

**OUR FATHERS' ALTAR:**

**A**

**CENTENNIAL SERMON,**

**PREACHED**

**JUNE 7, 1846,**

**IN COMMEMORATION OF THE**

**Founding of the First Christian Church**

**IN**

**NORTHBOROUGH, MASS.**

---

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## P R E F A C E .

Northborough is highly favored in possessing its own topographical and narrative history prepared with much labor, by Rev. Mr. Allen, who has thus laid the town under great obligations for his interesting researches. It is not, however, a direct object of those researches, to give a history of religious opinions in this place. And it is in view of this field, unoccupied except incidentally, that the author of the following discourse complies with the request for its publication. The history of religious opinions is the history, in part, of men's thoughts, which is the most important part of the history of the world.

The author, moreover, represents in this discourse, a portion of the inhabitants of Northborough who feel called upon to put on record, for future generations, such evidence as exists at this day, respecting the particular religious opinions of the christian fathers of this town. Nor in so doing do we regard ourselves as obtrusive, or arrogant in our claims of "succession" as to the religious opinions of those who founded a church in this place. We only declare with others, our convictions of truth, and show as an historical fact, the views of those whom all the living love to honor.



# S E R M O N .

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JOSHUA 22 : 28.

Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord which our Fathers made.

Many anticipate perfection in human society ; and the present age is unparalleled in its supposed improvements on the religion of the past. We, too, believe in human progress ; in the fullest, noblest idea of the phrase. But progress is a strange misnomer for much that would take shelter under its wing. Not every *change* is progress. Were it so, in respect to opinions, some could not be far from the goal of perfection. But the progress of too many is like the wanderings of the children of Israel in the desert.

In religion itself we hold to growth in knowledge, as well as growth in grace. We cherish the noble idea of the venerable Robinson, so strangely misapprehended by many. He did anticipate progress, even in the knowledge of God's word. But how would he have received the idea that what were to him "the first principles" of divine revelation, the very alphabet of the Bible, would, by future "progress," be subverted ? He did expect, and taught our pilgrim sires to expect, that "*further* light" would dawn upon truths already known ; that new truths would yet "break forth" from the scriptures. Progress in religion, is, as in science, *growth, increase*, and not mere change. The very idea of *increased* knowledge presupposes something as already known, as *settled* truth. For if *nothing* be settled, then our present foundations may give way to others, and these to others still, and thus mere change were the destined order of human opinions. But if there be *one* truth in the Bible which we may rest upon as established beyond subversion, then there may be two such or more. There are some, at least, so plainly revealed, that we expect no future progress will ever subvert them. They are an anchor to our souls in all the winds of doctrine which come and go like uncertain waves of the sea.

The bearing of these remarks, having reference not to men but to principles, will be seen from the occasion of this discourse. One hundred years have now elapsed since the founding of the first Christian church in this town. A century ago this day, reckoning time by weeks, our Fathers first met, as a church, in the sabbath congregation. And we have thought it suitable to notice the hundredth anniversary of that event, by such a discourse as the present. Note A.

The text I use, by accommodation, to signify,

*The essential oneness, in respect to doctrine, of the church which our Fathers here founded, a hundred years ago, and the church worshipping in this house to-day.*

We maintain a oneness such as implies that there has been no subversion, on our part, of any doctrine which our fathers held to be essential to scriptural faith; and that, to their faith, we have added nothing, as being essential to salvation, which they did not hold as such.

If this shall be made to appear, it will follow, that, in respect to religious doctrines, we are not innovators in this town; that our altar is not built in opposition to the altar of our fathers, but after the same pattern.

I proceed then to the proof, that the church which the fathers of this town established was one with us in its faith; and that we may reply to any who say to us, "what trespass is this that ye have committed, *in that you have builded you an altar*, that ye might rebel this day against the Lord," that to such we may reply—"behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made."

I. I adduce, the known history of the New England congregational churches, one hundred years ago. These were, up to the middle of the last century, probably without exception, Calvinistic, as to doctrine.

We are bound, therefore, in failure of specific evidence to the contrary, to conclude that the church in this place was in full fellowship with those which received it into christian communion. Note B.

II. The "Covenant" of the original church in this town, used through the whole ministry of its first pastor, a period of twenty-one years, fully confirms the statement that our fathers were one with us in doctrinal belief.

They did not adopt a creed, in the technical use of that term. There was not, at that day, the need of creeds, as such, which now exists. The "Covenant" itself answered then, the same end that creeds are *designed* to answer now. At that day, when men covenanted to take the *holy scriptures* as the rule of their faith they were understood *by all* as concurring with the church which they joined in their belief of what the scriptures taught for doctrine. But when it came to pass that it was known none the better what a man's belief was, for his saying that he took the scriptures as his rule of faith, then creeds came into use in our churches. Not to take the place of the Bible, but to give a definite import to the language and act of the one professing fellowship with the body. To assume the obligations of the covenants of the New England congregational churches one hundred years ago, and much later, was virtually and really, to profess an assent to and a belief in the known orthodox faith, technically so called.

But be this admitted or not, the position is strictly true as to the covenant of our fathers. For with the avowed object of maintaining "*the true religion*," they bound themselves by one article of their covenant to educate their households in the doctrines of "orthodox catechisms." If such a vow was not equivalent to a declaration of faith in the doctrines of these catechisms as a summary of scriptural faith, then neither language nor action has any significance. Thus was the covenant of our fathers, virtually, and in its effect, really, as much a "creed" as are our "articles of faith."

Whatever ambiguity may sometimes pertain to the words "orthodox" and "orthodoxy," no question can be raised as to the meaning of the phrase "orthodox catechisms," as it occurs in the covenant referred to. For it is well known that the catechism used in this town for more than a quarter of a century from the founding of the church, was the Westminster Assembly's Catechism. Note C.

In establishing then, the essential oneness of our faith with theirs, we need only to show its agreement, in all essential particulars, with the Westminster formulary. Before doing so, however, I remark, that all intelligent and candid minds are ever ready to make a distinction between the *substance* of a doctrine and any *heory* which may be adopted to *explain* it. I believe in the doc-

trine of universal gravitation. The substance of the doctrine is that all bodies or particles of matter mutually tend towards each other. This simple, alledged fact is *the doctrine*. But as to the theory, by which I would *account* for the fact, I may believe that the cause of gravitation is immediate, divine efficiency ; or I may believe in the existence of some natural law as the cause, which is not the same thing as the immediate energy of the Almighty. Now my *theory* in either case may be true or false, and I yet hold the real doctrine of universal gravitation.

