

1905

# Harvey Loomis: a Historical Discourse

Charles Herrick Cutler

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Rev Charles Whittier

**Harvey**

**Loomis**

HARVEY LOOMIS

**A Historical  
Discourse**

*By*

Charles H. Cutler, D. D.

MINISTER OF THE  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

BANGOR, MAINE  
1905



## **The Tablet.**



On Sunday evening, October 29, 1905, in the First Congregational Church of Bangor, was unveiled a bronze tablet in memory of the REVEREND HARVEY LOOMIS.

Beside the Minister of the Church who gave the Historical Address which follows, five other clergymen participated in the service, Messrs. Collier and Moore of the Hammond St. and Central Congregational Churches; Mr. Scott of the Unitarian Church; President Beach of the Theological Seminary; and Mr. Brown of Veazie. The One Hundredth Psalm and the Ninetieth Psalm were read, and the congregational hymns were

"O God our help in ages past,"  
"The Church's one foundation,"  
"For all the saints who from their labors rest."

The cost of the tablet is defrayed, chiefly, not by present members of this Congregation, but by others whose personal or traditional connections with Mr. Loomis or with the past history of the church give reason for interest in the matter. In this number are included Mr. Loomis's granddaughter and grandson, the former of whom, indeed, hearing of the plan, of her own motion contributed more than half of the whole cost.

On page 6, is an excellent sketch of the

tablet made for the Bangor Commercial, from which the Address is reprinted. The only departure from the original to be noticed in the sketch, is the substitution of the abbreviation "Jan." for "January."



IN- MEMORY-OF

THE REVEREND-HARVEY-LOOMIS-

BORN-IN-TORRINGFORD-CONNECTICUT-1785

MINISTER-OF-THE-TOWN-OF-BANGOR-

FIRST-PASTOR-OF-THIS-CHURCH.

ORDAINED-NOVEMBER-27-1811

FELL-IN-HIS-PULPIT-DYING-JAN-2-1825

FAITHFUL-AND-BELOVED

ERECTED-BY-DESCENDANTS-OF-MR-LOOMIS

AND-FRIENDS-OF-THIS-CHURCH-

1905.



# Historical Address

BY

*Rev. Charles H. Cutler, D. D.*



In the town records of the town of Bangor, Vol. 1, page 183, may be found the copy of a warrant, "in the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to summons and notify the pew holders and other inhabitants of said town qualified by law to vote—to assemble in the school house in the Second School District in said town on Saturday the nineteenth day of October instant (1811) at two of the clock in the afternoon to act on the following articles, viz:

"1st. To choose a Moderator to Govern T. Meeting.

"2d. To see what measures the said inhabitants will take for the settlement of the Rev. Mr. Loomis in the ministry in said town and if any, what."

Agreeably to the foregoing warrant, the qualified voters of the town assembled in town meeting, chose Jacob McGaw, Esq., moderator; named a committee: Joseph Carr, Esq., John Bowler and Moses Patten, to wait on the Rev. Mr. Loomis; and instructed their committee as follows: "That the town will give the Rev. Mr. Loomis \$600 a year for the first two years of his ministry in said town, the sum of \$700 a year for the next two years and \$800 a year for the residue of his ministry in said town," adding an equitable provision for the termination of the contract.

At an adjourned meeting, the committee reported, with a written communication from Mr. Loomis in which he reserves his final decision saying: "Gentlemen:—I have examined the propositions which you have done me the honor to lay before me, by which I learn that it is the wish of the town that I become their settled minister; the present is so important a crisis in my life, the course I now take will so materially determine my future usefulness as well as happiness, that I feel it a duty which I owe to myself, to this people and to our Divine Master, to consider seriously, prayerfully and maturely the subject under consideration before I act." "With regard to the salary which is offered," adds Mr. Loomis, "I think it is generous, considering the present situation of the town." And when we find that this sum of \$600 is the same amount as was appropriated that year by the town for public schools, and half as much as was voted for the repair of highways, we are inclined to agree with Mr. Loomis.

