

Ordination of Mr. Bliss. — State of the Church. — Revivals. — Proceedings of different Ecclesiastical Councils and of the Church. — Divisions in the Parish and Church. — Death of Mr. Bliss. — Ordination of Mr. Emerson. — Proceedings of the Church. — Notice of the Rev. Mr. Emerson. — Ordination of Mr. Ripley. — Proceedings of the Church. — Covenants. — Funds. — Ordination of Mr. Goodwin. — Succession of Deacons. — Trinitarian Church.

THE dismissal of Mr. Whiting left the church again destitute of a minister. It did not, however, long remain so. The Rev. Daniel Bliss was chosen by the church, August 22, 1738, in which act the town concurred, 14th September, 70 to 32. October 19, it was voted, 63 to 12, to give him £500 as a settlement and £200 as a salary, in the old-tenor province bills of credit. The settlement was subsequently paid by the sale of town lands. February 14, 1739, was appointed for his ordination, when a council of seven churches, of which the Rev. John Hancock was moderator, convened for the purpose; but some difficulties having arisen, it adjourned, and met again on the 6th of March, with two additional churches, called by the church, and three by the dissatisfied members. By the decision of this council it was agreed to abide. The charges brought against Mr. Bliss were principally personal. But the council, after a full examination, came to a result in his favor on the 7th of March, when his ordination took place.

On this occasion, the Rev. John Barnard, of Marblehead, made the introductory prayer; the Rev. William Williams, of Weston, preached from Acts xxvi. 17, 18; the Rev. Ebenezer Hancock, Sen., of Lexington, gave the charge; and the Rev. John Gardner, of Stow, the right hand of fellowship. The church, at this time, consisted of 85 members, 35 males and 50 females.

This was an important era in the ecclesiastical history of New England. Much of the zeal which had characterized the churches at an early period had subsided; the sermons from the desk had become cold and formal; and spiritual lethargy and indifference ensued. About this time a powerful revival of religion commenced in many churches in the colony. These remarks will be true, whether applied to the general history of the country, or the particular history of Concord.

Mr. Bliss was one of the most distinguished of the clergy, who, at that day, were denominated by their opposers *new lights*. He introduced a new style of preaching, — bold, zealous, impassioned, and enthusiastic, forming a striking contrast to that the church had previously enjoyed. The truths of divine revelation, which people from infancy had been taught to regard with reverence, were now exhibited in a manner new and surprising. And it had a powerful effect. The attention of the people generally was soon greatly awakened, and their feelings were excited on the subject of religion.

On the 13th of October, 1741, the celebrated Whitfield first visited Concord. “About noon,” says his Journal, “I reached Concord. Here I preached to some thousands in the open air; and comfortable preaching it was. The hearers were sweetly melted down. About £45 was collected for the orphans. The minister of the town being, I believe, a true child of God, I chose to stay all night at his house, that we might rejoice together. The Lord was with us. The Spirit of the Lord came upon me, and God gave me to wrestle with him for my friends, especially those then with me. They felt his power. Brother B**s, the minister, broke into floods of tears, and we had reason to cry out it was good for us to be here. O blessed be thy name, O God, for the sweet refreshing in our way towards the heavenly Canaan.”

The preaching of Whitfield, though somewhat resembling that of Mr. Bliss, tended to keep alive and increase these powerful religious feelings. The number of those who publicly professed religion, and joined the church in full communion, was unusually large. *Fifty* joined in 1741, and *sixty-five* in 1742. *Eighteen* in one day. The feeling pervading society was such, that religious meetings were held every day in the week; hundreds sought advice from their pastor; and persons might often be seen, apparently suffering under extreme agony from a sense of their guilt, or in an ecstasy of joy under the consolations of religion. This revival, though attended with much enthusiasm in feelings and action, and extravagant pretensions to religious influences, produced the most salutary effects on many individuals. As is ever the case when the attention of the people is called to think seriously on the subject, the number of those who were reformed and became really pious, is stated to have been very great.



But though productive of much good, many evils resulted from the proceedings of those times. Much controversy and division in towns took place, which hardly find a parallel in modern times, and in which most of the leading clergymen of the colony were engaged as partisans or counsellors. Concord partook largely in these troubles. An unhappy controversy was here generated, which continued many years, and produced some important revolutions in the town. This controversy involved so many principles of importance to the church generally, and to this town in particular, that I trust I shall be excused for minuteness of detail.

The dismissal of Mr. Whiting was not approved by every inhabitant; and, as has been shown, there was not entire unanimity in settling Mr. Bliss. Under these circumstances, his character and preaching were likely to be carefully examined, and all his errors exposed. As early as July, 1740, several brethren "made application to the church for redress"; and Messrs. Timothy Minott, James Minott, Samuel Heywood, Samuel Merriam, and Nathaniel Whittemore, were chosen a committee "to hold a Christian conference with them, and to receive and report their particular grievances to the church." At the same time, Messrs. Timothy Wheeler, Jonathan Ball, and John Jones, were chosen a committee to obtain from others the reason for absenting themselves from the communion. It does not appear that reports were made till the following year. Not being satisfied, the aggrieved brethren requested the church to join with them in calling in a council, but it was refused.

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At length an *ex parte* council was convened, before whom fifteen articles of complaint were examined. This council, consisting of the Rev. Messrs. John Barnard of Marblehead, Moderator, John Prentice of Lancaster, Samuel Ruggles of Billerica, William Cook of East Sudbury, Thomas Parker of Dracut, Oliver Peabody of Natick, and Willard Hall of Westford, and delegates from their respective churches, met here first in June, 1742, and during the following year by several adjournments.

The charges submitted to this council were referred to the church, before whom they were examined; and the vindication of the accused was made, and voted to be satisfactory. After this examination (August 26, 1742) four of the brethren were suspended from the privileges of the church.

In consequence of the dissatisfaction that prevailed, the church had also called in the aid of a council, of which the Rev. Samuel Moody, of York, was moderator, and which met here, June 21, 1743, "to hear and consider these proceedings, and inform them, if in any thing they have deviated from the rules of the gospel." Messrs. Deacon Dakin, Nathaniel Billings, John Dakin, Daniel Adams, David Whittaker, Nathaniel Ball, David Melvin, Nathaniel Whittemore, and Timothy Wheeler, were chosen on various committees to confer with the council on different subjects.

Both of these councils were in session in Concord at the same time. That called by the disaffected brethren had requested Mr. Bliss to appear before it, to refute any charges which might be brought against him; but he refused to recognize them as the proper tribunal, before whom he or his church ought to appear. The church's council were then invited to unite, and both to sit together as a mutual council. This was also refused. And they came to a result, June 24, 1743, in which they state that the complaints of the aggrieved brethren were well founded, and advise them to secede from the ministry of Mr. Bliss, and support public worship among themselves, unless proper acknowledgments and reformation, agreeably to their views, took place.

