

REMINISCENCES OF A FIFTY-YEARS PASTORATE.

HALF-CENTURY DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

NORTH-HAMPTON, N. H.

NOVEMBER 18, 1851,

BY JONATHAN FRENCH, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

PORTSMOUTH :

C. W. BREWSTER & SON, —PRINTERS.

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*Dear Sir,*—The people of North-Hampton, through their Committee, thank you for your Half-Century discourse delivered on the 18th instant, and request a copy for the press.

With much respect,

JOHN L. HOBBS,

*Chairman of Com. of Arrangements.*

TO REV. JONATHAN FRENCH, D. D.

North-Hampton, Nov. 20, 1851.



*Dear Sir,*—In compliance with the request of the people of North-Hampton, I will furnish a copy for the press.

Yours with great respect,

JONATHAN FRENCH.

Mr. JOHN L. HOBBS.

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## DISCOURSE.

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GENESIS XLVIII: 21.

“BEHOLD I DIE; BUT GOD SHALL BE WITH YOU.”

THESE are the words of Israel to his son Joseph. Though spoken to an individual they had reference also to a community. That community was a portion of the Jewish church.

Israel had felt, and continued to feel, a great interest in its welfare. He knew that he had himself become old, and was drawing near the close of his mortal life. In the affairs of the past and of the passing generations of the children of Abraham, he had been intimately conversant. He rejoiced in the prospects of good to those who were to succeed him. He seems to have anticipated his approaching death not only with calmness but comfort; as well he might; for they who say *such* things as *he* said, shew plainly that “they desire a better country, even a heavenly.”

In his last interview with Joseph and his children he could say concerning himself, with unhesitating submission, and in the hope of immortal life in the world to come, “Behold I die!” He could also, in the spirit of unwavering faith, say concerning them: “But God shall be with you.” It was his “heart’s desire and prayer,” and his belief that God, before whom his fathers, Abraham and Isaac did walk; the God who fed him all his life long unto that day; the angel, who redeemed him from all evil, would be with them and bless them.”

Such were Israel's views in anticipation of most important events which awaited himself and them. Such were the feelings and faith which found utterance in the words of the text.

In adopting these words, on this occasion, I must not only say, "Behold I die!"—but having passed the line of three-score-and-ten by more than three years, I have reason to say, in the words once used by David to his friend,—“Truly, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.”

Though no pastor is authorized to say to his people with unconditional or prophetic certainty, “God shall be with you;” yet he can say, with assurance, for God is faithful to his promises, “The Lord is with you while ye be with Him. If ye seek Him, He will be found of you.” But the serious caution must be added,—“If you forsake Him, He will forsake you.”

The half-century discourse of a pastor must of necessity be somewhat autobiographical. However disagreeable to himself a frequent use of the first person may be, great pains to avoid it would not only cramp his pen, but would appear to his hearers like affectation rather than modesty. In the present instance it will not be attempted.

That some incidents in an aged pastor's life and in the history of his church and people should be given, though less interesting to others than to themselves, seems requisite as a reasonable acknowledgment of the providence and grace of God, and as calculated to keep in the pastor's mind the importance of a watchful preparation to give up within a short time the accumulated accounts of a long ministry. Such recollections may be to him a timely admonition to beware lest having preached to others he should be himself a cast-away.

Brief sketches also of the history of a people and of their

origin may lead them to more earnestness in prayer, and urge them to use with energy as well as with discretion the requisite means for securing to themselves and their posterity the blessings of God's providential and gracious presence.

Though I cannot claim to be a Hebrew of the Hebrews, or of the stock of Israel,—gratitude for the goodness of God and a sense of special obligation resulting from it, constrain me to mention that I am of the stock of the Puritans, and a descendant in the sixth generation from one of the Pilgrims of Leyden, who came in the *May-Flower* to Plymouth, New-England, in 1620, who was one of the signers of the civil compact made before the location for the first settlement had been selected, then a young man of 22. It is registered of him, that he not only was employed in public offices for many years, but was distinguished for his holy life and conversation, and that his death, at the age of about 89, was not only peaceful but triumphant.\*

In one of the branches from that stock both my parents originated. These family memoranda, with details too particular to introduce here, have often in successive generations, been cited by parents in conversations with their children, not to excite foolish pride, but as motives to early and constant piety and to a uniformly consistent manner of life.

The responsibility of all who are, or have been, or ever shall be indulged with the privileges of a New-England religious education, must be incalculably great. Such persons must be under peculiar obligations to give themselves to the Lord a living and acceptable sacrifice.

I pass over the details of a long and distressing confinement in consequence of a deep scald, when in my fourth year, and of the impressions which it occasioned, only saying that I fully expected to recover, and that the purpose was then formed of becoming a preacher of the Gospel, and that this

\* John Alden. See Appendix A.

intention was never afterward relinquished. The recollections of my early years, however, furnish many sad illustrations of the fact that "childhood and youth are vanity."

It was not until the age of sixteen that I ventured to make a profession. Being then in my first year at College, and there being at that time very few youthful professors in our community, many fears were entertained lest temptation to inconsistency, if not to apostacy, should prove too strong to be resisted. I do not, however, recollect a sneer, or a word of ridicule from any fellow student. On the other hand, a profession of religion did induce carefulness, lest some erratic behavior should be an occasion of reproach.

There are sometimes circumstances in a person's history apparently unimportant when they occur, which give a new direction to his path of life, turn him at a short corner, carry him across the track he had marked out for himself, and lead him in a way which he knew not. Whoever else may cavil at the doctrine of a particular providence, I cannot;—having witnessed and experienced many things which I cannot doubt resulted from the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, not however excluding human voluntary agency. Two such incidents I have cause to record here. One of them prevented my settlement with a church from which I had received a unanimous invitation. It was the selection of a text on which a minister preached, with whom I exchanged, and who, I have no doubt, sincerely desired my acceptance of the call. That circumstance, without any such design by the minister, led to surmisings which caused delay. In the meantime having received invitations to preach in other places, I discouraged any further measures in regard to a settlement with that church. The other incident was an unexpected interview between the committee of this town and myself, in which I received an invitation to this place, at the moment I was mounting my carriage to go



in a different direction. The difference of a minute or two in our movements might have prevented my being here.

I came to this town, July 19, 1801; and the next day, being the Sabbath, commenced my ministry among this people.

North Hampton was for many years a part of Hampton. Of the religious character of its settlers we cannot obtain a more correct view than is given in a historical address delivered at Hampton in 1838, in commemoration of its settlement. "Our fathers came hither for the enjoyment of religious freedom. One of their first movements was to secure a minister, who should be to them a spiritual guide. They came hither united in church covenant, and at the very commencement of their settlement, they were supplied with a pastor."\*

We find here reasons for the remarkable permanency of the ministry and its attendant institutions in Hampton and the towns formed from it; especially in those societies where the principles of their Puritan fathers have been honored and cherished. The declaration of the Lord Jesus to his first ministers remains forever true in its fullest import. "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." This, every people and every individual should distinctly understand and apply.

From authentic papers recently examined we have learned some interesting facts concerning the formation and affairs of the North-Hill parish, now North-Hampton. [See App'x C.]

On the petition of sundry persons to the General Court it was ordered in Council that there should be a parish in the north part of Hampton. A committee was appointed, by whom the boundaries of the proposed parish were run out, and were reported to the Court, Oct. 29, 1719. "The House of Representatives did not act in the granting of the aforesaid parish."

\*Dow's Historical Address, p. 28. See also Appendix B.

In 1734 there was another petition for the establishment of the parish as laid out in 1719, with the exception of what had in the meantime been set off to Rye. On another petition, a few years afterward, a distinct parish, authorized to act in affairs concerning the ministry and school was established by the General Court, Nov. 17, 1738. It is variously named in the records of the town,—“The North-Hill Parish in Hampton,”—“The North Parish in Hampton,” &c. It was incorporated as a town by the name of North-Hampton, Nov. 26, 1742.

From the papers before mentioned we learn that the first meeting-house in what is now North-Hampton, was erected in 1734, or earlier. We had supposed it was built about the year 1738. We cannot now ascertain the exact date. It stood about fourteen rods south-westerly from the house where we now worship.\* Its size was 30 by 40 feet. It was occupied at least 27 years, and probably a longer time. The inside of the house was never finished. There were no regular seats for the congregation. It had been agreed that one range of pews should be laid out adjoining the walls of the house to be valued at from £15 to £10 “according to the dignity of the pews.” Only a parsonage pew was built. The pulpit was of plain style but is judged to be of good workmanship, and was so much venerated that it was removed from its ancient location in the first house and became the pulpit of the second house, which was built in 1761. In that pulpit all the ministers settled by this town were cousecrated. There they all preached. The present pastor occupied it during the first thirty-seven years of his ministry and for the last time on the Sabbath, Oct. 28, 1838. The front section of the old pulpit, which was many years the preacher’s desk, is carefully preserved.† The second house stood a

\*A few rods from the first meeting-house was a garrison house. See Appendix D.

†See Appendix E.

few feet north of the first house, and was used about seventy-seven years.

The frame of the house in which we now worship, was raised June 21, 22, 1838. The building was completed in about four months. The house was dedicated October 31. The whole enterprise was conducted with great harmony and success.

