

HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE FIRST
CONGREGATION CHURCH
IN MARLBOROUGH, MASS.

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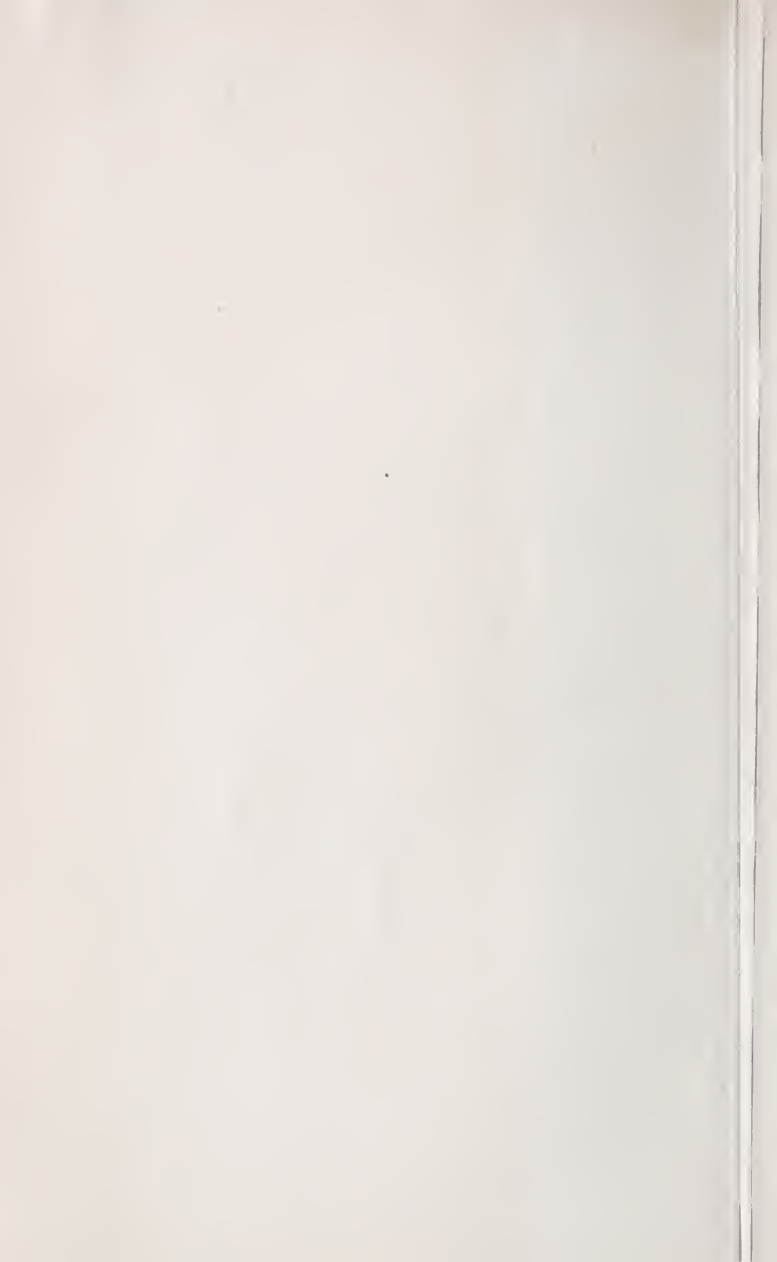
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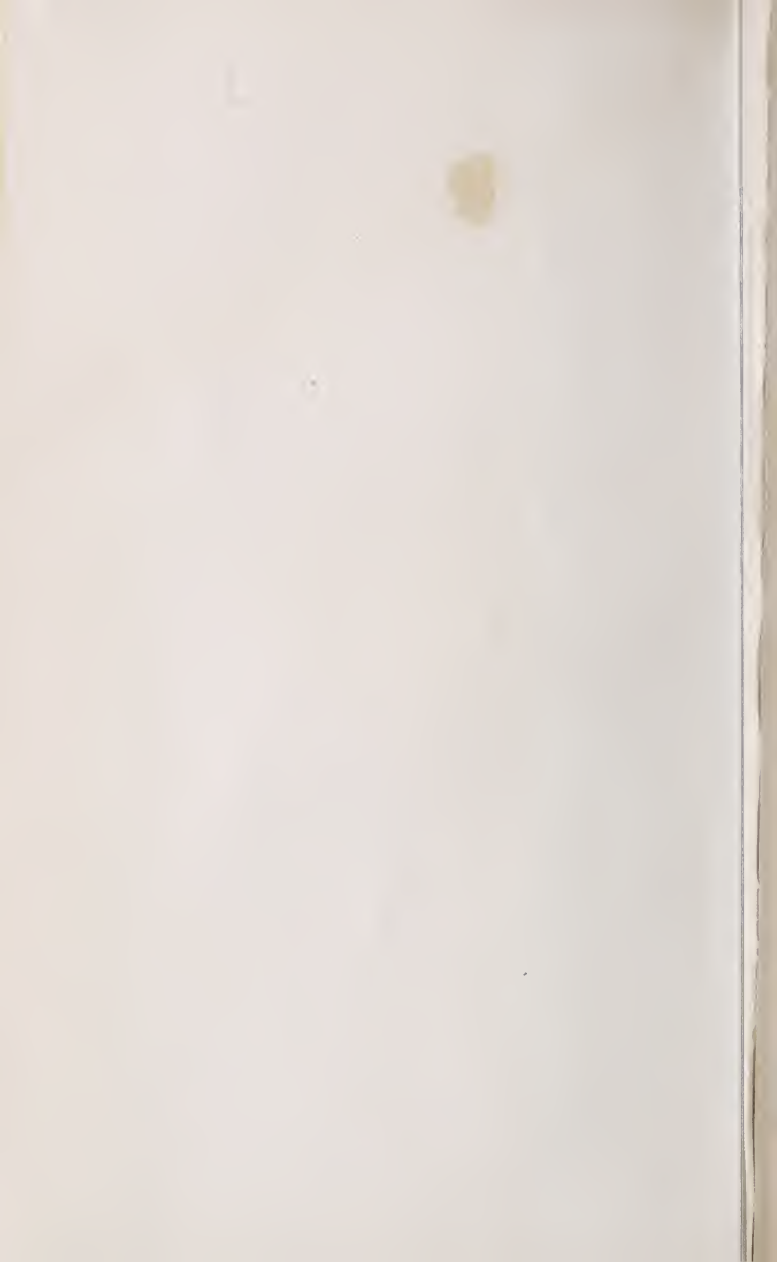
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AN
HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF THE
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
IN
MARLBOROUGH, MASS.,
WITH THE
EXERCISES AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF REV. SYLVESTER F. BUCKLIN'S
ORDINATION, AS PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

BY LEVI A. FIELD,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

WORCESTER:
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P R E F A C E.

Many an interesting chapter in New England history, is yet unwritten. The materials for such histories are to be found, partly in the recollections of the generation far advanced in years, and rapidly passing away; and partly, in those piles of ancient pamphlets and manuscripts which are regarded as worthless, and therefore are left to be scattered and destroyed. Both these sources of information are constantly diminishing; and already many a valuable paper or retentive memory, which might have thrown light on some question of local history, is lost to us beyond recovery. It was the hope of gathering up and fixing in a permanent form some of these scattered fragments and floating traditions which have come down to us, that has led the writer to undertake this brief sketch of the church in this place. And the previous remarks have received a singularly forcible illustration, in the preparation of this Sketch. Scarcely had it been brought to a close, when the individual who was the most desirous of having it prepared, and who furnished by far the largest amount of materials, was suddenly removed by death. Had it been delayed one year longer, some parts of it could never have been written. As an assistant in this work, no living person could supply his place.

I wish in this connection to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Rev. S. F. Bucklin, for many valuable suggestions, and also to Mrs. S. R. Long, for the communication of some important facts ; to Rev. H. Alger, pastor of the West Church in this town, for the use of valuable papers in his possession ; and to Rev. Dr. Allen of Northborough, for the privilege of examining some interesting manuscripts, and especially for the use of his "History of the town of Northborough."

This sketch is a mere outline and nothing more. I cannot but hope that some measures may be taken to have a complete history of the town prepared. Such a work would involve considerable expense and a large amount of labor, and should receive encouragement if not assistance from the town. It is now nearly two hundred years since its Incorporation. Several sections have been set off from it, and erected into separate townships. Valuable materials are already at hand, and many more might be collected as the basis of such a history. And could a person of sufficient leisure and taste for such inquiries, be induced to gather them up and combine them into a simple narrative, it would furnish a record of no ordinary interest and value. Every year of delay will increase the difficulty of preparing such a history ; because some valuable document may be destroyed, or some venerable father, learned in all our traditions, may be taken from us, and thus sources of information may be lost which can never be regained.

L. A. F.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The Records of this Church, previous to the year 1700, have been irrecoverably lost. Its early history therefore, can never be fully written. The few incidents which we have been able to gather up from other sources of information, are probably nearly all that can now be collected of any great importance. That which is gone, and can never be restored, we must be content to lose.

This Town was incorporated in the year 1660, but the church was not organized till six years afterwards, in 1666. In the early settlements of the country, there were religious assemblies and preaching, often for several years, before a church was formed or a pastor ordained. The exact date of the formation of this church, cannot now be ascertained with certainty. But from the fact that churches were often organized at the time of the ordination of the pastor, we may infer as most

probable, that this church was gathered when the first minister was settled, Oct. 3, 1666. In 1662, a rate was made of 12 pence per acre upon all house-lots for building a Meeting House; and in 1664, a rate of $3\frac{1}{4}$ pence for finishing it. This House stood on the old Common, and was afterwards burnt by the Indians. The Common itself, which was the cause of much dispute, was purchased of an Indian named Anamaks.

William Brimsmead was the first settled minister of this town. He was a native of Dorchester, and probably the son of John Brimsmead, who lived there in 1638. He was educated at Harvard College, but never received a degree. In consequence of the College term being lengthened from three to four years, the class to which he belonged did not graduate till the year 1648; but he, with sixteen others, left in 1647. It seems that measures were early adopted in this place for maintaining public worship; as Mr. Brimsmead was preaching here as early as Sept. 1660. He afterwards left and preached for a time in Plymouth, where he was invited to settle, but declined the call. He returned again, and was settled in 1666, Oct. 3, with a salary of about £40.

In 1661, the town voted to build a house for their minister on a lot reserved for that purpose. This house stood not far from the old Meeting House, on the west side of the hill which rises back of the Common, and tradition says was set on fire by the Indians. It was built by contract for £15, and a rate of 7½ pence was made on all house-lots, for the payment of the sum.

Mr. Brimsmead preached an Election Sermon in 1681, which was printed. Among the papers made use of by Prince in writing his Annals, was a Journal in Latin kept by him from 1665 to 1695. He was never married, and tradition says uniformly refused to baptize children born on the Sabbath.* During the last part of his life he was in feeble health, and unable to perform his pastoral duties without assistance. He died on Commencement morning, July 3d, 1701. "The clergy honored him, and the magistrates asked his prayers in times of difficulty and danger." He was buried in

* Mr. Brimsmead was not alone in this singular practice. Mr. Loring of Sudbury, followed the same custom until a pair of twins were born to him, on the Sabbath; from that time his opinions seem to have met with a change on the subject, and all were permitted to receive the ordinance.

the old grave yard, and an unlettered stone still remains to mark his resting place.

It was during Mr. Brimsmead's ministry, that the first Meeting House was burned. This town, with other neighboring towns was made to share the horrors of King Phillip's War. On the 20th of March 1676, while the people were assembled for public worship, and while Mr. Brimsmead was in the midst of his discourse, the cry was raised that the Indians were advancing upon them. The congregation fled at once to the Fort, which was not far distant, and succeeded in reaching it in safety with but a single exception. Moses Newton, while assisting an aged female to escape, who must otherwise have been captured, received a musket ball in his elbow, from the full effect of which he never recovered. The Meeting House, many of their dwellings, together with much of their property, cattle, fruit trees, &c., were entirely destroyed. Alarmed by this attack and discouraged by their losses, the inhabitants left the place, and sought protection in a safer and more populous neighborhood.

Some time in the early part of the following year, the settlers returned. "Soon after their return, they proceeded to the erection of a new

Meeting House, which, like the former, was thatched with straw, or rather a species of tall grass taken from a meadow, since called, from that circumstance, Thatch Meadow. This building, which was left in an unfinished state, lasted but a few years. In 1680, an unsuccessful attempt was made to enlarge and repair it; and at length, in 1688, a larger and more commodious house was erected near the site of the former, which lasted more than 120 years, having stood till 1809.* The old Meeting House was valued in 1689 at £10; and the pulpit at £4.

The following is a copy of the first Covenant of this church, called the Brimsmead Covenant.

“Marlborough Church Covenant as it was Renewed Octob^r y^e 15th 1679.

We whose names are hereafter subscribed, Inhabitants of y^e Town of Marlborough Knowing y^t we are very Prone to offend and Provoke God y^e Most High both in Heart and Life, through y^e Prevalency of sin that Dwell-eth within us, and manifold temptations from without us; for which we have great Reason to be unfeignedly Humbled before God from day to day; Do in y^e name of our Lord Jesus with Dependency upon y^e Gracious Assistance of his Holy Spirit, Solemnly Enter into a

* Dr. Allen's Hist. of Northborough.

Covenant with God and one with another according to God as followeth.

1. That having Chosen and taken y^e Lord Jehovah to be our God ; we will fear him and Cleave to him in Love, & serve him in Truth with all our hearts ; Giving up our selves to be his People, in all things to be at his Disposal & sovereign Direction, that we may have and hold Communion with Him as members of Christ's mystical Body, according to his Revealed will, to our Lives End.

2. We also Bind our selves to Bring up our Children & Servants in y^e knowledge and fear of God by his holy Institutions according to our Best Ability, and, in special by y^e use of Orthodox Catechism that y^e True Religion may be maintained in our families whilst we Live ; yea & among such as shall Live when we are Dead & gone.

3. We furthermore Promise to keep Close to y^e truth of Christ, Endeavoring with affection towards it in our Hearts, to Defend it against all opposers thereto as God shall call us at any time thereunto ; which that we may do, we Resolve to use y^e Holy Scripture as our Platform ; whereby we may Discern y^e mind of Christ and not y^e New found Inventions of men.

4. We also Engage ourselves to have a careful Inspection over our own Hearts so as to Endeavor by y^e Vertue of y^e Death of Christ, y^e mortification of all our Sinful Passions, worldly frames, Disorderly affections, whereby we may be withdrawn from y^e Living God.

5. We moreover oblige ourselves in y^e faithful Improvement of our Ability & opportunity, to worship God according to all Particular Institutions of Christ for his Church, under Gospel Administrations ; as to give Rev-

crend Attention to y^e word of God, to pray unto him, to sing his praises & to hold Communion with Each other in y^e use of both the Seals; Namely Baptism and the Lords Supper.

6. We Likewise Promise, that we will peaceably submit unto y^e Discipline appointed by Christ in his Church for offenders; obeying them that Rule over us in y^e Lord.

7. We also Bind our selves to walk in Love one towards another, Endeavoring our mutual Edification, Visiting, Exhorting, Comforting as occasion serveth; And warning any Brother or Sister which offends, not Divulging Private offences Irregularly, But heedfully following ye several Precepts Laid down by Christ for Church Dealing; Matt. 18th; 15, 16, 17, willingly forgiving all that manifest unto judgment of Charity that they truly repent of all miscarriages.

Now to y^e God of peace that Brought again from y^e Dead our Lord Jesus the great Shepherd of y^e sheep through y^e Blood of y^e Everlasting Covenant; make us all perfect in Every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for Ever & Ever. Amen.

This Covenant, with a few verbal changes, was used by the church until 1837.

In the year 1661, the General Court “expressed their desire and order for the convening” of a Synod to meet at Boston, to give their advice respecting the Half-Way Covenant. The Synod met the following year and

adopted propositions which approved that Covenant, though not without opposition on the part of a small but learned and able minority.

This Church has the following record in regard to this Covenant.

At a meeting of y^e Church of Christ in Marlborough on y^e 2^d of y^e 7^m 1701 ; It was proposed unto consideration w^t was necessary to be done in order to admitting of Persons to y^e ordinance of Baptism y^t were not in any way in Church Fellowship. After a very deliberate and friendly debate, it was unanimously and jointly concurred in & agreed to, y^t all such Persons as shall offer y^m selves or y^{ir} children to this church for y^e seal of Baptism, shall be received, provided y^y are not scandalous in conversation and are orthodox in religion and will submit to y^e Discipline of Christ in this Church, and do engage, and bind y^m selves to bring up y^{ir} Children & Servants in y^e Fear and Knowledge of God by holy Instruction according to y^{ir} best abilities ; and in special by y^e use of Orthodox Catechisms y^t y^e true religion may be maintained in y^{ir} families while y^y live, yea and among such as shall live wⁿ y^y are dead and gone.