The other council, after examining all the proceedings of the church, from December, 1741 to that day, and the charges of the aggrieved brethren, adjourned without coming to a result, only advising the church to consult with the aggrieved brethren, and invite an additional number of churches to join them at their adjourned meeting, and then to sit as a mutual council. This was consented to by both parties; and a council, consisting of ministers and delegates from fourteen churches, met here September 13, 1743. The ministers were the Rev. Nathaniel Rogers and Samuel Wigglesworth, of the first and third churches in Ipswich; Samuel Moody, of the first church in York; Israel Loring, of Sudbury; William Williams, of Weston; Peter Thatcher, of Middleborough; John Cotton, of Newton; Nathaniel Appleton, of Cambridge; Joshua Gee, of Boston; Wareham Williams, of Waltham; Joseph Parsons, of Bradford; Ebenezer Turell, of Medford; David Hall, of Sutton; and Solomon Prentice, of Grafton. John



Cotton was moderator, and Joshua Gee and Nathaniel Rogers, scribes. It continued in session six days. Ten of these fourteen ministers, with the Rev. Mr. Bliss, were part of the hundred and sixteen who had fully approved the existing revivals, "as the glorious work of God," and given in their attestation at the meeting in Boston on the 7th of the preceding July.¹

Twenty-two articles of grievance, containing "exceptions against the doctrines, discipline, and conduct of the reverend pastor of the church," obtained a full and impartial examination. These charges involved some of the points of theology most disputed at that time. The following extracts from the complaints, Mr. Bliss's defence, and the result of council, are given as examples.

COMPLAINT 5th. — "His asserting that every person that was converted must know it; and afterwards denied the same."

Defence: — "That all persons converted, when adult, must receive a change so great that they will necessarily be acquainted therewith, is what I believe; but at the same time, that they shall as certainly know this to be true and real conversion to God, is what I deny."

Result of Council. — "We judge that many who are converted do know it, and that it is the duty of Christians to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure; yet the doctrine that Mr. Bliss hath taught, namely, that every person that is converted must know it, it what we apprehend to be unsound; but in what he offered to the council he expressed himself more cautiously to our satisfaction."

COMPLAINT 6th. — "Mr. Bliss hath asserted that the main reason any man cannot enter in at the strait gate, is because they are not elected."

Defence. — "The truth of what you object against, I think clear from the word of God in many places, particularly Romans xi. 5-8. The originating cause of the salvation of any of the children of men, I believe to be the electing goodness and grace of God; and of consequence the main cause why others are not saved as much as those that be, is because they were not elected; but with the same breath desire to have it well remembered, this is no excuse for us continuing in unbelief."

Result: — The charge "was fully proved. We judge Mr. Bliss's expressions very improper, tending to make an ill improvement of the important Scriptural doctrine of election."

COMPLAINT 8th. — "In mentioning that text, 'He that believeth not is condemned already,' he said, 'But I say he is damned already; every person that hath not a true saving faith is in a state of damnation; you believe, and so doth the devil; but your faith is a cursed, damned faith.'"

Defence: — "I hold that every man that believeth not is damned according to the sense and meaning of John iii. 18; that he is kept out of hell by mere unpromised, unconventional mercy and goodness; that all faith which produceth not good fruits working by love, &c., is accursed and soul-destroying, I have said, and purpose still to say it, though some may be offended."

Result: — "Voted that the expressions are very unsuitable and improper."

COMPLAINT 10th. — "Mr. Bliss said in a sermon that it was as great a sin for a man to get an estate by honest labor, if he had not a single aim at the glory of God, as to get it by gaming at cards or dice."

Defence. — "I am suspicious whether you have done me justice; because I can find no such expressions in my written sermon on 1 Cor. x. 31. The nearest thereto is this: 'If husbandmen plow and sow that they may be rich, and live in the pleasures of this world, and appear grand among men, they are as far from true religion in their plowing, sowing, &c., as men are, that game for the same purpose.' If I had the same expression which you mention, I suppose it to be true in this sense only; that they are both enemies to God; self-lovers, self-seekers, and idolaters. That the one doth not take more sinful ways in carrying on his designs against God, I never thought of affirming."

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1. Christian History, Emerson's History of the First Church, page 190, Trumbull's Connecticut, Chauncy's Seasonable Thoughts, and Edwards's and Whitfield's Works, may be consulted for a history of those times.



Result. — “Voted that the expression are unwarrantable and of dangerous tendency; and therefore ought to be carefully guarded against. But Mr. Bliss in his vindication, declared he was not apprehensive of his every having delivered himself as testified by the witnesses.”

COMPLAINT 12th. — “In preaching from that text, ‘He that came down from heaven is above all,’ he said a person might go on in sins, in drunkenness, in Sabbath-breaking even to rioting; but I must tell you for your comfort, if you belong to the election of grace, Christ will bring you home.”

Defence. — “I did not encourage sin, in preaching upon John iii. 31, in saying that persons might go on in sin, &c. By the word *might*, I had not the intention to give them liberty. But if they were so perverse, that they would for some time longer continue in sin and increase iniquity; yet if they belonged to the election of grace they should be brought home by faith and repentance; which affords comfortable thoughts, but such, I think, as must most certainly reprove and reproach such as yield themselves to sin with hopes of after repentance.”

Result. — “We judge these words are a very ill and unwarrantable use of the doctrine of election, and of very dangerous tendency.”

COMPLAINT 14th. — “We are uneasy with his wandering from town to town to the disturbance of towns and churches, and neglecting his own church at home.”

Defence. — “I have never preached in other churches without the consent of their pastors, nor in other towns without invitation, which I suppose a privilege granted in the gospel to the ministers of Christ, that I propose by the grace of God never to part with. If you will instance to me any criminal neglect of my own church, I shall endeavor to be suitably thankful to you, and, by the Lord’s help, amend for the future.”

Result. — “Voted that we, having reason to fear that Mr. Bliss hath been incautious in his compliance with invitations to preach in some other ministers’ parishes, exhort him for the future carefully to observe the testimony and advice of the late convention which he hath signed. But we do not find he hath neglected his own charge, but on the contrary his faithfulness and diligence were testified by many.”

Mr. Bliss had been almost incessantly occupied in attending religious meetings, and also, says the result, in attending “the multitude of souls that have flocked to him for his advice and direction.” His sermons, generally extemporaneous, had been produced without much previous study, and contained many hasty expressions and mistakes, which more mature reflection would have prevented. This was one of the main causes of difficulty on his part. The council also state, that “principles contrary to the doctrines of grace have been espoused by some persons in this place, which hath occasioned their stumbling at some truths which had been delivered to them.”² This, and the spirit of opposition and prejudice on the part of the people, caused them to “overlook,” in the language of the council, “the zeal, faithfulness, and love of souls, with which, we are persuaded, he hath ministered to his people.” While the council disapproved of the incautious and improper manner in which Mr. Bliss had treated some of the doctrines of the Bible, it bore testimony to his usefulness as “the instrument of God in carrying on his remarkable gracious work in this town.” Both parties were admonished, and advised to mutual confession and reconciliation. Mr. Bliss made a confession in presence of the council, satisfactory to them and the church, a large majority of which was always in his favor.³

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2. Christopher C. Baldwin, Esq., the Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, has furnished me with extracts from the Rev. David Hall’s MS. Journal. Under March 7, 1742, he says, “Was at Concord last week. Discoursed with some of Mr. Bliss’s opposers. I find they are rank Arminians. Was at several houses. Mr. Beaton made me a present of Shepard’s ‘Sound Believer’; and it is indeed a valuable present.” Mr. Hall was an admirer of Mr. Bliss and Mr. Whitfield. In several places in his journal he speaks of the affairs of Concord, and generally in favor of Mr. Bliss.

3. In the Boston Evening Post, of March 14, 1743, is published a letter from a “gentleman of unquestionable veracity in Hopkinton,” giving an account of a sermon preached there by Mr. Bliss, in which it is said, “He began in a low, moderate strain, and went on for some time in the same manner; but towards the close of his sermon, he began to raise his voice, and to use many extravagant gestures, and then began a considerable groaning amongst the auditors, which as soon as he perceived, he raised his voice still higher, and then the congregation were in the utmost confusion. Some crying out in the most doleful accents, some howling, some laughing, and others singing, and Mr. Bliss still roaring to them to come to Christ, — they answering, — ‘I will, I will, I’m coming, I’m coming.’”