To understand correctly our own history we must refer to that of the old church at Hampton, whence we originated. That church had already been organized when the settlement of the town commenced, in 1638. For many years it was the only church in the town. As the settlements extended and the population increased, other churches were formed. "After the lapse of a century those members of the church residing in the north part of the town, then called North-Hill, requested a dismission for the purpose of being organized into a new church. Their request was not granted." "It is however probable, that the church and town considered the formation of a new church at that time unnecessary."\* A council was called, that, after due deliberation, proceeded to organize it,† as "The fourth church of Christ in Hampton."‡

Rev. Nathaniel Gookin, son of the late pastor of the first church, was ordained October 31, 1739. The father had deceased. He died Aug. 25, 1734, aged 48 having been in the ministry in Hampton 24 years.

The author of the historical account of that town, to which reference has already been made, after mentioning Mr. Gookin's decease and excellent character, observes, "I shall do injustice to this people, if I neglect to mention their generous provision for the maintenance of Mr. Gookin's widow. Soon after his death, the town agreed to give her £80 a year ;

\* March 21, 1742, several members of the Hampton Church were "dismissed to North Hill," which proves that the old church then acquiesced in the organization of the church at North-Hill. [Hampton Ch. Rec.] [N. H. Ch. Rec.]

† Dow, p. 37.

‡ Letter missive to Greenland church.

to furnish her with the keeping of three cows and a horse, Summer and Winter, and to give her fifteen cords of wood per annum. They also built for her use a house and barn. All this they performed as a memento of their love to Mr. Gookin, and their high regard to the worth of his widow. Mrs. Gookin was a daughter of the Rev. John Cotton, her husband's immediate predecessor in the pastoral office."\*

Here is one of the noblest illustrations to be found, of respect and affection for the ministry, and of gratitude to the family of a faithful pastor. And here we find another reason why God has given so much permanency to the parent Hampton church and to those of her children who have imitated her example and have cherished the ministerial spirit.

When in 1738 the inhabitants of the north part of Hampton were authorized by the government, on petition, to support the worship of God among themselves, they were discharged from the ministerial and school taxes of the old town of Hampton so long as they should support and maintain an orthodox minister and a writing and reading schoolmaster among themselves. But they were to pay their proportion of the grant made to the widow Dorothy Gookin, by the town of Hampton, and all other town and province taxes, minister and school excepted.

The Society in the north part of Hampton called their first meeting Dec. 21, 1738, at the North-Hill Meeting-House. They soon after called a Fast, as was the usage in those days, invited five ministers to attend it, and asked their advice in regard to settling a minister. Agreeably to the advice they received, Mr. Gookin was employed several months as a candidate, and was then invited to settle. A generous salary was voted to him, including sufficient fire-wood annually, the use of a convenient house and barn, and a title to the salary, even though he should be taken from the public services

\*Dow's Historical Address, p. 37.

of the Sabbath by sickness. The call was accepted and the ordination took place at the time which has been already mentioned.

On such liberality and promptness the North-Hill Society, then consisting of only thirty freeholders, laid the foundation for the permanency of religious institutions here. With truly Puritan principles they acted for their posterity as well as for themselves. Many of their descendants have inherited and still inherit the blessings thus secured, and they will inherit them so long as they shall continue to cherish, as they now do, the honest and liberal views of their fathers. Here is a principle, on which I feel warranted to apply the text,—“Behold I die, but God shall be with you.”

I learned many years ago, from an aged and intelligent man, that the property of the North-Hill parish, now North-Hampton, was about a fifth part of the property of the whole town of Hampton, as he inferred from the fact that the North-Hill parish paid that proportion of the grant to Madam Gookin.

The salary of Mr. Gookin of this place, which was liberal for the times and circumstances of this people, sunk rapidly in value when the depreciation of the currency came down like an avalanche upon New England. This people, notwithstanding their own sufferings from this general calamity, did not shrink from their responsibility to their minister. Their first vote for his relief gave him an addition of £90 Old Tenor “to help make good the currency.” The next year £110. In a subsequent year £200. The next year voted “Mr. Gookin’s salary to go four times double.” For the information of young people it may be well to state that in those days a silver dollar was 45 shillings in Old Tenor, and 6 shillings lawful money. In other terms, two shillings and sixpence Old Tenor was four pence lawful money.

It was well that this people took thought for their pastor,

for it is said that he was never distrustful, never complained, was always contented and cheerful, and "never took thought for the morrow." He died Oct. 22, 1766, aged 53 years, having sustained the character of "a sound divine, a serious, plain preacher, a wise counsellor, and a much beloved pastor of his flock."\* One of his sons, Hon. Daniel Gookin, and his family, passed some of the most important periods of life in this place, sustaining the ministry and the church, and exerting a beneficial influence in this community. The statistical records of Mr. Gookin's ministry are missing.

Rev. Joseph Stacey Hastings, the second minister of this town, was ordained Feb. 11, 1767. During his ministry, which continued between seven and eight years, 55 were added to the church. Mr. Hastings was beloved by his people, and esteemed ardently pious, but adopted the opinions of Robert Sandeman, the leader of a small sect, who held some unusual notions. Mr. Hastings briefly declared his resignation of his ministry. The notice, though informal, was treated with respect and kindness, and his dismissal voted in 1774. That there was a tincture of eccentricity in the mind of that good man is apparent from some singular entries in his church records. On one occasion his record stated that there had been a difficulty between two members of the church. They had appeared before the church, asked forgiveness of each other and of the church, and were forgiven. All present were cautioned against ever reviving the unhappy affair and advised to "endeavor that the whole matter should be buried in perpetual oblivion." He then adds: "Nota Bene. The affair was this!" and immediately proceeded to record the particulars of the dispute.

In dismissing Mr. Hastings, at his own request, the parish honorably settled their accounts with him, and kindly voted him the use of the parsonage house till the parish should again want it.

\*Alden's Epitaphs.

Rev. David McClure, D. D. the third pastor of this church was installed Nov. 13, 1776. Soon after, an astounding depreciation of money again befel the country. Continental bills of credit constituted the paper currency, which depreciated so rapidly that soon 150 nominal paper dollars were hardly an equivalent for one silver dollar. The depreciation continued in proportion to the sums issued, and the issues were so great that the sum in circulation amounted to two hundred millions of dollars, and the value of the paper bills sunk almost to nothing. This people did not wish their pastor to suffer such a pressure unrelieved. In 1778 they voted him 500 dollars in addition to his salary. The next year they agreed to give him a thousand, in addition to his salary; and in December of the same year, that he might be sure of something more substantial than paper, they voted to give him a hundred bushels of corn. The next year his salary was increased 40 for one, and amounted to 12000 dollars.

Dr. McClure's ministry was during the American revolution, and continued till the peace. But the circumstances of the churches and of the country were perplexing and disheartening. Dr. McClure considered the support of the ministry and other religious institutions as having become very precarious, and requested a dismissal, stating at the same time that he had no charge or accusation to make against this people, and that they had lived together in love and harmony. His resignation was accepted; some privileges in the parsonage were voted to him, and his ministry with this people closed August 30, 1785. He had continued with them between nine and ten years, and had received 22 persons to the church.

Rev. Benjamin Thurston was ordained November 2, 1785. His ministry continued about 15 years; in which time 53 were received to the church. He was the fourth pastor of this church. In 1800 he tendered his resignation without

assigning any definite reasons. His resignation was treated respectfully and accepted, Oct. 27, 1800.

This people have never as a body sought to rid themselves of a minister. They have never been disposed to wound his feelings, nor to withhold from him what they have supposed a comfortable support. I wish to testify on this occasion that during the whole fifty years of my ministry they have regularly and punctually paid my salary, according to the stipulated amount for the time being, as understood between them and me. I have received many tokens of kindness from individuals. It is true, that in some instances the pecuniary straits which the pastor experienced were not made known. Who could complain to such a people?

After all these favorable things have been related, would you expect to hear from the present pastor that when he came among them in 1801 he found them in a state of feeling toward one another, which, instead of presenting to a youthful pastor the prospect of a peaceful and happy ministry, even threatened to break up the very foundations of peaceful society?

But it pleased God to give me personal favor with this people notwithstanding the conflicting interests and party feuds which existed among themselves. It had become strictly true throughout this nation—as was said by one of our own historians—that “party spirit, never long asleep in any nation, and least of all in a republic, had already risen high in America, and the whole body of the people from the first statesman in the cabinet, down to the merest village alehouse politician, were ranged under the banners of one or the other contending parties.”

The few surviving fathers of this people, who were acting members of society here, fifty years ago, recollect the turmoils of those days. Our middle-aged and even our young men have known times when differing parties have very strenu-



ously opposed each other. But those were only fresh gales, compared with the earlier storms. What rendered the state of things peculiarly calamitous here, was, that in some cases, families were divided; brother against brother; entirely apart; and influenced by directly opposite political interests. Often the religious and local affairs of the people were blended with their political excitements.

But the half was not told me till after I had received an invitation to become their pastor; had taken the advice of the ministers in all the neighboring towns, as was then customary, had prepared an affirmative answer, and the Saturday evening had arrived, previous to the Sabbath on which the answer was expected. Those who were earnest for my settlement had been careful not to alarm my fears. Those who opposed the settlement declared that they were not dissatisfied with the preacher, but with the proceedings of the majority.

