe that the miracles of the gospels are not myths but matters of fact, for they seem to me reasonable, natural, and beautiful manifestations of the character of Jesus Christ. I am not alarmed at hearing them doubted. I am sure the Church will never give up her faith in them. But I do not believe that Jesus ever intended that a belief in them should be made a test of discipleship. Miracles are to be believed on the ground of Christianity, not Christianity on the ground of miracles. So says Augustine, so says Luther; so feels every spiritual man, however he may have been taught a different opinion.
Church will work in all its parts to do that which Christ did when he was here below. To give eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, to heal the sick and to raise the dead, to cure the foul leprosies of society, to heal the deep wounds of the troubled heart, to clear the pathway of the doubter, to aid the sinner to return to God and virtue,—to this will the Church of the Future devote its whole energy. What would be the result here in Boston, if all the sects, laying aside their jealousies, should cooperate together for a single year, with combined action, to remove the Intemperance, the Licentiousness, the Ignorance, the Poverty of this community? What would be the effect if all sects throughout the South should combine their energies to abolish slavery there? Before such a combination what evil could maintain itself? Then would the Church not only repeat in its prayer, "Thy kingdom come," but would carry out its prayer into action, and see this long deferred reign of Christ commencing below.

Of the organization of the Future Church I will not undertake to speak. It seems to me that it will be various, that it will in some of its parts admit the solemn rites and symbolic forms of Catholicism, in others the simplicity of the Quaker. Its organization may sometimes include our industry and take in all parts of our life, but in other circumstances confine itself to directing our moral enterprises, and carrying on special reforms. But I think that in the Future
Church the distinction between clergy and laity will altogether cease, for this distinction does not belong to Christianity, but was imported into it from Judaism. In the early Church all were clergy and all laity, all priests and all people. By one spirit all had been baptized into one body, and no clerical order is intimated. The Church had its officers as any association must, but these officers did not form a class or clerisy. The Clergy-Church must be changed into the Church of the People, before the members can all feel their individual responsibility for the total action of the body. The ministry, worship, and preaching will remain, but the Church will not be built on the ministry but the ministry on the Church.

With these ideas and these principles, my friends, we united together, seven years ago, and established this Church of Disciples. We took that name in sincere humility. We wished to be scholars, learners, sitting at the feet of Jesus. We wished to unite together, to coöperate, to help each other onward and upward. Our Creed was Faith in Christ, and we were comprehensive enough to include in our body many varieties and even extremes of opinion. Your minister was one of yourselves; he claimed no preeminence, he assumed no official authority, he wished that all the brethren should occupy the pulpit, he wishes and hopes for it still. A band of brothers and friends, we sought for a deeper religious life, for a larger view of truth, for a better habit of active good-
ness. So we began; so, I think, in some measure, we have gone on. We have met with changes, with some severe trials. We have lost, in a variety of ways, a very large body of our best members. As I look around, half of those who were with us at first are no longer here. But our principles are here, our ideas stand fast; and to those ideas and principles I wish steadily to adhere. We have not been faithful to them. We have taken too light a view of our duties toward them. We have not gone deeply enough into the religious life, nor been willing enough to deny ourselves and labor for the sake of our Church. We have never been popular, for we ran counter to many prejudices; to the prejudices of the Conservatives, and to the prejudices of the Reformers. We could not be one-sided, narrow or ultra; nor could we be lukewarm and neutral. So many of our friends have left us from time to time, offended with one thing or another in our conduct and course. But I believe I may say that not one ever left us in anger, nor is there to-day a shadow of coolness between us and our former brethren. This, at least, is something for which to be grateful.

And now we enter to-day into this new house, which is to be our own home. Its simple but harmonious forms, its cheerful seriousness of character, harmonize well with our views of the nature of the religion which we wish here to study together. We wish and intend that these doors may be always open
to welcome the stranger, the feeble, the wretched. We wish and intend that here the rich and the poor may sit together, and the differences of rank and caste be forgotten. We wish that the fugitive slave, and the penitent prodigal may here feel themselves welcome, as they always have been. We have always rejoiced in open doors, in free seats, in having a Church composed not of the rich but of the poor as well. We shall sell no pews, nor put it into the power of any body of pew-holders to control the religious action of the Church. This Church has been built by the free and generous offerings of its members, who gave, hoping for nothing again, except the pleasure of knowing that they were providing for the accommodation of others as well as for their own.

And now, my friends, may this place be to us none other than the House of God and the Gate of Heaven! May it become dear to us as the place where our best affections shall be unfolded, our purest hopes cultivated, new and better views of time and eternity attained. May Faith and Love and Hope abound in the midst of us. And though no candles burn before the altar, though no incense streams upward from the waving censer, may the Lamp of the Lord be here kindled, and the Incense of the heart arise here to Heaven.
ORDER OF SERVICES.