On 14th May, 1794, the matter was again brought before the church, to see if any change should be made in the terms on which persons might be admitted to Baptism for themselves or their children, but was left without any action.

The Half-way Covenant was not formally abrogated in this church till the year 1836. But practically, the customs to which it gave rise ceased a number of years previous to that time. The main reason which led to this, was the vote of the church in 1818, that a Committee be chosen to examine candidates for admission to the church, and for the rite of Baptism under this Covenant. From this time the practice almost immediately fell into disuse.

The following was the Covenant used on such occasions, and was known as the Baptismal Covenant.

Professing a serious and hearty belief of the truth of the Christian Religion, you most solemnly choose and take the Lord Jehovah to be your God and portion, promising to fear, love, obey, and depend upon him, as finally to be made completely happy in him.

You believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, to be the only Redeemer and Savior of men, and take him to be your Prophet, Priest and King, depending on his merits to save you from the guilt of sin and the wrath of God.

You believe the Holy Spirit to be the only applier of the work of redemption, depending on his influences and grace to renew, sanctify, comfort, and guide you to glory.

You believe us to be a true church of Christ, and do give up yourself to this Church to be watched over and edified in your Christian Faith to Salvation.

You promise to submit peaceably to the discipline of Christ in this church, obeying them who have the rule over you in the Lord. And you engage that you will bring up the children and servants which may be committed to your care in the knowledge and fear of God, according to the Holy Scriptures which you accept as your only rule. And you promise, by the help of Divine Grace, to labor to be made worthy to come up to a full and acceptable observation, of all the holy ordinances of Christ.

During King William's War, as it is called, an incident occurred to a member of this church which is worth recording in this place. It is thus referred to in Whitney's "History of the County of Worcester;" "On the 18th of July, 1692, the Indians assaulted the house of Peter Joslin, (Lancaster) who was at his labor in the field, and knew nothing thereof, until entering the house, he found his wife and three children, with a widow Whitcomb who lived in his family, barbarously butchered with their hatchets, and weltering in their blood. His wife's sister, with another of his children, were carried into captivity. She returned; but that child was murdered in the wilderness." The person here referred to was Mary Howe, of Marlborough, then on a visit to her sister in Lancaster, just before the time appointed for her marriage. After a captivity of between

three and four years, she was ransomed by government, and returned home in safety, and was married to Thomas Keyes, afterwards a Deacon of this church. She lived to a great age, but was never able to overcome the shock of terror she experienced when taken captive. *

On the 12th of Sept. 1701, Rev. John Emerson, a native of Ipswich and a graduate of Harvard College in 1689, was invited to become the minister of the town. This invitation was the occasion of a long and bitter controversy, and for more than a year kept the town in a state of great excitement. In March 1702, Mr Emerson declined the call. It was renewed in April of the same year, and declined again in May, so strong was the opposition against his settlement. The advice of two councils was asked, and in both cases, the decision was against his becoming minister of the town. The several papers to which this controversy gave rise, such as letters of invitation, remonstrances, results of councils, have been preserved in their original form, and among them are manuscript letters from Increase and Cotton Mather.

* Dea. Keyes lived on the farm now owned by Wm. L. Weeks.

Mr. Emerson was settled in Newcastle, N. H., in 1703, and dismissed in 1712; afterwards was settled in Portsmouth where he died 1732.

Robert Breck, the second minister of this town, was a native of Dorchester. He was born Dec. 7, 1682; was graduated at Harvard College in 1700; and was settled in this town Oct. 25, 1704, when only 22 years of age. His salary was to be "seventie pounds annually, and firewood for the year annually, and settlement one hundred pounds."

The record of his ordination is as follows.

The 25th day of y^e 8^m 1704, Mr. Robert Breck was ordained Pastor of y^e Church of Christ in Marlborough, No Persons objecting. Mr Rawson carried on y^e work of The Day. Mr. Estabrook gave y^e Charge. Mr. Clark y^e Right Hand of Fellowship. Mr. Danforth gave a word of advice unto y^e people.

He married Elizabeth Wainwright of Haverhill, by whom he had six children; four of the children and the widow survived him, she dying in 1736. His son Robert was settled as a minister in Springfield.

The Marlborough Association was formed at the house of Mr. Breck, June 5, 1725. The

original members were John Swift, Robert Breck, John Prentice, Israel Loring, Job Cushing, John Gardner and Ebenezer Parkman. It was formed "with Design and Aim herein to Advance y^e Interest of Christ; y^e Service of our Respective Charges, and our own mutual Edification in our great work." It was voted "that Marlborough, y^e central Town, be y^e Place of our ordinary meeting, unless upon y^e Desire of any particular member, the Association shall see fit to meet elsewhere." The ordinary business of its meetings may be inferred from the vote; "That we will consider any cases that shall be laid before us by any member of us, or by other persons which shall be thought worthy thereof. And if there be opportunity therefor, each member shall deliver in his order, Concionem ad Clerum; unless it be then judged proper some question be spoken to, being proposed y^e meeting before, and as many persons to make answer to it as were appointed thereunto." And accordingly, the early Records are mostly made up of cases of conscience, and questions of difficulty in church discipline, or matters of disagreement, between the parties in a church, or between pastor and people, which were laid before this body for

advice and counsel. The Association was dissolved Oct. 14, 1814, and the Records were given to this church, where they are still preserved.

Sept. 1st, 1730, it is recorded that the Association met at Framingham, and that "Rev. Mr. Breck was prevented from attending by a grievous sore in his mouth, which afterwards proved the sorrowful occasion of his death."

"Oct. 15, 1730, Associated at Marlborough. Met at Benjamin Wood's, by reason of Mr. Breck's being under Salvation." This meeting was changed to a fast, on account of Mr. Breck's dangerous illness. Rev. Mr. Prentice of Lancaster, preached in the morning, and Rev. Mr. Swift of Framingham in the afternoon. The manuscript sermon by Mr. Prentice, from Matt. 4: 24, has been preserved with the records of this church.

In 1728 Mr. Breck preached the Election Sermon, which was published. June 15, 1720, he preached the first sermon ever preached in Shrewsbury. Mr. Breck died Jan. 6, 1731, at the age of 49 years, in the vigor of his powers, and universally lamented.

On the occasion of his death, three funeral sermons were preached to his people; one by

Mr. Prentice of Lancaster, one by Mr. Swift of Framingham, and also one by Mr. Loring of Sudbury; all of which were published in a single pamphlet, and several copies are still in existence. An Appendix is added to Mr. Prentice's Sermon, containing some accounts of Mr. Breck, taken from the Weekly Journal of Jan. 18, 1731, from which are copied the following paragraphs.

“ Before his Settlement at Marlborough, he was a Preacher for some time at Long Island, in the Province of New York, during the Government of Lord Carnbury; there he had the Courage, though at that Time Young, to assert and adhere to the Cause and Principles of the Non Conformists, notwithstanding the Threatenings and other ill Treatment he there met with.”

“ He was a Man of strong natural Powers, clear Head, solid Judgment; and by the Blessing of God on his unwearied Diligence and Study, he attained great Skill in the learned Languages, (uncommon in the *Hebrew*; using to read out of the Hebrew Bible to his Family;) as also in Philosophy, the Mathematics, History, as well as in Divinity, in which he was sound and orthodox, a good Casuist, a strong Disputant, a methodical and close Preacher.

“And as his personal Conduct in his Lifetime was Steady, not elated by Prosperity or sunk by Adversity; so at the Approach of Death, though for a considerable time under Languishments and expecting of it, and in exquisite Pains, yet he then sedately set his House in Order, and with his usual Steadiness, wonderful Patience and Resignation, enjoying Peace in his Soul, he departed this Life, and doubtless entered into the joy of his Lord.”

The Boston Weekly News Letter of the same month speaks in the same high terms of his abilities, his acquirements, his christian and ministerial character, and ranks him among the ablest men of his time.

A monument was erected to his memory near that of Mr. Brimsmead, on which is the following Latin inscription.

Reliquiae terrestres theologi vere venerandi Roberti Breck sub hoc tumulo conferunter. Pars coelestis ad coelum myriadum angelorum et ad spiritus justorum qui perfecti sunt abiit.

Ingenii penetrantis, quoad vires naturales, vir fuit amplissimae mentis et judicii solidi, una cum animi fortitudine singulari. Quoad partes acquisitas spectat, in linguis quae doctae praesertim admodum peritus; literarum politarum men-

sura parum communi instructus; et, quod aliis fuit difficile, ille, virtute ingenii proprii et studiis coarctis, feliciter subegit. In omnibus Theologiae partibus versatissimus, et vere orthodoxus, Scriba ad regnum coelorum usquequaque institutus. Officio pastorali in ecclesia Marlburien- si, ubi Spiritus Sanctus illum constituit episcopum per XXVII annos, fideliter, sedulo, pacifice, multa- que cum laude, functus est.

Doctrinae Revelatae, una cum cultu et regimine in Ecclesiis Nov Anglicanis instituto, assertor hobilis et strenuus. Ad consilia danda in rebus arduis, tum publicis tum privatis, integritate conspectus et prudentia instructissimus. Sincere dilexit amicos, patriam, et universam Christi ecclesiam.

Denique pietatis, omnis virtutis socialis, et quoad res terrenas moderaminis exemplar. In doloribus asperis aegritudinis ultimae patientia ejus opus perfectum habuit; et si non ovans, expectans tamen et placide discessit.

Natus Decem^{is} 7^{mo} 1682.

Denatus Januar. 6^{to} 1731.

Prophetae ipsi non in seculum vivunt.

The following is a translation of it into English.

Beneath this mound are deposited the mor-

tal remains of the truly Reverend Robert Breck. His immortal part hath ascended to heaven, to join the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect.

He was by nature a man of acute intellect, capacious mind and solid judgment, together with singular mental resolution. As to his attainments, he was eminently skilled in the learned languages, familiar beyond the common measure with polite literature; and what to others was difficult, he by his powers of mind and close application to study, accomplished with ease.

Thoroughly versed in every department of theology, and truly orthodox in sentiment, he was a scribe in every respect, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. The duties of the pastoral office in the church at Marlborough, over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer, he discharged faithfully and assiduously, in peace and with great reputation, for twenty-seven years.

He was a skilful and able asserter of the doctrines of revelation, and of the worship and discipline of the New England Churches.

He was a counsellor in cases of difficulty,

both public and private, of distinguished uprightness and consummate prudence.

He was a sincere lover of his friends, his country, and the whole church of Christ.

In a word, he was a model of piety, of every social virtue, and of moderation in regard to earthly things.

In the severe pains of his last sickness, his patience had its perfect work; and his departure, if not in triumph, was full of hope and peace.

Born Dec. 7th, 1682.—Died Jan. 6th, 1731.

Even the prophets do not live forever.

Benjamin Kent, the successor of Robert Breck, was ordained Oct. 27, 1733. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1727. The Town Record has the following in regard to his settlement.

“The Town granted a salary of one hundred and eighty pounds per annum in passable bills of public credit, if he shall see cause to accept of the call given him by the Church and Town, and to continue so long as he shall be their minister, and to rise and fall according to Silver, which is now current at twenty shillings an ounce.” For settlement he was allowed four hundred pounds.

There seems to have been some marked defects in his ministerial qualities, which soon resulted in his dismissal. Under the date of Oct. 1733, there is the following reference to him in the Records of the Marlborough Association, which met that day at Framingham.

“ The Rev. Mr. Smith had invited the Southern Association, (which were to have met this day at his Son’s-in-law, Mr. Stone of Holliston,) by which means we had the benefit of their advice and assistance in the difficulty before us, relating to Mr. Benjamin Kent, ordained at Marlborough ; — great complaint being made about the world, of his principles. Mr. Kent was present, and very freely submitted himself to our inquiries and examination. Mr. Loring interrogated upon the Articles drawn up in the New England Confession of Faith, chiefly relating to the controversy with the Remonstrants ; and he gave such a declaration of his belief, and with such professions of honesty and sincerity in all, that the Association manifested their satisfaction therein, upon condition that they should find that both his preaching and conversation had been, and should for the future be, agreeable to such declaration ; in short, so long as they should

see that what he had exhibited were his real sentiments.”

The general impression made by this equivocal statement, is confirmed by the following letter of Dr. Franklin. “You tell me that our poor friend Ben. Kent is gone; I hope to the regions of the blessed; or at least to some place where souls are prepared for those regions. I found my hope on this, that though not so orthodox as you and I, he was an honest man and had his virtues. If he had any hypocrisy, it was of that inverted kind, with which a man is not so bad as he seems to be.”

The Church Records also show that there was great dissatisfaction with his course, among some of his church and congregation. Scarcely had he been settled, when Benjamin Wood, who seems to have been a prominent member of the Society, brings some grave charges against him. He calls him a “profest Arminian,” and says that his want of orthodoxy has made a “great noise almost over all of the Province;” that the “nearest neighboring ministers refused to assist in his ordination;” and also charges him with contradictory statements. The opposition to him increased and kept the church in commotion during the

entire year 1734; and at length a Council was called, Feb. 4, 1735, to investigate the matter, and give their advice. The result of that council has fortunately just been recovered, and is full of important information. It appears from this document, that, in the estimation of the council, the charges of being a "profest Arminian," of "profane and scandalous conversation," were fully sustained. They find that he "held and vented unsound and dangerous opinions with respect to the great and important Scripture doctrine of the Trinity;" "that Jesus Christ hath not made full satisfaction for all our sins;" "that there were several answers in the Assembly's Catechism which had not a word of Scripture to support them, particularly that respecting the Decrees;" "that he denied an absolute Election, and asserted a conditional one on the foresight of good works;" "that he said in his preaching, that if God dealt with Adam as a moral agent he could not have hindered his fall or his sinning against him;" "that infants came into the world free and clear of original guilt." It also appeared to them "that he had said in his preaching, that the fundamentals of religion were plain and easy; were not, never were,

never could be disputed, because they were of a moral nature, which expressions we judge are false, and have a dangerous tendency to lessen our regard for revealed religion." Finding him guilty of holding and preaching such sentiments; of using "profane and filthy expressions;" and also of "expressions relating to y^e neighboring ministers which are indecent and injurious reflections upon them;" the council judged, and advised that the Rev. Mr. Benj. Kent be suspended from preaching the word, or administering the holy Sacraments until the 27th of May next. And if as we earnestly wish, it shall in mean time please the God of all grace to give him that light and conviction which may dispose him publicly to retract his errors, and own the truth as it is in Jesus, it may give occasion to restore him in the spirit of meekness and with joy. To that time this council will be adjourned, and will then stand ready, (God willing,) to give this church our further advice."

Mr. Kent's ministry probably closed with the decision of this council. No record now remains that he ever retracted his errors, or was ever again restored to his regular standing as a minister of the gospel. He probably

withdrew at once, leaving the church as we know in a divided state. An action was brought against the town, to recover the sum of £400, which was voted to him as a "settlement," and the case, after a prolonged litigation, was finally decided in his favor. He afterwards removed to Boston where he commenced the practice of law, and became celebrated for his "eccentricity and wit." He fled from that place, as a refugee, to Halifax, where he died in 1788 at an advanced age.

The following Covenant seems to have been formed and entered into by an Association of Young Men in this place, who met together for religious objects. It was formed Sept. 9, 1736, and twenty-nine names were appended to it. How far it was successful, or how long it existed, we have no means of knowing; but from the fact that the Covenant was copied out in 1740, and that new names were subsequently added, it may be inferred that it continued in existence for several years. It is the first record that I have found of any Association of Young Men.

"We the subscribers,—Being Sensible that it is our great Duty, and Interest to serve God in the Days of our youth, and to Seek him Early, and Having his Promise that

when two or three are met together in h's name, that he will be in the midst of them,—Have thought it might be for the glory of God and our spiritual good, to meet together for Religious Exercises at certain times: Do in the Presence of God, and whom we fear, and to whose Service Herein we Devote our Selves, Covenant and agree together as follows.

(1) That we will with God's Leave meet together Every Lord's Day in the Evening, and on y^e evening of Thanksgiving and Fasts, to Carry on among our Selves Religious Worship, to Pray to God, to Sing His Praises, to Read his word or Some Practical Discourse, and to conclude with Prayer, and while we Continue together our Conversation shall be Savory and Suitable to the End Proposed by us in our meeting together.

(2) That we will Conceal and not expose any weakness or Infirmary that may Proceed from any of us, either while we are together or elsewhere, and that we will watch over one another for good.

(3) That we will Each of us in our turns, according as shall be appointed by y^e Society, Carry on part of Religious Exercise from time to time as God shall Enable us.