A *religious* doctrine also is an alledged fact. And in respect to to a belief of the doctrinal *facts* which the faith of our fathers embraced, we claim to be one with them in such doctrines as they held to be essential to scriptural faith. As to theories designed to explain or account for these doctrinal facts, we may or may not differ from them. We may have made progress or we may not have done so ; at any rate, we believe there may be progress in these respects, and yet some truths remain unchanged and unchangable.

My limits allow only a specification of such doctrines as are the most important.

1. Our fathers believed as we do, in the unity of God.

“One only, the living and true God,” is the language in which they taught their children. Such is *our* belief. God as a Being, is one, and one only. Nor can charity itself well excuse such as affirm that we believe differently.

2. The founders of the first church in this town were Trinitarians. They held that “the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.” Thus they taught their children, and for this end, viz. that the “true religion” might be maintained while they should live, and among such as should live when they were dead. Nor was their hope vain. God has remembered his covenant, and blessed their children unto the third and fourth generations. And though they are dead, the doctrine of the adorable Trinity is still maintained in this place. Our faith embraces it. Our hearts love it. Our souls adore the incomprehensible Jehovah thus manifested to his creatures. And any “progress” which discards a doctrine so plainly revealed in the Bible, simply because we cannot comprehend such a mode of divine existence, is itself discarded by us.



3. Our fathers believed as we do as to the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ.

They believed that he “was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.” In other words, they held, with us that “the Word was God” and “the Word was made flesh. “Great,” indeed, “is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” But it was enough for our fathers, and is enough for us that such a truth is revealed in the Bible. Note D.

4. Our fathers believed as we do in the entire sinfulness of all men in an unregenerate state.

The *substance* of this doctrine is, that all men are, before conversion, wholly destitute of moral goodness, and, in all moral character wholly and positively sinful. The *theory* by which the Assembly’s Catechism would explain this doctrine, or account for the existence of such a fact, is wholly separate from the fact itself. Nor were any specific explanations of this kind ever made essential to “orthodoxy.” But the *doctrinal fact* has ever been regarded, by evangelical sects, as essential to scriptural faith. That the catechism recognizes this fact none will deny. And in this, which is the substance of the doctrine, we are one with our fathers.

5. We are one with our fathers in our belief of the doctrine of the atonement.

The great doctrinal fact which their formulary of faith asserts in respect to this doctrine, and in which all evangelical sects agree is, that the sufferings and death of Christ are, by the appointment of God, the procuring cause, the *ground* or *reason*, in view of which he bestows pardon on the penitent and believing. Such is the doctrinal *fact*. And this alone, is now, and was with our fathers, essential to “orthodoxy” on this point. Different *theories* have been adopted at different times to explain the *manner* in which the atonement becomes effectual. But in no theory which has prevailed among orthodox christians, so called, has the idea ever been *wanting*, that sins are forgiven “for Christ’s sake,” or *on account* of what Christ has suffered. Note E.

This doctrine of an expiatory sacrifice, or vicarious suffering on the part of Christ, is directly opposed to that which makes “*repentance* the ground of forgiveness.” Repentance is the *condition*

forgiveness, but not the meritorious ground of it. Pardon is promised on condition of repentance; hence many mistake the condition which is to be complied with by us, for the procuring cause of pardon, which is the atonement of Christ. Repentance is not an atonement. It is a renunciation and hatred of sin. But the atonement sustains the divine law whilst its incurred penalty is withheld from the transgressor, so that God can now "be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," which implies, plainly, that without such a "propitiation" God would *not* be just in justifying even the penitent. Thus has the atonement of Christ *not only* a moral and persuasive power, inducing us to be reconciled to God, to be "at-one" with him, but it has also a sacrificial efficacy, and becomes a proper "propitiation for sin."

Such is our faith. And such was the faith of the christian fathers of this town. Nor in proof of this are we left to the formulary of faith which they adopted. As their highest tribute to the memory of their first pastor, whose ministry they had enjoyed almost a quarter of a century, they inscribed on his monument, to be read in succeeding generations, as a testimony to his soundness in the faith, and as evidence of the ground of their own hope, that he was an "eminent preacher of the *great Redemption by Jesus Christ.*" That this language expressed to all, one hundred years ago, the idea which we have stated concerning the atonement of Christ, none can doubt. And on this doctrine especially did our fathers found a church here, for the maintenance of "the true religion." They knew of "other foundations," though other "can no man lay." But "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone," was theirs. And through fidelity on their part, according to their covenant, in household religion, has this same "corner stone" of our hopes for eternity been preserved to us. And we trust that God is here rearing a superstructure thereupon. Be this so, however, or not, we know it will arise.

"Thou dying Lamb; thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed church of God,  
Are saved to sin no more."

In all ages hath such a redemption for sinners stood forth in the oracles of God for the comfort and peace of the believer in Jesus. All other foundations have, in numberless cases, failed the soul in

the hour of trial and death. But this, *never*. Men may die calmly in the belief of fatal error. But *sometimes* their hope will fail. Not thus with any of all the thousands who by faith in Christ have sought "redemption through his blood." Who, having thus received him, ever renounced such a ground of hope, in death! Here then we proffer you, my hearers, by the word of God, and by the experience of all ages, a sure foundation. We commend it to you, not because our fathers received it; not because the christian church has, in all ages received it, but because God hath so set the Savior forth "to be a propitiation for the remission of sins."