The proceedings of this council, like many other similar attempts to settle difficulties, did not allay public excitement, nor heal the divisions in the town. New instances of withdrawal took place, notwithstanding the efforts of different committees, chosen by the church, to treat with the disaffected.

September 4, 1744, the town voted, not to hear “the result of the last venerable council that sat”; not to free those persons who had separated from Mr. Bliss from their proportion of the ministerial tax; and not to allow them the privilege of holding public worship in the town-house. But a petition of 47 inhabitants, “who have, by the advice of two councils, separated from the ministry of Mr. Bliss,” was presented to the General Court, October 17; and they were exempted, by an act passed January 19, 1745, from all ministerial charges since (June 1743), they had maintained or shall maintain public worship among themselves. They petitioned the town several times afterward for assistance to build a meeting-house, but were unsuccessful.

On the 12th of December, 1745, *twenty* male communicants subscribed to a covenant, and organized the West Church. Among them were some of the most wealthy, respectable, influential, and pious men in town. Others soon after united with them, and, in conjunction with some who were not communicants, they were accustomed to hold public worship regularly in a house which stood near the present [1835] residence of the Hon. Nathan Brooks.⁴

From this time there were two incorporated religious societies in Concord. Individuals living in the easterly part of the town had also several times petitioned to be set off into a separate precinct or parish; and they were successful in 1746. In that year, what is now Concord was incorporated as the first precinct or parish, and what is now Lincoln, as the second. In the latter precinct, many of the aggrieved brethren united with others, and formed the third church in the town.

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The first meeting of the first parish was held September 19, 1746, at which the parish officers were chosen. The two societies in this parish continued to hold separate meetings. Another council was called by the disaffected brethren, whose proceedings I have not been able to find. Additional charges were also laid before the church, February 20, 1746, and at eight subsequent meetings examined. Mr. Bliss's defence, June 6th, appears at length on the church records, but the charges are not found there. As far as appears from the defence, they related principally to his preaching in the parishes of other ministers, or encouraging lay preachers in his own, or to alleged personal indiscretions. Mr. Bliss had preached to the separatists in Boston, at Springfield, and at Worcester, where he had been “earnestly requested by a multitude of souls.” Mr. Cotton, of Newton, excluded him from his pulpit.

At length, the difficulties continuing to increase, a parish committee was chosen May, 1747, to consider what measures should be taken to promote peace and unanimity between the two societies. This committee recommended that five persons, not inhabitants, be chosen to give their advice. Three of these being selected, the parish could not agree on the others, and the project failed. After several unsuccessful attempts, however, to adjust the difficulties, it was voted at a meeting of the parish, March 1, 1748, “That a committee of seven ministers be chosen, and be desired to hear and examine into the difficulty the parish labors under; particularly to take into their consideration the result of the venerable council called by the church; and also the result of the last council called by those who lately separated and formed into a church state; and also to hear and examine into any matters of grievance which have arisen since the result of said councils; and to give their advice, in order to be laid before the churches in this parish for their consideration, for an accommodation and union of both churches, if it can be found practicable.”

This council was composed of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Sewall, moderator, and John Webb of Boston; Hull Abbott of Charlestown; William Hobby of Reading; and Nathan Stone of Southborough. Two others were invited but did not attend. They met the 16th of May at Mr. Ebenezer Hubbard's, and came to a result on the 20th. The charges brought against Mr. Bliss, before this council, related to his encouraging Elisha Payne and the Rev. Mr. Dutton in preaching and selling books in his parish; to his hasty suspension of several brethren of the church; to his preaching in other ministers' parishes without their consent, and contrary to

4. This was a public house. The sign had a black horse painted on it. Hence this church was called, by way of derision, the *black-horse church*.



advice of former councils and his own promise, &c., and were generally supported, as appears from the result. This was laid before the church and accepted; and the pastor made such acknowledgments as the council had pointed out, which were voted to be satisfactory. At the same time the vote by which the church suspended several members was reconsidered.

The West Congregation had voted, May 27th, "to adhere to the results of the venerable councils called by them, and the indulgence obtained from the Great and General Court."⁵ The proceedings of the above council were laid before it, August 15; but for reasons ably drawn up, the advice they contained was not complied with. They were advised to unite with the other church, and settle a colleague with Mr. Bliss. This they could not do; for, being a minority, they had no hopes of obtaining a person of their choice. "We came out from Mr. Bliss and his church," say they, "not on account of any sudden transport of passion, but with mature consideration, with true principles of Christianity, and with the best of advice." They also stated, that Mr. Bliss was not on terms of fellowship with many neighboring churches; and, should a reunion be effected, they were desirous of having this restored. The following documents relate to this subject. The first appears on the church records; and the second was among the papers laid before the General Court.

The following vote of the church was passed February 9, 1749.

"1. We have not any certain intelligence given, that any churches are not in charity with us, as is thought and supposed by our brethren that have withdrawn from us.

"2. The ground mentioned by them of this their surmise is, 'that this church hath passed many votes in vindication of Mr. Bliss, before and since the sitting of the church's council, which have been reversed by the said council, and the committee of reverend ministers lately with us.' This we look upon to be insufficient to give dissatisfaction to any church whatsoever, if it be remembered that this church accepted and complied with the advice given by both the councils and committees aforesaid.

"3. Whereas our brethren point us to the churches whereof the council was formed, that advised to their withdrawal from Mr. Bliss, which they conceive to be among the dissatisfied; let it be observed, that as this church had nothing to do in calling or laying any matters before the council, so we apprehend that for this church to make application to those churches to give them satisfaction, would be a contradiction to that which we have said before the late venerable committee was with us, and hath not been reversed by complying with the result, which hath this passage, viz., 'Yet we cannot think that this will justify your withdrawal, or that of any others from the church, and embodying in a new church state without asking a dismission from the church;' which passage, if our brethren would own to be just, we apprehend they would no more say any thing concerning our making satisfaction to the churches whereof that council consisted, which advised to their withdrawal from us. And indeed we apprehend it to be sufficient to give satisfaction to any church or churches, when we shall be properly informed by them of their uneasiness together with the reason thereof. Further we think it needless to reply; but on the whole would say, that, this church having accepted the result of the late venerable committee of reverend ministers, viz. Messrs. Joseph Sewall, moderator, John Webb, Hull Abbot, William Hobby, and Nathan Stone, which was chosen by the first parish in Concord, it must not be expected by any that this church will go into any measures contradictory to said

5. On the 18th of February, 1748, the Hon. James Minott and several others, a committee of the West Congregation in Concord, petitioned the General Court, praying that they may be enabled to settle an orthodox minister among themselves at the joint charge of the inhabitants of the first precinct in said town, and to erect a suitable house for public worship. A similar one had been presented to the town, May 15, 1745, but not granted. Orders of notice passed on this petition. Committees were appointed to take it into consideration at several successive meetings of the Legislature, before whom the remonstrances of the precinct, the first church, and Mr. Bliss, were made. The Legislative Journal says, April 12, 1749, "Whereas the petition of the West Society in Concord has been continued over to this time, that the parties therein concerned might agree their differences among themselves, but there being no prospect of such agreement," voted, that a committee be appointed "to take said petition, and answers thereto, and all other papers in the case, under their consideration, hear the parties now attending, and report what they judge proper for the Court to do thereon." Reported April 21, and again referred to the next session, and "the parties recommended to compromise their difficulties in the mean time." How it was finally disposed of, I have not learned.



