

**AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE DELIVERED
AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE SECOND
CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN PROVIDENCE,
NOVEMBER 7, 1839**

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An historical discourse delivered at the celebration of the second centennial anniversary of the First Baptist church in Providence, November 7, 1839 by William Hague

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WILLIAM HAGUE

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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

Chas. W. Hayden

AN

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE
SECOND CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, IN PROVIDENCE,

NOVEMBER 7, 1839.

By WILLIAM HAGUE,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

BOSTON:
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1839.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year eighteen hundred and thirty-nine, by B. CRANSTON AND COMPANY, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Rhode-Island.

At a meeting of the Committee appointed by the First Baptist Church and the Charitable Baptist Society, of the City of Providence, to make arrangements for celebrating the completion of the second century since the establishment of said Church and Society, held November 11, 1839,

It was voted unanimously, That the thanks of this Committee be returned to the Rev. William Hague, for his historical discourse delivered at the celebration on Thursday last, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for the press.

Voted, That the Chairman and Secretary be requested to communicate the above vote to Rev. Mr. William Hague.

A true copy :

F. WAYLAND, *Sec'ry.*

PROVIDENCE, Nov. 12, 1839.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR :

The undersigned, by the direction of the Committee, have the honor to communicate to you the above votes ; and they are happy to assure you, that they are

With great respect,

Dear sir,

Your ob't serv'ts,

NICHOLAS BROWN,

F. WAYLAND.

DISCOURSE.

It is mentioned by the father of history, at the commencement of his immortal work, that he was prompted to write by a desire to preserve past events from oblivion, and to perpetuate the just renown which belonged to men of departed generations.* Not unmindful of these motives, still higher ones animate us in meeting here to-day to commemorate the scenes and actors of a former century. We too would wish like the Grecian sage to rescue the past from being forgotten, to give honor to whom honor is due, but most of all, to contemplate afresh those great principles which our fathers cherished with a love stronger than death, to bring our tribute of praise to the altar of God who enabled them to establish on these shores the religion and the freedom for which they suffered, and hath given

* Herodotus, Clio. §1.

us reason to exclaim at this day, "the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, we have a goodly heritage."

Two hundred years have now passed, since was founded in the colony which had become known as the asylum of oppressed consciences, this Church, the first of the Baptist name which was planted on the continent of America. Although that event occurred in a small community, in the midst of a savage wilderness, yet it was not shrouded in complete obscurity.* Its founder was among the lights of his age, the friend of Cromwell and of Milton,† and like his companions, an exile on account of his faith. It was the grief and wonder of the Puritans among whom he first ministered, that a man so learned and so eloquent, so disinterested and so pious, could not submit himself to the laws of their church establishment, but claimed for man as man of every nation and of every creed, the same liberty of conscience which he demanded for himself. Not understanding as he did the nature of the christian dispensation, nor the full meaning of the truth that the weapons of christianity are not carnal but spiritual, not carrying out in all its length the maxim of Chillingworth,

* Winthrop's Journal, p. 174.

† Knowles's Memoir, p. 25, 264.