It was a late hour on Saturday; an arrangement had been made for an exchange with Dr. Buckminster, who was to communicate the answer. It was seen at once that returning the question to the town, or giving a negative, or proposing delay, would throw this community into a state of turbulent commotion. There appeared to be but one safe and consistent way, and that was to let the answer go in, as it had been prepared, with the understanding that the whole subject would be calmly submitted to the consideration and decision of a large and judicious council. Such was the conclusion. The council convened on the 18th of November, 1801. An opportunity was given, by public notice to the parties, to make their several statements to the council, as fully as they might desire. This having taken place, the council, after mature and prayerful deliberation, voted unanimously that the objections and opposition, that appeared against the settlement, were not sufficient to prevent the council proceeding to ordination.\* The ordination accordingly took place.

\*Dr. Buckminster's minutes of the Council.

In that solemn consecration the pastor hoped he gave himself to the service of Christ among this people, feeling willing to live and die with them, should the Lord so will, although there seemed cause to fear what some confidently predicted, that the relation must be speedily dissolved.

What seemed most alarming to the youthful pastor was the apparent absence of the special influences of the Holy Spirit. There is scarcely anything which renders the reception of saving blessings less hopeful, than a spirit of discord, unless it is the spirit of indifference.

It has long been the custom in this town, at each annual town meeting, as soon as it is organized, to request the minister to open the meeting with prayer. It was, I think, on the first occasion of that sort after I was ordained, that as I entered the place of meeting to perform the requested service, a company of men rushed by me from the house, toward another place of resort, one of them uttering the exclamation: "I hope you will be short." This and other unpleasant demonstrations, I did not construe as expressions of enmity toward me personally, but as a method adopted by some disaffected persons, to express their minds, and show their political prejudices and preferences. Some other measures of a similar character were occasionally taken. The Annual State Fast occurred a few weeks after the town meeting. On Fast day I found in the pulpit, an anonymous letter directed to me in a legible but I thought disguised hand. It professed to disclose threatenings against me, overheard by the writer when on a journey through this town. The communication purported to be a friendly warning giving me opportunity to avoid exposure to intended violence. The denunciations were too outrageous to be credited, and failed to excite alarm. I had occasion soon after, to return in the evening from a pastoral excursion, by a solitary way, but perceived nothing unusual. This incident is mentioned to show the unpleasant

feelings that then existed. Some, no doubt supposed it might be a public benefit, and certainly a private one, to be relieved of the encumbrance of a settled minister.

The laws of the State, at that time, admitted of enforcing the payment of ministerial taxes, where the persons taxed had not obtained actual legal exemption. A plan was formed by some of the disaffected, to have the taxes of dissentients collected by distraint. It was foreseen that such a measure, if carried out, would enkindle a fire, before which neither the minister nor the congregation could stand. The amount of the taxes in question was about seventy dollars.

There was in this town at that time, a man\* of some singularity, who used to say he could not go forward in public affairs, but could lift at the wheel, and would be a gap man when necessary, to support the ministry. This declaration he uniformly made good, whether he accorded in sentiment with his minister or not.

When he was informed of the threatened disturbance concerning taxes, he resolved to prevent it without delay.

Having formed his plan, he composed, mentally, a letter to the town, for he very seldom used a pen. He called on a friend in a neighboring town and obtained his assistance as amanuensis. The letter having been written as he dictated it, he requested a fellow townsman, who was a good reader, to communicate it to the town at a meeting which was soon to be holden for other purposes. I afterward asked his leave to give that letter to the public. To this he did not consent, but allowed me to take a copy and read it to my friends.† The moral is good. Let me read it to my friends here.

That the letter may be understood it must be observed that his property was not large, although he had a comfortable farm, and was a tanner on a comparatively small scale, and that

\*Benjamin Hobbs.

†Reasons against the publication of the letter at that time do not now exist; while the importance of the subject, the correctness of the argument, and the originality of the communication justify its preservation, without giving names.

his ministerial tax for several years averaged not more than four dollars annually. The body of the letter, without names, is as follows :

“ TO THE LEGAL VOTERS IN —————.

*Gentlemen* :—We all wish to discover what will be most for our advantage and how we may be most prosperous and happy. There is an important discovery, which is not to be kept secret, as it is designed for the good of every one who wishes to reap the advantages of it. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

We do not walk humbly with our God unless we keep his commandments. And he has commanded us to support and obey that blessed gospel which his own dear son come down from heaven to reveal. We do not love mercy unless when we are able to do good we do it cheerfully, and are glad of an opportunity to do good to them that need our help. We do not deal justly unless we render to all their dues.

To walk humbly we must love and prize the gospel, and to do justly we must support the preaching of it. Christ has commanded his ministers to go and preach his gospel, and he has commanded us to maintain them. For the laborer is worthy of his hire. This is good in itself. It is good because God requires it. And it is good for us, not only as it relates to the future life and the great day of reckoning, but with regard to our worldly interest.

Christ says to his ministers, Lo, I am with you alway. And if we are not with his ministers we are not with him, for he is on their side. And we cannot prosper either here or hereafter, if we are not on the same side with Christ.

It is an old saying that a man will do anything for money. To give part of our earnings to support the gospel is the most certain way of getting money. I am persuaded it is more for the worldly interest of a tanner to pay four dollars to the support of the ministry than to tan an ox-hide to the halves.\* And if it is so great a profit to the tanner to be taxed to the maintenance of a minister, it must be as much profit to men in all other occupations. It would be a great happiness to me, and to you, my fellow townsmen, if we all thought it not a burthen, but as it really is a great privilege to give part of our substance to support them that preach the gospel. To pay our money in this way is for our own interest, the interest

\*Those who were acquainted with the author of the letter would not regard this as a witticism, but simply as an illustration taken by a plain man from an item of labor which he knew was considered profitable.

of our families and the increase of our estates. It is an old saying that a man will not be the poorer for what he pays to his minister. But I believe he will be richer; richer in satisfaction of mind, and richer in goods; for what he pays will bring him a better interest than it would in any other way.

I have reason to believe you do not all think as I do in this matter, and I am heartily sorry we do not agree in so important a point. I understand there are some among us who determine not to pay what they are taxed to the minister. It is my desire that the selectmen and the constable would use all the arguments and reasons they can to persuade those who have refused to pay, to come and join with us in supporting the gospel; for I have no desire to take this privilege from them. But it is also my desire that if they do refuse, they may not be compelled. It is my desire that the constable may be directed to return the names of those who are unwilling to pay their minister tax to the selectmen, and the selectmen to deliver them to me, at least seven days before the annual meeting in March next. If their names and minister tax as it is now — — — — be delivered to me by that time, I hereby engage, that I will myself willingly pay all the said taxes and see that they are crossed out of the collector's book. And I further engage that if any are willing, and yet unable to pay, I will pay theirs also, if the selectmen shall judge that they are not able. I wish it to be understood however, that I have no desire to deprive any one of paying to the support of the gospel, which I think a real privilege.

Life is short. We shall all meet in the congregation of the dead. We shall meet once more after that. It is my desire, and I hope it is yours, that we may meet with joy.”

\*\*\*\*\*

The whole sum before mentioned he paid freely, but did not have occasion to make a similar proposal again.

At one of the seasons when our prospects appeared dark, he told me “not to be discouraged, he would be one of ten, or would, if it should be necessary, do more to support me.”

I once found among some old books in my father's library a small anonymous pamphlet printed in 1772, entitled “A Dialogue between David Dogood and Nabal Lovemoney, concerning the maintenance due unto the ministers of the gospel of Christ.” Knowing that it accorded with his views of the subject, I obtained it and asked him to read it. Hav-

ing read it, he said to me, "I must have this." He walked to Portsmouth and asked a printer for what he would furnish him with fifty copies. The printer answered, "for five dollars." He replied, "I should think you could give me a hundred for that. Nevertheless, I would not take five dollars for that one, if I could not get another." He obtained his hundred copies, and distributed them in this and other towns where he supposed they would be useful.\*

These are a few specimens of his liberality. And they are but specimens of an ever flowing stream of kindness; and yet he did not agree with me in some of my measures and doctrinal views. He did not approve of extra meetings, extempore preaching, or other innovations; and at times cautioned me against what he accounted being "righteous overmuch." But he enjoined upon me as an invariable rule, not to do or omit doing anything because he said so. He "would not give anything for a man that could not say no."

I could mention, were there time, many interesting and curious facts respecting the ministerial spirit of that singular man.

But the ministerial spirit itself was not confined to that singular man. I could not assent to the remark, made in another town fifty years ago, that "all the religion North Hill people had was being good to their minister." But the ministerial spirit has been a characteristic of this people from the first. There has not arisen here any generation with the spirit of that Egyptian king "which knew not Joseph." The last † of the male members who were in this church when I was ordained, told me in his old age, that when he married and was about to remove his bride, an only daughter, to her new home, her father ‡ addressed them both very seriously, and enjoined it upon them, as they would hope to prosper and enjoy the blessing of God, to be good to their minister, a

\*See Appendix, Note K.

†Mr. Simon Leavitt, who died August 22, 1842, aged 89 years.

‡Col. Abraham Drake, who died August 1, 1781, aged 66. Appendix E.

principle on which they acted, and which has been practically regarded by many of this people.