(4) That when we Break up our Religious Exercise, we will Directly return to our Several Homes, and nothing But what is Extraordinary Shall Divert us therefrom.

(5) That We will admonish one another in love if there be occasion; and if any among us, (which God forbid) shall fall into any Scandalous Sin, or Break through any of y^e Articles of this agreement, or without any just Cause, be absent from our meeting and Refuseth to give Christian Satisfaction to us, He shall cease to be a member of the Society.

(6) That we will not only whilst together, But at all times, in all Company, Endeavor by y^e grace and Help of God to regulate our Conversation with that Christian Prudence and Sobriety as Shall give no occasion to others to Speak ill of us, nor of the Religious Design that we have now Engaged in.

Finally for the Performance hereof we will rely upon the Divine Grace and Seek for God's Blessing upon and with us.

Sept. 9, 1736. Copied out August 16th 1740.

Aaron Smith, the fourth minister of the town was ordained June 11, 1740. This was about the time of the "Great Awakening," but there is no record of any deep or general interest in this place. Whitefield preached here on the afternoon of Tuesday, the 14th of Oct. 1740, and tradition says on the common in front of the old Meeting House, because the use of the House was denied him. Appointments were often made in advance, without consulting the wishes or convenience of the Ministers, and this in many cases awakened strong opposition to his course. It is supposed to have had some influence in this case. We find the following reference to this day in his letters. "His heart was dead at first, and he had but little freedom; but before he finished, the word came with such demonstration of the spirit, that

great numbers were melted down. Here he found Gov. Belcher, who went with him through the rain, that night to Worcester." In the private Journal of Rev. Ebenezer Parkman of Westborough, mention is made of special meetings in this place, but nothing that indicates any general interest. From the fact that the Marlborough Association drew up and generally signed a Testimony against Mr. Whitefield and his conduct, it may perhaps not unjustly be inferred, that Mr. Smith had little sympathy with the Great Awakening.

The 15th of June 1749, was observed as a day of "public Fasting on Occasion of the extreme Drought," prevailing at that time. Mr. Smith preached two sermons from Lev. 26: 3, 4, on "Some Temporal Advantages in Keeping Covenant with God." The sermons were printed, "At the earnest Request of His Hearers," and a copy is preserved with the Church Records. The following extract is taken from the Appendix.

"The Heat and Drought daily increased until not only the Ground was chapt, but the Corn which clothed the Valleys was fainting, and on the point of sinking into the Earth. The Trees languished and died; The Brooks dried up; the small Fish so perished that the Rivers Stank:

yea the Air by a long stagnation become so putrid and unfit for Respiration, that Mankind were in Danger of being suffocated. In this last Extremity. When every Countenance gathered Paleness, for all Things appeared dark and dismal, and in Consternation, Men stood gazing one on another, wisely inquiring, Wherefore God's Anger burned towards them in such a tremendous Manner! I say in this very critical Juncture, the Lord wrought graciously for his People on the 6th of July; that memorable Day Almighty God compassionated our desperate Case, and called us to behold his great Power in relieving us, when reduced to the lowest Ebb New England ever saw. 'Twas in the very Instant when all Hope was ready to fail; that the Father of Rain sent plentiful showers, and so refreshed the parched Earth, and recovered the perishing Fruits, and destroyed the Insects; And the Earth yielded more than a competent supply for the Necessities and Comforts of Life."

In the year 1775, the dysentery prevailed in this town and was signally fatal, as in three instances, four persons were buried in one day, and nineteen in one week.

A singular event in Mr. Smith's history occurred in the year 1777. Tradition says, that three men went to his house at night, and fired a gun into the window of his study. And in the Records of the Marlboro' Association, Aug. 19th of this year, it is recorded, that certain topics were the subject of conversation, to-

gether with what Mr. Smith had lately met with at Marlboro'; several guns having been shot into his study at midnight, as if aimed to take away his life, but he survived unhurt."

It is probably a mistake to suppose that the design was to take his life; in fact all the circumstances indicate that there was no such intention. But Mr. Smith had now become unpopular as a minister, on account of his age and infirmities, and also, tradition says, because he was regarded as a Tory; and the design evidently was to alarm him, and induce him to leave the place. *

On the 13th of Feb. 1777, the church voted to choose a colleague with Mr. Smith, on account of his feeble health, but the town refused to concur with the action of the church. In Jan. 1778 he asked a dismissal, and was accordingly dismissed by a Council called for the purpose April 29, 1778; on account of his "infirmity and weakness which greatly affected his lungs, and voice in particular." As a brother in the church, he was recommended by

* The house where Mr. Smith resided, is the one now occupied by Mr. William Gibbon. The bullet fired through his window and lodged in a beam, was a few years since extracted by Mr. Gibbon, and is still preserved.

letter to the church in East Sudbury, to which place he removed, and where he died in 1781, in the 67th year of his age. His daughter was married to Rev. Mr. Bridge of that place.

In 1767 this church numbered 164 members; 79 males and 85 females.

The following warrant for a Town Meeting was issued 1758, and is interesting as a part of the history of that period.

“ Middlesex ss. To Mr John Barns Constable for the Town of Marlborough in said County, Greeting.

In His Majesty's name you are Hereby required forthwith to warn all the Freeholders, and other Inhabitants in your Part of this Town, Qualified as the Law Directs to Vote in town affairs, to meet att the Meeting Hous, in said Town, on Monday the Third Day of April Next, att one of the Clock after non, to act on the following Articles.

1. To chuse a moderator for s^d meeting.

2. To See if the Town will give order by a Vote, that the Persons that now own the Present Pews shall take up the Seats in the body of the meeting hous and the floar, and Lay another floar upon the Sells with new Sleeppers, and with using the old boards for the under floar, and new boards for the upper floar, and to Put the Seats up again upon the said Persons Cost.

3. To see if the Town will take down the Present Pulpit in the meeting hous, and take away the table, and build a new Pulpit and a Deacon's seat before the Pulpit, and cut the minister's Pew and the women's Pew, to make

Room to build two Seats more, one on the mens side, and another on the women's side, before the Present fore seats.

4. To see if the Town will grant Liberty to any Person or Persons that may appear to Do the work, he or they having the Women's Pew, and the ground that may be spared where the Pulpit stairs now are, to build a Pew on.

Hercof fail not and make Return of this Warrant with your doings thereon to the Select men on or before the time of s^d meeting.

Dated at Marlborough the twenty fourth Day of March in the thirty first year of his Majesty's Reign, A. D. 1758 by order of y^e Select men.

J. Warren Town Clerk.

After the dismissal of Mr. Smith, the church was destitute of a pastor about seven years. At last, after hearing a number of candidates, Mr. Asa Packard of Bridgewater was chosen, and was ordained March 23d, 1785. This day has always been remembered from this fact; that the snow was then lying so deep as to cover the tops of the fences, and sleighs could pass over the fields in any direction without difficulty. The town "Voted to give Mr. Packard for a settlement £300, to be paid, one half in one year from the day of his ordination, the other half in two years from said day; and for a Salary £100, and 20 cords of good marketa-

ble oak wood, cut and brought to his door, at his dwelling house in said Marlborough, annually, so long as he remains our Minister." In the course of time, owing to the depreciation in the currency, his salary had become less valuable than at first; and in a communication made to the church, Nov. 8th, 1804, complaining of the inadequacy of his Salary, he makes the following proposition. "To prevent any dispute on the subject, on the town's part or on mine, I will silently and quietly abide the decision of the select men who shall be chosen in March 1805, together with the Deacons then in office, and will receipt the Treasurer for one year's salary on receiving what they shall judge equivalent to \$333,33, in March 1785." He also pledged himself to make no demand of the town, for compensation or depreciation, previous to March 1804.

In December, a committee was chosen by the town consisting of seven, to consider and report on this matter, "all of them opposed to the separation of the town then contemplated by the westerly part, whose petition was pending in the General Court."

This committee, after conferring with the pastor, reported unanimously in favor of his

proposition ; but the town would not adopt the report. Mr. Packard then asked a dismissal from the church, and requested them to unite with him in calling a council for that purpose ; but the request was denied. This action of the church and town, was doubtless in a great measure the result of the serious difficulties in which the town was now so deeply involved.

The great event of Mr. Packard's ministry, was the division of the town into the East and West Parishes, and a corresponding division in the church. As this is so closely connected with the history of the church, it will be necessary to give a brief sketch of the circumstances which led to it. The old Meeting House had now been standing more than an hundred years, and was no longer a suitable place for public worship. The question which for several years agitated the town, and which finally resulted in its division, related to the location of the new House. The West part of the town claimed that there was only one suitable spot, and that was the old common, where every Meeting House had stood since the town was incorporated. The East part of the town maintained, that the old location was not central, and justice required them to select

a spot which would best accommodate the greatest number ; which spot was nearly half a mile east from the common.

In June 1804, a Committee was appointed to form a plan of the town, and take the length of the roads leading to every house, so as to find the most central spot. At length, Jan. 1, 1805, after several other locations had been proposed and rejected ; it was "voted, 81 for, and 10 against the motion, to build a Meeting House at Spring Hill, so called, on the place or spot of ground which was lately surveyed by Silas Felton, by direction of a Committee of the town chosen on the 4th of June 1804. On condition that a certain bond executed by Dea. Josiah How, Dea. Abner Goodale and others, to the inhabitants of the town of Marlborough, bearing date Jan. 1, 1805, the penal sum of three thousand dollars, conditioned, among other things, to put said place or spot of ground in suitable, proper and fit condition to erect said building upon, in consideration of and exchange for the old Meeting House common, or the value thereof in money, be lodged in the hands of the town Treasurer of the town of Marlborough, there to remain and be made use of for the benefit of the town, according

to the true intent, tenor and express condition of the same."

The town chose as their building committee, "Mr. Uriah Eager, Dea. Abner Goodale, Joseph Brigham, jr. Esq., Mr. Micah Sherman, Mr. John Loring, Mr. Enoch Corey, Capt. Jonathan Weeks, Mr. Lovell Brigham, Capt. David Brigham, Capt. Lovell Barnes, and Capt. William Wesson."

The ground was prepared by the individuals giving the bond, and was accepted by the town Nov. 1805. The old common at this time consisted of "two acres, one half, and seventeen rods," and was appraised at one dollar and fifty cents a square rod. As the common itself could not be legally given, the value of the common was given as a compensation for preparing the ground, amounting according to the appraisal to six hundred and twenty-five dollars and fifty cents.

On petition of Jonah Rice and eight others, an article was introduced into the warrant for town meeting on the 16th of July 1804, as follows: "To see whether they will give their consent, that those inhabitants residing in the westerly part of Marlborough be incorporated and a separate town made of the territory." Passed in the negative, 75 to 110.

In the warrant calling a town meeting, May 26, 1806, appears the following article: "To see whether the town will consent that Messrs. George Williams, William Boyd, Stephen Felton, Phineas How, Solomon Barnes, Jonah Rice, Samuel Gibbon, Benjamin Rice, jr., Moses Ames, William Arnold, &c., with such others as may join with them, shall be incorporated into a religious society, by such a name as the Legislature of the Commonwealth may direct." It was voted, 125 to 76, that this request should not be granted for the following reasons:

"1st. The town has been at great expense to obtain a measurement of the town, and find the center East and West is near where their new Meeting House now stands according to Gen. Holman's Report.

"2d. The north part of the town had a just claim to have the house carried nearly a half a mile further north, as appears by said Report, but gave up that right for the sake of keeping the Town together, and being united in one Society.

"3d. This central spot on which the Town have erected their Meeting House, does accommodate a majority of 64 families, better than the old common would have done.

"4th. This spot has been fitted by individuals at an expense of nearly \$4000, for the sole purpose of keeping the town together in one Society.

"5th. The Town has not injured those Petitioners in the

location of their new Meeting House, but have given them more than their right, as will be seen by the Plan of the Town.

“ 6th. The House built by the Town is sufficiently large for the reception of the whole Town.

“ 7th. Should they be set off, the Town would be left in a very bad situation ; the inhabitants being obliged to travel to the edge of the Parish, and at the same time, obliged to maintain the Minister.”

During this time, the inhabitants in the west part of the town had taken steps for forming a new Parish, and for building a new Meeting House. This division, and the simultaneous erection of two houses of worship by his own people, placed the Pastor in a trying position. The matter was finally brought to a crisis, by a request of the Committee of the town that Mr. Packard should assist in dedicating the new Meeting House at Spring Hill. The Pastor declined complying with this request ; and a meeting of the Marlborough Association was called by him and the Committee to give their advice in the matter. The Association met March 4th, 1806, at Mr. Packard's house, and after hearing a full statement from the Committees of both Parishes, and from the Pastor himself, gave the result of their deliberations as follows :

"1st. From the representations made by the Committee on the part of the town, and the documents by them exhibited; it is the opinion of the Association that the Meeting house at Spring Hill so called, has been built by the town of Marlborough, pursuant to legal meetings and votes of the said town.

2d. It is the sense of this Association, that the said town who have thus built the Meeting house and mean to congregate there, have a reasonable and legal claim to the Ministerial services of Rev. Mr. Packard in said house. But as there exists a respectable minority amounting to nearly one half of the church and town, who appear determined not to assemble at Spring Hill,—and have taken decided steps to become a separate Society—these circumstances have suggested conscientious scruples to Mr. Packard's mind. of the propriety of taking the lead in dedicating said Meeting house. and rendering his services there in future, and induce him to ask a dissolution of his Pastoral relation to the Church and people in Marlborough; and the Association, while they sincerely lament the occasion of it, both on their own and the people's account, cannot but acquiesce in his determination."

Mr. Packard then repeated his request that the Pastoral relation existing between himself and this Church and people be dissolved, and it was accordingly dissolved by a mutual council convened for that purpose, April 10, 1806. Previous to the meeting of the Council, however, the town had acted upon the request, prematurely it would seem, by voting that

“ they do resolve and agree that his relation as a Minister to this Town, and the ministerial contract which now exists between him and this Corporation, shall be dissolved and done away. And they accordingly do hereby dismiss him from all further ministerial Service in this town.”

Mr. Packard was thus dismissed after twenty-one years pastoral labor; and Rev. Reuben Puffer of Berlin, was chosen Moderator of the Church.

The Meeting House erected on Spring Hill, and also the one erected by the inhabitants in the west part of the town, were both opened for public service, on the same day, April 27, 1806.

The Meeting House at Spring Hill, together with the expense of preparing the grounds, cost, it is said, between twenty and twenty-five thousand dollars. The bell weighed 1318 pounds, and cost \$585,78.

The church was now divided into two nearly equal bodies, but the two bodies were not yet formed into separate churches. Sept. 23, 1806, the following Dissent was addressed to the Rev. Reuben Puffer, Moderator of the Church.

SIR :

“The present unhappy situation of this Church leads us the Subscribers, members of said Church in regular standing, to enter with you this our Dissent to the admission of new members, or the transferring of the relation of any members to or from said Church, previous to a regular meeting of the same.”

On the 2^d of October a request was sent to the Moderator, from the branch of the Church worshipping at Spring Hill, that a church meeting might be called. They complain of the interference of the other branch of the church with their rights and privileges, as an appointed communion, and proposed Baptisms had been suspended on account of their Dissent. A church meeting was called and a mutual council invited to meet and advise the church in its present difficulties. The Council met Oct. 22, and closed its labors Oct. 24, recommending among other things the following course as the result of their deliberations :

“That each branch of the Church of Christ in Marlborough, have full liberty, (except as hereafter excepted) without any offence to the other branch, to attend upon and enjoy all the special ordinances of the gospel, and to exercise all the powers and privileges of a regular Christ-

ian church in separate and distinct bodies, at such times and in such places as each branch may choose for itself, until a reunion of the church may be effected; or some legal decision had on the state of the town."

"That the two branches of the church agree, by accepting this result, that in case the minor part of the inhabitants of the town should be legally incorporated into a distinct Society, then the branch of the church which may choose to be united with such corporation, shall be wholly released from its connection and covenant engagements with the other branch, and may become in a regular way a distinct church, bearing the name of the West Church in Marlborough; and that in such an event, the branch of the church united with the majority of the town, shall likewise be wholly released from its connection and covenant engagements with the other branch, and shall be known and acknowledged as a distinct and regular church, bearing the name of the East Church in Marlborough."

"In case of an actual division of the Church in any regular way, or in consequence of an incorporation of that part of the town with which the West branch of the Church is united, that there be an equal division of all the property, of whatever name or nature, except the Church Records, which belong to the whole church, between the said two branches of it, no regard being had to a majority, be it found in which branch it may; and that until such a division of the property, all the vessels of the Sanctuary be kept in such places as will be most convenient for both branches of the church, and equally free for the use of both branches, though on different days."*

*The church vessels were kept at the house of Simon Stowe, where the Town House now stands, until the church was finally divided.