result. DANIEL BLISS, *Pastor.*”

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“This may certify all whom it may concern, that we have seen and heard so much proved (as we apprehend) against Mr. Bliss of Concord, especially with respect to his notorious prevarications and wronging the truth; and the meanness and mistakes in his public performances, and what has passed thereupon in councils; that we cannot comfortably hold communion with him, nor those that abet him. The confessions drawn by him, or for him, are far from being satisfactory. The withdrawal of the West Church will therefore be justified by knowing, impartial judges. The proposals for union offered last year by the reverend ministers seem to them impracticable, until Mr. Bliss and church have sought to obtain the charity of neighbouring churches, which they have neglected or refused, under pretence they knew of none that are not in charity with them, as they have represented. Whereupon it don't appear to us practicable for the West Church in Concord to return to the First Church; nor can it serve any interest of religion till the outstanding difficulties above mentioned be removed, with their other apparent aversions to all our Christian proposals. Nor can we look upon ourselves bound by the laws of Christ, and the order of these churches, to hold further communion with them. Upon which we humbly offer on their behalf, that their distressed condition may find relief by this honorable Court, that their hands may be strengthened to build upon that foundation this Court hath laid for them. All which we humbly submit and pray.

John Hancock, Oliver Peabody, Thomas Parker,
John Barnard, John Gardner, William Cook.

“The First Church in Lancaster as having received no satisfaction.

Timothy Harrington, *Pastor*

Daniel Rogers, [of Littleton.]

“May 8, 1749.”

In the mean time several meetings of the parish were held, at which measures were taken to reconcile the two societies, and effect a union; but being unsuccessful, the following proceedings were had, February 13, 1750.

“The votes of both churches having been read; and it appearing that the First Church has agreed to accept of and comply with the advice of the later venerable committee of ministers, called by the parish to give their Christian advice; and are very unwilling to come into any measures contradictory to, or inconsistent with, the said advice; have made other proposals which have been considered and answered by the First Church in the parish as being not satisfactory to them; and inasmuch as a reconciliation and union seem at present difficult and almost impracticable; therefore voted, that nothing further be done at this time towards calling and settling a colleague with Mr. Bliss.”

Another council consisting of the Rev. Messrs. Israel Loring of Sudbury, John Gardner of Stow, and William Cook, invited by the West Church, met here, October 8, 1750, to consult on the propriety of their proceedings, and advised the members not to unite with the other church. From this time, however, the controversy principally ceased. Many, disaffected with the First Church, found an asylum in the church at Lincoln, after the incorporation of that town in 1754; others had become reconciled by mutual concessions. A few only remained separate till the death of Mr. Bliss.

The West Church existed about fourteen years, and supported public worship the most part of the time, though no minister was settled. The Rev. Messrs. John Whiting, John Gardner, Ebenezer Winchester, Benjamin Stevens, ___ Marsh, and probably others, were preachers; Samuel Miles and Jonathan Buttrick, deacons; and Josiah Hosmer and Ezekiel Miles, “choristers to set the tune for the congregation.”⁶ The Rev. Mr. Loring administered the sacrament, March 25, 1750, and at several other times.

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The secession from Mr. Bliss was not made, like most others in New England,⁷ because the pastor was not zealous enough in promoting the religious excitement of the times, but on account of his supposed or real errors in his preaching and pastoral conduct. Some thought he was too zealous and too enthusiastic; and, though wishing the spread of true religion, they thought Mr. Bliss took improper measures to promote a revival. It cannot be denied that the influence of the clergy was very great in promoting and confirming the unhappy divisions in this town, though acting conscientiously in opposition of Mr. Bliss. The troubles in Concord were the cause of great disturbance in the neighboring churches; some individuals espousing the cause of Mr. Bliss, and some that of his opponents. A division took place in the Rev. Mr. Loring's society; and several councils were called to settle them. Similar effects were produced elsewhere.

These facts give but an imperfect idea of the condition of the town in this important period of its history. Did the limits of this work permit, a more full account of the ecclesiastical documents, which have accidentally fallen into my hands (a part only of which are in the church records), would be given, but the details already made lead us to view this controversy too important to be passed over without a particular notice. Though mingled with much personal feeling and altercation, producing division among ministers, in societies and families, between husbands and wives, parents and children, which scarcely finds a parallel even in modern sectarianism, and the details of which might be well to bury in oblivion; yet it involved many important principles in theology and church discipline, and teaches the inefficiency of ecclesiastical councils to settle personal difficulties. To its results may be traced the introduction of those more liberal feelings and sentiments, which lead people to think and judge for themselves, and not to depend too exclusively on the opinions of the clergy.

In April, 1741, Timothy Minott, Deacons Dakin and Heywood, and Timothy Wheeler, were appointed a committee to assist the pastor in preparing a new covenant. One was reported, and publicly signed, May 11, 1749, by ninety-two male members of the church. The Rev. Thomas Prince, of Boston, preached on this solemn and interesting occasion.

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The genuine principles of religion obtained little influence during the progress of the controversies in town. Great apathy prevailed. In 1748 one person only united with the First Church; and for some years before and after that period a comparatively small number. After these troubles subsided, special attention to the subject again prevailed. In 1763 *thirty* individuals united with the church. Less enthusiasm and more lasting benefit, it is said, attended this revival than that of 1741 and 1742.

Mr. Whitfield visited Concord again, March 10, 1764. The next day being Sabbath, Mr. Bliss, at the special request of Mr. Whitfield, preached in the morning, and Mr. Whitfield in the afternoon. This was one of Mr. Bliss's most powerful efforts, and made such an impression on Mr. Whitfield as led him to remark, "If I had studied my whole life, I could not have produced such a sermon." But it was the last time Mr. Bliss ever appeared in the pulpit. He was soon after taken sick with a consumption, in which he languished till his death. A special fast, on his account, was held in Concord, May 4. The Rev. Daniel Emerson, of Hollis, prayed; and the Rev. William Lawrence preached, from Psalm ciii. 3, in the morning; and the Rev. Mr. Clark prayed, and the Rev. Jonathan Loring preached, from Psalm lxxv. 2, in the afternoon. All difficulties between Mr. Bliss and the neighboring ministers were happily settled at this meeting. He died about 12 o'clock at noon, just a week after. He was buried on the 16th. His bearers were the Rev. Messrs. Martin, Stone, Swift, Bridge, Lawrence, Emerson, Clark, and Loring.

During the ministry of Mr. Bliss, 290 persons were admitted to the church in full communion, 328 owned the covenant, and 1424 were baptized.

The Rev. DANIEL BLISS was son of Mr. Thomas Bliss, and born at Springfield, in January, 1715 [actually, on June 21, 1715]. His grandfather, Samuel, one of ten children, five sons and

6. The prudential affairs of the society were managed by a clerk, treasurer, or committee of three, and two collectors. Captain Stephen Hosmer was clerk (whose papers have furnished me with many facts), and Nathaniel Colburn and Charles Prescott, Esq., at different times, treasurers. The Hon. James Minott was a leading member. Three hundred pounds currency were raised to support preaching, in the same proportion as other taxes, in 1747; £500 in 1748; and £800 in 1749. The collectors were vested with the same authority as in towns.

7. See Trumbull's History of Connecticut, Vol. II.



five daughters, who removed with his mother, Mrs. Margaret Bliss, to that town in 1646 (her husband's name not being known), married Mary, daughter of John Leonard, in 1664, and died in 1720. Thomas was born in 1667, and died in 1733. The Rev. Daniel was graduated at Yale College in 1732. While at college he imbibed those principles of thought and action for which he was distinguished in after life. Some time after he left college he received an invitation to settle at Guilford in Connecticut, but was not ordained. The following long epitaph appears on his monument in the Hill Burying-Ground.