But with all the good qualities of this community, there have been seasons of commotion, usually originating in political struggles, which have threatened to destroy the old foundations of religious society here. Such a tempest arose nearly twenty years ago. The pastor of this church continued, at that time, to be the minister of the town. On some occasion\* of party strife an alarm was excited, and a rumour circulated, that many of the people would take legal measures to exempt themselves from any tax to the support of the ministry, and that the few who might adhere would be responsible for the whole salary.

Learning the state of things, the pastor resolved that he would seek the preservation of the long continued institutions of the gospel among this people, at any personal and pecuniary sacrifice which might be necessary, and which he could endure ; and accordingly, unsolicited by any of his people, proposed to relinquish one-fourth of the cash part of his salary. Peculiar circumstances, which it is not necessary to detail, justified in his view, this measure. The experiment was made. He has not regretted it. No agitation like that which has been mentioned has since occurred. The way was opened, and an opportunity at length offered, for an amicable adjustment of ministerial property between the town and our present society, which issued in transferring in a quiet and satisfactory manner, the parsonage and the pastor to the Congregational society and church, under circumstances promotive of the prosperity of the society and the harmony of the town.

When our relations were changed, as has been stated, so many new and large expenses necessarily arose in our community, concerning the parsonage, a new meeting-house, and other things, that there seemed to be no room even to intimate

anything respecting the reduced salary. The pastor thought best to waive that matter, and to suggest rather the importance of preparation to meet the expenses which will be necessary in the settlement and support of a new minister.

As a people, we always have been, and still are "little among the thousands of Judah." But the Lord of the whole land made this a station of some consequence, on account of its central position in relation to ten or twelve of our churches to whom and to whose ministers a pastor here might be useful; and the more so from the ministerial feeling to which this people were born and brought up, never inclining them to speak of disliking this or that preacher, but disposing them to call the pastors in the whole circle around us "our ministers."

In these circumstances I could not think of abandoning the standard that had been erected here; and believing that we are acting under the authority of the great Captain of salvation, and having full confidence in our glorious leader I can now say to the company of christian soldiers that have rallied around this standard; "Behold I die; but God shall be with you."

The embarrassment which the abatement of salary, before mentioned, occasioned to the pastor, was known at the time to a few only; and has but recently been generally understood. It is ever safe to trust in God. He knows the circumstances of all. One of the names by which he declares his goodness is "Jehovah Jireh—The Lord will provide." He has provided, and is still providing for us. We will gratefully acknowledge his good providence, while we sincerely thank our friends of this and other places, for the kindness with which they have contributed to our relief and comfort.

As we have traced the history of this church and people since the commencement of the present century, we have no-



ticed several providential interpositions in our behalf. But we should not overlook afflictive dispensations by which, from time to time, we have been made to feel the necessity of casting our burden on the Lord. There have been times of peculiar trial and discouragement when elderly people, who in their early days had witnessed more unanimity in the worship of God, would say to their minister, "It seems as if everything is going to ruin. If you die, or give up and leave this place, the cause will sink; there will never be another minister here." This was especially the melancholy sentiment more than twenty years ago, when a man of leading influence, an officer in the town and in the church, deceased after a sudden and short sickness.\* Many felt that it was a fatal stroke to this community, as if they had lost their head, and with him their hope of prosperity. The pastor was obliged to suppress and calm his own feelings and fears, that he might quiet those of his friends; and said to them, you must not talk or think so discouragingly. It savors too much of unbelief. "Instead of the fathers shall be the children." And so it has proved.

All the pastors of this church, of whom I am the fifth, were, as has been mentioned before, settled by the town. My own relation to the town as their minister, continued through the first thirty-five years of my pastorate; and when legally dissolved, the mutual regard of minister and people which had in many ways been cherished, was not dissolved. It is but a just tribute to the character of the people of this town to say that, in all their conflicting movements, I was treated generally with respect and kindness by those who did not, as well as by those who did attend upon my public ministrations. I wish to say also, that while I have not sought to conceal either my religious or political sentiments, no disposition has appeared to debar me from the exercise of any opinion or act

\*Deacon Morris Hobbs, who died August 11, 1830, aged 54 years.

allowed me, equally with others, by our constitutions and laws.

Soon after I came to this place, my attention was attracted by some old volumes of a social library\* which was founded here at an early period of this church. That library appears to have been one of the most efficient means of intellectual and practical godliness enjoyed by former generations of this people.

The first books of a social library here, were Henry's Commentary on the Bible, five large folios; Flavel's Works, two vols. folio; Willard's Body of Divinity,† in two hundred and fifty lectures on the Assembly's Shorter Catechism; Watts's Works in six large quartos; Doddridge's Family Expositor, six vols. quarto; Neal's History of the Puritans, and History of New-England, five .octavos; Universal History, eighteen or twenty octavos; and several other standard works. These books it seems were read, and so much read that it became expedient, as the records show, to vote that "the principal books might be taken out by the proprietors in turn."

There is a tendency in our world to deterioration. In the latter part of the last century many of our churches had sunk into a sad state of declension. The ebbing current had undermined or impaired some of the foundations of social and religious progress.

One of our earliest measures for improvement was reorganizing the ancient library; collecting such of its scattered and worn volumes as could be found, and replenishing it with new books.

The ancient custom of catechising children had been suspended. The Assembly's Shorter Catechism went in a great measure out of use in families. Household religious instruc-

\*Commenced as early as Jan. 1761. Rev. Mr. Gookin was then pastor of this church.

†This work, published in 1726, was the first folio volume on divinity printed in this country. Allen's Biog. Dist. p. 606.

tion was greatly neglected. There were no Sabbath-schools or Bible classes to take the place of those means of religious knowledge; and strange as it may appear, even the sacramental lecture had been discontinued because so few attended it. There were no meetings for social prayer, and little or no conversation on subjects of experimental religion; seldom a private lecture, or more than the forenoon and afternoon exercises on the Sabbath.

Intemperance had increased and continued its progress till forty hogsheads of the "fiery New-England" were sold in a year in one store in this small town, then numbering but about six hundred and fifty inhabitants. Besides this, as our farmers marketed their products in the trading towns in the vicinity, in some cases a barrel, and in a few cases a hogshead of ardent spirit was brought back and deposited in a farmer's cellar. A considerable number of persons also supplied themselves, in smaller quantities at a time, when they went to places of traffic. The prospects on account of this evil were appalling. I felt constrained to say to one of our traders of those days, calmly but plainly,—“Your business is counteracting the influence of mine. Serious thoughts instilled into the minds of our people on one Sabbath, appear, with a considerable class of our men, to be dissipated at the store or the tavern, before another Sabbath comes.”

The history of the temperance reform has become familiar. I need not relate the obstacles which first came in its way. They are many and great even now.

I early endeavored, and with some success, to reinstate the catechism in its former place in the minds of children and in the favor of parents. The sacramental lecture was restored. Reading some religious book and singing was introduced as an intermission exercise in the meeting-house, to employ the minds of those who used to stay at noon. Afterward the pastor occupied part of the intermission in Bible exercises,

which collected a considerable number of persons around him in the singers' gallery and adjacent pews of our former house. A Female Charitable Society was formed. The Sabbath-school was introduced, at an early period of its adoption in our New-England churches. But these new movements excited alarm in the minds of some very respectable people, who were exemplary in their morals, and observant of the customary seasons of religious worship; but extra religious meetings or measures they feared would tend to enthusiasm and irregularity. The Monthly Concert was introduced by making it at first a part of the exercises of the Female Charitable Society, which had been already quietly formed. My singular friend, mentioned before, opposed, though not angrily, frequent religious meetings. He feared that instituting the Monthly Concert of Prayer was overdoing, being righteous overmuch. He advised me against continuing that meeting. His advice, in that case, of course I could not follow.

He said to me one day, pointing into the parsonage field, "You have a fine piece of grain there." "Yes sir," I replied, "it seems to be doing well." "How do you think it would do," said he, "if you should sow it over and over every month? Come, try it, I'll find you with seed." As I claimed to have authority for sowing the moral seed more frequently than the natural, and quoted the precept, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good"—he only answered, "I will be clear of the blood of you."

No stated social prayer-meeting had for a long time been sustained. Such an exercise, designed as a weekly church prayer-meeting, was commenced with the smallest social number, to whom the presence of Christ is promised. It gradually increased, and with varying interest and exercises

has been sustained. Evening lectures at private houses were appointed and were well attended. Some mercy drops in hopeful conversions were bestowed from time to time.

In the autumn of 1817 there were indications of a revival of religion among us. In about three months from the first development of special interest in 'the things which are not seen and are eternal,' there were seventeen persons added to our communion. That awakening, in some of its most remarkable cases, could be distinctly traced, as we believed, to the blessing of God upon the public exercises and influences of the weekly prayer-meeting; the monthly concert; and to the account given by the pastor, in public and private, of the narratives of the state of religion, as reported at a meeting, then recent, of the General Association of New-Hampshire.

There was a season of refreshing in 1821, and twelve persons, most of them heads of families, were gathered into the Church. The three intervening years we were not without some special tokens\* of mercy. During that time several persons trusted that they experienced renewing grace, and professed publicly their faith in Christ.

But our young people took little interest in the subject of religion. Their minds were carried away with the gaities and amusements often so attractive to the young. Pious parents saw with great anxiety, their children growing up around them in neglect of the great salvation. Some of those parents had in fresh remembrance, though several years had passed away, a young man, one of their cotemporaries, among whom there was not one in the place more energetic or more beloved, who unquestionably sacrificed his life a votary to the pleasures of the dancing floor and its attendant amusements. An affectionate sister did not hesitate to attribute his premature death to the cause which has been mentioned, and could not afterwards speak of such perversions

of time and youthful vivacity without deep emotions of grief.