My impenitent friend, what a fitness is there for your necessities, in "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." True, men may abuse even the grace of the gospel. Some do sin because grace abounds. So it would be in this apostate world, on any scheme of divine compassion. Let not therefore "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" become to you "a savor of death unto death." Lost you certainly are, without cordial faith in the Savior. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Such is the declaration of the compassionate Redeemer. Look unto him then in faith, with repentance towards God, and be ye saved. You need such a Savior. Your sins, unprevented by divine interference, would prostrate that holy law on which hangs the happiness of earth and heaven. That law, "just and good," knows not of forgiveness but through a Savior. But in him there is pardon for the chief of sinners. You need not reap in the world to come the appropriate fruit of your sins. There is a deliverer. There is deliverance. "Behold the Lamb of God." His blood "cleanseth from all sin." Wait not till death, the judgment and eternity shall awaken your sluggish soul too late, to a realizing sense of what it is to have "counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing." Turn now by "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," and peace of soul shall be yours on earth: and in heaven, rest with all the pious dead, in the presence of God and the Lamb.

III. Another source of evidence that the church which our fathers here established was of the same specific faith which we hold, is the well authenticated views of their first minister.

Though we had no reason for doubts respecting the particular,

faith of the Rev. John Martyn, first minister of Northborough,—so explicit is traditionary testimony and the inscription on his monument,—yet we feared that specific evidence, in his own name, as to his *particular* doctrinal faith, could not be obtained. But I have the satisfaction and pleasure of exhibiting to you to-day, the Rev. Mr. Martyn's *old "study Bible."* Venerable relic of a devoted servant of its great Author. Over it, no doubt, have been offered up many prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, that God would remember his promise, and bless, to the latest generations, the seed of his children who here entered into covenant with him and one another, for the maintenance of the truth as it is in Jesus. On the blank leaves of this Bible, on the margins, and between the lines are found in Mr. Martyn's own elegant hand, annotations, remarks and inferences, which evince most clearly his particular religious sentiments, and exhibit attainments in sacred literature and biblical learning, most honorable to the ministry of New England one hundred years ago. From the evidence which appears in his bible, we are constrained to believe that it was not in mere compliment that his people inscribed upon his monument, that he was an "eminent" preacher of the great Redemption. Note F.

But my design is to exhibit Mr. Martyn's specific faith. It is necessary, however, in order to give to his testimony its full force upon the opposing views which now exist, to call to mind the religious history of his own times.

"About the year 1734," says President Edwards, "began the great noise that was in this part of the country, about Arminianism." Arminianism, not now represented by any one denomination, denied particularly what are termed "the doctrines of grace." The great metaphysical error which President Edwards publicly controverted in Mr. Martyn's day, was the Arminian view of "moral liberty," or such a freedom of the human will, as leaves all volitions contingent or uncertain. Mr. Martyn understood the subject matter of this controversy. On a blank leaf in his bible, he says, "the disputes in Holland between the Calvinists and Arminians were upon these five points, viz. Election, Redemption, Original sin, Effectual grace, and Perseverance." In another place he says, "against the doctrine of *free will* as taught by the Arminians, N. B. the following passages of scripture, for whilst they

are acknowledged to be canonical they will forever fly in the face of such pernicious doctrines; viz. Gen. 6: 5. Jer. 17: 9. Jn. 3: 6. 6: 24. 15: 5. Rom. 9: 16. 1 Cor. 15: 10. 2 Cor. 3: 5."

Mr. Martyn's ministry was from 1746 to 1767, in the beginning of the second century of New England ecclesiastical history, and including the very period of the great Arminian controversy. Many influences had long been preparing the churches for the developments that were made in his day. One which began to operate early in their history, was the restriction by the old colony laws, of the right of suffrage, to members of the church. Men were thus influenced by political motives to profess religion. Another instrument of calamitous influence, was the old "half way covenant." Those who had been baptized in infancy, were at a suitable age, if of a correct outward life, called upon to "own the covenant." This did not admit them to the Lord's Supper, but entitled their children to baptism, whilst they themselves were understood to have some indefinite relation to the church. And in this "half way" profession of religion, men rested. Few came into full communion. And this result led to another expedient. Men confessedly unconverted, were admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The ordinance was regarded, in their case, as "a means of regeneration." Thousands came to the table of Christ. But Zion was not enlarged. Her wasting was increased. Her watchmen saw it. And some of them lifted up their voice. Cotton Mather, ever to be had in grateful remembrance in the churches of New England, declared, in view of some of these measures, and their result, that if things should go on thus for forty years, *churches would be gathered out of churches*. He understood human nature, and the tendency of principles. He was mistaken in this case only as to the *time* when these things should be.

Such were some of the influences which were about coming to a crisis, when a branch of Christ's church was established in this town. They were the remote causes of the errors which followed. But an *immediate* occasion of the *development* of the errors for which the churches had been so long preparing, and which appeared in Mr. Martyn's day, was the great revivals that occurred under the preaching of Whitfield and Edwards. For a long time there had been only occasional "awakenings." The Holy Spirit

seemed to be very generally withdrawn. But the ten years preceeding Mr. Martyn's ministry, were made memorable by unusual visitations of divine grace, which were like the candle of the Lord amidst his churches. Nothing reveals human hearts like revivals of religion. The all-searching Spirit of God is then specially present. And satan too, feeling then that his time is short as to many whom he has led captive at his will, comes down upon the earth, "having great wrath." He enrages the wicked, tempts christians to distrust the works of the Spirit; and some who would do God service, he hurries on to monstrous extravagances. Such excrescences attached themselves to the revivals just mentioned. And yet after all reasonable allowances, it is estimated that in one of them, there were, in the space of two years, more than thirty thousand hopeful conversions in New England alone. To human appearance these revivals were the salvation of our American Zion. All evangelical denominations shared in their glorious result. Note G.

Such were the revivals. But the extravagances which attended them afforded a pretext to those who desired one, for an opposition to the revivals themselves. And too many who would not knowingly have opposed any work of divine grace, failed to distinguish between the operations of the Spirit and mere animal excitements. Because tares grew among the wheat, they were slow to acknowledge God as the author of the harvest. Others also had come into the church in its great declension, who, it is to be feared, not only never "saw it on this wise," but who had never felt in their own souls, the power of God. The revivals came, and the thoughts of many hearts were revealed. "Arminianism" became a general designation, not only for the views which rejected particularly "the doctrines of grace," so called, but for various forms of heterodoxy. The denial of the entire sinfulness of mankind in their natural state, of the necessity of the Spirit's influence in conversion, of Christ's supreme divinity, of the vicarious nature of the atonement, prevailed more or less extensively. These various doctrines had not then been resolved into any definite system. Note H.