“Here lies Interred the Remains of the Rev. Mr. Daniel Bliss, Pastor of the Church of Christ in Concord, who Deceased the 11th Day of May, Anno Dom: 1764 Ætatis suæ 50.

“Of this beloved Disciple and Minister of Jesus Christ 't is justly observable, that in addition to his natural and acquired abilities, he was distinguishedly favoured with those eminent Graces of the Holy Spirit (Meakness, Humility, and Zeal), which rendered him peculiarly fit for and enabled him to go through the great and arduous work of the Gospel Ministry, upon which he entered in the 25th year of his age. The Duties of the various characters he sustained in Life, were performed with great strictness and fidelity. As a private Christian he was a bright example of Holiness in Life and Purity in Conversation. But in the execution of y^e ministerial office he shone with Peculiar Lustre, — a spirit of Devotion animated all his performances;— his Doctrine dropped as y^e Rain and his lips distilled like the Dew:— his Preaching was powerful and searching;— and he who blessed him with an uncommon Talent in a particular Application to y^e Consciences of men, crowned his skilful Endeavours wth great success. As y^e work of the Ministry was his great Delight, so he continued fervent and diligent in y^e Performance of it, till his Divine Lord called him from his Service on Earth to the Glorious Recompense of Reward in Heaven; where as one who has turned many unto Righteousness he shines as a star for ever and ever.

“His soul was of y^e Angelic Frame,
The Same Ingredients, and the mould y^e same,
Whom y^e Creator makes a Minister of Fame.’
Watts.”

Mr. Bliss married Phebe Walker, of Strafford, Connecticut, in 1738. She died July 2, 1797 aged 84, having had 9 children. 1. Daniel, who will be noticed among the college graduates; 2. Phebe, who married the two ministers who were successors of her father; 3. John, who died young; 4. Thomas Theodore, who lived at Brimfield, held a commission in the army of the American revolution, and was a brave, but unfortunate officer. He was taken prisoner at the first campaign in Canada, at the Three Rivers, with all his company, and retained as a hostage during the war. He died at Cambridge in 1802; 5. Hannah, who was drowned at Springfield; 6. John; 7. Samuel, who was an officer in the British army, during the Revolution in New York and New Jersey. He had an island in the Bay of Fundy granted to him; 8. Martha, who married Isaac Hoar; 9. Joseph, who died at Plymouth, New Hampshire. It is somewhat remarkable that the two of Mr. Bliss's sons should have been ardent Tories and two, ardent Whigs.⁸

May 23d, 1764, Deacon Samuel Minott was chosen standing moderator, the Rev. Daniel Emerson, of Hollis, New Hampshire, “moderator extraordinary,” and Messrs. Simon Hunt, John Cuming, Jonathan Puffer, Ephraim Brown, and James Barrett, a committee “to assist the moderator in hearing and preparing any matters to be laid before the Church.” Early in June a day of fasting and prayer was kept in the church; and the Rev. Messrs. Hall of Sutton, Hutchinson of Grafton, Searls of Stoneham, and Bridge of Framingham, assisted in the public

8. Mr. Loring preached on the next sabbath two funeral sermons; in the morning, from Zach. i. 5, and. in the afternoon. from Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

Ebenezer Hartshorn made Mr. Daniel Bliss's coffin “Five hundred broad-headed coffin-nails and five hundred small white tacks were put on the cover.” “White ones used to be used, but lately they use them that are jappaned black.” Gloves and rings were given at the funeral. The late Thomas Clark, Esq., of Boston, had in his possession a ring, given to his grandfather the Rev. Jonas Clark, as one of the pall-holders. His funeral expenses, paid by the town, were £66, 13s. 4d.

Mr. Bliss published the following work: “The Gospel hidden to them that are lost. Being the substance of two sermons preached. Published at the repeated request, and free cost, of some who heard them. 1755.”



religious exercises on the occasion. On the 11th of October, 1765, the church voted, though not unanimously, to receive into its communion members of the late West Church, who chose to offer themselves. Some had already united; and some others were disposed to do so. That all difficulties might be settled before the ordination of another minister, a council was called, consisting of the Second church in Cambridge, and the churches in Grafton, Wilmington, Framingham, and Marlborough; and met here, November 26, 1765. Their proceedings are not recorded.

On the 18th of February, 1765, the church chose William Emerson to be their pastor; and in this vote the town concurred, in March, 128 to 62. The only other candidate mentioned was Mr. Samuel Williams. It was agreed to give him £200 as a settlement, and £100 as an annual salary. He was ordained January 1, 1766. The council, on the occasion, was composed of ministers and delegates from the First and Second churches in Sudbury, the Second in Cambridge, the Second in Wells, the Second in Reading, and the churches in Malden, Stow, Littleton, Acton, Chelmsford, Topsfield, Lexington, Hollis, Pepperell, Lincoln, Bedford, and Billerica. The Rev. John Gardner, of Stow, was moderator. The Rev. Daniel Rogers of Littleton made the introductory prayer; the Rev. Joseph Emerson, of Malden, preached from 1 Chron. xxix. 1; the Rev. John Gardner gave the charge; the Rev. William Cook, of East Sudbury, made the last prayer; and the Rev. John Smith, of Acton, gave the right hand of fellowship.

When Mr. Emerson began his ministry, some of those feelings, which had been fostered in the previous controversies, were still existing. But though he came into office under these disadvantageous circumstances, his piety, talents, and popular manner, as a preacher, secured the affection and support of a great majority of the church and town. The subsequent difficulties in his church arose principally from the rejection of an individual [Mr. Joseph Lee] who offered himself as a candidate for admission. When the church was called upon to act on his admission, it was well known that objections existed in the minds of some of the communicants against him; and Deacon Simon Hunt arose, after the question was put, and before the vote was declared, and requested it to be made certain. Considering this an unjustifiable act, the candidate immediately withdrew. This happened in 1767, and *nine* of the members of the church, uniting with some who were not professors of religion, and considering its proceedings improper and arbitrary, and Mr. Emerson as partial for approving them, espoused the cause of the rejected individual, and composed the principal opposition, and were known as the *aggrieved brethren*. In the progress of the controversy, many frivolous complaints were brought forward, and much personal feeling was excited; but few important principles in doctrine or discipline were discussed or settled. The records concerning these transactions are very imperfect.