“That as there may be a connection between the civil and ecclesiastical Records of the town, the Church Records shall be assigned to that branch of the Church united with a majority of the town.”

Both branches of the Church accepted this result “without a dissenting voice.”

The number of acting male members whose names appear at this date is 47; of these 24 belonged to the West Branch of the church, and 23, including all the Deacons, belonged to the East branch.

On the 23^d of Feb. 1808, the West part of the town obtained an act of incorporation as the Second Parish in Marlborough; and on the 5th of March the West Church was organized. On the 23^d of March, Rev. Asa Packard was installed over the Church as its first Pastor, and retained his pastoral office until May 12, 1819. He afterwards removed to Lancaster in this State, where he resided until his death.

Thus ended this unhappy strife, in which for several years the town had been involved. Its effects were most disastrous, and are still felt, even after the lapse of half a century. In the erection of two Houses of worship, and in the expense of advocating and opposing the divi-

sion of the town, there must have been a cost of between thirty and forty thousand dollars; and some families became straitened and almost impoverished by their lavish expenditures in carrying out a favorite plan. But worse than all this, and more injurious, were the feuds that sprung up; the bitterness of feeling awakened; the personal hostilities that were enkindled and carried to the grave; and the local jealousies which, perhaps even now, are not entirely extinct. Religious interests were involved in the strife, and religion also suffered. It was a great hindrance to the spread of genuine piety, and for a long time was felt as an obstacle to the progress of the kingdom of Christ.

Mr. Packard, as has already been stated, was born in Bridgewater. At the age of sixteen, he entered the revolutionary army as a fifer. In an engagement near Harlem Heights, a companion who had made great boasts of his valor, seizing Mr. Packard's fife and giving him his musket in return, fled to a place of safety. Mr. Packard faced the enemy and engaged in the conflict, but soon received a wound which it was thought would prove fatal. The ball entered his back just above the hip; and though an attempt was made to extract it, yet

so severe was the operation, that the surgeon feared he would die in his hands, and was obliged to desist. A severe illness followed in consequence, and when sufficiently recovered, he left the army and returned home. When his health was fully restored, he commenced a course of preparation for the ministry, and was graduated at Harvard College.

He married a daughter of Josiah Quincy of Braintree, in what is now the town of Quincy, with whom he lived more than half a century. They had six children, only two of whom now survive.

One who had every opportunity of knowing his opinions, and whose near relationship to him gives authority to speak on the subject, makes the following statement in regard to his religious sentiments. "When Mr. Packard was settled in Marlborough he was called an Arminian, but after his removal to Lancaster, he united with the Orthodox Church then in existence in the town of Bolton. After that had become extinct, many of its members united with the church in Lancaster, and he aided in the establishment of that now flourishing church, and was a cheerful supporter of it until his decease. It is due to him to say, that he

never was a Unitarian, and when he heard of the first minister who denied the doctrine of the Atonement, he remarked with tears, that without it, the Bible was to him a dead letter."

Perhaps, after all, it would be more correct to say, that he had never formed for himself any definite system of doctrinal belief. His mind was more distinguished for its readiness, than for its method; and he seems to have held opinions in regard to different doctrines which were not consistent with each other, and which could not be combined into a logical system. Different persons who have known him well, have for this reason classed him with different denominations; since on some points, his views seemed to coincide with the Unitarian, and on others with the Orthodox Standards of doctrine. This was the view entertained of his theological opinions, by one of the most distinguished preachers of New England.

Mr. Packard's death was very sudden. He had been in his usual health; and on coming in from his usual business, sat down to listen to a letter from a distant brother. While it was being read to him, he sunk back and immediately expired. He died March 20, 1843, aged 85 years. His wife died on the third of

the February following—of the infirmities of age—at the advanced age of 80 years.

It will be appropriate here to mention the Funds which belong to the church. Tradition says, that during the ministry of Rev. Mr. Brimsmead, Bethia Woods, daughter of James Woods, left a legacy to this church of five pounds. This sum was put on interest and almost forgotten, till in the year 1802 some circumstance recalled it to mind, and inquiry was made in regard to it. The note was found among the papers belonging to the church, given by a brother then deceased; but on the face of the note were certain original and unaccountable defects, besides having been outlawed a number of years. But the son, believing that his father once signed the note, offered to pay the principal and half the interest, amounting to more than twenty dollars. After using a part of it for defraying some church expenses, thirteen dollars and fifty-eight cents remained in the treasury of the church. This sum suggested the idea of raising a Fund for the relief of indigent members of the church, and it was at once increased by subscriptions until it amounted to one hundred and fifty dollars. At the division of the church

into the East and West churches, this Fund was equally divided between them. The Fund was called the "Woods Fund," in honor of its first contributor, and is left in the hands of the Deacons of the church as Trustees.

Previous to the division, Hannah Priest of this town left a bequest of one hundred dollars to the church, of which this church received fifty dollars. After the division, Dea. Samuel Howe left to this church the sum of one hundred dollars; and both these legacies were expended in 1832, by vote of the church, for the support of preaching. The only Funds now belonging to the church are the "Woods Fund," and the Goodale Fund, to be mentioned hereafter.

After Mr. Packard's dismissal, the church listened to several candidates for settlement without being able to unite on any one as their minister. Among these was Mr. Edward Payson, afterwards of Portland, who commenced his ministry in this place. He was licensed to preach May 20, 1807, and May 24th preached his first sermon. The following is an extract from his Journal, referring to that day.

"Was favored with considerable fervency, life, and sense of dependence, this morning. Endeavored to cast

myself wholly on the Lord for support. Felt thankful it was rainy. There were very few people at meeting; and I just got through without stopping. Spoke too fast and too low. Was a good deal depressed after meeting. In the afternoon, did a little better, but still bad enough. Was very much fatigued and almost in a fever; but enjoyed some comfort after meeting."

Mr. Payson supplied the pulpit thirteen Sabbaths, and during that time gave abundant indications of his superior abilities and faithfulness as a preacher. A number of conversions took place during this period; and several persons now survive who regard him as the instrument of leading them to Christ. As a large part of his hearers did not sympathize with his doctrinal views and his pointed and impressive style of preaching, he never received a call. His last sermon was preached from Luke 19: 41, 42.

Mr. Sylvester F. Bucklin of Rehoboth was the sixth minister of this church, and the first after its division. He was a graduate of Brown University in 1805, and was ordained Nov. 2, 1808. Rev. Mr. Hill of Rehoboth, offered the Introductory Prayer; Rev. Mr. Clark of Norton preached the Sermon; Rev. Mr. Adams of Acton gave the Charge; the Consecrating Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Kellogg of

Framingham; Rev. Mr. Ripley of Concord gave the Right Hand of Fellowship; and Rev. Mr. Foster of East Sudbury offered the Concluding Prayer. The sermon, from Luke 2: 49, together with the Charge and Right Hand of Fellowship, were published and are still preserved. Mr. Bucklin's Salary was \$600.

Only two or three references to Sacred Music have been found in the Records of the Church. In 1793 the church voted to follow its usual custom of reading the Hymn or Psalm, line by line. In 1807, a Committee was chosen to report on "what regulations are proper in regard to singing on Sacramental occasions; who shall perform and what tunes?" The first recorded action of this Parish in regard to it was in Oct. 1808, when the society "voted to hire Master Sanger one week, to teach the singers in the Parish, previous to the ordination. This indicates that choir singing had already been adopted.

Prayer Meetings began to be held from time to time as early as about 1810; but there is no record of any such meeting being established by vote of the Church, and at stated seasons, until 1827.

The "Female Benevolent Society" was formed Dec. 31, 1817. "The Ladies met at Mr. Thaddeus Warren's and formed themselves into a Society, and elected the following officers for the current year, viz :

Persis Goodale, 1st Directress ; Lucy Howe, 2d Directress ; Sophia Warren, Treasurer ; Lucy Goodale, Cor. & Rec. Sec. ; Sophia Rice, Meliscent Warren, and Catharine Bruce, Managers.

The first Sabbath School was commenced in connection with this church, May 31, 1818. It was held for a number of years in the old School House which stood a few rods south west from the Meeting House. Mr. David Goodale was the first Superintendent, and was assisted by Mr. Samuel Witt, Miss Sophia Rice, Miss Persis Goodale, Miss Lucy Goodale, Miss Lucy Howe and Miss Sophia Warren as teachers. Mr Bucklin being absent on exchange, Rev. Dr. Puffer of Berlin opened the school with an address to the teachers and scholars, and at the close of his remarks offered prayer. The school then consisted of 44 scholars, 8 boys and 36 girls, the oldest scholar being only 13 years of age. The first class studied "Cummings' Questions on the New Testa-

ment;" the second class, "Emerson's Catechism;" the third class, "Evangelical and Familiar Catechism." Any parent had the privilege of selecting any other Catechism for his children, or any part of the Bible which he wished them to commit to memory.

In the early history of the school, the following method was adopted to induce the scholars to commit passages of Scripture and hymns to memory. Tickets were procured by the Superintendent, representing in value three, six, twelve or fifty cents, and the scholar was rewarded with one of these, according to the amount he was able to recite. When the tickets thus obtained amounted to a sufficient sum, the value of them in the form of a book, or some other useful article, was given to the pupil. This method probably had a strong influence at that time in increasing and retaining the members of the school.

In June 1818, a subscription paper was put in circulation which read as follows: "Deeming no sacrifice too great to promote the benevolent object for which the Son of God became incarnate; we the subscribers resolve to contribute annually whatever is affixed to our names for the encouragement of those children

in Marlborough who will commit to memory their Catechism, hymns, or portions of the Sacred Scriptures, and will devote their little earnings in this way for the education of a heathen child at Ceylon, to be named *Sylvester Fuller Bucklin.*”

The Sabbath School was for a long time under the direct control of the church; but in 1853 the church voted to leave the school to make choice of its superintendent, without the usual nomination on their part.

In May 1818, the church voted to choose a Committee of three to examine candidates for admission to the church, and also for receiving the Baptismal Covenant. Previous to this time, there was really no examination in regard to doctrinal belief or religious experience. A wish was expressed to the Pastor of uniting with the church, and sometimes a written communication was made to him and read before the church, and the candidate was received. The church had no Articles of Faith, and of course no standard of doctrine except the one contained in the Covenant. The appointment of this Committee produced these two beneficial results; it led to greater care in receiving only those who gave good evidence of genuine

piety ; and also very soon abolished the practice of offering children for Baptism under the Half-Way Covenant. In Jan. 1827, it was voted that those coming from other churches, should appear before the Church Committee for examination.

The South Middlesex Conference of churches was formed August 20, 1828. This church became connected with it on the 8th of October of the same year. On the 5th of October, the following resolutions were adopted :

“1st. Resolved, that this Church approve of church conferences, and when rightly managed, believe them to be well calculated to promote practical piety.” “2d. Resolved, that this church request a union with the South Middlesex Conference, which is to meet at Framingham next Wednesday.”

July 11th, 1830. “The church voted that they approve of the change taking place in the community with regard to wearing mourning apparel on funeral occasions ; and that they engage for themselves, and to use their influence with their families to induce them also, to dispense with it on such occasions.”

This church began to make contributions to benevolent objects about the year 1810.

During Mr. Bucklin's ministry, there were not wanting evidences of the special blessing of God. There were two seasons of special religious interest, and on each occasion 29 were gathered into the church as the precious fruits of Christian labor. It was during this period also that those differences of opinion became so marked and manifest, which disturbed the peace and harmony of so many churches, and led to the dismissal of so many faithful pastors. It was also during his ministry that the custom so generally prevailed of holding what were termed "Protracted Meetings," and which were then thought to be productive of great good, but which are now generally regarded as of but doubtful expediency. Meetings of this kind were held by this church during the year 1832, and several were hopefully converted.

Mr. Bucklin was dismissed June 20, 1832, and has never been settled a second time. The Council expressed in their result the utmost confidence in his christian and ministerial character, and cordially recommended him to the confidence of the churches. Since his dismissal he has resided among the people of his first and only charge, flourishing in a green old

age, and enjoying the respect and affection of the entire community in which he lives. And it deserves to be made a matter of special record, that although a retired minister, he has always sought the best interests of this church and society, and his successors in the ministry have always found him a firm friend and an active and cheerful assistant. No one has had reason to complain, that he has sought to injure their influence or counteract their usefulness.

Immediately after the dismissal of Rev. Mr. Bucklin, those differences of opinion began openly to manifest themselves which resulted in the division of so many churches in this Commonwealth. The question which now divided the society, was, whether their ministers in future should be men of Orthodox or Liberal sentiments. The party which desired a thorough evangelical ministry, were a majority of the church but a minority of the society; and finding it impossible to secure their object, took measures to form themselves into a separate society. On the 18th of March, 1833, a paper was filed with the Clerk of the First Parish, certifying that about fifty of its former members had withdrawn, and formed

themselves into "The First Evangelical Congregational Society." On the 1st of April, 1833, the church voted to worship with this Society; and 73 out of the 91 members withdrew from their connection with the First Parish. The First Parish and remaining church members held by law the Meeting House and the Church Property; a church was organized; and Mr. Bucklin was employed to supply their pulpit for the year.

The Evangelical Society, and the branch of the church connected with it, invited Mr. Charles Forbush to become their Pastor. He accepted the invitation, and was ordained Aug. 21, 1833.

Early in 1834, proposals were made by a Committee of the First Parish to the Deacons of that branch of the church connected with the Evangelical Society, for a union of the two Societies. These proposals not being satisfactory to this branch of the church, the Deacons and the Committee recommended that both Societies unite in calling a mutual council to advise on what conditions they should become united. As a preliminary step, it was demanded by the First Parish, that Mr. Forbush should be dismissed, and they in turn,

pledged themselves to favor the settlement of any man, for whom two thirds of the Evangelical Society would vote.

This Council was convened March 19, 1834, and the following questions were submitted to them for their decision. "1st. Shall the church belonging to the Evangelical Society unite with the church belonging to the First Parish, or vice versa; or in what way shall the differences between them be adjusted or a union effected? 2d. What disposition shall be made of the property belonging to the church at the time Mr. Bucklin was dismissed."

The Council embodied the substance of their result in these words :

"The Council cannot advise the church connected with the Evangelical Society to go back to the house of the First Parish, because, as they believe, it is not expedient to make it a house of worship for any Society. And should it be altered and repaired, it may still be the property of the First Parish, and as such, be under its unlimited control. But we do recommend that the church connected with the Evangelical Society shall receive into fellowship those members who worship with the First Parish, on such terms as the said church shall deem consistent with the principles of truth and harmony."

The union of the two branches of the original church, was not however yet effected. It

was not decided, whether both branches were true churches, or only one; and if one, which one; and besides, the difficulties had been greatly increased from the fact, that a member had been received from a Unitarian church and promoted to the office of a Deacon in one branch, whom the other branch could not fellowship in that position. A Council was therefore called, March 14, 1836, which decided that both branches were churches, although they were not prepared to sanction all the steps, or approve all the circumstances of the separation. It was recommended, also, that Articles of Faith be drawn up for the members of both churches to sign; and as the Deacon above mentioned offered to resign his office on condition that a union be effected, the remaining Deacons should be considered the officers of the one united church. On the 18th of March, both churches met in convention and "voted unanimously to accept the advice and result of the council." The Deacons then presented the "Articles of Faith, eleven in number, which were read and acted upon one at a time, and every article was acted upon and signed just as presented." "Thus the two branches of the church, which had been separated since

April 1st, 1833, are now united into one church."

The First Parish, and the "First Evangelical Congregational Society," petitioned the Legislature to be incorporated as the "Union Society;" and on the 1st of April 1835, they held their first meeting and voted to receive the Act of Incorporation.

April 29, 1835, the Union Society voted to take down the old Meeting House which had been standing since 1806, and erect a new one on nearly the same spot. This new House was dedicated Sept. 15, 1836.

As the First Parish made it a condition of union, that Mr. Forbush should be dismissed, his connection with the Evangelical Society was dissolved March 26, 1834, by an Ecclesiastical Council. He was soon afterwards installed over the Congregational Church in Northbridge.

In October of the same year, a call was given to Rev. Joseph Fuller to settle with them in the ministry, but the call was declined.

On the 24th of April 1836, the church "voted that the name of this church be changed from the East Church in Marlborough to the Union Church in Marlborough, to cor-

respond with the name of the Union Society, with which we are connected."