About the beginning of 1823, our young people, although of as regular moral deportment as youth in general, appeared to be more than usually inclined to such parties of amusement as have been mentioned, and were manifestly "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." The feelings of their pastor and of their christian parents and friends cannot be described. Much prayer was offered on their behalf. The faith of christians was tried, but at length their prayers were answered. A revival of considerable extent ensued. Among the results may be noticed, that in one direction for about two miles there was hardly a house in which the influence of the Holy Spirit was not manifest. The attention, although more general among the youth than any other class, was not confined to them. A number of heads of families, and some persons past middle age were among the subjects of hopeful conversion.

The taste of a large proportion of our young people was changed. For "those noisy senseless balls," as a young man who knew their history appropriately termed them, were substituted social meetings, which furnished intellectual pleasure and improvement; and which strengthened and enlivened the most cheerful and refined feelings of the heart. We were confident that none of the lessons given to young people, in what are sometimes said to be schools of politeness, could have so much improved the manners and increased the enjoyment of our youth.

In that revival more than sixty entertained the hope that they had experienced religion. Forty-five were received to communion.

Several other seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord have been granted to us, though none, perhaps surpassing in interest that which has just been mentioned.

In connection with the erection of this house of worship

and subsequently to its completion, the Lord, to whom it was consecrated, poured upon us a blessing, which we hoped was significant of his favor toward the undertaking. We trusted it was an indication that the Lord in his grace as well as providence had built the house, and therefore that the labor of his people had not been in vain.

The population of this town has varied during the last half century from 651 to 885. In the year when the number of inhabitants was greatest, the list was considerably increased by persons connected with the construction of the railroad, who did not long remain among us.

There are now in this town about a hundred and sixty-five families. Of these, as nearly as I can ascertain, seventy-five families are Congregationalists; sixty-seven families are of other denominations; and I do not know that the remaining twenty-three families have a stated sabbath home in any place of public worship.

Of persons of various ages who died in this town in the last fifty years, there were six hundred and forty-three. Of these were fifty-three between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five. Eighty-six persons between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five, the period when life is usually considered to be in its most vigorous state. Seventy-nine lived to between seventy and eighty. Sixty-three to between eighty and ninety. Twenty arrived to ninety; and one to ninety-nine.

Of the heads of families who were here fifty-years ago, only two couples have not been separated by death.

There were nearly a hundred names on the list of living members of this church when I was ordained. No male who was then a member survives. One man who was a member of this church more than fifty years ago, having changed his residence, had also removed his church relation to another place. He still lives and again resides with us.

A few female members, who were in the church when I

was ordained, yet live, but are not now able any more to visit God's earthly courts. They will have our prayers to-day that they may wait all the days of their appointed time till their change shall come; that they may be sanctified wholly, and made meet for the holy temple and worship of God on high.

Two hundred and eighty-five members have been admitted to this Church since I became its pastor; and, in that time, four hundred and fifty-six, pertaining to the households of the church, have been baptized.

I was younger than any member of this Church when I was ordained its pastor, and I am now among the few old men who are able constantly to worship God in his temple.

Twenty ministers of the Piscataqua Association were living when I requested admission. Only one of them still lives, Rev. Isaac Briggs, then of York, Maine, West Parish, now of Rochester, Mass.

When I joined the Association I was its youngest member. One generation of ministers passeth away and another generation cometh, with almost imperceptible rapidity. The number who have become members of this Association during the fifty years past is exactly one hundred, nineteen of whom have deceased. Such facts admonish our young brethren in the ministry, as well as the aged, that there is but a step between them and death. Even the youngest, should he live to old age will find that period come over him before he is aware. When he begins to be addressed as a father in the ministry, or is called to services which he had considered as belonging to his seniors, he will be taken by surprise, and will hardly know what it means.\*

Changes in the Association and in the ministry generally have been frequent. In this respect the last fifty years have differed greatly from many years that preceded. Many

\* See Appendix I.



changes have occasioned many councils. Notwithstanding our trials in this place, we have been favored in not having had occasion for any council here since that which ordained me; but the circumstances of other churches have brought to us a hundred and seventy-three "letters missive," to attend councils. A hundred and forty-four of those councils we have attended.

It is incumbent on me, on this occasion, to acknowledge the great goodness of God in granting me so much health, in the long period of my ministry. Eight and a half Sabbaths only, since I became a preacher, have I been prevented by sickness from attending public worship. At those times our pulpit was supplied by the kindness of brethren from abroad. I have sometimes been quite sick early in the week, but have been so much relieved before the ringing of the sabbath bell as to admit of my going to the house of God, and conducting the usual services. Having obtained help of God I continue to this day. With gratitude for the past, and reliance on the goodness and grace of God, may I be enabled to meet submissively, and cheerfully, remaining events in the arrangements of providence concerning me.

The particulars of our history which have been noticed, demand the special consideration and improvement of this Church and people, and of their pastor.

It becomes us to consider what God has done for us, the lessons his dispensations toward us impart, and the obligations to repentance, faith, gratitude and obedience which abide upon us.

Great duties devolve on the present generation in relation to their successors. Let it be remembered that among the most valuable inheritances possessed by this people are the institutions of the gospel, and the regard for these institutions in which they were trained by the precepts and examples of their predecessors. May the fathers, in these times, instil

these principles into the minds of their children, that the generation to come may know them, and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.”

Amidst all the changes which take place in the churches and in the ministry, and everywhere among men, God changes not; and every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let not this solemn truth fail to influence our minds while we consider the past history and future prospects of this community. Such attention to the concerns of our own souls will tend to render our desires more earnest that God will own and bless us, and dwell with us, and prepare us to dwell forever with him.

Here may humble, fervent supplication be made continually for the blessing of God. May the effectual influences of the Holy Spirit incline this people to acknowledge and serve the God of their fathers. May they ‘with purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord.’ In hope that it shall be so, may I not say again, “Behold I die; but God shall be with you.” Amen.

## APPENDIX.

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### ORDER OF THE SERVICES.

The Semi-Centennial Celebration, on which occasion the preceding discourse was delivered, took place at North-Hampton, N. H., November 18th, 1851.

The people of North-Hampton, by their committee requested Rev. R. W. Clark of Portsmouth to officiate as chairman of the meeting.

Rev. S. P. Fay of Hampton invoked the blessing of God upon the exercises.

Rev. Mr. Clark read selections from the Bible, and also the accompanying extracts of letters from distinguished clergymen.

Prayer was offered by Rev. I. W. Putnam, of Middleborough, Mass.

The following hymn, written for the occasion by Nathaniel Lord, Jr., Esq. of Ipswich, Mass. a college classmate of Rev. Dr. French, was sung :

Being of beings, unbegun,  
Source, whence all other beings spring,  
All-present, Infinite, Unknown,—  
To thee our humble praise we bring.

We bless that love which gave thy Son,  
To be our Savior, Teacher, Guide,  
Head of his church, that glorious One,  
Who for a world of sinners died.

He sent his servants to proclaim  
Through all the world the way of peace,  
And offer pardon in his name,  
To guilty men, till time shall cease.

His promise still secure will stand,  
His spirit will attend his word,  
Till every age and every land  
Shall find the knowledge of the Lord.

Thy servant, Lord, who here has stood  
These many years, thy word to preach,  
Bless with all needed earthly good,  
And give him grace yet more to teach.

By word and life still may he shine,  
To show thy gospel rich and free,  
Till, late, thy word of power divine  
Call him away to dwell with thee.

The closing prayer and benediction were by Rev. A. Tobey, of Durham.

EXTRACTS OF  
CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE OCCASION.

*From Rev. Dr. Pierce.*

BROOKLINE, MASS. 24th June, 1847.

REV. JONATHAN FRENCH :

*Rev. and Dear Sir* :—You may remember that in your Junior year, at H. U. I was, a short time, particular Tutor of your class. Since that period, I cannot be certain that I have seen you, though I often hear a good account of your standing and your activity in the christian ministry. I formerly received a letter from you, dated 14th August, 1814, inquiring about our provision for the widows and orphans of ministers in our State.

My Jubilee, on 15th March last, was a blessed day. All denominations united in it, who appeared of "one heart and of one soul." In my view, it more nearly resembled the description which our most serious divines have given of the Millennium, that any occasion at which I have ever been present, or which I expect to witness, on this side the eternal world.

You perceive, dear brother, that you are fast approaching the front ranks of your profession. May you live to 18th Nov. 1851, which will occur in a little more than four short years, and have as pleasant a Jubilee, as any of your predecessors.

But alas! What monitions crowd upon us of human frailty. The great Dr. Chalmers, of Edinburgh, Scotland, was found dead in his bed, on 31st May last. He was born 17th March. 1780, three weeks to a day, before your classmate Channing. The good Lord prepare us for his second coming! May we be found with our lamps trimmed and burning!

So earnestly prays your superannuated brother,

JOHN PIERCE.

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*From Rev. Dr. Kendall.*

PLYMOUTH, MASS. Nov. 5, 1851.

