

**A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE, DELIVERED
BY REQUEST BEFORE THE CITIZENS OF
NEW HAVEN, APRIL 25, 1838; THE TWO
HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST
SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWN AND
COLONY**

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A Historical Discourse, Delivered by Request before the Citizens of New Haven, April 25, 1838;
The Two Hundredth Anniversary of the First Settlement of the Town and Colony by James L.
Kingsley

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JAMES L. KINGSLEY

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APRIL 25, 1838,

THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

THE FIRST SETTLEMENT

OF THE

TOWN AND COLONY.

BY JAMES L. KINGSLEY.

NEW HAVEN:

B. & W. NOYES.

1838.

THE author was invited, March 20th, 1838, by a joint committee of the Connecticut Academy, of the Mayor and Aldermen of the City, and of the Selectmen of the Town, of New Haven, to prepare a discourse for the Second Centennial Anniversary of the founding of the Colony. He subsequently received the following communication.

PROFESSOR JAMES L. KINGSLEY,

Sir—The Committees appointed to conduct the Celebration of the Second Centennial Anniversary of the settlement of the Colony of New Haven, respectfully request that you will furnish them for publication, a copy of the very able Historical Discourse, which on that occasion you addressed to one of the most numerous and enlightened assemblies, ever convened in this city.

With the highest regard,

Your friends and fellow citizens,

BENJAMIN SILLIMAN,	} <i>Committee of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences.</i>
THOMAS HUBBARD,	
JONATHAN KNIGHT,	
LEONARD BACON,	
THEODORE D. WOOLSEY,	
EDWARD C. HERRICK,	
HENRY C. FLAGG,	} <i>Committee of the Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of the City.</i>
BENJAMIN BEECHER,	
CALEB BRINTNALL,	
JOHN B. ROBERTSON,	
SOLOMON COLLIS,	
LEVI GILBERT, 2d.	} <i>Committee of the Se- lectmen of the Town.</i>
MARCUS MERRIMAN, JUNR.	

New Haven, Thursday, April 26, 1838.

ERRATA.

Page 16, line 8, for June 3, read June 26.
" 89, " 18, " January, 1647, read January, 1646.
" 92, " 9, " Hodgson, read Hodabon.

☞ Some passages of the following Discourse, to avoid trespassing too much on the patience of the audience, were omitted in the delivery.

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

WE are assembled, fellow citizens, to commemorate the close of the second century from the first planting of the town and colony of New Haven. This act of respect and pious gratitude to the founders of our city, we have been led to perform, less, it is believed, by the influence of custom, than by a strong conviction of the importance of the event which we celebrate, and a wish to impress on our own minds, and on the minds of those who shall come after us, the great truths which it is so well fitted to teach.

Hardly any feeling arises more spontaneously in the human breast, than that which prompts us to recur to times which are past, to review the events of former years, and especially to inquire into the characters and fortunes of those, whose actions in the order of providence have a near connection with our own allotment. It affords us a melancholy pleasure, unless a false philosophy has deadened our sensibilities, to visit the places of the burial of such men, to inspect their monuments, to traverse the ground which has been the scene of their exploits, and to mark by some appropriate observances, the times, which in their progress through life, have been especially signalized by disaster or success. Nor are such reminiscences without their

use. They bring to our view, more distinctly and with deeper conviction, the influence of man upon man, the connection of one generation and of one age with those which follow; enlarge our knowledge of the human character and of human interests, and at the same time quicken the most generous feelings of the heart. Our duties are made more clear, and our resolution to perform them strengthened and confirmed.

To indulge in reflections on the past, we are this day invited by numerous circumstances of deep and affecting interest. We are entering on the third century from the time, when civilization and christianity were first introduced into this part of New England. It is the same season of the year, the sun is moving in the same circle of the heavens, as on that day, when the original settlers of this town, first assembled after their arrival, to offer up, in the open air, their prayers and praises to that Being, who had conducted them in safety to this spot, and on whose almighty aid they relied for continued support. We now behold around us the same hills, the same plains, the same waters in the distance, as then greeted their eyes; and we see, what they were able to discern only in the dim future, and in the visions of hope, a cultivated region and a populous city, enjoying the advantages of literature and religion, and enlivened by the pursuits of agriculture, commerce and the arts. Let us, then, yielding to the dictates of our understandings, as well as of our feelings, briefly review the early history of New Haven; without stopping to apologize to those, who would deride the observance of such an anni-

versary as mere idle parade, or the lingering of puritanical prejudice.

The great cause, which led to the first colonization of New England, is well known to you all. But though the subject is trite, a reference to a few facts seems necessary, fully to illustrate the main topic now to be considered. The separation of the English church from the church of Rome was at first rather political than religious; it was rather resistance on the part of Henry VIII. to the power and authority of the pope, than a change in doctrines, or in the general rules of ecclesiastical discipline. That the rise of Protestantism should be gradual, was a matter of course. Individuals, much more large bodies of men, seldom renounce old opinions suddenly; especially opinions so fondly cherished and so strongly fortified by early associations, the influence of authority, and the powerful feelings of hope and fear, as those of religion. The right and obligation of the monarch to enforce uniformity in religious belief and worship, was at the beginning of the reformation, hardly questioned by any one; the only debate was, whether in particular cases he had determined correctly. His authority, therefore, was opposed by men, who, if they could have attained their object, would have persuaded him, not to give up the power of legislating in matters of religion, but so to exercise it as to support opinions, which they themselves had adopted.

At first the number of individuals who withstood the will of the sovereign, however capricious, was inconsiderable. The belief in the infallibility of those, who controlled the civil and ecclesiastical affairs

of the nation, and the dread of pains and penalties, seem for a time to have entirely subdued in the human mind all independent thought. But in a period of so much mental agitation, as that from the commencement of the reformation in the reign of Henry VIII. to the time of James I., it was impossible that this intellectual slavery should remain undisturbed. To believe, according to act of parliament, a doctrine to be at one time essential truth, at another the most fatal heresy, and at another a matter of indifference, at length exceeded the powers of a few; and the spell being once broken, diversity of religious faith was increased and strengthened. The art of printing had made books more accessible, the clergy as a body were more learned, men's minds were sharpened by controversy, and no human power could stop the progress of dissent. The puritans, as they were called, wished for greater changes in the church, especially in its discipline, than met the views of their civil and ecclesiastical superiors; and in consequence they were exposed to severe sufferings.

To these men of ardent minds and tender consciences, and goaded on by intolerance in some instances without doubt to extremes, submission to government against their own belief and sense of duty, appeared to be the greatest of crimes. With their convictions, they could neither comply with the ceremonies of the church as by law established, nor cease to worship after their own manner. But in neither of these respects could they find indulgence. The struggle which in consequence they endeavored to maintain with the power of the state