In removing the old Meeting House, and erecting the new one, some very serious and unexpected difficulties were encountered. The Meeting House was claimed by the town, because the town had built it; it was claimed by the pew holders, in part at least, because they had property invested in it; it was also claimed by the Society, because they had the control of it. But a law had been passed in April 1834, abolishing the old method of meeting ministerial and Parish expenses, and establishing our present Parish system, and the rule of taxation for its support. According to the provisions of this law it was found, that the House now belonged to the Parish and not to the Town, and that only the pew holders had any real claim upon it. A Committee of disinterested persons was therefore chosen to appraise the pews, and the amount of the appraisal of each pew was tendered to its owner in the presence of witnesses. In this manner, after a very severe struggle, the Society gained complete control of the Meeting House, with full liberty to repair or remove it as they pleased. In accomplishing this object, and in erecting the new

House, no one was probably so active and so influential, as the late Dea. David Goodale.

Rev. John N. Goodhue was the first pastor settled over the Union Church. He was graduated at Amherst College in the year 1830, and was ordained pastor of this Church May 4, 1836. The order of exercises at his ordination were as follows: Introductory services, Rev. Mr. Cross of Boxboro'; Prayer by Rev. Mr. Long of Milford; Sermon by Rev. Hubbard Winslow of Boston; Ordaining Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Hyde of Wayland; Charge to the Pastor by Rev. Mr. Phinney of Westboro'; Fellowship of the Churches, by Rev. Mr. Paine of Holden; Address to the People, by Rev. Mr. Fay of Northboro'; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Trask of Framingham. His Salary was \$600.

Mr. Goodhue's ministry was short, lasting only a little more than three years; but brief as it was, it was yet long enough to show his ability as a preacher, his faithfulness as a pastor, his usefulness as a minister of the Gospel, and also to secure for him an affectionate and lasting remembrance in the hearts of his people. The Church Records have the following notice under the date of Sept. 13, 1839. "At

3 o'clock P. M., our Pastor, Rev. John N. Goodhue, died of typhus fever, after an illness of three weeks. He ministered to us, before and after ordination, three years and a half, and died beloved and lamented, aged $29\frac{2}{3}$ years."

On the last Sabbath that he preached to his people, he delivered three sermons from Eccl. 9: 10: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." These sermons, which he preached with unusual earnestness and solemnity, proved to be his last earthly labor. He retired from his pulpit to sicken and die. The singular energy manifest in the delivery of his sermons was probably the first stages of that feverish and fatal delirium, which was soon to settle down upon and cloud his reason. These discourses were published after his death, together with a "Tribute" to his memory, which appeared in the Boston Recorder, from which the following extracts are taken.

"As a *preacher*, Mr. Goodhue was clear, plain, pungent, always energetic. often very powerful. His views of divine truth were bold and original, his illustrations of doctrine, of which his sermons were full, were uncommonly

apt and striking, and his application of truth to the consciences of his hearers were generally of that convincing kind from which there is no escape. *Doctrinal preaching* was his forte. Strictly evangelical, without narrowness or illiberality, jealous for what he considered God's message to his creatures, undaunted in its advocacy, impatient of the prevalence of error, yet resisting it in the spirit of a Christian, he delighted in going down into the gospel and bringing up from thence some great neglected doctrine, and then endeavoring to wield it in the name of the Lord.

“ Mr. Goodhue's mind was emphatically a *ready* mind. ‘*Semper paratus*’—*always ready*—was his motto. Hence his remarkable *fluency*, in preaching, in prayer, in conversation. His memory was not merely uncommon, it was *vast*. He could remember the plans of all the sermons he ever wrote, and could repeat passages from his favorite authors, for hours, without exhaustion.

“ As a pastor, too much cannot be said in praise of the departed. He was always about his Master's business— instant in season, out of season—wholly devoted to his people. The sick, the dying, the aged, the infirm were the objects of his constant care. His only error in the pastoral work was that too common error of the youthful clergy of the present day, *attempting to do too much at once.*”

“ After preaching on the last Sabbath, “intense pains soon settled in his head, and in four days he was placed on a bed of fevered anguish, his reason clouded and at times shrouded in delirium. But in all and under all he was submissive and patient as a little child. Many a sweet prayer he made upon that bed of death, and many a holy

thought escaped his lips. Much of the time he evidently thought himself in his pulpit, and would then proceed regularly through the services of public worship, praying for every body, singing with the choir, naming the text, and delivering the sermon throughout with great accuracy and force. At times, after a paroxysm of pain, he was heard to say, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' Half an hour before his death, he seemed to be in the company of invisible beings, and with great earnestness would exclaim, 'Oh the angels, the angels!' And so he died Sept. 13th 1839, Aged 29 years."

The Church and Society erected a Monument to his memory.

During Mr. Goodhue's ministry there were seasons of special religious interest. In the year 1837, more than forty were received to this church, some by letter, but by far the largest number on profession of their faith. Many of these were converted through the instrumentality of Mr. Goodhue's labors.

Oct. 21, 1836. "Voted that the Deacons of the church should be ex officio members of the Examining Committee."

"Voted that candidates for admission to the church, after having been examined by the Committee and approved by them, shall be proposed to the church as soon as convenient; and if no objection is offered, they shall be

publicly propounded to the church two weeks previous to admission, and be voted into the church at the Preparatory Lecture as Church members, after having assented to the Articles of Faith and having* taken upon them the Covenant.”

In the year 1836, a donation was made to this church by Hon. Job Goodale of Bernardston, Franklin County, who was a native of this town, and formerly a member of this church. The bequest runs as follows :

“ I give, bequeath and devise to Jonathan Hapgood, Ezekiel Bruce, and David Goodale, Deacons of the Trinitarian Congregational Church in Marlborough, and to their successors in said office,—the Temple Farm so called, lying in the easterly part of said Marlborough, containing about one hundred acres ; also about six acres of land, lying southwesterly about one hundred rods from the same, which I bought of Heman Stowe ; to be held by said Hapgood, Bruce, and Goodale, and their successors in said office of Deacons forever,—in trust to and for the use and support, so far as the income of the same will go, of a stated, settled, Orthodox minister of the Gospel in said Parish and Society.”

In Nov. 1836, this farm was sold to Richard Hemenway of Framingham, for \$1600. The church voted that the money arising from the sale of this farm be kept as a fund, and that it

be called the "*Goodale Fund.*" The following year, Deacon Goodale offered to the church a deed of the place which he had bought of James Woods, on condition that he should receive from the church the obligations which they held against Mr. Hemenway. The church "voted to accept the offer and make the exchange, for the purpose of having a Parsonage for our Pastor." This place was afterwards sold, and the original Fund is now invested in the present Parsonage. This, with the Woods Fund before mentioned, are the only Funds belonging at present to this church.

September 1, 1837, we have the following Record. "Our Pastor and Rev. S. F. Bucklin, having been previously appointed a Committee to revise the Church Covenant and By-Laws, and to prepare a copy of the Articles of Faith for the press, presented their Report, which was accepted; the Covenant and By-Laws being voted in, one by one, the Articles of Faith having been previously adopted in the same way."

The Brimsmead Covenant, with a few verbal changes, had been used from the formation of the church until this time; but this church had no Articles of faith until March 18, 1836.

This form of the Covenant and Articles of Faith are still in use at the time this sketch closes. It must not be supposed however, that, because the church had no distinct Articles of Faith, it had no standard of doctrinal belief. The Covenant refers to the Catechisms as the system of doctrine which the church adopted; and all its members bound themselves to instruct their children out of these orthodox standards.

The views of this church in regard to the Reforms of the day, will be seen from the following Resolutions:

October 28, 1836. "Voted that in future, candidates for admission to this Church, shall pledge themselves to abstain from the use of distilled spirit, except as a medicine." This was incorporated into the Rules adopted April 1, 1837.

February 20, 1840. "Resolved, 1st. That regarding Slavery, in all its forms, and under all the circumstances in which it is at this moment upheld and practised in our country, as a sin of awful magnitude in the sight of God—as in most direct opposition to the precepts of our holy religion—as a tremendous obstacle to the spread of the Gospel of Christ, and as having a direct and powerful tendency to corrupt the purity, disturb the harmony, and destroy the influence of the Church, we will not knowingly suffer a slaveholding minister to enter our Pulpit, nor a slaveholding professor to sit at our Communion Table."

“Resolved 2d, That the cause of the slave is entitled to the sympathies the contributions and the prayers of all, and we hereby add the Massachusetts Abolition Society to the list of Benevolent Societies to which we have pledged our countenance and support.”

In February 1840, Mr. J. Addison Saxton was invited to become pastor of this church, but the invitation was declined.

December 2, 1840, Mr. George E. Day of New Haven, a graduate of Yale College and of the Theological Seminary connected with that Institution, was ordained pastor of this church. The order of exercises were as follows:

Introductory Services, Rev. Mr. Cummings of Southboro'; Prayer, Rev. Mr. Hosford, Saxtonville; Sermon, Rev. Dr. Bacon, New Haven; Consecrating Prayer, Rev. Mr. Cummings; Charge to the Pastor, Rev. Mr. Brigham, Framingham; Fellowship of the Churches, Rev. Mr. Buckingham, Millbury; Concluding Prayer, Rev. E. P. Dyer, Stow; Benediction by the Pastor.

Mr. Day was dismissed December 23, 1847, to become pastor of the Edwards Church, Northampton. From that place he was called to a Professorship in Lane Theological Seminary, where he still remains.

Rev. David L. Ogden was installed pastor of this church April 26, 1848. The several parts of public services were assigned by the Council as follows:

Introductory Services, Rev Mr. Tarbox, Framingham; Sermon, Rev. Mr. Griggs, Millbury; Installing Prayer, Rev. Mr. Houghton, Northboro'; Charge to the Pastor, Rev. Mr. Adams, Berlin; Fellowship of the Churches, Rev. Mr. Rawson, Southboro'; Address to the People, Rev. Mr. Day, Northampton; Concluding Prayer, Rev. Mr. Cooke, Stow; Benediction by the Pastor.

Mr. Ogden was dismissed July 23, 1850, and now resides in New Haven.

Rev. George Denham, now of Barre, Mass., preached as a Stated Supply from the last of July 1850, until the first of April 1853.

During the summer of 1852, the Meeting House was thoroughly repaired at an expense of about \$1000, and furnished with a new organ. It was opened for public service at the Preparatory Lecture, September 17th. On the evening of Wednesday, November 10th, it was discovered to be on fire, and in a short time was entirely destroyed. No satisfactory explanation has ever been given of the origin of the

fire, but it is generally supposed to have been the work of an incendiary.

Measures were taken by the Society during the succeeding winter for the erection of a new House on the same spot. It was commenced in the Spring of 1853, and completed in August of the same year, at a cost of more than \$10,000.

Rev. Levi A. Field, the present pastor, a native of Leverett, and a graduate of Amherst College and of Andover Theological Seminary, commenced preaching to this Society on the first Sabbath in April 1853. He was ordained the 31st of August of the same year, when the new church was first opened for public worship; the ordination and dedication being included in one service. The order of public services on that occasion were as follows:

Introductory Exercises, Rev. Mr. Ashley, Northboro'; Dedicatory Prayer, Rev. Mr. Cady, Westboro'; Sermon, Prof. Austin Phelps, Andover; Ordaining Prayer, Rev. Mr. Northrop, Saxonville; Charge to the Pastor, Rev. Dr. Ely, Monson; Fellowship of the Churches, Rev. Mr. Morse, Brimfield; Address to the People, Rev. Mr. Bodwell, Framingham; Concluding Prayer, Rev. Mr. Spear, Sudbury; Benediction by the Pastor.

At this point we bring this brief and imperfect sketch to a close. We have followed along the course of this history, sometimes smooth and sometimes troubled, for a period of almost two hundred years. No friend of the church can fail to lament the strifes and divisions which facts have compelled us to record; yet some of these have involved questions of principle which she felt compelled to maintain, and in doing it, she has been purified and strengthened. This church has never been distinguished for any remarkable displays of the agency of God's renewing and sanctifying Spirit; and yet there have been all along in her history, seasons of spiritual refreshing, manifest tokens of divine favor and converting grace. She has been blessed for the most part with a devoted and faithful ministry, and sometimes with men of preeminent ability and learning, and their labors have been owned and accepted of God. We cannot but express the hope, that those seasons of severe trial and bitter contention which have marred her earlier records, have forever passed away, and that henceforth her course is to lead over calmer and smoother seas. But if in future years she shall be made to pass through those scenes by

which God disciplines his children ; if ever she shall meet with losses, or even be rent asunder in her efforts to preserve inviolate the purity of her doctrine ; we can only ask that she enjoy the same Presence, and be led by the same powerful Hand, which guided and strengthened our fathers.

APPENDIX.

The following list embraces all the pastors of this church, with the date of their settlement, and also of their dismission or decease.

| | | |
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| WILLIAM BRIMSMEAD, | { | Set. Oct 3, 1666. Died, July 3, 1701. |
| ROBERT BRECK, | { | Set. Oct. 25, 1704. Died, Jan. 6, 1731. |
| BENJAMIN KENT, | { | Set. Oct. 27, 1733. Dis. Feb 4, 1735. |
| AARON SMITH, | { | Set. June 11, 1740. Dis. April 29, 1778. |
| ASA PACKARD, | { | Set. March 23, 1785. Dis. April 10, 1806. |
| SYLVESTER F. BUCKLIN, | { | Set. Nov. 2, 1808. Dis. June 20, 1832. |
| CHARLES FORBUSH, | { | Set. Aug. 21, 1833. Dis. March 26, 1834. |
| JOHN N. GOODHUE, | { | Set. May 4, 1836. Died, Sept. 13, 1839. |
| GEORGE E. DAY, | { | Set. Dec. 2d, 1840. Dis. Dec. 23, 1847. |
| DAVID L. OGDEN, | { | Set. April 26, 1848. Dis. July 23, 1850. |
| LEVI A. FIELD, | { | Set. Aug. 31, 1853. |

The following is a list of those who have held the office of deacon in this church, with the date of their election and decease, and also their age so far as is known.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| EDWARD RICE, | { Elected, — { Died, Aug. 15, 1752. |
| JOHN WOODS, | { Elected, Sept. — 1704. { Died, — |
| JOSEPH NEWTON, | { Elected, June 1, 1710. { Died, — |
| JAMES WOODS, | { Elected, Aug. 9, 1716. { Died, — |
| CALEB RICE, | { Elected, March 12, 1718. { Died, Jan. 5, 1739 aged 72. |
| THOMAS KEYES, | { Elected, June 17, 1726. { Died, — |
| JOHN BARNES, | { Elected, April 17, 1729. { Died, — |
| JAMES WOODS, | { Elected, May 22, 1741. { Died, — |
| — STEVENS, | { Elected, May 22, 1741. { Died, — |
| ANDREW RICE, | { Elected, Oct. 14, 1742. { Died, Jan. 15, 1775, aged 72. |
| JOSEPH TAYNTOR, | { Elected, Aug. 18, 1742. { Died, Feb. 19, 1764, ag'd 76. |
| DANIEL BARNES, | { Elected, May 26, 1762. { Died, Mar. 24, 1775, ag'd 73. |
| SAMUEL STOW, | { Elected Oct. 17, 1770. { Died, Jan. 12, 1818 ag'd 89. |
| SIMON STOW, | { Elected, Oct. 17, 1770. { Died, Dec. 16, 1795, ag'd 73. |
| THOMAS HOWE, | { Elected, March 20, 1776. { Died, — |
| SAMUEL HOWE, | { Elected, July 3, 1794. { Died, July 31, 1820, ag'd 71. |
| ABNER GOODALE, | { Elected, July 3, 1794. { Died, May 16, 1823, ag'd 68. |
| JOSIAH HOWE, | { Elected, Sept. 21, 1796. { Died, Jan. 15, 1827, ag'd 78. |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| X JONATHAN HAPGOOD, | { Elected, Oct. 17, 1821. { Died, Apr. 12, 1849, ag'd 90. |
| DAVID GOODALE, | { Elected Sept. 15, 1823. { Died, Oct. 17, 1858, ag'd 67. |
| EZEKIEL BRUCE, | { Elected, March 13, 1827. |
| WILLIAM E. TIDD, | { Elected, Dec. 16, 1836. { Dis. May 2, 1851. |
| WILLIAM STETSON, | { Elected, Dec. 1, 1853. |
| JOHN E. CURTIS, | { Elected, April 5, 1855. |
| RUFUS HOWE, | { Elected, July 2, 1858. |

The following list has been furnished me as including most, if not all, of those who originated in this place, and entered the ministry.

David Barnes, son of Daniel Barnes, settled in Scituate.

Benj. Brigham, son of Benj. Brigham, settled in Fitzwilliam, N. H.

Jonathan Barnes, son of Jonathan Barnes, settled in Hillsborough, N. H.

John Bruce, son of William Bruce, settled in Amherst, N. H.

Perley Howe, son of Simon Howe, settled in Surrey, N. H.

William B. Stowe, son of Heman Stowe, settled in Wilmington, Vt.