REV. JONATHAN FRENCH

*My Dear Sir* :—Be assured, my brother, after so long an interval, I was rejoiced to hear from you by a line from your own hand. It brought to mind many interesting and pleasant reminiscences. One of the happiest periods of my life was spent in Andover when I was often in communication with the amiable family of your venerated parents.

Some of my earliest and deepest religious impressions were produced under the preaching of your revered father. His fine voice even now seems to vibrate upon my ear. I was a member of his church, and he was present and preached at my ordination on the 1st of January, 1800, almost 52 years ago. How great the change which we both have witnessed among our friends since that period!

I have a distinct recollection of your ordination, and of the sympathy I felt for you, and the interest I took in this commencement of your ministerial life. I rejoice that you have been spared to see and religiously to notice its 50th anniversary. It must be an interesting occasion to you and to your parishioners who remain, and who remember the occasion. It would afford me great pleasure if circumstances would admit of it, to be present, and exchange greetings and congratulations on this memorable occasion. But my advanced age and the season of the year seem to admonish me that my safest course would be to remain at home. I confess, with *fourscore and two years* upon my shoulders, I have a *little shrinking* at the thought of leaving a quiet home—and taking the risk of a November storm—by a journey from Plymouth to North-Hampton, N. H. At a milder season of the year—notwithstanding my age—with my present comfort

table health, I should have been strongly inclined to undertake the journey—for the sake of the satisfaction and enjoyment I should derive from so interesting an occasion. As it is, I think I must ask you not to depend on my being present or taking part in the service.

But, be assured, my brother, my heart will be with you with its deepest sympathies, its warmest congratulations, and its sincere and earnest prayer. And all the more from the remembrance of how much I was interested and how much I enjoyed in the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of my own ordination two years ago the 1st Jan. 1852. *This Jubilee* was to me one of the most interesting events of my life. My friends also, both in town and out of town, seemed disposed to make it a *religious festival*. There was a large assembly in the church, and a social gathering in the evening—with a pleasant exchange of friendly greetings and congratulations. But comparatively few were old enough to take a part in my ordination, or even to be present on that occasion. Most of that generation had passed away, and another had taken its place.

I have been highly favored as to my health, during the whole period of my ministry. I have not been entirely free from illness;—but never so sick as to be confined to my bed for a day—nor prevented from supplying my pulpit, by any indisposition, except three Sabbaths, during my ministry. I have cause for sincere thankfulness to the Great Preserver for the health, which I have enjoyed, and for the numerous blessings, with which my life has been crowned. I have only to regret that I have not been more deeply impressed with a sense of the blessings with which I have been favored, and more faithful in the service of my Lord and Master. But I trust, I shall find mercy in the Day of the Lord for my deficiencies—and acceptance for every sincere and earnest endeavor to serve Him in truth and in love.

With kind regards to your family,

I am your very sincere friend and brother,

JAS. KENDALL.

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From Rev. Mr. Stone.

BROOKFIELD, Nov. 13, 1851.

REV. JONATHAN FRENCH :

*My Dear Sir* :—If it were practicable for me, nothing scarcely of a temporary nature would afford me more sincere pleasure, than to be present and participate in the joys and entertainment of the occasion so replete as it must be to you and your beloved people. But insurmountable obstacles forbid a compliance with your invitation. The distance, the season, my age, and my indisposition, all combine to pronounce an interdict. But however I may be absent in person, be assured, I shall be present in spirit to rejoice with you and your church and people, on the interesting occasion. I doubt not you will have many important facts to communicate that will be highly gratifying to the hearers, illustrative of God's gracious dealings with you, your family and people.

Your letter has revived many reminiscences of the two pleasant years which in early life I passed in your father's family; more than I am able at present to recite; but which it would be very pleasant to converse over with you.

With my best wishes and prayers for God's presence and blessing with you and your people, I subscribe myself

Your affectionate friend and brother in Christ,

MICAH STONE

*From Rev. Dr. Bates.*

DUDLEY, MASS. NOV. 14, 1851.

REV. J. FRENCH :

*Dear Sir* :—I have delayed answering your kind letter, in hope that I might find it consistent to be with you on the fiftieth anniversary of your ordination. But I must be deprived of the pleasure and the profit of witnessing the scene and participating in the exercises of the interesting occasion. I hope, however, to be with you in spirit, and sympathize with you in some of the recollections and anticipations which the occasion will bring with it. Indeed, your letter has already done this in part, and called before my mind interesting scenes and venerated persons associated with your consecration to the work of the ministry. I suppose the occasion was more interesting to me at that time, because I was then just commencing my theological studies with your venerated father. His discourse on the qualifications and responsibilities of a good minister of Jesus Christ with the momentous consequences of the Christian ministry, made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. The very words of the text: "We are a savor of life," &c. still sound in my ears, with the melting tones in which they were uttered. I remember too, the charge by that other beloved man Dr. Buckminster. I had then never heard a charge so impressive, nor have I heard any since that time which has made me feel more sensibly the solemn responsibilities of a "dying man" called to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to "dying men." Indeed the whole occasion was to me, one of thrilling interest: And I have no doubt that if present, I should find the meeting of next Tuesday equally interesting. We should find many topics of interesting conversation, both in recollection of the past, and in anticipation of the future. For we were then putting on the harness for our arduous and glorious work, and could boast of nothing; but now we are putting, or rather about to put it off, and although we cannot boast of anything done by us, meritorious in itself; yet I trust we may boast of the grace of God, bestowed upon us. We have both been prospered in the ministry, and (with some tender chastening,) blessed in our families. And we have both occasion to sing of mercy as well as of judgment; yes, of mercy, more than judgment.

Wishing you a pleasant season of celebration, and strength and grace still to labor in the vineyards of the Lord; till your work is done, I remain,

Your friend and fellow-laborer unto the kingdom of heaven.

JOSHUA BATES.

## NOTE A.—See Page 5.

Among the descendants of John Alden was Sarah, the wife of Ephraim Thayer. "This happy couple, another Zacharias and Elizabeth, as to their life and conversation, were blessed with a numerous family of children, remarkable for their piety. They were indulged the peculiar satisfaction of living to see fourteen children arrive at years of maturity, enter a family state, and unanimously make the noble resolution of Joshua,—*as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*. On one communion occasion, they enjoyed the singular felicity of presenting themselves, with the fourteen children God had graciously given them, at the table of the Lord, to receive the emblems of redeeming love!"—*Alden's Coll.* 2. 7.

The writer of the foregoing sermon traces his genealogy through the line of his great grand parents Ephraim and Sarah Thayer to John Alden before mentioned.—*Thayer's Family Memorial*.

In regard to the disembarkation of the pilgrims at Plymouth it is stated in Alden's Coll. 3. 264, that John Alden "was the stripling who first leaped upon the rock, as mentioned by President Adams."\*

In the families descended from John Alden, of the names of Alden, Adams, French, Thayer, &c. it has been the tradition time immemorial that John Alden was the first of the company who set foot on "Forefather's rock."

A tradition is said to be equally strong in families of the names of Latham, Winslow, &c. descendants of Mary Chilton,† that she was the first who stepped on that rock. The late Rev. Oliver Alden Taylor gave the following quotation from Judge Davis, who after some very pleasant remarks on the several traditions says, "We expect from the friends of John Alden that they should give place to the lady." Some of his descendants certainly are willing as an act of politeness at least, that two questions in the old New England Primer should be so appropriated to the landing of our Forefathers, and the answers so varied, as to read,—

*Ques.*—Who was the first woman? *Ans.*—Mary Chilton.

*Ques.*—Who was the first man? *Ans.*—John Alden.

## NOTE B.—See Page 7.

Rev. Stephen Bachelor was the first pastor of the church in Hampton. "He had been a minister in England for many years. In 1632 he removed to this country and became the first pastor of the church at Lynn. In 1638 he came to Hampton with the little band that settled here. Mr. Bachelor's descendants are very numerous in Hampton, and in several other towns in New Hampshire."—*Dow's Hist. Address*, p 29. All the families of the name of Batchelder, in North Hampton, are descendants of Rev. Stephen Bachelor of Hampton.

Other ministers settled in Hampton before North Hampton was set off as a parish, were Timothy Dalton, in 1639; John Wheelwright, 1647; Seaborn Cotton, 1660; John Cotton, 1696; Nathaniel Gookin, senior, 1710; Ward Cotton, 1734.—*Amer. Quar. Register*.

Rev. Timothy Dalton of Hampton, died Dec. 28, 1661, without issue.—The ministerial funds in Hampton and North Hampton, originated from

\*The first President Adams.

†Only child of James Chilton, one of the Mayflower's company.

his donation. PHILEMON, brother of TIMOTHY, had children, and was the ancestor of the Dalton families in this town and the vicinity.—*Farmer's Register*.

Families in successive generations of the name of Cotton, to the present time have been inhabitants of this town. The Hampton ministers of this name were the descendants of the eminent John Cotton, who was the minister of Boston in England, and who became teacher of the first church in Boston, New England, in 1633.

NOTE C.—See Page 7.

For the documents to which this note refers we are indebted to the kindness of Hon. John Kelly of Exeter.

These papers show that on the 2d of May 1719, it was ordered in Council that Mark Hunking, Shadrach Walton, Nicholas Gilman and John Gilman, Esq. should be a committee to ascertain the bounds and limits of a parish in the north end of Hampton; and that on the 29th of May they made their report: but that the proposed parish was not then established.