Such was the state of religious opinions in New England, when Mr. Martyn was called to a defence of the gospel. And knowing the history of that day, we may judge more intelligently of the testimony which follows.

Mr. Martyn had no intention, of course, of expressing his creed on the margins of his Bible. Yet on most of the important doctrines of religion we find here his belief unequivocally expressed.

1. As to the *Scriptures*. Between the Old and New Testaments, Mr. Martyn writes, "N. B. Christianity is no innovation, but a perfection of the old religion ;—for in the old, there is a close comprehension of the new, and in the new an open discovery of the old." With the first minister of Northborough, "the Bible," and "the Word of God," were phrases of one and the same signification. With him the *Bible* was not only "a good book," "an incomparable book," "*the book*," par excellence ; it was the very word of Jehovah. Nor was the Old Testament, in his esteem, a collection of Hebrew Literature, as such ; it was not merely a "record of the Jewish religion," it was *the Word of God* which the Savior commanded men to search as testifying of himself. It was the Scriptures of truth which the noble Bereans searched for the proof of christianity itself. And so long as Christ's own words recognize, by name, "Moses," and "the prophets and the Psalms," as the very word of God, so long shall we prefer the faith of the christian fathers of this town, to any "progress" that makes the Bible anything less than the divinely inspired word of the living God.

2. As to the Trinity of the Godhead, Mr. Martin's views are explicit.

On Math. 28 : 19, "Baptising them in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," he remarks thus, "*name* and not names, to show *the equality of the three Persons*." On 1 Jn. 5 : 7. "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost," he says, "in Essence, in Being and in Deity." Again, on the same, "this verse being quoted verbatim, by St. Cyprian who lived in the middle of the *third century*, is a plain demonstration that it was not inserted by Athanasius who flourished in the fourth century."

To the foregoing I add, as evidence in point, that Mr. Martyn has copied in his Bible, the Athanasian creed, the body of which is a rigid defence of the doctrine of the Trinity ; and he accompanies it with the following remark, viz : "this creed was received through almost all the western churches and bears the name of Athanasian, because it contains the *orthodox faith*, which went by that name in contradistinction of the rest which were under their

heads, as Arians, Apollinarians, &c." Arians denied Christ's supreme divinity; Apollinarians denied his humanity, and Nestorians were understood as denying the real union of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ. "The orthodox faith" included, in Mr. Martyn's view, the doctrine of the Trinity.

3. Mr. Martyn held the doctrine of the Supreme divinity and proper humanity of Jesus Christ.

To the genealogy of Christ as given by Luke, he adds, "Hence the *humanity and divinity* of our Savior, is proved."

The following remarks accompany the following passages. Jn. 8: 58, "Before Abraham was, I am." "Hence the union of two natures in Jesus Christ is proved." Jn. 2: 24, "He knew all men." "Hence his Godhead is proved." Rev. 20: 6, "They shall be priests of God and of Christ." "Hence his Divinity is proved." Heb. 1: 3, "Upholding all things by the word of his power." "Hence his *Eternity*." He who upholds all things must surely have existed before the things which he upholds. And we may add, must also be Almighty. Mark 2: 11, "I say unto thee arise," &c. "Hence he is God as well as man." Mark 13: 32, "Of that day knoweth no man—neither the Son, but the Father." "That is, the Messiah, not the *second person*" (of the Trinity.) Mat. 4: 3, "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." "By thy own absolute power as God. Hence the Devil understood by the name of the *Son of God*, the same as the true and living God." Jn. 10: 30, "I and my Father are one." "Not in purpose only but in reality and sameness, as the Jews understood him, else they would not undertake to stone him, for so was their faith at that time."

1 Jn. 5: 20, "This is the true God and Eternal life." Here Mr. Martyn makes a marginal reference to Isaiah 44: 6. "Thus saith the Lord—I am the first, I am the last, and, besides me there is no God." He understood, most evidently, that, if Isaiah affirmed of Jehovah that he was the only God, and John affirmed of Christ that he was the true God, then Christ and the Father were one being, whether men could understand or not *how* it should be so. In another place he remarks, "let Christian Divines be content to explain what they understand; to adore what they understand not; and to leave in mystery all that Christ and his apostles have left so." On Isa. 9: 6, "Unto us a child is born—and his name



shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God," &c. he says; "to be born a child and to be the mighty God is absolutely impossible and contrary in itself, except we acknowledge Christ's hypostatical union, that he is God as well as man." By hypostatical union he means the real union of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ. Again, Ro. 9: 5, "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." On the margin of the passage Mr. Martyn has simply, but significantly written "N. B." We say amen; let all mark it well; "Christ over all, God blessed forever."

Again, Jn. 20: 28. "Thomas saith unto him, my Lord and my God." On this he says "no man can rightly receive the Mediator as Lord, if he does not acknowledge him as God." Again, 1 Jn. 5: 20, before referred to, "this is the true God and eternal life," here we find the following remarks; "His being the true God is absolutely necessary to his having eternal life in himself originally, and the text may be called the death of Arianism and Socinianism; and the connexion of the next verse, to both Arians and Socinians and all those who deny the things contained in the 20th verse."

4. Of the Holy Spirit. First, of its *personality* in distinction from an "influence." Acts 13: 2. "The Holy Ghost said separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." To this Mr. Martyn subjoins, "*me, I, ergo*" (therefore) "he is a *person*." Again, Rev. 8: 27. He that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of "the spirit." "Mind," says Martyn, "ergo he is a person."

Secondly, as to the *office* of the Holy Spirit. Jn. 3: 6, "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Mr. Martyn adds, "the Holy Spirit is the great agent which worketh this change" (the new birth) "in men and none else."