David Goodale, son of Nathan Goodale, settled in Halifax, N. H.

Levi Brigham, son of Willard Brigham, settled in Saugus.

Edward Warren, son of Thaddeus Warren, Missionary to Ceylon.

Jonathan Wilkins, ——— ——— ———

Willard Brigham, son of Willard Brigham, settled in Waldsborough, Vt.

Waldo Stevens, son of Temple Stevens, settled in Mansfield.

Of most of the persons contained in the foregoing list, I have no knowledge. How many of them are now living, or where is their present location, I am unable to say. In many cases the families are broken up and scattered, and information in regard to them is very difficult to be obtained. Most of them however have long since finished their work.

Two missionaries have originated in this place: Mr. Edward Warren, mentioned above as a missionary to Ceylon; and Miss Lucy Goodale, who became the wife of Rev. Mr. Thurston, missionary to the Sandwich Islands. Mr. Warren sailed for Ceylon in 1815, in company with Messrs. Meigs, Richards, Bardwell and Poor; he died in August 1818, at Cape Town, where he had gone for his health. Mrs. Thurston sailed with her husband for the Sandwich Islands in Oct. 1819, and still survives.

A Methodist Church has existed in this town for more than fifty years. Early in the present century a Class was formed by Mr. Phineas Sawyer at Feltonville, and meetings were held there from that time until 1827, when a church was erected in the north part of the town. This church was burned late in the year 1852, and in the Autumn of 1853, their present church in the center of the town was opened for public service.

The Baptist Society commenced holding meetings in Feltonville in 1844; and in 1851, their present church was erected.

The Universalist Society commenced holding meetings in 1818, and continued them until the close of 1854. Their House of worship was erected in 1829.

Several of the neighboring towns were taken from what was formerly embraced in Marlborough, and of course their churches once had a close connection with this church.

Westborough—so called from its including the section lying along the whole length of the west side of the original town of Marlborough—was incorporated Nov. 18, 1717. The church was formed Oct. 28, 1724, and on the same day Rev. Ebenezer Parkman, their first pastor was ordained. He continued to perform the duties of the pastoral office until within six weeks of his death, which occurred on the 9th of Dec. 1782, in the 80th year of his age, and the fifty-ninth of his ministry. He married a daughter of Rev. Robert Breck of Marlborough.

Northborough—so called from its embracing the north part of the town of Westborough—was incorporated Oct. 20, 1744. The first church was gathered in this town May 21, 1746, and on the same day Rev. John Martyn was ordained as their pastor. He retained the pastoral office until April 30th 1767, when he died after a short sickness, in the sixty-first year of his age, and the twenty-first of his ministry. Their second pastor, Rev. Peter Whitney, was ordained Nov. 4th, 1767.

Southborough—so called from its embracing the south part of the ancient town of Marlborough—was incorporated July 6th, 1727. The first church was organized Oct.

24th, 1730, and Rev. Nathan Stone was ordained their first pastor on the same day. He died May 31st, 1781, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, and the fifty-first of his ministry. Rev. Samuel Sumner, the second pastor, was settled June 1st, 1791.

A
SERMON,

PREACHED IN MARLBOROUGH, MASS.,

Nov. 3, 1858,

BY

REV. SYLVESTER F. BUCKLIN,

ON THE

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF HIS ORDINATION,

AS PASTOR OF THE EAST CHURCH IN THAT TOWN.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

WORCESTER:
HENRY J. HOWLAND, PRINTER,
1859.

SERMON.

AND THOU SHALT REMEMBER ALL THE WAY WHICH THE
LORD THY GOD LED THEE. DEUT. 8:2.

The ways of Divine Providence, in the government of the world, are often to us dark and mysterious. The dealings of God with his rational creatures are often covered with a veil too thick for the dim eye of reason to penetrate. The truth of this appears from his treatment of the children of Israel in the wilderness. No people were ever visited with greater trials, none ever experienced more signal deliverances, and both these were designed to make them feel and acknowledge their dependence on and obligations to God. He led them forty years in the wilderness by his own hand, and although their course was indirect and circuitous, notwithstanding their many trials and discouragements, the mercy of God always predominated. They were favored with many miraculous evidences of the Lord's special pres-

ence with them, and regard for them. "He led them forth in the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." It was on account of that series of blessings which followed the Israelites, those miraculous deliverances which they experienced, and trials they endured, that Moses required them to "remember all the way which the Lord had led them." He well knew this would be fitted to humble them under a sense of their sins, and to lead them to exercise love, gratitude, and obedience.

The same duties are required of us. Every individual, and every community, is required to remember God's dealings with them.

To review the past, to call to remembrance the various scenes through which we have been led, to see as we may and acknowledge the hand of God in them, is both instructive and profitable. "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. Consider the days of old, the years of many generations, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known unto their children. That the generation to come might know them; that they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God." The blessings of

God's common providence, their richness, variety, and importance, added to his special interpositions in their favor which all experience, would, if properly noticed, awaken gratitude in every heart, and lead to a devout and holy life. Under a sense of these, David was pressed with a load of gratitude, of which he could unburden himself only by daily praise. "Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits ; even the God of our salvation." Especially should those, whose days have been prolonged beyond the ordinary period of human life, who have been carried safely through all its dangers and vicissitudes, carefully notice the dealings of God with them, be humbled under a sense of their great deficiencies in duty, and incited to constant gratitude and love.

If we look back fifty years, and contemplate the changes and events which have taken place during that period, we shall see much that will interest us as individuals, and as a community. We may gather up many facts and lessons which will be useful to ourselves and to posterity. For this reason, I propose to review this portion of my history, as connected with this Church and Society ; not that there is any thing uncommon or remarkable in it, but I do

it at the special request, and in deference to the opinion, of those in whose judgment I have been accustomed to confide.

1. I commence, with my personal history. And here I would premise, that this is one of the occasions, in a person's life, when he feels justified in talking about himself. For this then, I shall make no apology. I was born, in the town of Rehoboth, now called Seekonk, in the south part of this State. I was the youngest of nine children, eight of whom lived to mature age; seven were over sixty, five over seventy, and two over eighty years of age. A fact worthy of notice is, that no special sickness or death occurred in this family for nearly fifty years. My own age, is seventy-four years and four months, and I have never been confined by sickness a day since my remembrance, nor had occasion to consult a physician on account of my bodily health. "Through help obtained of God, I continue unto the present day." I attribute my uninterrupted health to an originally strong constitution, an education on a farm, and to early acquired habits of regularity and temperance. I have never allowed my usual hours for sleep to be interrupted. The Sabbath, I have always endeavored to

remember, and keep according to its original design. Besides being a religious duty, I have deemed it essential to health, as well as to temporal and spiritual prosperity. No man should expect to prosper who desecrates the Sabbath, or who knowingly violates the laws of his physical constitution.

My father died when I was six years old. I was then placed under the guardianship of my eldest brother, with whom I spent my childhood and youth. It was my privilege to enjoy the instruction and example of a pious mother, and from my earliest recollection, I was the subject of serious impressions. These continued until I entered College. The gaities and follies of college life nearly effaced them, but they returned at a later period, and resulted, as I humbly trust, in an entire consecration of myself to the service of God. My early advantages for obtaining an education were limited. Living among a sparse population, I could attend school but a few months in a year. My time being occupied upon a farm, I had little leisure for reading or study. But a change took place in my situation which seemed entirely providential. A pious student* from Brown

* Rev. Lucius Bolles, D. D.

University, was employed to instruct the district school where I resided. He was the first person that suggested to me the idea of pursuing a course of study, and through his influence I was led to change my pursuits. Thus we see that a word may change the course of a person's life, and even their future destiny. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." In one year from this time I commenced the preparatory studies, and in two and one half years entered Brown University, and graduated in the class of 1805.

After leaving College, I taught school for one year. I was undecided as to a profession. I had an ardent desire for the ministry, but shrunk from its responsibilities; and it was not until after some months spent in serious inquiry for the path of duty, and earnest prayer to be enlightened and directed, that I decided upon my profession, and entered my name with a private instructor.* After spending less than one year in the study of Theology, I was licensed to preach the gospel. A wide field of labor now opened before me, and I was willing to occupy any part of it. Some time was spent in gratuitous service, among my brethren in

* Rev. Perez Forbes, D. D., L.L. D., of Raynham, Mass.

the ministry, in preaching a few Sabbaths as a supply, and I was then invited to preach in this place. My first Sabbath here was June 26, 1808. The day and the season were delightfully pleasant. These hills and dales were clothed in their richest attire. The prospect from them, always enchanting, was now doubly so to me. I hailed from the sterile plains of Seekonk, and the contrast between that place and this, was as great, as between Mt. Zion and the Mts. of Gilboa. After preaching eight Sabbaths, I received an almost unanimous invitation from the Church and Society, to become their Pastor. This was unexpected to me, and for several reasons, undesirable. I wished for a longer time in which to qualify myself for the christian ministry. Then, in many respects, this was not an inviting field. The previous divisions, contentions, and alienations, which had here existed, were great discouragements. The Meeting House, which had recently been erected at great expense, designed to accommodate the whole town, was much too large for the Society, and illy adapted to the comfort of the speaker, or benefit of the hearer. My youth, inexperience, and want of mental resources, seemed to forbid my occupying so impor-

tant a position. But the unanimity which existed in the Church and Society; the earnest solicitude manifested; and the unhappy result which might follow a refusal to settle, induced me to give an affirmative answer on the 24th of September. November 2, fifty years since, I was ordained to the work of the christian ministry in this place. It was one of our most delightful autumnal days, and the Meeting House, for the first and last time, was filled with attentive hearers. The Ordaining Council consisted of ten churches.

Introductory Prayer, by Rev. John Hill of Rehoboth.

Sermon, by Rev. Pitt Clark of Norton.

Consecrating Prayer, by Rev. David Kellogg of Framingham.

Charge to the Pastor, by Rev. Moses Adams of Acton.

Fellowship of the Churches, by Rev. Ezra Ripley of Concord.

Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Joel Foster of East Sudbury.

The Sermon, Charge and Right Hand of Fellowship, were published.

2. I would next give some account of the religious state of things in this Church and Society, at the commencement of my ministry. Previous to my settlement, a long and bitter controversy, had existed in this place. The Meeting House, which had been standing for

more than one hundred years, had become dilapidated, and a new house was needed. With regard to this, there was no diversity of opinion; but when the question arose, where shall the new House be located, this could not so easily be decided. The old Church stood about one third of a mile west of the centre of travel on the county road. The majority of the town contended, that as they and their fathers had for so many years travelled west of the centre, justice required that the new House should be located in the centre, as respected east and west. The West part of the town dissented. They were willing to come as far east as the old Church, but no farther. Various propositions were made for a compromise, but to no purpose. A spirit of discord and dissension had arisen, and it triumphed over every persuasion or argument that could be presented.

In 1805, a majority of the town voted to locate the new House at Spring Hill, where this House now stands; a most ineligible spot, being a complete ledge of rocks, of the kind most difficult to remove. To obviate this objection, and with the hope of conciliating the West part, individuals came forward and pledged themselves to prepare the spot in a

suitable manner for the erection of the House, in consideration of and exchange for the old Meeting-House Common, or the value thereof in money. The town accepted the proposal; but finding the Common could not be sold, gave them the value of it in money, amounting to over six hundred dollars. The expense of preparing the site was estimated at nearly four thousand dollars. The inhabitants of the West part of the town persisted in their opposition; this resulted in the erection of two Meeting Houses the following year, one by the town at Spring Hill, the other by the inhabitants of the West part of the town, as far west of the site of the old Church as Spring Hill is east. Both houses were opened for public worship on the same day, April 27, 1806. At the time of the division of the town, Rev. Asa Packard was the minister. Soon after, he was dismissed, and installed over the West Church and Society.

The Spring Hill Meeting House was one of the largest and most expensive then in the country; it was said to have cost, (exclusive of the expense of preparing the site,) at a low estimate, twenty-one thousand dollars. No expense was spared, to make this an elegant

and imposing structure, as the West part of the town were obliged to pay their full proportion for its erection. Both houses, including the expenses of separation, amounted to between thirty and forty thousand dollars. This was a tax which but few towns in the State could well sustain, and proved the cause of reducing a number of respectable, and at that time wealthy families, to straitened circumstances. Others have felt the effects of that outlay to the present time. Much of this expense and animosity might have been avoided, had wiser council, and a spirit of conciliation prevailed. These facts may be useful to other communities. They are instructive and admonitory, and wisdom may be learned from the sufferings of others.

In consequence of the division of the town, an Ecclesiastical Council was convened, and after a session of two days, they decided to divide the Church, and designated the two branches, the East and West Churches of Marlboro'. A small majority of the Church was connected with the minority of the Society.

I was settled over the East Church as its first Pastor. The Church, at this time, was not in the most desirable state. There was but little life or

activity manifested by the members in the cause of Christ. No meeting for prayer and religious conference, as far as I could learn, had been observed for many years, except the preparatory lecture before communion, and public worship on the Sabbath. This state of things had continued so long, that there was more of the form, than of the power of godliness, manifest in the Church. This was the legitimate effect of the preaching they had heard for so long a period.

For more than twenty years, the Church had been under the charge of Rev. Asa Packard, an avowed Arminian. And strange to say, there does not appear to have been any great dissatisfaction with his ministry; and stranger still, when we know that all the officers, and some of the lay members, were evangelical in sentiment. They, doubtless, were indoctrinated in their youth, and became pious and devout persons, notwithstanding all adverse influences.

That the most prominent and active members of this Church were Orthodox in sentiment, appears from the candidates they employed. The late lamented Payson commenced his ministry in this place, and there are fruits

of it remaining to this day. An invitation was given to an Orthodox man to become their Pastor, which he declined. It is true, that a majority of the Society and a minority of the Church were opposed to Orthodox preaching. A great number of candidates preceded me; those that the Church would have settled, the Society opposed, and vice versa.

When I was employed as a candidate, Providence had laid aside by sickness, one of the prominent members of the Church, who had been uniformly opposed by the Society. He heard me preach only a few times previous to my invitation to settle, and for prudential reasons, took no part in my settlement. I was afterwards told by my friends, that I owed my call to the sickness of this man.

From what has been observed, it might be inferred, that I should have trials and difficulties to encounter in the very outset of my ministry. This was not the case. My trials were not greater, than are often experienced by my brethren in the ministry. I endeavored to preach the gospel of Christ, as I understood it, with great plainness and simplicity, and to "commend the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God." No doctrine or truth

which was deemed essential to salvation, was withheld.

Early after my settlement, I established a meeting for prayer and religious conference, which was held semi-monthly, at private houses in different parts of the Parish. This was a new measure in this place, and was regarded by some of my people as of doubtful expediency, and they were not slow to tell me so. At first it created some alarm, and the observation was made by a prominent man, that he would rather a fatal epidemic should be introduced into the Society, than religious meetings on a week day. The great argument urged against them was, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." They were continued however, and when the people found their fears were groundless, the excitement died away. We now had a season of peace and religious prosperity, when the "gospel was made the power of God unto salvation," and "converts to righteousness were multiplied." Nothing occurred to interrupt it, until the controversy arose between the Orthodox and Unitarians.

From the commencement of my ministry, I held ministerial intercourse with all the Congregational ministers in the vicinity. They

were, at that time, considered evangelical in sentiment. A number of years elapsed before any minister in this vicinity was suspected of being unsound in the faith, or of embracing other than evangelical sentiments. The controversy above alluded to, seemed to throw new light upon the Churches. They were led to inquire more earnestly, "What is truth?"—to examine more thoroughly the foundation upon which they stood. The result showed that many of the ministers and Churches in this vicinity, and through this State especially, had departed from the faith of the Puritans, and had embraced error in its diversified forms. This led to numerous divisions and separations.

As early as 1818, a number of individuals who had never been fully satisfied with my ministry, and especially with my exchanges with Orthodox ministers, withdrew from my society, and with others of similar views in this and the adjacent towns, were organized into a Universalist Society. In 1829, they built a Meeting House, settled a minister, and for a few years flourished like a green bay tree. But that House has long since been deserted by them, and the Society disbanded.

3. I would mention some obstacles to the success of the gospel in this place. The first was the size of the Meeting House, which was too large for the whole town. Nearly one-half of the town seceded to form the West Society; a small number to form the Universalist Society. The number left, although respectable, appeared small, scattered over so large a space. The House was incommodious and unsuitable. Its aspect was forbidding—there was a solitariness pervading it—a chilliness of atmosphere which might be felt in mid-summer, and which sensibly affected both speaker and hearer. “Thoughts that breathe and words that burn,” would freeze before they reached the ears of the audience. Especially would this be the case in mid-winter, for this House was never warmed by either stove or furnace. These were luxuries unknown in those days. Some of my people rode more than four miles to meeting, and never went to a fire until they returned home. Under such circumstances, could it be expected that people would be greatly benefitted by the word preached? Would it not be an almost insurmountable obstacle to the success of the gospel in any place? I considered it one of the greatest with which I had to contend.