The same papers also show that between the years 1719 and 1734, there were various petitions concerning said parish. It seems that it was not established by the General Court until Nov. 17, 1738; and that it was incorporated as a town by the name of North-Hampton, Nov. 26, 1742.

NOTE D.—See Page 8.

A few rods southwesterly from the site of the first meeting-house in North Hampton was a garrisoned house, on the southern border of what was formerly called "the Green." The spot where the house stood is now the brink of the high gravel bank by the road-side.

A few extracts from Dow's Historical Address at Hampton will show the necessity for such a strong-hold here in times of Indian hostilities in this part of the country. Among a number of instances within the original bounds of Hampton, it is stated that "on the 13th of June, 1677, four persons were killed in that part of the town which is now North Hampton. These men were Edward Colcord, Jr. Abraham Perkins, Jr. Benjamin Hilliard, and Caleb Towle."

Of the men of those perilous times it is said that "they earned their bread at the continual hazard of their lives, never daring to stir abroad unarmed; they could till no lands but what were within call of the garrisoned houses, into which on every considerable alarm their families were crowded."—*Dow, p 16.*

In the garrisoned house, before mentioned, tradition relates that Simon Dearborn was born July 31, 1706. He was the father of Capt. John Dearborn, and of Maj. Gen. Henry Dearborn. There was a genealogical mistake in some printed notices several years ago of a few of the Dearborn family, it not being understood that there was a generation, the head of which was Simon before mentioned, who was the son of Dea. John, who was the son of Henry, who was the son of Godfrey, who was the patriarch of the Dearborn family in the United States.—*See Genealogy- Dearborn family, by E. B. Dearborn, Hist. &c. Reg. Jan. 1848.*



## NOTE E.—See Page 8.

The front section of "the Old Pulpit," may, with very little repair, be made more suitable for the vestry desk, than that which we have hitherto used, and, to those who have any taste for affairs of olden times, would be an interesting memorial of the ministers, who from the organization of this church, stately or occasionally held forth the word of life from that pulpit, or, united with others, gathered around it, in acts of devotion and fellowship.

## NOTE F.—See Page 20.

Simon Leavitt, mentioned page 20, was the son of John, who was the son of Moses, who was the son of Hezron, who was the son of Thomas, the first of the Leavitt family in the history of Hampton. He is said to have been, as early as 1629, in Portsmouth, and to have resided in Exeter in 1639, and removed thence to the west end of Hampton, previous to 1643. He deceased, Nov. 28, 1696, being above 80 years old.

Abraham Drake, page 20, is known in the history of the Drake family as Col. Drake. He was early in life, in public employment both civil and military. He was son of Abraham, who was son of Abraham, who was son of Abraham, who was son of Robert Drake, one of the early settlers of Hampton.

## NOTE.—See Page 17.

The express purpose for which the following document was prepared fully justifies the publication also of the letter that was at first interdicted, page 17.

NORTH HAMPTON, Dec. 20, 1811.

Mr. Benjamin Hobbs having at his own expense done much toward making some of the parsonage buildings and land, commodious and useful, and having freely done it for the convenience and advantage of the minister, and the benefit of the people, and knowing that what he has done has been satisfactory to himself, and believing also that it has been for his profit, he is desirous that some record may be made of these expenses, to encourage others hereafter, to do likewise according to their ability; we the subscribers have therefore by his desire carefully and according to our best judgment estimated the expense of what he has done in building the wood-yard and barn-yard fences, also his expense toward building the hogshouse and yard, and toward enlarging and repairing the barn and building the west shed, together with his expense at various times toward clearing the parsonage pasture. After having particularly examined the work and computed the value of the materials and the amount of labor, the whole according to our best judgment amounted to at least two hundred and twenty three dollars and fifty-five cents.

\$223 55.

SIMON BROWN.  
ABRAHAM LEAVITT

NOTE.—See Page 20.

Mr. Benjamin Hobbs some of whose singularities have already been mentioned, had his own way to say and do everything. He was quite accustomed to talk in parabolic language.

Once when inclined to make a present to his minister, he called on him before sunrise, and said to him "I have received a little money from heaven to trade upon. Pay-day has come, and I wish to return it. I see no angels by whom to send it. I hope you are going that way. I wish you to take it." So saying he placed twenty silver dollars in my hand, and bid me "good bye."

NOTE I.—See Page 30.

An occurrence at my ordination is illustrative of this remark. The weather was stormy, some of the elderly ministers invited were absent, Dr. Buckminister, who was occupied as scribe, was called without previous notice, to give the charge, which with much emotion he commenced as follows :

Our Fathers where are they ? and the Prophets do they live forever ! I had not once imagined that so many of my Fathers had been taken from my head that there could have been any propriety in summoning me to the duty to which I am now called by this venerable council ; but relying upon the promised aid of the great head of the church, and throwing myself upon the candor of this respectable audience, I go forth to this unexpected duty like the Patriarch of old, not knowing whither I go.

## DEACONS OF THE CHURCH.

THE following notices of Deacons in the North Hampton church, are as accurate as can be obtained under the disadvantage of having only a few remnants of the records of the first quarter of a century from the organization of this church, as distinct from that in which it originated at Hampton.

The first Deacon here was JOHN DEARBORN, for many years a deacon of the Hampton church, to which office he was elected on the same day with his cousin of the same name, John son of Henry. He is sometimes on the record called "John Dearborn, 3d" to distinguish him from his father and cousin. He lived on the original homestead of the family, the farm of his father and grandfather. Dea. John Dearborn married Hannah Dow, daughter of Daniel son of Henry senior, who went to Hampton previous to 1643.

Dea. THOMAS MARSTON, was son of Ephraim, son of Thomas, who went to Hampton the first summer of the settlement. Dea. Marston married Deborah daughter of Dea. John Dearborn.

Dea. SAMUEL BACHELDER was a descendant of Rev. Stephen Bachelder who was the first pastor of the church in Hampton. Mr. Bachelder returned to England where he is said to have died aged a hundred. His posterity are very numerous in New-Hampshire. Dea. Bachelder died suddenly March 22, 1797. He resigned his office several years before, having become aged and infirm.

Dea. DANIEL SANBORN is said to have lived to old age, to have sustained an excellent character and to have died in 1797 very suddenly. He was found one morning in his bed, with his hands folded on his breast, as if he had departed without a struggle. The records respecting that worthy man are very scanty. He was the grandfather of the late much esteemed Doctor Benaiah Sanborn of Sanbornton.

Dea. CHRISTOPHER SMITH was the son of Benjamin, who was the son of John, who was the son of John, who was the son of John. These families were located at different times in Hampton and North Hampton.—Deacon Smith deceased on Dec. 9, 1814, in the 33d year of his office, aged 78. The most of his children settled in the interior of the state.—One of them, Ebenezer, settled in this town where his son Christopher remains to bear up the venerated name of his grandfather.

Dea. BENJAMIN HOBBS deceased April 23, 1804, aged nearly 76, having sustained the office of Deacon 36 years.

Deacon Hobbs was a son of James, who was a son of Morris, who was son of Morris, who was son of Maurice the first of the name who settled in Hampton. The present owner and occupant of the ancient mansion of Deacon Benjamin Hobbs is his grandson of the same name.

The other Benjamin Hobbs mentioned page 17 was a son of John, a descendant of Maurice Hobbs.

Dea. NATHANIEL DEARBORN was appointed Aug. 7, 1806. He is son of Samuel who was son of Jeremiah. Mr. E. B. Dearborn's Genealogy of the Dearborn Family contains much interesting information respecting the history of that family and the settlement of the town.

Godfrey Dearborn was the patriarch of the Dearborn family in the United States. One of his descendants of the name of Samuel has been called the pioneer of North-Hampton, and is said to have built the first house in the town "north of the brook." The farm is now in possession of Dea. Nathaniel Dearborn, a lineal descendant.

Dea. MORRIS HOBBS, was elected Dec. 1, 1816. He was son of Morris, who was son of Morris, son of Morris, son of Maurice.

Maurice Hobbs, [since written Morris,] came from England first to Newbury, and thence to Hampton between 1640 and '45. He married Sarah, daughter of William Estow (or Eastow,) one of the first settlers of Hampton.

Morris, son of Maurice, married Sarah, daughter of Capt. Benj. Swett and removed to what is now North-Hampton, when he was about twenty years old. He cut the timber for his house in the dense forest where it grew. The house was of one-story and consisted of one room. It had but one window, composed of the small diamond shaped glass, which was secured from Indian assaults by an iron shutter. The house was also lined with brick. This ancient house still remains, and is now the east room in the large mansion of the late Dea. Hobbs, being on the estate, and near the present dwelling of his son, John L. Hobbs.

Dea. FRANCIS DRAKE was elected deacon May 4, 1832. He was the son of Cornet Abraham Drake who was the son of Col. Abraham Drake, a descendant of Robert, who came to Exeter, New-England, before 1643, and removed thence to Hampton in 1651.

Sketches of several branches of the family are given in S. G. Drake's Family History.

Deacon Drake deceased June, 1843, having served in his office eleven years, aged nearly 58.

Dea. SAMUEL CHAPMAN was elected to office May 4, 1832.