I.—INTRODUCTORY PRAYER.
BY REV. NATH'L HALL.

II.—SELECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES.
BY REV. E. PEA Body.

III.—LORD'S PRAYER.

IV.—HYMN.—Pierpont.
O bow thine ear, Eternal One;
On Thee our heart adoring calls;
To Thee the followers of thy Son
Bend low within these sacred walls.

Here let thy Holy Days be kept,
And be this place to Worship given,
Like that bright spot where Jacob slept,—
The House of God, the Gate of Heaven.

Here may thine honor dwell; and here,
As incense, let thy children's prayer,
From contrite hearts and lips sincere,
Rise on the still and holy air.

Here be thy praise devoutly sung;
Here let thy Truth beam forth to save,
As when, of old, thy Spirit hung,
On wings of light, o'er Jordan's wave.

And when the lips, that with thy name
Are vocal now, to dust shall turn,
On others may Devotion's Flame
Be kindled here, and purely burn.
V. — SERMON.
BY THE PASTOR.

VI.—DEDICATION CHANT.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.

For except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

But will God indeed dwell upon earth? Behold the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Him. How much less this house that we have builded!

For thus saith the Lord—the Heaven is my throne, and the Earth is my footstool. Where is the house ye build for me, and where is the place of my rest?

Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, that keepeth the truth, may enter in. Lord! who shall abide in thy tabernacle; who shall stand in thy holy hill?

He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

For the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. O! worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; fear before Him, all the earth.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations.—Amen.

VII.—DEDICATION PRAYER.

Minister.—Infinite and Eternal Spirit, Thou dwellest not in temples made with hands, neither art worshipped by men’s hands, as though Thou needest anything.

Congregation.—Behold! the Heaven and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee—how much less this house that
we have builded. Thou dwellest in light, inaccessible and full of glory; above all height, below all depth, surrounding, embracing, penetrating all being.

Minister. — Thou art not far from any one of us; for in Thee we live, and move, and have our being. Yet, when we meet together, we more fully feel thy presence. Be with us now, and help us, whose lives are rooted in Thee, to turn to Thee our souls, to give to Thee our hearts.

Congregation. — For without Thee we are nothing; away from Thee we can do nothing; forgetting Thee, all our work is empty, and will come to nothing.

Minister. — We have built this house to be a House of Prayer, a House of Thought, a House of Love and United Action. May we enter it with right intentions and wise aims. We now consecrate it, by solemn prayer and earnest purpose, to highest uses and universal ends.

Congregation. — It is no more ours — it belongs to Thee and to thy Son. Separated forever from private, selfish, sectarian, and party ends, may it be ever used to advance the cause of all Truth, all Love, all Goodness.

Minister. — We dedicate it to the Love of God — to pure worship, to sincere prayer, to a free and joyful piety, to a service of the Father, without formality, superstition, or hypocrisy.

Congregation. — When we here confess our sins, then hear Thou in Heaven, and be merciful to us sinners. When we gratefully bless thy goodness, accept Thou the love of thy children. In sorrow, in need, in darkness, in weakness, when we draw near to Thee, give to us, O our Father, light, strength, and peace.

Minister. — We dedicate this House to the Love of Man — to active goodness, to practical Christianity, to all that may bless and elevate human hearts and lives.

Congregation. — May we learn here to love one another, not in name and word only, but in deed and in truth. May the distinctions and prejudices which separate man from man never enter these walls. May we call no man common or unclean, but here learn to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Minister. — We dedicate this house to free and earnest thought — to the study of truth, to an ever increasing insight, to an ever advancing knowledge.

Congregation. — Here may we learn to know Thee, the Uni-
universal Father—to know Christ, the Saviour and Friend—to
know ourselves, our needs and capacities—to know the Aim of
Life, the law of duty, the bliss of the present, and the hope of
the future.

Minister. — We dedicate this house to the Culture of the
Soul—to its renewal, its elevation, purification, and redemption. We dedicate it to the Church, to brotherly love and
Christian Union.

Congregation. — May this be the home of the highest aspiration
and the largest love.

Minister. — Universal Father, we consecrate this place to
Thee.

Congregation. — Our Father, bless this offering of thy children.
Minister.—Jesus, friend of Man, we devote this place to thee.
Congregation. — Teacher, Master, Saviour, be here to thy
disciples the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Minister. — To the Holy Spirit of purity and love, to the
sweet breathing of God in our hearts, to the spirit of Christian
communion, we devote this place.