Another obstacle was the Half-Way Covenant. This I found in use when I came here, and it was probably introduced at an early period in the history of this Church. Any person of good moral character might receive this Covenant, and have his children baptized. Many availed themselves of this privilege, being governed, probably, more by custom, than by a sense of duty. It was fashionable to present their children for baptism, and would be considered disgraceful if they did not. True, there were some who had such a sense of the impropriety of this practice, that they did not wish to avail themselves of the privilege. But on those who did, the effect was unfavorable. Having performed so much of their duty, they thought they might safely neglect the remainder. As they had dedicated their children to God, they neglected self-dedication. Their consciences were quieted; they felt at ease, and would wrap themselves in a garment of self-righteousness. I soon became convinced that serious evils attended this practice, and exerted my influence to abolish it. Some were easily dissuaded from it; others persisted for a time in what they considered their duty and privilege. At length, the Church Committee was

appointed to examine candidates for this Covenant, and they soon convinced those who offered themselves, that there was no Half-Way Covenant between man and man, much less between man and God.

There were other obstacles to the success of the gospel in this place,—such as the laxity of sentiment and morals, which prevailed.

To become a christian, and to maintain a consistent life, required more than an ordinary measure of grace and self denial. Besides the opposition which every one finds in his own heart, there were here numerous other adverse influences, to draw one away from God and duty.

4. I would speak of the support of the gospel. The salary of my predecessor, Rev. Asa Packard, was one hundred pounds, and twenty cords of wood, to be paid annually. At that time, every tax payer in town was obliged by law, to pay his proportion towards the minister's support. When I was settled, this was the law of the State, and Mr. Phineas Sawyer, of Feltonville, a Methodist, was the only exception. After Mr. Packard had been settled nearly twenty years, and his salary had depreciated in value, and the expenses of living had increased

and also his family, he asked for an increase of salary, which request was not granted. The request was renewed several times, and as often refused. The reason assigned for the refusal was, the fear of discord and division should there be a change in the salary. Soon after this, the town expended between thirty and forty thousand dollars for Meeting Houses, and paid eleven hundred dollars annually for preaching,—and this they did most cheerfully. This clearly shows what sacrifices will be made to accomplish a favorite object; what obstacles will be overcome which at first view seemed insurmountable.

In process of time, the law of the state respecting the support of public worship was modified several times, and at last abolished. The effect of this may have been unfavorable upon some feeble Churches, but in general, it has operated favorably. It has led people to place a more just estimate upon the value of the gospel, and to make greater sacrifices for its support. The voluntary principle, is undoubtedly the true one, with regard to the maintenance of public worship.

5. I would next mention some matters relating to the Church. For several years after my

settlement, there was no committee for the examination of candidates for admission to the Church. This responsibility rested solely with the Pastor. If in his judgment, the applicant was deemed worthy of admission, he was propounded; a written relation of his religious experience was read before the congregation; and after standing propounded two weeks, if no objection was made, he was received into the Church. I found the responsibility greater than I wished to assume, and requested to have a committee from the Church chosen to assist in examining candidates. Such a committee was chosen, and from that time, the Church has dispensed with written relations.

It is believed that this Church was organized with a Covenant only, having no distinct Articles of Faith, and continued thus until 1837. In that year the Covenant was revised, and definite articles of faith adopted, which have been used until the present time.

From what has already been said of this Church and Society, it might be inferred that great harmony would not prevail in either, but this would be a wrong inference. Although there was some diversity of sentiment in the Church, yet no dissatisfaction was manifested on

account of my doctrines, or with my general course of procedure. I had no doubt there were some in the Church who did not approve of my doctrines, but they had the good sense to know that what I preached was the truth, or the civility to be silent. Knowing their state, I could say with the Great Teacher, "I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now." I endeavored to lead those who differed from me in my religious views, step by step, into what I considered the truth. And I had the satisfaction to believe, that within a few years after I came among them, by the blessing of God, nearly all the members of my Church harmonized with me in my views of religious truth, and that they cordially embraced the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel.

During my ministry of twenty-four years, there were two seasons of religious interest;—one in 1809, the other in 1818. In each of those years, twenty nine persons were added to the Church, who greatly increased its strength and influence.

The whole number admitted during my ministry, was one hundred twenty two, and the number of baptisms four hundred and seven. Church discipline being deemed important, has

been maintained in this Church, and several persons were excommunicated during my ministry.

A Sabbath School was established in 1818, and has been continued to the present time. Improvements have been made in the manner of conducting it, and it has proved a great blessing to all connected with it. Nearly all the accessions to the Church for many years, have been from the Sabbath School. Previous to its formation, it was my practice to meet the children and youth in the several school districts in the Parish, once a year, for catechetical instruction.

As early as 1810, this Church commenced contributing to benevolent objects, and has since contributed with a good degree of liberality. The Monthly Concert was early observed. Thus for more than twenty years, under the care of a kind Providence, nothing unusual occurred to interrupt the peace and prosperity of the Church. Both Church and Society were greatly prospered in their secular interests. They were "kept from the pestilence which walketh in darkness, and from the destruction that wasteth at noon-day." The voice of health and rejoicing was heard in their habitations.

They could truly say, "God hath not dealt so with every people, and as for his judgments that they had scarcely known them."

In 1831, new measures were adopted by many Churches for the promotion of religion. I refer to protracted meetings. These were held in most of the Evangelical Churches in this vicinity, where young men had been recently settled. These, as they were often conducted, were regarded by some as of doubtful expediency, but by others they were highly approved. Doubtless, in many instances, they were productive of good; but after years have proved them to be of human rather than Divine origin. They were the cause of bringing many unconverted persons into the Church, of creating uneasiness, and of the frequent dismissal of ministers. All those in this region who were the most favorable to protracted meetings, were in a few years dismissed. Formerly, a minister spent his days in one place, with one people; now, all he can promise himself is, a few years, or even months.

During the year 1831, it was suggested to me by some of my friends, that some in this Church wished for a change in the ministry. This was not unexpected to me, knowing as I

did the restlessness which existed in many of the neighboring Churches. I had long before resolved that I would never be burdensome to my people, and had learned from high authority, that "it is better to leave off contention before it be meddled with." Accordingly I yielded to my friend's suggestion, and in April 1832, asked for a dismissal. On the 20th of June, an Ecclesiastical Council was convened and I was dismissed; retaining all the immunities and privileges of a christian minister. From the time I came here as a candidate, to the time of my dismissal, was just twenty-four years. During my ministry I had no vacation, and can recollect only two instances, in which I failed to supply the pulpit on the Sabbath.

6. I proceed to give some account of the dealings of God with this people after my dismissal. For several months, they were in a divided and unsettled state. Mr. Charles Forbush, received an invitation from the Church, and a minority of the Society, to become their Pastor, May 27th, 1833. In this invitation a minority of the Church and majority of the Society, did not concur. The friends of Mr. Forbush, being unwilling to relinquish him, withdrew from the Parish; assumed the name

of The First Evangelical Congregational Society in Marlboro'; and commenced separate worship, being excluded by law from the Meeting House. Mr. Forbush was ordained Aug. 21, 1833.

In March 1833, a Committee of the First Parish applied to me to supply their pulpit for one year. This I consented to do, with the hope that after mature deliberation, a reunion of the Church and Societies would take place. In this, I was not disappointed; for in less than a year a proposition was made by members of the first Parish for a re-union. On March 12th, 1834, a Council met at the request of the two Societies, to consider the expediency of dismissing their present Pastor, Rev. C. Forbush. The result of this Council was his dismissal on the 26th of the same month, having remained here only seven months.

March 19, 1834, another Council was convened at the request of the two Societies, together with the members of the Churches worshipping with each, to give advice and to adjust the difficulties existing between them. The result of this Council was an amicable adjustment of all difficulties, and the presentation of a petition to the Legislature to incor-

porate the two Societies into one,—to be called the Union Society. The request of the petitioners was granted. Another Council was soon after called to give advice and to recommend terms of union between the two Churches. This was eminently successful in re-uniting them in the bonds of peace and fellowship. It is believed that nothing has since occurred to render the name Union Church and Society inappropriate.

In Oct. 1834, the Church invited the Rev. Joseph Fuller to become their Pastor; but he returned a negative answer.

In the Spring of 1836, the Society voted to take down the large Meeting House and erect a new one on the same site, of more suitable dimensions. This House was dedicated Sept. 15, 1836. In the same year, Mr John N. Goodhue received an invitation to become Pastor of this Church and Society, and was ordained as such, May 4, 1837. He was removed by death after a ministry of three and a half years. His removal was a heavy bereavement. Mr. Goodhue was a man of great promise. He possessed a rare combination of those traits of character, which were calculated to render him a useful and successful minister of

Christ. He was much endeared to his people, and will long be affectionately and gratefully remembered by them.

In 1840, Mr. Joseph A. Saxton was invited to settle in this place, but declined. The same year, Mr. George E. Day received a call from this Church and Society and was ordained December 2. After a pastorate of seven years, he was invited to the Edwards Church in Northampton, and was dismissed December 23, 1847.

Rev. David L. Ogden accepted an invitation to become the Pastor of this people. He was installed April 26, 1848, and dismissed July 23, 1850. There were causes which operated to render his ministry unhappy to himself and his people. He was settled upon the injudicious plan of "six months notice." After his dismissal, the pulpit was supplied from August 1, 1850 to April 1853 by Rev. Geo. Denham. In 1852, the Society voted to paint their Meeting House, and make all necessary repairs. This they did at an expense of more than one thousand dollars. When completed and ready for use, the House with its Organ, Clock, Bell and Books, was consumed by fire. This occurred early in the evening of November 10, 1852, and whether accidental or occasioned by

the torch of the incendiary, is unknown. There was only a small insurance on the House. This loss was viewed as a great calamity by some, and with despondency, but the Society soon resolved that the House of the Lord should be rebuilt. "They had a mind to work;" and the commodious House in which we are now assembled, was erected the next year, at an expense exceeding ten thousand dollars. The excellent bell which notifies us of the hour of worship, was presented to the Society by the late Dea. David Goodale. The clock which adorns the gallery of the orchestra, was presented by a member of this Church, Nicholson B. Proctor, Esq., this being the second gift of the kind from the same benevolent individual. The clock in the Vestry was given by Dea. Wm. Stetson. Both organs which have discoursed sweet music to us, were procured by subscriptions from the ladies and gentlemen in the Society.

On the 30th of May 1853, Mr. Levi A. Field received an invitation to become the Pastor of this Church and Society. He gave an affirmative answer, and his Ordination and the Dedication of the Church took place, August 31, 1853.

Thus it appears that Rev. Mr. Field is my fifth successor in the ministry in this place. Two of these have long since finished their labors on earth and entered upon the rewards of the just. This people have been under the discipline of Divine Providence, and joy and sorrow have followed each other in quick succession. They have passed through many trying scenes; their fondest hopes have been blasted; their brightest prospects, cut off; yet they can truly say that light has arisen out of darkness, good out of apparent evil, and that events which seemed adverse, have been so overruled by Divine Providence as to promote their highest good.

7. Many improvements have been made during the period now under review. When I came to this town fifty years ago, most of the houses were unpainted, floors uncarpeted, and rooms but dimly lighted. Now we seldom see a house unpainted, or an uncarpeted floor, and in some of our dwellings, the darkness of night is turned into day by the brilliant gas-light. The huge fire-place and settee within it which would accommodate one-half of the family, have given place to the neat grate, stove, furnace, or steam apparatus. Great improvements

have been made in roads, carriages, and modes of transportation. The first rail-road in this country was built less than fifty years since. Now these roads are common everywhere, and we have more than enough in this place. There have been improvements made in our burial grounds. A pleasing change has taken place within a few years, but there is still room for a much greater change in this place.

The facilities enjoyed by the youth of both sexes for the acquisition of knowledge, have greatly increased. The systems of education in our common schools and higher seminaries have changed. Female Seminaries have been established within the last twenty-five years. Colleges have greatly increased within fifty years. At the commencement of this century there were but twenty-five, now there are more than one hundred and twenty-five Colleges and Universities. We have now more than forty Theological Institutions, twelve Law-Schools, and about forty Medical Schools.

There have been numerous scientific discoveries and inventions during the last half century; such as steam power, railway, and telegraph. We have various labor-saving machines in almost all kinds of business. These are of

great importance to the manufacturer, and agriculturist, as one man can perform the labor of twenty or fifty men.

Some of our customs and habits have improved. Formerly, intoxicating liquors were freely used by all classes in the community. They were deemed necessary and indispensable for the laboring classes. They were used on joyous and on solemn occasions, at all social gatherings ; and it was considered a breach of hospitality not to present them to our friends. This practice has long since ceased in all good society, and we wonder that it ever prevailed. It is thought by many, that our progress has been retrograde in reference to family instruction and government ; to obedience and respect to parents and superiors. The change is lamentable, and should lead parents seriously to inquire into the cause of this departure from the example of our fathers. The Sabbath is not as strictly observed as it formerly was, and many now make it a holiday.

8. I will next mention some of the changes which have taken place among us during the last fifty years. "One generation passeth away and another generation cometh." Instability is written upon all terrestrial objects. Man is

not an exception. Every member of the Council at my Ordination has long since passed away. Few only who witnessed the services of that occasion, are among the living. Most of those who were active in my settlement are numbered with the dead. Only six heads of families, then married, are now living among us. Instead of the fathers are the children, and children's children.

The Church has not been exempt from the ravages of time. Its former officers, venerable for age and for piety, are gone; and but one who was a member* of the Church when I became its Pastor, remains to testify to the faithfulness of her covenant God and Savior. Many who have since united with the Church have died.

Death has recently invaded our ranks, and called away an honored officer of this Church. Dea. David Goodale was the first person who proposed this celebration. He had important facts to communicate, unknown to others, and had his life been spared, he would have added greatly to the interest of the occasion. But God required his service in another part of his kingdom. We bless God that he was spared

*Mrs. Sarah Stowe.

so long to his family, and to this Church and Society, and that he was permitted to do so much for its establishment and prosperity.

The members of "The Marlboro' Association," with which I was connected, with one exception,* have ceased from their labors. Many who succeeded them have been removed by death, or have gone to other fields of labor.

It is believed that no Orthodox Congregational minister in this County, has been settled in one place fifty years, who now has the sole charge of a people. There are in the State, eight or nine Congregational clergymen, who were settled fifty years since, who still hold the Pastoral office, though in most cases they have colleagues, and are released from service. The number in New England who have remained half a century in one place, and are still in active service, is small. If we look among men of other professions—among statesmen who have been most distinguished for their usefulness, we shall see that great changes have taken place. Men may be exalted in station, in honor, and trust, but death invades their ranks and lays them low in the dust. "I have said ye are gods, but ye shall die like men."

*Rev. John B. Wight, of Wayland.

9. The condition of our country and some important events which have taken place within the last fifty years, demand a passing notice. Our country during this period has been unparalleled in its increase of wealth and numbers ; in its progress in the arts and sciences ; and in efforts to improve the condition of the race. Many benevolent societies have commenced their operations during the present century. Successful efforts have been made to carry civil, intellectual, and christian culture, into Asia, Africa, and the Islands of the sea. Much has been done to remove social and moral evils, and to purify the fountains from whence they sprang. Many philanthropists have arisen, whose lives and labors have been devoted to human welfare. They have been stars in the moral firmament, and have shed their radiance far and wide. Their names and their deeds will long be remembered, and transmitted as a rich legacy to posterity.

Widely different has been the condition of Europe, during the last fifty years. While we have enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace and prosperity, the old world has been engaged in war and blood-shed. Nations have risen and fallen ; empires have been lost and won ; kings

and emperors have been dethroned ; conquest has followed conquest ; and blood has flowed freely as water, to gratify the ambitious purposes of men. But these revolutions we believe have given an impulse to the cause of liberty ;— have led men to understand more perfectly their rights and their duties. It is only through suffering, that nations as well as individuals, are prepared for the acquisition, appreciation, and enjoyment of the greatest blessings. But there are two events which remain to be mentioned, which distinguished the year 1858. First, the Atlantic Telegraph. This is the greatest enterprise of the age, and promises the happiest results, whether viewed in a commercial, political, or religious aspect. Only a few of the benefits of this achievement can at present be conceived. God will reveal them to us in due time. The other event to which I refer, is the extensive Revival of Religion, which has pervaded our land. This has been most emphatically a year of the right hand of 'The Most High—one of surpassing interest to the Church and to the world. God has revealed his love and power in glorious manifestation as never before known. With no special means employed ; without exciting influences to awaken

feeling ; the word of God has gone forth in the silent majesty of truth, conquering and to conquer. Its trophies have been multiplied all over the land, from every class, condition, and character. The Spirit of God has wrought these wonders of mercy and grace. To Him be all the praise.

