

**A SERMON, IN TWO PARTS,  
DELIVERED ON THE SABBATH,  
JUNE  
28, 1856: THE CLOSE OF THE  
FIFTIETH YEAR OF HIS MINISTRY**

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A Sermon, in Two Parts, Delivered on the Sabbath, June 28, 1856: The Close of the Fiftieth Year of his ministry by Joseph Richardson

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**JOSEPH RICHARDSON**

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# SERMON,

IN TWO PARTS,

DELIVERED ON THE SABBATH,

JUNE 28, 1856.

THE CLOSE OF THE

FIFTIETH YEAR OF HIS MINISTRY,

AS

Pastor of the First Church and Parish

IN HINGHAM,

BY JOSEPH RICHARDSON.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.  
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of Cambridge.

## SERMON IN THE MORNING.

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PHILIPPIANS 1-9, 10, 11.

"AND THIS I PRAY, THAT YOUR LOVE MAY ABOUND YET MORE AND MORE IN KNOWLEDGE, AND IN ALL JUDGMENT; THAT YE MAY APPROVE THINGS THAT ARE EXCELLENT; THAT YE MAY BE SINCERE, AND WITHOUT OFFENCE, TILL THE DAY OF CHRIST; BEING FILLED WITH THE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHICH ARE BY JESUS CHRIST UNTO THE GLORY AND PRAISE OF GOD."

THE text announces concisely, distinctly and fully the design and object of the Gospel of the Son of God; of all Christian devotions and ordinances; if I have rightly apprehended them, the design and object, from the beginning, of the founders of this Church and Parish, and of the labors of those who have been devoted to them as their Ministers.

That you may abound in love to God and to all whom he loves; that you may approve the things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offence, being filled with the fruits of righteousness unto the glory and praise of God. This great design and consummation of the hope of our being have *we* worthily pursued?

*Fellow Christians and Friends of this*

*First Church and Parish in Hingham :*

Let us remember that we are descendants and successors in the time honored inheritance of those who first founded this parish, formed this church, and erected this ancient house of worship. Not to boast would we mention this, but from the memory of the past to be more deeply impressed in our own hearts with a sense of obligation and of sacred duty to the future. A trust of great responsibility is committed to us. This trust, the most precious of all our bequests, those around us rising into life and those who shall live after us may justly expect to be held, and transmitted to them unimpaired. On this occasion a reminiscence of a few occurrences seems to be pertinent.

It is now two hundred and twenty-one years since this town was incorporated. At the time when this was incorporated, the towns in the colony, generally, if not without exception, were by law constituted parishes or religious societies. This town was incorporated in July and this church was formed the next September.

The first minister of the town was Rev. PETER HOBART. Our history does not give the precise time of his ordination. He deceased in the fifty-third year of his ministry, nine of which he passed



in England, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.\* The Rev. JOHN NORTON, the second minister of this church and parish, continued in the ministry nearly thirty-eight years, and deceased in the sixty-sixth year of his age.

The Rev. EBENEZER GAY, the third minister of this church and parish, continued in the ministry almost sixty-nine years. He deceased at the very advanced age of ninety years and upwards; an instance of longevity in the ministry almost without a parallel. It is not my province to-day to eulogize the departed, however highly distinguished and honored.

The fourth minister of this church and parish was the Rev. HENRY WARE, who after a ministry of some less than eighteen years, was dismissed, and entered upon his office as Hollis Professor of Harvard University.

All these were beloved and honored in life and in death. Beloved and honored do we say? They passed not the ordeal of a calling, I think often the most severe in this world, without opposing elements and wounding reproaches. But through him who loved them, they were conquerors and more than conquerors.

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\* See History of Hingham, by Hon. S. Lincoln.

From the labors and sacrifices of Peter Hobart and John Norton, and Ebenezer Gay, and others like them, blessings above all estimate have descended to us who possess the inheritance they left.

Is it not delightful to think of those ministers, blest for having turned many to righteousness, now clothed with light, with many stars in the crown of their rejoicing, with the multitude they instructed and comforted; and, as shepherds led through the wilderness of human life, now, as we trust, giving glory to him who sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb who once was slain for them and for us?

On the second day of the month of July, the anniversary of his ordination, the minister who now addresses you, the fifth of this church and parish, will have continued the long period of a half century in his ministry here.

With you, he has to confess, he has been "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," declaring unto you, and to a multitude departed from life, the testimony of God; "that ye may be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness."

The completion of a half century of the connexion between this church and parish and their minister, I have thought worthy of some notice. What connexion could be more sacred, more momentous

to the parties immediately interested, or more solemn in responsibility, can you tell me?

Of the ordaining council who consecrated this connexion, not one remains. Few of those who took an active part in my settlement continue in life.

Of the whole number in the parish above the age of seventy, there are twenty men. Of women above seventy years of age now connected with the parish there are nearly the same number. If these, during half a century, have had cause to be thus firm and steady in their attachment to the parish and their minister, the fact is worthy of grateful notice to-day. It is wisely ordained by Divine Providence, that some live to advanced age to bear witness of the past, and of hopes and prayers that have been kindly answered. Can an instance be found, in this time of rapid changes, of so many persons of so advanced age, having been parishioners of the same minister fifty years? Seven of the number are past the age of eighty years. A large number of young men, at that time, not of lawful age to vote, manifested their choice, in addition to the large majority of legal voters.

Comparatively few among us can remember the clouds of the morning of the ordination day—their breaking away—the bright and beautiful meridian, and the calm, clear evening that succeeded.