The Chapman family it is said emigrated from Ipswich, Mass. to this place. Deacon Samuel Chapman is the son of Samuel, who was the son of Samuel, who was the son of Job. Some of the name of this family came to New-England among the early settlers. There was a John, who arrived at Boston as early as 1634; and a Dea. Samuel Chapman who was one of the proprietors of Westfield, Mass. in 1642.

NOTE K.—See Page 20.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN DAVID DOGOOD AND NABAL  
LOVEMONEY,

Concerning the Maintenance due unto the Ministers of the Gospel of Christ.

"Who goeth a Warfare at any time at his own Charges?"

"The Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

"Render unto all their due, to God his due."

Printed in the year 1772; and Re-printed in 1812.

MR. LOVEMONEY lamenting his troubles to his neighbor, Mr. Dogood, said, Sir, I am grievously burthened with Taxes; I get but little money and the collector will have that for my Minister's rate.

DOGOOD. Come let us discourse calmly upon this subject. I receive my all from God, and esteem it a privilege to honor the Lord with my substance in the way of his appointment.

L. Let Ministers preach the gospel freely and trust God and the good will of their people for their support.

D. Ministers must not tempt God; but look for their support in a way which is agreeable to the direction of the sacred scriptures.

L. I never read my Bible to learn my duty with respect to the maintenance due to my Minister.

D. It is time you knew the will of God in this respect. But remember, you with others did freely promise by a public vote before God and many witnesses, to give Mr. B— eighty pounds yearly; if he would settle in the work of the ministry with you: he accepted your invitation and continues to perform the duties of a Minister of Christ, expecting you will make good your promise for his support. Are you not bound in the sight of God and by your own conscience to perform your promise according to your ability?

L. I have changed my mind and do not like to be bound by the parish votes; for every man ought to be at liberty to do what he pleases for the support of his Minister.

D. What wretched times have we come to, if change of sentiments will dissolve civil contracts. Have you found a religion to establish iniquity and stifle conscience? Suppose you had accepted of an invitation to keep a school at Arab for sixty pounds yearly, and after a few years the people should say to you, Sir, we are convinced in conscience, that it is your duty to keep school, and leave it with every person to give you what and when he pleaseth. What would you think of them?

L. I should know that covetousness was Lord of their consciences, and they a company of knaves and covenant breakers, not to be trusted. But Christ said to his disciples, "freely have ye received, freely give."—*Matt.* 10: 8.

D. Did Christ teach you to deal deceitfully with his Minister and cover your deceit with a plea of liberty of conscience? No, in the text mentioned, Christ is speaking of miraculous gifts; heal the sick, cleanse the

lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils ; freely ye have received, freely give. Elisha would not receive money for healing Naaman ; but Christ received a temporal support while in the flesh from others.—*Luke 8 : 3.*

L. It would do me good to see Ministers labor with their hands for their support, and depend upon the Spirit to preach the gospel.

D. It would please many and the wicked one, to have an ignorant ministry ; that the ministry and the gospel might both fall into contempt with man. But Christ has directed his ministers to give themselves to reading, to meditation, to prayer and the study of the Scriptures ; that they may be able ministers of the new testament ; not cumbered with the cares of the world, nor unlearned, wresting the scriptures to their own and others' destruction.

L. Paul worked with his hands that he might not burden the Church of Christ.

D. Paul was a man of eminent learning, and mentions his laboring with his hands among his great trials and sufferings, to the shame of the Church of Corinth.—*1 Cor. 4 : 12.*

L. The Apostle preached the Gospel freely, and glories in keeping himself from being burdensome.—*2 Cor. 11 : 7, 9.*

D. Paul and Barnabas upon a special occasion labored with their hands for their bread ; when they had a divine right to demand a support.—*1 Cor. 9 : 6, 7.*

L. What special reason had they to labor with their hands ?

D. The false teachers greatly disturbed the churches, boasting they were the only ministers of Christ who preached the Gospel without wages, and reviled the Apostles as hirelings and robbers of the churches ; therefore Paul and Barnabas labored with their hands to stop the foul mouths of those vile slanderers.—*1 Cor. 9.—2 Cor. 11, 12, 13.* Consider how the Apostle speaks of this to the dishonor of the Corinthians ? Ye were not inferior to other churches, except it be, that I myself was not burdensome to you ; herein I wronged you ; forgive me this wrong ; but this I did being crafty, I caught you with guile and robbed other churches, taking wages of them to do you service.—*2 Cor. 12 : 13, 16.*

L. What doth the Apostle mean by taking wages ; did he preach for hire ?

D. Paul preached the Gospel freely from love to God and man, and took wages for his temporal support ; for the laborer is worthy of his hire.—*Luke 10 : 7.*

L. Doth God in the new testament require, that the hearer of the word support the preacher of the Gospel ?

D. The Lord hath ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. Who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock. Do ye not know, they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple ; and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar ? If they have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing, if they should reap your carnal things ? It is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen and not for the honorable support of his servants.

L. I would freely give my Minister alms as to a beggar, and not have it taken from me as a just debt.

D. Would you freely promise a Minister a sum for his support, and after he is settled, like Ananias and Sapphira, keep back part of the price? Christ hath said, the laborer is worthy of his hire. He is worthy of a just reward from men for his labors.—1 *Tim.* 6 : 17, 18. Would you be guilty of robbing God? If you are partakers of their spiritual things, the Lord has commanded you to minister unto them of your carnal things.—*Rom.* 15 : 27.

L. It grieves me to be obliged to pay a salary.

D. It grieves some to be obliged to be honest and just to a minister; therefore they covenant more privately with their preacher for his support; that they may deceitfully boast, that their minister lives without a salary, and be at liberty, upon the least offence, to rob him of his due; and the preacher also glory from place to place with a lie in his mouth, that he preaches the gospel without any charge to the people.

The method of supporting ministers of Christ, as directed by the laws of the land, is open, just and honest, agreeable to the word of God. When Paul expected to be with Philemon in answer to prayer, he directed him to provide for his support, saying, with all prepare me a lodging.

L. It is the laying a tax upon me for the minister, that is my burden.

D. You are grieved because you are obliged to be just and honest to your minister. The Lord has directed every one to lay by him in store as he hath prospered him; and common prudence would lead a people to choose fit men yearly to visit every man and enquire how the Lord hath prospered him, and lay the rates accordingly, that one may not be eased and another unjustly burdened; but all pay an equality, as the Lord hath prospered them. Why are you grieved that disinterested men point out to you the measure of your duty?

L. I hate to see a Collector and cannot think the office is pleasing to God.

D. You judge of God by yourself: Jesus Christ honored the office and wrought a miracle to pay tribute unto a heathen. Yea, the God of Israel laid taxes upon his own people for the support of public worship, and ordered persons to gather the taxes, so that the office itself is not displeasing to God.

L. What right has the civil Magistrate to oblige me to pay rates unto my Minister?

D. It belongs to the Magistrate to oblige men to fulfil their civil contracts and pay their just debts: the minister's salary after contract is a just debt due him, as the labourer is worthy of his hire, and God required the Magistrate to see it paid.—*Neh.* 13 : 10, 11. The heathen princes provided honorably for their priests, and shall christian magistrates see Christ's ministers robbed of their dues and neglect them? Why is it a crime in the ministry to have their living secured to them by a wholesome law, while other men esteem it a privilege?

L. The support of ministers impoverisheth the land.

D. No set of men in public character lay up less money for their children, or send less out of the land. Look round upon the towns and parishes, which have lived in the peaceable support of a regular minister; do they

not increase in wealth? Observe the places which have lived without a regular minister, or that have neglected to pay their minister his due; are they not running into poverty, divisions, and intemperance? Where is the town in New-England, that ever long flourished in riches and in piety without a regular minister of Christ? Honour the Lord with thy substance; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty.—*Prov.* 3 : 9, 2,—*Chron.* 31 : 10, *Malu.* 3 : 10—12, and remember that what you unrighteously withhold from God, will be a moth to your substance.

L. I blush, and must confess with shame, my covetousness and love of money has been great; that it was like taking away my eyes to take my money for the support of the gospel. I thought it was a glorious liberty of conscience to change my religion to save my money and rob God. I could easily see, *that* religion was right which required no rates of me. I often spoke fair to my minister, when I watched him to find something in him which might excuse me from attending his ministry, that I might be freed from paying him my rates. But now I am convinced that my change of religious sentiments doth not dissolve my civil contract with a minister any more than a contract with my neighbour; neither doth my change of sentiments dissolve my obligations to honor God with my substance, by supporting the ministers of the gospel. I thank you, Sir, for these instructions, and will honor the Lord with my money, though it be only a mite. Christ noticed the widow's mite.

D. What I pay yearly for the support of my minister, I give with the greatest satisfaction as to the Lord, and the Lord has prospered me—and this I will continue to do as long as he preaches the word of God and walks in character as becomes a minister of Christ. I hate to see a minister a beggar: for Christ and his gospel is hereby brought into contempt. It is more agreeable to the will of God, to give my minister an honorable support, that he may be an example of hospitality and charity. But when he has visibly forfeited his character as a minister of Christ, either by errors in doctrine or in practice, I will take gospel steps to be freed of him and labor for a better, that the honor of the gospel and the peace of the church of Christ may be preserved: for they are both dearer to me than silver and gold. I rejoice to do something yearly for the support of Christ's visible kingdom in the world, and with my money I will honor Christ my King.