In reviewing the past, I feel that I have great reason for gratitude to God, that my life has been prolonged ; for the health I have enjoyed, and for other distinguishing favors. I feel grateful that I have been permitted to preach the gospel of Christ, and as I humbly trust, not wholly without effect. Although I lament my many deficiencies, I rejoice that I have not labored in vain. I review with pleasure the system of doctrines and duties which I preached, and believe them the same which were taught by Christ and his apostles. They are the only doctrines which God has promised to bless to the saving benefit of man. They have been increasingly precious to me since the commencement of my ministry, and were I permitted to commence again, I should endeavor to preach substantially the same truths, and enforce them by the same motives. I rejoice that the gospel is still preached in its purity

and in great faithfulness in this place. So may it ever continue to be, and become "the power of God unto salvation" to multitudes yet unborn.

It has been said (and with some truth I fear) that dismissed ministers make the most troublesome parishioners. It is with satisfaction that I can appeal to each of my successors now living, to prove that there are exceptions to this remark.

The intercourse between them and myself, and between our families, has always been most cordial and friendly, and I have endeavored to co-operate with them in advancing the cause of Christ.

I would gratefully acknowledge the kindness and respect shown by this people to myself and family; their sympathy in seasons of sorrow: it has been a balm for our wounds, and a cordial for our tears. It has greatly endeared them and our home to us, and my heart's desire and prayer to God is, that they may be rewarded an hundred fold, and inherit everlasting life.

This Church and people have great occasion for gratitude to God. You have not been led by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night; but the hand of Providence is conspicuous in every period of your history, especially during the last half century. In that time you have expe-

rienced numerous changes ; some joyful, others sorrowful : you have been tried with prosperity, and with adversity ; but all these trials have been overruled for your good. God has been your Leader and Guide. He has led you in the right way. You have been greatly blessed in enjoying the uninterrupted ministration of the gospel for so many years. You and your children, have had opportunity to avail yourselves of its inestimable blessings.

Few persons have been so highly favored : few have enjoyed so much external prosperity. This has never been greater than it is at the present time. Remember then all the way in which the Lord has led you, and let this remembrance lead you to the exercise of love, gratitude, and obedience.

To conclude, Brethren and Friends, I congratulate you on your present prosperous condition ; on being blessed with an efficient ministry ; with the constant preaching of the gospel, and with other means of spiritual culture ; with the success which has attended them, accompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit. The contrast between your present and former condition, is to me, most striking. You have not only increased in numbers, but as I believe, in spirituality. You are more

deeply rooted and grounded in the truth, and possess more as I trust of the requisite qualifications for the Heavenly Inheritance. See to it, that you do not forget the Author of all your blessings; that you suitably appreciate and wisely improve the price put into your hands, for getting wisdom.

The years roll on; and with us, they soon pass away. How few of those who worshipped with us fifty years ago now survive, and how few now present will live to see the close of this century. Soon, risen and succeeding generations will tread upon our ashes, as we have trodden upon the ruins of departed years. Soon shall we all pass away like a dream and be forgotten: soon Eternity will be present with all its realities.

What then is our wisdom? To hearken to the voice of God; to "fear Him and keep His commandments." If we receive instruction from Him and obey Him, we shall obtain the great object of life; a part in the resurrection of the just; a part which will survive the ravages of Time and Death, and the wreck of worlds; and which will secure for us a dwelling place "in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

APPENDIX.

It will be proper in this connection, to give a brief sketch of the circumstances which led to this celebration, and also of the order of exercises on that day. Early in the year 1858, the following Paper was presented to Rev. Mr. Bucklin, signed by forty four of the leading members of this Society.

“REV. S. F. BUCKLIN :

Dear Sir,—The second day of November next, will complete half a century, since you were ordained as pastor of this church and people. Though a number of years have elapsed since you retired from the active duties of the ministry, still you have from time to time discharged the functions of the sacred office; and occasionally you have filled the place of a pastor and teacher among us—administering the sacred ordinances, and mingling with us in scenes of joy and sorrow. We are unwilling that an anniversary of so much interest to us and to you, should pass over, without some proper notice of the event, and without giving us occasion to manifest to you our personal regard. We, therefore, the undersigned, in accordance with what we believe to be the unanimous wish of this Church and Society, invite you to meet us on that day, and give us some reminiscences of the last fifty years, and receive from us some token of affectionate interest and esteem.”

Mr. Bucklin having signified his willingness to comply with their request, a committee was chosen, consisting of Dea. David Goodale, Dea. William Stetson, Stephen Morse, Esq., Mr. Dwight Witt, and Mr. William Wilson, to make arrangements for celebrating the day. As the annual State election occurred on the second day of the month, the exercises of this occasion were deferred to the third day of November, when a large audience assembled from this and the adjoining towns, completely filling every part of the church. The order of exercises on the occasion was as follows :

Voluntary on the Organ.

Singing,—Anthem for Easter.

“The Lord is risen indeed. Hallelujah.”

Invocation and Reading of the Scriptures,

By Rev. W. A. Houghton.

Singing,—121st Psalm 3d pt (Church Psal.) Tune, Lenox.

“To God I lift mine eyes.”

Prayer,—By Rev. J. C. Webster.

Singing,—575 Hymn—Tune, Confidence.

“Thou, Lord, through every changing Scene.”

Sermon,—By Rev. S. F. Bucklin.

Prayer,—By Rev. Joseph Allen, D.D.

Singing,—685 Hymn—Tune Old Hundred.

“Eternal God! I bless Thy name.”

(The whole Congregation united in singing this Hymn.)

Benediction,—By Rev. Dr. Allen.

At the close of the religious services, the congregation resumed their seats to witness the following ceremony. The table in front of the pulpit had been tastefully ornamented with flowers, and in the center of it stood a beautiful Silver Pitcher, bearing the following inscription :

To

REV. SYLVESTER F. BUCKLIN,

Ordained as Pastor of the

First Church and Society in Marlborough,

Nov. 2d, 1808,

Presented by his Friends and Former Parishioners,

as a token of their respect and affection,

Nov. 2d, 1858.

The Pitcher was presented to Mr. Bucklin, at the request of the Committee of Arrangements, by the pastor of the Church, and in doing it, he addressed him as follows :

REVEREND AND RESPECTED SIR :

Before we separate on this occasion, your friends and former parishioners wish to present you with some substantial token of their regard. The hours of this day will soon be gone. The friends who have gathered here to meet you will return to their homes, and this season will live only in the memories of those who have shared its festivities. But we wish to leave behind us some more enduring memorial of the scenes of this hour ; something that shall outlast the present, and outlive the generation of your early companions who are so rapidly passing away ; something that shall remain when you are gone, and be eloquent to those who come after you of the respect and affection which greet you here to-day.

It is the wish of the Committee of Arrangements, that I should present to you this testimonial ; and also that I should express in their behalf the sentiments which this community feel towards you, and which prompt them to this act. And you well know, Sir, why this duty devolves

on me, and not on another. You well know that I occupy a place which another was expected to fill, who, alas, is with us no longer. It is the only shadow which darkens the gladness of this occasion, that he should be absent who had so long anticipated and labored for it; who had known you well for half a century; and who was prepared to speak of your upright and consistent course, and your claims to our affectionate regard. It was almost the only earthly enterprise which he had planned but was not permitted to complete; the thought of it haunted him by day and by night, in health and in sickness; and it is strange indeed, that he should come so near to this occasion which he had so long desired to see, and yet die without the sight. But of the sentiments, or remembrances, or congratulations which he wished to express, we know nothing; he has died and made no sign; and all those treasured memories must be reserved for the companionship of the skies.

It is a pleasant fact that the mind so readily loses the unpleasant features of the period through which it has passed. The dark scenes fade from the memory and the bright ones only remain. Those which were full of discouragement and perplexity, will brighten with the lapse of time, and finally appear serene and peaceful amid the gathering mists of years. And it is our wish to recall only such scenes as you would love to remember; to bury everything which might seem unpleasant or unfriendly; to bridge over every chasm which may have been created; and to link back this day, to the second day of November of half a century ago. There are some things, Sir, which we cannot change. We cannot bring back the friends of your youth. We cannot remove the impress which years have

left upon your frame. We cannot efface the inscriptions which time has written upon your forehead. We cannot change the silver light of those grey hairs which are whitening into a crown of glory. But we can gather around you with words of cordial welcome which will make your heart feel young again, and which will bring back into your thoughts the pleasant memories of buried years.

We extend to you, Sir, our kindest and warmest welcome. We congratulate you on the signs of affectionate regard, which are manifest around you. We bless God that he has spared your life to see this day. Only a few live to the close of half a century of ministerial service; and fewer still, after having retired for a quarter of a century from the active duties of the ministry, are met with so many tokens of affection as meet you on this occasion. We all know how liable a minister, in leaving his profession, is, to sink in the estimation of the community at large. But your course, I rejoice to say, has been such as to command the respect of all classes. You have always been a peace-maker; you have ever sought to promote the best interests of this church and people; you have always been a pastor to these families whenever they needed your assistance; you have shared their joys, sympathized in their sorrows, and in times of sore bereavement, your heart has gone down with them into the graves of their dead. And your successors in the ministry have always found in you a firm friend and an active assistant, and some of us have found you a father in counsel and in kindness; but never have we had reason to feel that you sought to injure our influence or counteract our usefulness.

We bless God therefore, not only for the fruits of your

active ministry, but also for the christian example of your retired ministry. I know whereof I affirm in these statements, and I rejoice to bear this testimony which is just and true. This case deserves to be held in honorable and lasting remembrance, as one instance, where a retired minister has not only retained, but has increased and deepened the respect and affection of his people. Your course, Sir, has been a living witness for the cause of Christ and will not soon be forgotten. And we rejoice that we are permitted this day to give you the pleasing evidence that we appreciate the nobleness and consistency of your life.

And not you Sir, only, do we welcome on this occasion of rejoicing. You come not here alone. We rejoice that she too is spared to see this day—the companion of almost half a century,—the sharer of your joys, your trials, and your hopes,—she, who has borne by your side the heat and burden of the day, and whose presence as wife and mother has cheered your home so long. We welcome you both to this season of social gladness and festivity. The fathers and the mothers; the grey-haired sires and the little children; the young men and maidens, rise up to greet you and to welcome you here.

You will see here only a few of those faces which you looked upon fifty years ago. Instead of the fathers, are the children. Here and there is one whose silver locks remind us of three-score years and ten, and perhaps four-score years: but almost the whole generation has passed away, and now they sleep by the sepulchres of their fathers. Those, who then presided over these households and welcomed you to their firesides, have left their names and their places to those on whom you set the seal of the Cov-

enant in their infant years. You have stood by the dying beds of these fathers and mothers ; your prayers and words of consolation have strengthened their faith and hope ; you have followed them down into the valley of death, and have caught the last farewell from those now sainted lips. No, Sir, these families do not remain the same unbroken groups as you found them ; and it is for your sympathy in their trials, for the kindness with which you stayed the trembling steps of aged parents as they went down to the grave, that the children now rise up and bless you.

And your own beloved family circle has not been passed over. The darkness of the shadow of death has rested upon your household, and left there the traces of loss and sorrow. As I recall that catalogue of names so familiar to your ear, and so deeply engraven on your memory, I find that they are not all here ; no, not all. As you gather that group around you to-day, to give them a father's benediction ; you will find some vacant seats, some silent voices, some haunting remembrances of vanished forms, which come no more to greet you. No, Sir, you are not all here ; you never can be all here again ; you must henceforth remain a broken band, a divided family, until you all rest side by side with yonder generations of sleeping dust.

But time is passing, and I may not linger. This testimonial, which we desire to present you, we hope will be acceptable of itself, and still more acceptable from the feelings which go with it. It has not been obtained by a few liberal contributions, but by the individual gifts of a large number. I speak not therefore for the few, but for the many ; the whole community feels an interest in it ; it is the united and unanimous expression of this whole people, of the manner in which they respect and cherish

you. It is full of their warmest wishes and earnest prayers for your future welfare, and the fondest hopes that your life may be continued yet long among us in the beauty and freshness of a green old age. And finally, when the silver cord shall be loosed and the golden bowl shall be broken; when the pitcher shall be broken at the fountain, and the wheel be broken at the cistern,—may it come upon you so gently, that you shall go down to your rest like a shock of corn fully ripe in its season, and ripe too for the rewards and the glories of eternal life beyond.

In the name then of these your friends and former parishioners, I now present you this testimonial of their sincere and affectionate regard. Receive it, Sir, I entreat you, as a freewill offering of our hearts—as only a feeble expression of the respect we so deeply feel. Let it always be present at your family gatherings; let it ever adorn your festive board; let it gladden all the scenes of your future rejoicing; and let it go down to your children, and to your children's children, as a token of the respect and affection which we cherish for their father.

Mr. Bucklin, in receiving the Pitcher, made the following response:

Permit me, Dear Sir, through you, to express to my friends my obligations for this unexpected testimonial of their friendship and respect. They need not be told that this day is one of deep and tender interest to me; that it brings fresh to my recollection events that have transpired since my residence among them—various scenes of joy and sorrow in which we have mutually participated—when we have rejoiced with those who rejoice, and wept with those who wept. And, Sir, it is peculiarly gratifying to me to

know, that some of my early friends still remember me, and are disposed to cast the mantle of charity over my many imperfections, and to speak words of affection and kindness concerning me; and that later friends have arisen, taking the places of those who have passed away, who are disposed to manifest the same friendly feelings.

Nothing earthly gives such a charm to life, such a solace and support under trials, as to know that we enjoy the affection and confidence of those among whom we dwell. During the years of my ministry, I enjoyed the respect and esteem of an affectionate people. But alas! most of them have been called away. And now, after a quarter of a century had elapsed since my pastoral relation to this people had been dissolved, and I had mingled with them in the common transactions of life, that those who remain, in connection with a new generation that have grown up, should unite to make me this freewill offering, you may well suppose is truly gratifying. It is gratifying to know, that this is not the act of an individual, nor of a few special friends,—but that it is the act of earlier and later friends, of those within and those without this Society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I most cordially thank you for this testimonial of respect. I would assure you that I appreciate it for its intrinsic worth; but especially as a token of affectionate and grateful remembrance. Of this, then, it shall ever be a memento to myself and to my wife, to my children and to my children's children. And now my friends, may we all fill up life with duty and fidelity in our several stations, that we may all be so unspeakably happy as to be gathered to our Father in peace, and with the joyful hope of a blessed immortality.

I wish also to acknowledge on this occasion the reception of another testimonial of kind remembrance. This beautiful Cane which I hold in my hand, has been presented to me by Mr. John B. Clark and Brothers of Worcester, as a token of their personal regard. This gift I esteem very highly, because it comes from the descendents of pious ancestors who were members of my Church ; who were bright examples of piety, and whom I always regarded as my personal friends. The name of Clark will long continue to be a cherished name in this community. And I shall not soon forget, that your sainted Mother on her dying bed gave me a testimonial of her personal regard, by constituting me a life member of one of our most important benevolent Societies.

Gentlemen, please accept my cordial thanks for this most appropriate gift—a staff for me to lean upon in my old age. Permit me to express a desire that you may walk in the footsteps of honored and pious ancestors ; that the graces and virtues which adorned their characters may be copied into your own ; and that you may become followers of those who through faith and patience, have gone to inherit the promises.

At the close of these exercises, the congregation were all invited to repair to the vestries of the church, and partake of a collation. This was provided by the younger members of the Society, who manifested both their taste and liberality in the arrangement and supply of the tables. The social interview which followed was a delightful feature of the occasion. Opportunity was given for the renewal of friendships, which had been partially suspended by the separation of many years. And it was interesting

to witness the greetings exchanged between former companions after years of absence ; between the revered Pastor and his many friends who had assembled from this and neighboring towns to meet and rejoice with him. Every person seemed to enter into the spirit of the occasion ; and every countenance, from the oldest to the youngest, was beaming with gladness. This part of the exercises was interspersed with excellent singing, and with interesting addresses, by Rev. Dr. Allen, Rev. Mr. Webster, Rev. Mr. Houghton, and also by Rev. Messrs. Alger, Day, and Wakefield—pastors of the different churches in this town. After several hours spent in this manner, the large assembly gradually dispersed, and thus closed the celebration of this Fiftieth Anniversary. And it is not too much to say, that this church has not for many years, if ever, witnessed a more interesting occasion. The event reflects honor alike on the respected former Pastor, and on the people who so freely and generously offered to him these tokens of their regard.

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