5. Mr. Martyn held the doctrine of a vicarious atonement.

In view of Acts 20: 28, "to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood;" he says, "hence is proved a *true* satisfaction and not a *moral* one, as Socinians say." The Socinian idea of the atonement is, that it consists in the moral power of Christ's death as being adapted and designed to lead us to repentance. Mr. Martyn believed, of course, in such an influence, but this was not, in his view, the atonement. By a "true satisfaction," he evidently means such an influence as satisfies, sustains

or upholds the law of God, whilst yet He bestows pardon on the penitent transgressor. Again, Luke 22 : 19. "This do in remembrance of me." On this passage we find the following note ; "i. e. acknowledging that salvation which is through me, both as I am the atonement for sin and a principle of life to all those that lay hold of me by faith. W. Law 387." In another place is the following, "that Christ has fullness of merit of infinite value to purchase reconciliation and acceptance both of *our person* and *services*, together with an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven, see Dan. 9 : 24. Jn. 17 : 2. Hebs. 9 : 12. 10 : 14. Eph. 5 : 12. Ro. 3 : 24. 5 : 9."

6. Mr. Martyn held, as we do, the doctrinal fact of the entire sinfulness of all men in an unregenerate state.

From his remarks, it is probable that he adopted the prevalent theory of that day respecting the *manner* in which such a result comes to pass. But this theory, as we have before illustrated, is no part of the doctrinal fact.

On Ps. 51 : 5, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity," &c. and Job 14 : 4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean," he remarks thus ; "hence original sin in infants is proved." Jas. 2 : 10, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point is guilty of all ;" to this he adds, "in Adam." Hebs. 9 : 22, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission ;" to this he adds, "for original and actual sins." Again, he interlines 1 Jn. 1 : 8 and 10, so as to read thus : "if we say we have no ('original') sin, we deceive ourselves." "If we say we have not sinned ('actually') we make him a liar." None will say, we think, that Mr. Martyn held less than the entire sinfulness of all men in an unregenerate state.

7. He held the Calvinistic view of the divine purposes. On 2 Thes. 2 : 13, he says, "hence God's decrees are both of the means and the end." In another place he says, "the doctrine of *predestination* is proved, that we should be holy."

8. He believed in the doctrine of the saints perseverance.

In one place he says, "here perseverance is proved. Blessed news." And the note last recorded in his Bible is this, "the blessed and comforting doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is plainly promised in the word of God to all those happy ones who have passed from death unto life, and they can never perish."

9. Mr. Martyn recognizes in several instances the doctrines of a future judgment and eternal rewards and punishment.

In view of the sublime and awful revelation of Jesus Christ as recorded in the 25th chapter of Matthew's gospel, he says, "Here our Savior is not considered as a Redeemer, an High Priest, as glorifying the riches of his love and mercy, or as justifying the ungodly ; no, but as a Judge—proceeding according to the rules of distributive and remunerative justice." On Mark 3 : 29, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation," he remarks ; "is *subject* of."

Without any further specification, I add one more quotation, which evinces not only Mr. Martyn's "orthodoxy," but also his strict Calvinism. It follows Ro. 8 : 29, 30, "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate," &c. "Hence," says Mr. Martyn, "absolute election, particular redemption, effectual calling, free justification, and eternal glorification is proved." Such was the faith of the first minister of Northborough, whom his much afflicted people in his death, style "an eminent preacher of the great Redemption by Jesus Christ." Nor was his faith drawn from Calvin, or Augustine, or any other human authority. We find it here as deductions of his own, from the Word of God itself. And yet it is Calvinism, so called, not because Mr. Martyn followed Calvin, but because Calvin adhered to the Bible in its great doctrinal facts, and, as it happened, had his name attached to that system of faith which so great a portion of the christian world receive as being contained in the word of God.

We have thus shown what was the religious faith of the church first established in this town, and the faith of its first Pastor. We have shown also wherein we are one with them in the most important doctrines of the Bible. And by the maintenance of such doctrines, while they should live, did they hope that "the true religion" would be maintained here in succeeding generations. They are dead. We live after them. And let us bless the covenant faithfulness of our Father's God, who has not suffered these glorious doctrines of grace to become extinct in this community. Nor shall they, God helping us, die in our hands. They are our hope, our peace, our rejoicing. For the praise and glory of God's grace ; for the salvation of souls for whom Christ died, we will

not, my brethren, cease to uphold and proclaim this "glorious gospel of the blessed God;" these doctrines of hope for lost men. Nor stand we alone in their support and defence. Before this church was formed, another band of believers in the same great truths, differing from us only in the form of an external rite, raised here the attracting standard of the cross, and unfurled their banners inscribed with the glorious doctrines of the Bible and the Reformation. Our joy shall be in their prosperity, and in their adversity our prayer.

Do any ask *why* we make our altar after the pattern of that which our fathers made? We answer, not *because* they made their altar thus. We delight in following them only so far as they followed the Bible. Far from us, however, to reject a doctrine because it is old. And as far be it from us to receive it for this reason. But there is nothing repugnant to us in receiving as the unchanging truth of God, *old* doctrines, which have sustained Apostles, Prophets, Patriarchs, and the faithful of all ages, by their own divine energy. Believing therefore, that our fathers made their altar after the pattern which the Lord commanded, we rejoice to walk, so far, in their steps.

And now there comes to us all, a voice from the past; from the dead, who yet speak. Fathers, hear you not this day the voice of your own godly sires; and in your remembrance of them forget you their testimony to the piety and godliness of their fathers who reared here an altar to the living God? Let the remembrance of such an ancestry inspire your own hearts with renewed zeal for the honor of your fathers' God. A few days more are yet allotted you. May their God be yours; and may your God be ours. Another century and you, fathers and mothers in Israel, will be to other generations, as those who raised the gospel banners in this town are to us. And O, may your names be had here in everlasting remembrance. May your memory be as precious to the bearers of the gospel standard then, as is the memory of those who first covenanted together here for the maintenance of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Brethren, now in the midst of life, what does the voice of the past century demand of us? Not merely to cherish the memory of our sires and a pious ancestry. The voice of three generations, summoned, within one short century, from the places which we

now occupy to their final account, bids us awake for the solemn duties of life.

“How swift the torrent rolls,  
That bears us to the sea;  
The tide which hurries thoughtless souls  
To vast eternity.”

“Our fathers, where are they?” Does the turf cover them? They are on high. Palms adorn their hands, and crowns begird their brows.

“I ask them whence their victory came!  
They, with united breath,  
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,  
Their victory to his death.”