A mutual council sat here, April 11, 1769, whose result was favorable to the church, but was not accepted by the aggrieved brethren. After repeated "hearings," the candidate was still excluded; and notwithstanding frequent efforts of the church to promote peace and harmony, the difficulties remained unsettled. Under these circumstances, an *ex parte* council met at Mr. Ebenezer Hubbard's, August 28, 1770, consisting of the Rev. Messrs. Gad Hitchcock of Pembroke, moderator, Jacob Cushing of Waltham, Samuel Woodward of Weston, Jonas Clark of Lexington, Jonas Merriam of Newton, Elias Smith of Middleton, Phineas Whitney of Shirley, Zabdiel Adams of Lunenburg, and delegates from their respective churches. On the second day of their session they addressed a letter to the church, requesting the members to adjust the difficulties among themselves, or join in calling a mutual council. To effect the first object, five members of each party were chosen to agree, but they were unsuccessful. The church not complying with the other request, the council met again, October 23, with five additional churches, those of the Rev. Messrs. John Mellen of Lancaster, Daniel Shute of Hingham, Joseph Jackson of Brookline, Phillips Payson of Chelsea, and Jason Haven of Dedham. It again adjourned, and met November 13. Eleven articles of grievance against the church, five against the pastor, and eight against particular members, were examined. The result was unfavorable to the church, and in favor of the aggrieved, as might have been anticipated. This being published in the Boston Gazette, and industriously circulated, tended by no means to allay public excitement. At length, after several more unsuccessful attempts towards an accommodation, another mutual council was called, June, 1772, consisting of the First and Second churches in Rowley, the First in Hingham, the First in Newbury, the First in Stoughton, the First in Portsmouth, the Second in Shrewsbury, and the churches in Weymouth,



Byfield, Groton, Milton, Upton, Haverhill, Newbury, and Newton. The pastor, Deacon Hunt, John Flint, James Barrett, Jr., Deacon Brown, and Amos Wood were chosen a committee to lay matters before the council. A public examination was had in the meeting-house. The result was generally acceptable. After this period little was said on the subject; and, the more immediate author of these difficulties having become unpopular with the friends of liberty, all was settled, on July 1, 1774, when the following vote was passed by the church:

“That inasmuch as our aggrieved brethren, Benjamin Wheeler and others, have for some considerable time withdrawn from our communion, on account chiefly of the non-admission of Mr. Joseph Lee into full communion, a draft of a confession was made, and several times read in church meeting, which, if the said Joseph Lee consented to by signing his name to the said confession, the church voted that it should be satisfactory to them, so as that they could receive him into their communion and fellowship. The aggrieved brethren, being informed that the church had passed the above mentioned vote, signified in church meeting that the difficulty in their minds was hereby removed, as to the church's former refusal of Mr. Joseph Lee's admission into full communion, so as that they could return to their duty, if there was no objection in the minds of the brethren on any other account. Upon which it was agreed on all sides, that, as it had been a day of temptation, there should be a mutual confession of our faults one to another, and that the brethren aggrieved should return to the communion and fellowship of the church, without any further being said or done.”

The 11th of July, 1776, was set apart as a day of fasting and prayer, when the covenant was renewed and signed by 62 male communicants. On this occasion, the Rev. Mr. Bridge preached in the forenoon, and the Rev. Mr. Penniman of Bedford in the afternoon. This covenant, somewhat resembling the one entered into in 1749, proposed to take the Assembly's Catechism as “an excellent compendium” of the Bible. During Mr. Emerson's ministry 66 persons were admitted to full communion, 135 owned the covenant and 506 were baptized.

The Rev. WILLIAM EMERSON, son of the Rev. Joseph Emerson, of Malden, was born May 21, 1743, and graduated at Harvard College in 1761. His father was the son of Edward Emerson of Chelmsford, and grandson of the Rev. Joseph Emerson of Mendon, who married a daughter of the Rev. Edward Bulkeley, and died in Concord, January 3, 1680. His mother was a daughter of the Rev. Samuel Moody of York. The Rev. Joseph Emerson of Pepperell, and John Emerson of Conway, were his brothers. The Rev. William Emerson was pastor of the church in Concord about ten years. His ardent love for his country, as a “high son of liberty,” prevailed on him to contribute, by his intellectual and personal services at home and abroad, in the great conflict of the American Revolution. On the 16th of August, 1776, he left his people with their consent, his church, his friends and all the endearments of domestic life, to join the army at Ticonderoga as chaplain. He continued in office till advised by his physicians to resign on account of ill health, and was discharged by General Gates, September 18. He commenced his return home, but, his disease increasing, he could not proceed. He stopped at the Rev. Benajah Root's, of Rutland, on Otter Creek, where he remained suffering under a severe bilious fever, till his death, which took place at 5 o'clock on Sunday morning, October 20, at the age of 33. He was interred there with the honors of war by a detachment from Colonel Vandyke's regiment, commanded by Major Shepard. His last sickness was borne with great composure, resignation, and Christian fortitude. He often spoke of the endearing kindness of his people toward him, and the pleasure he should enjoy, if it were the will of God, to give him opportunity to show his gratitude by exerting himself more vigorously for their good. When the hour of dissolution seemed to be near, he appeared like one waiting “to depart and be with Christ.” The regret, apparent in all existing records, that he should be prematurely cut off in his promising career of usefulness, evinces the esteem of the society of which he was pastor. Mr. Emerson's personal appearance was pleasing and prepossessing; his manners familiar and gentlemanly; his conversation communicative and facetious, though not inconsistent with his ministerial character; in his preaching he was popular, eloquent, persuasive, and devotional, adapting himself, with remarkable ease, to all circumstance and occasions; and his doctrine was evangelical. “Fervency of spirit,” ardent zeal, love of his profession and his people, characterized all his performances. A monument was erected by the town to his memory in



1826, on which his character is delineated as “enthusiastic, eloquent, affectionate, and pious; he loved his family, his people, his God, and his country. And to this last he yielded the cheerful sacrifice of his life.”

Mr. Emerson married Phebe, daughter of the Rev. Daniel Bliss, August 21, 1766, by whom he had William (noticed among the college graduates), Hannah Bliss, Phebe, Mary Moody, and Rebecca. His widow married the Rev. Ezra Ripley, November 16, 1780, and died, February 16, 1825, aged 83, having had by him two sons and a daughter.⁹

Deacon Simon Hunt was moderator of the church, from the death of Mr. Emerson to the ordination of his successor. Committees of the church and town were chosen to supply the pulpit, as had been the case at similar times before; and a day of fasting and prayer was kept, September 14, 1777, in commemoration of the death of their late pastor, and preparatory to the choice of another. On the 11th of May, 1778, Mr. Ezra Ripley was unanimously chosen pastor on the part of the church, in which the town concurred on the 1st of June following, 94 to 1. He was ordained, November 11, 1778. In the religious services on the occasion, the Rev. Josiah Bridge of E. Sudbury made the first prayer; the Rev. Jason Haven of Dedham preached from 2 Timothy ii. 2; the Rev. Josiah Dana of Barre “prayed after sermon”; the Rev. Ebenezer Bridge of Chelmsford “prayed before and gave the charge”; and the Rev. Jonas Clark of Lexington gave the right hand of fellowship. The council was composed of these gentlemen, and delegates from their respective churches; and also the churches of the Rev. Eli Forbes of Gloucester, the Rev. Peter Thatcher of Malden, the Rev. Jonathan Newell of Stow, and the Rev. Moses Adams of Acton.

The town agreed to give Mr. Ripley £550 currency as a settlement, and £100 as an annual salary, founded on the prices of articles of produce, — rye at 4s. per bushel, corn at 3s.; beef at 2½d. per pound, and pork at 4d.; the salary to rise and fall according to the variation of the prices of these articles. He was also to enjoy all the ministerial perquisites, and to be provided with 30 cords of firewood. A salary thus established was found to be attended with much uncertainty; and some years to fall short of £100. This was the occasion of much embarrassment. The town ascertained that the real value of the £550, when paid, was but £40, and the first year's salary £41; and in 1785, £200 were specially granted to make up the deficiency. In 1793, £100 were also granted. In 1812 the contract was very properly altered; and instead of this uncertain income it was agreed to give him \$750 as his permanent salary, which, with his firewood, estimated at \$100, and the perquisites \$15, gave him the annual salary of \$865. At the ordination of his colleague, in 1830, he relinquished \$250 of his salary and 10 cords of wood.

From time immemorial it has been the custom of the church to administer the ordinance of baptism to such adults and their children, as “owned the covenant,” without joining the church in full communion. This covenant was the same as that which admitted to full communion, with the exception of the clause which referred to the communion, and was used for both cases till 1795, when the following was adopted to be subscribed by the individuals who “own it.” Three hundred and two have signed it since 1795.