Minister and Congregation, together. — Here may the little
child be brought to Jesus—here may the young be helped to
resist temptation—here may manly strength be given to good-
ness—here may the pathway of the aged be made smooth to
the tomb—may the solitary, the friendless, the bereaved find
here friendship and solace—may the mourner here be comfort-
ed—may the poor have the Gospel preached to them—may
the rich be made rich toward God—may the sinner be awak-
ened and find pardon—may many souls be born out of darkness
into light, out of death into life. And while this house shall
stand, may it be the home of that Divine Glory, which dwells
in hearts filled with love, joy, and peace.

Minister. — Now unto the King, eternal, immortal, invisible,
the only wise God,

Congregation. — Be honor and glory, through Jesus Christ,
forever and ever. — Amen.

VIII. — HYMN. — Heber.

Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth, sky, and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and Seraphim, falling down before Thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shall be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see;
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity!

IX. — CONCLUDING PRAYER.
BY REV. SAMUEL BARRETT.

X. — BENEDICTION.

NOTE.

The Church of the Disciples, in Boston, was formed in April, 1841, by the adoption of the following Declaration of Faith and Purpose, by a unanimous vote, as the basis of the Church.

"We, whose names are subscribed, unite together in the following faith and purpose:

Our Faith is in Jesus, as the Christ, the Son of God.
And we hereby form ourselves into a Church of his Disciples, that we may cooperate together in the study and practice of Christianity."

We called ourselves "Disciples," to express our wish to become scholars in the School of Christ, to sit at his feet, and learn what he had to teach us.

We united as a Church, not as a congregation of worshippers. Our object was to have but one organization, and that a religious organization. It should be large enough to include every one who, with faith in Christ, was seeking to know and to obey him, as the great object of life.

We adopted the Social Principle, desiring to study, and work, and pray in company; to know each other; to commune together, and to make one family of brethren and sisters in the Lord. For this purpose we have had social meetings of different kinds, constantly. We have met to examine questions of religion and morality. We have had Prayer and Conference Meetings. We have meetings for benevolent purposes. We have united, as a Church, in a Protest against the Mexican War. We have published and circulated tracts, to show the evils and wrong of slaveholding, and in other ways have endeavored to carry out the principle of social Christian cooperation.

The Worship of this Church has for seven years been strictly Congregational. The whole congregation have taken part in the prayers. The sing-
ing has been performed by the congregation, without an organ or a choir. An experience of seven years has shown us that this mode of singing is both practicable and very sweet and devotional.

The expenses of the Society have been defrayed by a voluntary subscription. During the past seven years, the rent of the place of worship, the minister's salary, and other expenses, have been met by this method, and no seats have ever been rented or taxed. The amount of our annual collections have varied from fifteen hundred dollars a year to about twenty-five hundred dollars. In the new Chapel, which will seat about seven hundred persons, half of the seats will be rented, and the other half will be free to all who wish to worship with us, temporarily or permanently. Our experience has shown, that though large sums cannot usually be raised by the voluntary method, yet that it is by no means so impracticable as has hitherto been believed.

A few more particulars in relation to the history of this Church may not be unacceptable to some persons.

The form of public worship first adopted by the Church was as follows:
1. —Singing, by the whole congregation.
2. —Reading from the Psalms of David. The minister and people read alternate verses.
3. —The Lord's Prayer, repeated by the minister and people.
4. —Reading selections from the Scriptures.
5. —Singing.
6. —The Sermon.
7. —A pause for silent prayer.
8. —An extempore prayer.
9. —Singing.
10. —Benediction.

In the year 1844, in May, the Church adopted a Service and Hymn Book, prepared by the pastor and some of the brethren, which is still used. It contains the Psalms, Litanies selected from the New Testament, Selections from the Prophets, &c.

In April, 1844, the Articles of Organization, (printed in the Service Book) were adopted.

In February, 1845, between fifteen and twenty members of the Church seceded from it, in consequence of an exchange between the pastor and Rev. Theodore Parker, then a member of the Boston Association. The seceders, with others, formed a new Church, under the name of the Church of the Saviour, between which and the Church of the Disciples cordial and friendly relations have constantly existed.

In 1847 a member of the Church offered to give five thousand dollars toward the erection of a chapel. About six thousand dollars more being subscribed by other members of the Church, a Building Committee was appointed, and the chapel was dedicated March 15, 1848, being just a year from the appointment of the Building Committee. The Architect is Edward C. Cabot, Esq. The chapel seats about seven hundred persons, without a gallery. It has a very tasteful interior, with open roof, one large south window, and windows in the clerestory. The seats are partly circular, and those in the aisles are turned toward the nave.