On us, brethren, *should* come the burden of the day. Remember the curse of those who “came not up to the help of the Lord.” Remember the reward of the faithful. Another hundred years, and *eternal* centuries will be ours, in which we shall rejoice in the presence of God, or mourn in banishment from “the glory of his power.”

Young men, descendants of the founders of a christian church in this place, I charge you this day, by our fathers labors, and toils, and prayers in your behalf, to stand in your lot, as they stood in theirs. On you, in the providence of God, rest the momentous interests of Christ’s kingdom in this place. Put away vain pursuits, and “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” that when he shall appear, he may assign you a portion with all the faithful of ages past, and of generations yet unborn.

Fathers, brethren and friends, I seem to behold, through the closing vista of the past century, that man of God standing before his flock and addressing them for the first time, as their pastor and guide. He looked forward to what should result from the union of that little company of believers. His faith and theirs beheld in their own little band, the germ of that vine which is yet to overshadow this fair heritage. And from that man of God, I seem to have, this day, a charge to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. And from pastor and people, comes to us all the injunction to keep in trust what God has committed unto us; to maintain in our families while we live, and to transmit to succeeding generations, the doctrines which were their support in life,

their hope in death. To our hands, has the gospel, as they received it, been intrusted. And for its maintenance, will the great head of the church hold us accountable. So let us live, so let us labor, that we may meet, irreproachably, in the judgment, our children, our fathers, our Savior and our God. Amen.

## NOTE A. Page 4.

The original church in Northborough, was organized May 21st, O. S. 1746. On the same day Rev. John Martyn was ordained as its Pastor, in which office he died April 30th, 1767. Rev. Peter Whitney succeeded him Nov. 4th of the same year. He died Feb. 29th, 1816. Rev. Jos. Allen, his successor, was ordained on the 30th of the following October. The Baptist Church in Northborough was formed July 2d, 1827.

In 1832, April 12th, the Evangelical congregational church, was organized. Its first minister, Rev. Samuel A. Fay, was ordained on the 17th of the following Oct. at which time also the house of worship was dedicated. Mr. Fay was dismissed, at his own request, Oct. 19th, 1836. The same day Rev. Daniel H. Emerson was ordained as his successor. Mr. Emerson also asked a dismissal which was granted April 22d, 1840. Between the dismissal of Mr. Emerson and the ordination of the present incumbent, July 5th, 1843, the pulpit was supplied two years and more by Rev. Joshua Bates, D. D.

## NOTE B. Page 4.

The following is taken from the *Christian Examiner* for May 1846, p. 289 : As an "incontrovertible canon of historical criticism," viz. "the silence of contemporary historians, themselves being actors in the scenes which they describe,—concerning any important fact, is strong presumptive proof against it." Is not the same true respecting the "silence" of tradition concerning any important fact, when tradition exists respecting other "important facts" of the same times ? Tradition is positive in this place respecting the "orthodoxy" of the original church. But respecting any difference between it and other Calvinistic churches, all is "silence."

## NOTE C. Page 5.

Perhaps no denomination ought to appropriate such terms as "orthodox" and "orthodoxy" to its own faith exclusively. But in settling the meaning of terms and phrases, the simple question is, what is their import by the law of "usage." The following is good authority. "It is a most clear, undeniable and universal rule, that the signification of terms must be decided in every country according to the known and general acceptation of them in the several countries where they are used." (Report of the board of overseers of Harvard College, 1727. Quincy's History, vol. I. 566.) It is equally "clear" that the same "rule" applies to "the signification of terms" in different *periods*, in the same country. We ask then, what, by this rule, must have been the meaning of "orthodoxy" in New England one hundred years ago, and in the very outbreak of "Arminianism ?"

The following is an article in the first church covenant of our Fathers. "We oblige ourselves to bring up our children and servants in the knowledge and fear of God, according to his holy institutions and according to our best abilities, and in special, by the use of orthodox catechisms, that so the true religion may be maintained in our families while we live and among such as shall live when we are dead." And in "a historical sketch of the progress of evangelical sentiments in Northborough" prepared by the first Pastor of the evangelical congregational church, under the inspection of his venerable grandfather, Nahum Fay, Esq. who acted as clerk of the first church, from the death of Rev. Mr. Whitney, till the settlement of his successor, I find the first covenant entire, recorded as having been used

*through the whole ministry of Rev. Mr. Martyn.* Mr. Whitney's settlement is then recorded and the covenant copied, which, the sketch says, "was used under his ministry." The substitution which is made in this second covenant for the article which we have copied from the first, may throw some light on the fact referred to by Rev. Mr. Allen, (centennial discourse, appendix p. 49), that in the original covenant, in his possession, the article prescribing the use of orthodox catechisms, "is now stricken out by a mark of the pen." The article in the *second* covenant which answers to the one we have copied from the first, is this; "you also engage to bring up such as may be placed under your care, in the knowledge and fear of God, that the true religion may be maintained while you live and by them who shall live after you. And to these ends you promise to keep up the daily worship of God in your house." For family worship in the latter, substitute the use of orthodox catechisms, and the two articles are identical. We see no need of queries. In all philosophical inquiries for the existence of given facts, "*one* adequate cause" is deemed sufficient.

It may be added in this connection that churches were not always necessitated to use "orthodox catechisms" or none. There was published, in New Hampshire, soon after the organization of the original church in this place, an edition of the Assembly's Catechism from which the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism were *expunged*. But the old Catechisms yet found in Northborough are not of the "improved edition."

#### NOTE D. Page 7.

Charity itself is sometimes greatly taxed by an ambiguous profession, on the part of some, of a belief in "the divinity of Christ," whilst in fact they utterly deny what that phrase implies by common usage. To say to one that I believe in the divinity of Christ, when I believe Christ to be divine only in the sense of being sent on a divine mission, is as if, to one asking me what my belief is as to the mode of God's existence, I should say, I am a Unitarian. I am such in the sense of believing in God's essential unity. But common usage of the language forbids such an application of terms by me, when I am not a unitarian in the common acceptance of the word. When usage has assigned to terms a particular meaning, no man has a moral right to use them in another sense without explanation.

These remarks apply not only to the subject of Christ's divinity, but to the use of the words atonement, regeneration and others.