“I do now seriously profess my belief in one God, who is ever all and blessed for every more.

“I believe the Holy Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, and are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus; and I will endeavor to observe them as the rule of my life in faith and practice.

“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and that God so loved the world as to give his only Son to die, the just for the unjust, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

“I believe that repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ are the gospel conditions of salvation, and therefore, penitently confessing all my sins to God, I look for salvation through Christ alone.

“I believe that baptism is a Christian ordinance, a sign of visible discipleship to Christ, and an act of dedication to God, and that the proper subjects of it are

9. The Rev. Ralph Waldo Emerson of Boston kindly loaned me a concise private journal kept by his grandfather, from January, 1775 to August, 1776; and several letters to his wife written at Cambridge and at the Northward; which, beside detailing some important historical facts, are remarkable for their easy, sprightly style. The Rev. Mr. Roots addressed a letter to the church, giving an account of his last sickness. A notice of his character appeared in the Boston Gazette, November 4, 1776.



believers in the Christian religion, and their offspring and charge. And I now promise that I will endeavor, by the grace of God assisting, to educate my children and charge according to the Christian religion.

“In testimony of this my belief and promise I hereunto subscribe my name.”

The covenant for admission into full communion, used by Rev. Emerson, was taken with him into the army and lost, no copy being in the records.

In 1779 a new one was prepared, and used until 1795, when the following, now [1835] in use, was substituted.

“Professing a firm belief of revealed religion, and that the Holy Scriptures, which contain it, are given by inspiration of God, and resolving to take them for your rule of faith and practice, you do now, as far as you know your own heart, sincerely avouch and choose the one only living and true God to be your God and portion; the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Mediator and Saviour; the Holy Ghost to be your sanctifier and guide; giving up yourself unto God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be his and his only for ever.¹⁰

“Sensible that in many things you have offended, and that your sufficiency is of God, you do now, with penitence for your sins, humbly implore the divine aid to enable you henceforth to walk before God in love, and in all holy conversation and godliness.

“Convinced of the importance of early instruction in virtue and piety, you now promise, that you will conscientiously endeavor to educate all such as are, or may be, committed to your care, agreeably to the prescriptions of God’s holy word.

“You do also covenant with this church of Christ and promise, that you will walk with us as a member of our body; that you will attend on the administration of the word and ordinances among us, and submit to the Christian watch, discipline, and regulations of this church, so long as God shall continue your life and abode with us.

“All this you profess and promise in the presence of the all-seeing God, and by the help of his spirit and grace will live agreeably to the same.

“I do, therefore, as a minister of Jesus Christ, and as pastor of this church, acknowledge you a member, and receive you into fellowship; and we declare, that we do and will look upon you as a member of the same body with ourselves, and will treat you with that affection and watchfulness which your relation to us now calls for; watching over you not for your halting, but for your edification; praying God, now and ever, to build up you, and us, and all his saints, a spiritual building, an holy house, a living temple unto himself the Lord our God. Amen.”

At the adoption of this covenant, some alterations in the customs of the church were made. The practice of giving relations of religious exercises of mind before admission to the communion, of “making public confession of particular crimes committed previously to any voluntary engagement and profession of religion,” and of calling for a vote on the admission of members, was discontinued. Members are now admitted before the church on examination of the pastor only, after having been publicly propounded, and no objection appearing. Since 1828, they have remained in their pews when the covenant is read to them.

During the ministry of Rev. Dr. Ripley, to the ordination of his colleague, 383 persons were admitted to the church in full communion, 449 owned the covenant, 1541 were baptized, 101 were regularly dismissed and one was excommunicated. At the death of Mr. Emerson the number of communicants was estimated at 150. January 1, 1815, the church contained 156, — 54 males and 102 females. The number now [1835] is about 138.

The funds of the church amount to \$350. John Cushing, Esq. gave \$111 for the benefit of the poor communicants. The “Minott Fund,” of \$132, was begun in 1778, by Mrs. Bulah Minott and other members of the church, for the purchase of the elements and other purposes, at the discretion of the minister and deacons. Miss Abigail Dudley, in 1813, bequeathed a legacy to the church, which was set apart for a singing fund. One of the communion vessels was given by Margaret Bridges, of Ireland, April 6, 1676; another by Thomas Brown, Sen. (the Town

10. The expression, “the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” was stricken out in 1826.



Clerk several years from 1689); another by the wife of Duncan Ingraham, Esq.; four were purchased by the treasurer of the church in 1714; eight with a donation from John Cuming, Esq. of \$222.22 for that purpose; and the baptismal basin from a part of the Minott fund.

The version of Psalms and Hymns, by Sternold and Hopkins, was used in the church prior to 1766, each line of which was read separately by the deacons when sung. On the 18th of February of that year, it was voted "to sing Tate and Brady's version three months on trial." In June following, Watts's version was introduced, and used till June 1, 1828, when the Cambridge collection was substituted. Singers were first seated about 1774, when the custom of giving out the line by the deacons was discontinued; and the church then voted, that Deacon Wheeler should lead in singing one half of the time and the singers in the congregation the other half. In 1779 it took into consideration "the melancholy decay of singing in public worship, and chose 20 persons, who should sit together in the seats below and take the lead in singing." The women to sit separate from the men. They removed into the gallery soon after the repair of the house in 1792. Under various leaders the church music has improved conformably by to the spirit of the times.

The Rev. EZRA RIPLEY, D.D., was born in Woodstock, Connecticut, May 1, 1751. He was graduated at Harvard College in 1776, and has received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the same institution. He was invited early in the spring to Concord, and was ordained November 7, 1778. During a long and useful ministry few things have occurred to interrupt the uncommon harmony which prevailed in the church and town at his ordination. In one instance only has the advice of neighboring ministers been called to settle difficulties, and this did not relate to the pastor. In was in 1784, and terminated happily. It is a remarkable fact, that, for 40 years of his ministry, not a single individual paid a ministerial tax to any other society, and that for 190 years, til 1825, excepting in Mr. Bliss's day as already noticed, the whole town were united in one society. The 11th of November, 1828, was the 50th anniversary of his ordination, and on that occasion he delivered his half-century sermon, which was published. In this he informs us he had written more than 2500 sermons. By perseverance in a constant and systematic exercise of his corporeal and mental powers, his great natural energy of character has been preserved, and his life and usefulness lengthened, and he is now (June, 1833) able to perform with remarkable ease the duties of the ministerial office.

In August, 1829, the Rev. Dr. Ripley made a formal request to his people for assistance in his ministerial labors. A committee was chosen, a town meeting was called, and other preliminary measures were taken to effect this object. Mr. Goodwin, after having preached several Sabbaths, was invited by the town, January 3, 1830, (the church having voted not to act on the subject in a separate capacity,) to settle as his colleague, with an annual salary of \$700 during the life of Dr. Ripley, and \$900 afterwards, and 25 cords of wood. He accepted the invitation, and was ordained February 17, 1830. The introductory prayer, on the occasion, was made by the Rev. Convers Francis of Watertown; reading of the Scriptures by the Rev. Jonathan Cole of Kingston; sermon by the Rev. James Kendall, D.D., of Plymouth, (which was printed); consecrating prayer by the Rev. Samuel Ripley of Waltham; charge by the Rev. Joseph Field of Weston; fellowship of the churches by the Rev. Ralph Waldo Emerson of Boston; address to the people by the Rev. John White of Dedham; and concluding prayer by the Rev. Nathaniel Whitman of Billerica. These and the Rev. Messrs. George Ripley of Boston, John B. Wight of East Sudbury, William H. White of Littleton, Thomas B. Gannett of Cambridge Port, Caleb Stetson of Medford, Frederick H. Hedge of West Cambridge, Daniel Austin of Brighton, Wilkes Allen of Chelmsford, and delegates from their respective churches, composed the council, of which the Rev. Dr. Kendall was moderator, and Thomas B. Gannett scribe. The church in Harvard College, the Twelfth church in Boston, the Second in Waltham, the First in Cambridge, and the churches in Stow and Sudbury, were also represented in the council by a delegate, the pastors being engaged at the same time in an ordination in Natick.