#### NOTE E. Page 7.

It is alleged of the doctrine of the atonement that it has undergone essential changes in its history. An article appeared in a recent number of the *Christian Examiner*, in which the history of this doctrine is divided into three periods; first, "the mythic period," extending from an early point of christian antiquity to the eleventh century, in which "the prevailing idea was of a *controversy* between Christ and the devil for the souls of men, and the work of Christ was, mainly to redeem men from the power of the devil, by paying the ransom due to him on account of their sins." This is confessedly the most objectionable theory. But gross as the idea is, we ask if, by the theory, deliverance from the consequences of sin was not granted, by God, in view of what Christ had done; in view of the ransom which he paid? That is, was not man saved "through Christ," or his sufferings as the *procuring cause*, and not by repentance as the ground of salva-



tion? If so, here is the real idea of atonement; much obscured by the crude philosophy of a dark age we admit, but there is in it the great idea that Christ died as "a propitiation for our sins."

The second it is said, is "the scholastic period, extending from the eleventh century to the Reformation." The idea of the atonement in this period was, that Christ suffered and died "to satisfy the justice of God, by paying the debt legally incurred by the sinner." If then Christ paid the debt, were not men, by this theory, also forgiven, "for Christ's sake," and not on account of their repentance as the procuring cause?

"The third period" extending from the Reformation to the present time, represents the atonement as having special relation to "the *government* of God." This is the idea which we have stated in the body of the discourse.

We ask now, if in *any* of these theories, the idea is wanting that the atonement of Christ is such as to be the meritorious ground, or reason in view of which God remits the incurred penalty of his law? If these several theories cover the whole history of the church, when has it not been the doctrine of the atonement, that men are forgiven "for Christ's sake," or "through Christ" as the procuring cause, by his own sufferings and death, of human salvation? When therefore the author says, "throughout the whole of this time we see that the doctrine is in *progress*, the remark has pertinency only to the theories and not to the substance of the doctrine, except as by more rational theories the real doctrine which is in them all becomes more intelligible and more glorious in all its relations. And the very fact that the great essential idea of a vicarious atonement has pervaded the crudest theories of the darkest ages of the christian church as well as the most enlightened, shows how clearly such an atonement is revealed in the Bible and how happily it is adapted to the known wants of a lost world.

#### NOTE F. Page 10.

The following is Mr. Martyn's monumental inscription. "Under this sepulchral stone lies interred, in Christian hope of a blessed resurrection, what was mortal of the Reverend John Martyn, A. M., the late worthy Pastor of this flock, son of the late Captain Edward Martyn of Boston. Educated at Harvard College, Cambridge. Was ordained in this place May 21st, 1746, approved himself an assiduous, orthodox, eminent preacher of the great redemption by Jesus Christ. After a few days illness, to the inexpressible grief of his family, flock, and friends, expired April 30th, 1767, aged sixty-one."

"Si vitam fide Christi Egimus Sanctam Si quid praeclare gessimus, hoc sit nostri monumentum."

The *Old Bible* is now in the possession of Mrs. Harriet Endicott of Sterling, wife of Captain Endicott and daughter of John Monis Martyn, who was grandson of Rev. John Martyn.

We have in hand also a manuscript sermon of Rev. John Martyn, belonging to Wm. P. Endicott, Esq. of Salem. It is without date or text, the first few leaves being lost. It appears to have been preached on the occasion of a special fast, in view of a great drought; probably in 1749. There is not, of course, anything *specifically* doctrinal in the sermon, but its sentiments are entirely coincident with those recorded in his study Bible.

#### NOTE G. Page 12.

As to the general estimation in which these revivals were held at that time, proba-

bly the call for and result of the meeting of Pastors in Boston, the day after commencement at Cambridge, June 1743, referred to by Rev. Mr. Allen, ("centennial discourse," p. 43) are a fair index. The *call* is not "to bear their testimony and give their advice in relation" to an *evil*, but "the late *happy revival of religion*." And so far as any difference of opinion appears in the results, it was in relation to "itinerancy." This was a separate matter from the revival, though unhappily connected with it. And when Dr. Benjamin Colman of Boston, Mr. Parkman of Westboro', and others refused to sign the "testimony and advice," of the convention—not because it favored the revival, but because it did not use language "*sufficiently strong*" against "itinerancy," or, as they define the term, against "ministers and others introducing themselves into other ministers parishes without their consent," they only ranked themselves, in the history of revivals, with such men as Griffin, Payson, Beecher, Nettleton, Kirk and others of the present century, who have ever cherished the memory of Whitfield and Edwards as among the most honored instruments of reviving and establishing vital godliness in the American churches.

In a biographical notice of Andrew Elliott, one of those who withheld his name as stated above, it is said of him that "in 1743 he united with many other excellent ministers in giving his testimony in favor of the very remarkable revival of religion in this country." The same might be said of Colman, Parkman, and others who also "concurred" with the testimony "*for the substance of it*."

A quotation, in the note just referred to, from "Quincy's History of Harvard University," may, we apprehend, from the sectarian bias of that history, lead to a misapprehension, in some minds, of the particular religious faith of Dr. Colman, and through his known influence at that day, to a misapprehension of the faith of our fathers generally, one hundred years ago. That Dr. Colman was truly "liberal" we doubt not. But whether he was so, in the sense of that phrase at this day in and about Harvard College, a few facts may serve to show.

In 1699, he with his church in Brattle Square, at its organization, say; "first of all we approve and subscribe the confession of faith put forth by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster." But perhaps he made "progress" in "liberality." Let us see: a quarter of a century later, he, with President Leverett, who according to the same author, was next to Dr. Colman in liberality, were examiners of the first Hollis professor of Divinity in Harvard College, 1722. In proof of the "orthodoxy" of this Professor, they received his assent to this same "confession of faith put forth by the assembly of divines at Westminster," and also his assent to "Ames' Medulla Theologiae," which being interpreted is, as to substance of doctrine, the "*marrow* of Calvinism." But Dr. Colman lived another quarter of a century, almost, in which time the light of transatlantic "progress" and "liberality" dawned upon the dark land of the Puritans. Still we find, that some fifteen years later, this same Dr. Colman was, according to Dr. Palfrey, (sermon to the church in Brattle Square 1824) apprehensive, lest "Arminianism" should gain ground in New England. But, says President Quincy, "his christian charity *brightened to the last*." Of this we have no doubt. Still we find him on the old foundations. A volume of sermons lies before me, by Dr. Colman's colleague, Rev. Wm. Cooper. The subject is "Predestination unto life." They are prefaced by Dr. Colman, Dr. Prince, and others, "senior Pastors of the town of Boston" 1740. In this preface they avow their faith in this doctrine "because," say they, "we find it in our *Bible*. This it is that makes us ~~Presbyterians~~ and Calvinists."

Of such a faith, as appears by these facts, was Brattle street church one hundred years ago, and President Leverett of Harvard college, and Dr. Colman, whom

*Predestination*

President Quincy alledges to have been "the recognized leader of the most *liberal* party of the province."

Another fact shows the same state of religious opinions in New England one hundred years ago. The author of the sermons just named, was in 1737 elected to the Presidency of Harvard College; and he is said to have been "an eminent promoter of the great revival of religion" which occurred in Whitfield's first visit to this country. He himself said that "since the year 1740, more people had sometimes come to him in one week about their souls, than in the preceeding twenty-four years of his ministry. He died 1743. It is not probable that Dr. Colman and Mr. Cooper his colleague, a man so sound and judicious as to command the chair of Harvard College, were at variance in respect to that great revival. Probably both were opposed to "itinerancy."

These facts may throw some light on the character of the times in which the first minister of Northborough was settled. They show at least what Harvard College was one hundred years ago, when such men as Cooper were sought to preside over its interests. But by men of the same spirit, one hundred years before Colman and Cooper, was that institution consecrated "*Christo et Ecclesiae*," to Christ and the Church.

In respect to the individual position of Mr. Martyn, towards the revivals of that day, no *positive* evidence appears. If the mere fact of his choosing on his ordaining council men who were opposed to the "New Lights" is evidence that *he* was opposed to them, then we should infer that his church were in *favor* of them, since they chose on their part, Mr. Hall of Sutton, a man so notedly in favor of Whitfield and Edwards as to command a seat in the council convened by the latter at the time of his difficulties in Northampton. Mr. Hall even *practiced* "itinerancy." Others, also, chosen on part of the church, "concurred" with the testimony and advice of the "convention" before referred to. The *presumption*, in respect to Mr. Martyn, is, that he favored these revivals. He at least held the doctrines under the influence of which, by the Spirit of God, they occurred. And if the assumption of the author of the "History of Harvard University" be true, that the *high Calvinists* were the particular abettors of the New Lights, we should almost suspect Mr. Martyn of being an advocate for "*itinerancy*."

#### NOTE H. Page 12.

Prof. Palfrey of Cambridge college, says, (Am. Enc.) that "*unitarian* opinions were extensively adopted in Massachusetts, as early as the middle of the last century." They were not, of course, known then by their present name. They appeared here as in England, at first, under the names of Arianism, Socinianism &c. See the same authority. The first minister of Northborough could not have been ignorant of the existence of these "opinions." Only four years after his settlement, Dr. Bellamy, in a letter designed to warn those who said there were "no Arians, no Socinians in the land," gave the alarm from Connecticut of departures from the faith in and about Boston. A little later the Arian work of Emlyn was published by Dr. Mayhew. And about the same time appeared the mutilated edition of the Westminster Catechism. And these developments, at that time, account for the particular cast of many of Mr. Martyn's remarks which we shall adduce, and give him a definite position towards these various doctrines.

But the inquiry may arise, why these views no sooner took an embodied form? They had no systematic existence in this country till about the year 1816. The *marked*, progressive developments, after the publication of Emlyn's Inquiry 1756,

were, according to Prof. Palfrey, the exclusion of the doctrine of the Trinity from the liturgy of an Episcopal church in Boston, 1785, the appointment of Dr. Ware to the chair of divinity in Harvard University 1805; and the publication, in this country, of Belsham's life of Lindsley 1816.

The history of the latter half of the last century will suggest to all a sufficient reason for the slow *embodied* development of these or any other exotic doctrines introduced at such a time. The political state of the colonies engaged all *public* attention. From the termination of the religious revivals till the adoption of the federal constitution, scarcely a year was free from violent agitations. The old French war began the strife, 1744. Four years later there was a cessation of war, but not for peace. Then came another conflict of arms with the same nation. Nor had peace fairly settled upon the land, before "the stamp act" and other measures began the real American Revolution. The strife of arms was but the maintenance of principles already settled. Then followed a period of internal agitation in bringing the states into one. Indeed the latter half of the eighteenth century was, to New England, any thing but a time for the development of theological *systems* as such; and yet it was a time exceedingly favorable for the coming in of errors in doctrine and in practice. Not only did the doctrines before referred to gain upon individual minds and in some churches, but other errors, and infidelity itself made great inroads. Opposition to evangelical doctrines had been awakened by the revivals. Looser views had been advanced. Such seed was already sown as would develope itself. Tares need no cultivation; if let alone they will grow whilst the wheat less neglected will perish by their side. So with doctrinal errors and truth in the half century under consideration. The intellectual champion and spiritual host of New England, the great Edwards, was dead, and there was but one Bellamy in the land. Centinels and watchmen there were, good men and true in their hearts. And though we would not condemn them for doing so much politically, and especially to sustain the American Revolution, yet we fear they did not labor so directly as they should have done, for that moral revolution which alone can make our fallen race freemen in the Lord. The preaching of that day was too abstract. The moral bearings of doctrinal truths were not applied to the conscience. The *theories* embraced in the catechism, or such others as individuals might adopt, were made more prominent than the doctrinal facts which they were designed to explain. It is not strange therefore, that, even while the catechism, containing the great doctrinal truths which have ever been made "the power of God unto salvation," was in such general use, error still came in upon the churches.

Other causes, too numerous to mention, existed, which fully account for the slow development of *systematic* errors whilst at the same time the errors themselves were undermining old foundations. Thus were churches, within half a century, and sometimes within a quarter of a century or less, subverted from their original foundations; and the few remaining members, who held to their original faith, passing off the stage by death, a religion which the fathers knew not was adopted by their children.