The Rev. HERSEY BRADFORD GOODWIN was born at Plymouth, August 18, 1805, graduated at Harvard College in 1826, and at the Theological School in Cambridge in 1829. The first child he baptized bears his name. He married Lucretia, daughter of Benjamin M. Watson, Esq. of Plymouth, June 1, 1830. She died greatly lamented, November 11, 1831, aged 23, leaving one son.



Succession of the Deacons.¹¹

Names.	Time of Birth.	Election.	Deceased.	Age.
1. Richard Griffin.	—————	About 1636.	April 5, 1661.	——
2. Robert Merriam.	—————	—————	Feb. 15, 1681.	72
3. Luke Potter.	—————	—————	Oct. 13, 1697.	——
4. James Blood.	—————	—————	Nov. 26, 1692.	——
5. Humphrey Barrett.	—————	—————	Jan. 3, 1716.	——
6. John Heywood.	April 8, 1662.	—————	Jan. 2, 1719.	57
7. John Wheeler.	—————	About 1717.	Dec. 1, 1736.	——
8. Edward Wheeler.	July 17, 1669.	—————	Feb. 17, 1734.	65
9. Joseph Dakin.	—————	About 1717.	Mar. 13, 1744.	75
10. Samuel Heywood.	—————	About 1719.	Oct. 28, 1750.	63
11. Samuel Merriam.	July 25, 1681.	About 1736.	June 1, 1764.	83
12. Samuel Miles.	March 14, 1681.	About 1734.	Oct. 11, 1758.	77
13. Samuel Minott.	March 25, 1706.	May 30, 1744.	Mar. 17, 1766.	60
14. Ephraim Brown.	Nov. 7, 1710.	May 30, 1744.	Oct. 9, 1788.	78
15. Amos Heald.	May 23, 1708.	Oct. 24, 1751.	Jan. 4, 1775.	67
16. Thomas Barrett	Oct. 2, 1707.	Feb. 18, 1766.	June 20, 1779.	72
17. David Wheeler	Dec. 27, 1707.	June 16, 1766.	Mar. 24, 1784.	77
18. Simon Hunt	Sept. 3, 1704.	June 16, 1766.	Dec. 13, 1790.	87
19. George Minott	Oct. 22, 1741.	Aug. 3, 1779.	April 13, 1808.	65
20. John White	Aug. 23, 1749.	Dec. 6, 1784.	Jan. 9, 1830.	80
21. William Parkman	—————	Dec. 20, 1788.	Feb. 5, 1832.	91
22. Joseph Chandler	May 5, 1748.	June 30, 1791.	Jan. 19, 1813.	64
23. Thomas Hubbard	—————	April 30, 1812.	—————	——
24. Francis Jarvis	—————	April 30, 1812.	—————	——
25. Reuben Brown, Jr.	—————	May 3, 1827.	—————	——
26. Cyrus Hosmer.	—————	May 3, 1827.	—————	——



The TRINITARIAN CHURCH, then consisting of 16 members, — 5 male and 11 female, was organized, June 5, 1826, by a council, consisting of the Rev. Dr. Beecher, moderator; Messrs. Samuel Green and Asa Rand of Boston, Paul Litchfield of Carlisle, Samuel Stearns of Bedford, Warren Fay of Charlestown, Sewall Harding of Waltham, George Fisher of Harvard, and delegates from their respective churches. Mr. Green made the first prayer, and gave the fellowship of the churches; Dr. Beecher preached; Mr. Fay read the confession of faith and covenant (which has since been published with collateral references to Scripture for proof); and Mr. Fisher made the concluding prayer. A corner-stone of a meeting-house had been laid on the 22d of May previous, which was completed and dedicated on the 6th of December following. On this occasion, the Rev. Samuel Green preached a sermon, which was printed. During this time the pulpit was principally supplied by the Rev. Mr. Rand. Mr. [Southmayd](#) preached his first sermon here, January 21, 1827, and on the 19th of February received the unanimous invitation of the church to become their pastor, with an annual salary of \$600, to which he gave an affirmative answer on the 30th of March. He was ordained April 25th. The Rev. Edward Beecher of Boston made the first prayer; James Murdock, D.D., of Andover, preached; the Rev. Samuel Stearns made the consecrating prayer; the Rev. Lyman Beecher gave the charge; the Rev. John Todd of Groton presented the right hand of fellowship; the Rev. Benjamin B. Wisner of Boston addressed the church and people; and the Rev. George Fisher made the concluding prayer. These gentlemen and the Rev. Messrs. Paul Litchfield, Sewall Harding, and Asa Rand were members of the council, of which the Rev. Dr. Murdock was moderator.

The Rev. [DANIEL S. SOUTHMAYD](#) was born at Castleton, Vermont, February 11, 1802, graduated at Middlebury College in 1822, and at the Theological Seminary at Andover in 1826. After sustaining the pastoral office a little over five years, he asked for a dismissal, June 8, 1832, which was granted by the church, and confirmed by a council on the 15th, consisting of the Rev. Samuel Stearns of Bedford, moderator, the Rev. Elijah Demond of Lincoln, scribe, the Rev. Sewall Harding of Waltham, the Rev. Leonard Luce of Westford, and delegates from their respective churches. From the time the church was organized to Mr. [Southmayd](#)'s ordination, 6 members were added to the church, and during his ministry 77, (53 by original profession, and 30 by letter from other churches,) and 30 were males and 53 females; 4 have been dismissed, 2 excommunicated, and 5 have died; present [1835] number of members 88, of whom 30 are males. Several, however, have removed from town. Mr. Southmayd administered 46 baptisms, and married 26 couples. He now [1835] lives at Lowell.

John Vose, chosen Deacon June 1, 1827; excused from active duty, March, 1832, and died in 1833.

Moses Davis, chosen June 1, 1827; removed to Lowell, September, 1831.

Francis Hunt and Samuel A. Thurston, chosen March 30, 1832.

Deacon John White bequeathed to this church \$700, and Miss Sarah Thoreau \$50, which has been vested as a fund for its use.

TO CONTINUE READING:

CHAPTER XII. — NATURAL HISTORY. — Climate. — Geology. — Botany. — Ponds. — Rivers. — Brooks. — Fish. — Quadrupeds. — Birds.

11. [Samuel Miles] seceded from the church under Mr. Bliss, and was deacon of the West Church.

[Amos Heald] was dismissed from the church in Lincoln, September 27, 1772, and removed to Townsend, where he died. He is said to have been a deacon in three churches, — Concord, Lincoln, and Townsend.

[John White] was dismissed at his request, January 7, 1827. and united with the Trinitarian Church.

[William Parkman] was excused from active services on account of age and infirmities, January 1, 1826.

[Joseph Chandler] resigned on account of ill health, December 4, 1811.



DR. LEMUEL SHATTUCK'S

1835 HISTORY OF CONCORD

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