This meeting adjourned to Saturday afternoon, the twenty-third day of November, 1811, when the committee's report, including the final answer of Mr. Loomis was read and accepted.

This reply is a model of good taste and brevity, and is worth quoting in full; it is addressed—very much as St. Paul might have written to the church in Corinth or in Ephesus:—

To the Christian Society in Bangor:

Beloved:

Whereas you have seen fit so far to express your approbation of my labors with you as to give me a call to settle among you in the work of the ministry; and

Whereas, I have taken the subject into serious and prayerful consideration, and also have advised with a number of the neighboring ministers, I therefore, in pursuance to their advice and in obedience to what I deem the view of duty, have come to this conclusion which I hereby signify to you: That I accept your call and cheerfully consent to become your pastor and teacher in spiritual things; and I pray the Great Head of the church to direct and govern us and cause the important and endearing relation (should it eventually take place) to be of mutual and everlasting benefit to us.

Wishing you grace, mercy and peace, I am with cordial esteem and Christian attachment.

Yours, &c.,

(Signed), Harvey Loomis.

Nov. 7th, 1811.

It is worth while to quote somewhat fully these records, because they hold an important place in the religious annals of Bangor. In vol. 1, pp. 189-190 of the town records, we find further, the proceedings of the ecclesiastical council, called to ordain Mr. Loomis, together with a copy of the order of the ordination service. In the proceedings of the council is embodied the authentic record of the organization of the First church in Bangor, to wit:

"Voted, that Deacon William Boyd, Steven S. Crosby, William D. Williamson, William Hasey be received and acknowledged as the Church of Bangor, upon the platform which they have exhibited."

And so, on November 27, 1811, was organized the First Congregational Church of Bangor,—or, as found on the

title page of its first volume of records, in Mr. Loomis's handwriting and kept by him as long as he lived—The Church of Christ in Bangor.

The small beginnings of great things are always impressive; who does not feel the charm of the spring, or stream, or lake,—in the woods up among the mountains,—which form the sources of the river, upon whose banks is one's birth-place and home, and which bears upon its broad current the commerce of a city, as the river flows majestically to the sea? Is it not with something of the same fascination that we think to-night, of that memorable day in the annals of Bangor, when four men, whose names we gratefully recall, gathered with Harvey Loomis, then a young man of 25, to form a Church of Christ in this community? And it must have been with some sense of the importance of the occasion that this little church of four members was organized, and Mr. Loomis was ordained and installed its first minister. The council was composed of pastors and delegates from the Congregational churches of Belfast, Bluehill, Castine, Buckstown (Bucksport) and Penobscot, with the Rev. John Sawyer and the Rev. H. May.

I have here a printed copy of the ordination sermon preached by Rev. Eliphalet Gillett, pastor of the church in Hallowell,—“an exultant discourse” from the text Isaiah 61:2; the charge to both pastor and people, impressive and in excellent taste, by the Rev. Alfred Johnson of Belfast and the right hand of fellowship, serious and earnest, by the moderator, the Rev. Mighill Blood, of Buckstown; I have read them all, and after all these years, the yellow faded



pages, breathe the spirit of solemnity, which, I am sure must have pervaded the historic occasion.

It may be a matter of interest to know that this ordination service was held in Union hall, in a building owned by Gen. John Crosby and Benjamin Joy of Boston, at the foot of Exchange street, on the stream side, called the Point, and in this hall, rudely furnished, a table for a pulpit and rough planks for seats, services of public worship were held for a year or two, the attendance averaging 150 to 200 in fair weather. The midweek meetings seem to have been held in the Hadlock house, corner of Exchange and York streets, where the First National Bank now is; and here in 1814, the first Sunday school in Bangor, was gathered at the instance of Mrs. Jacob McGaw, with eight or nine scholars, and Mr. Eliashib Adams its first superintendent.

Various movements for building a meeting house failed, until 1812, when a company was formed to erect the Court house at the corner of Hammond and Columbia streets and offered it to the town for public worship, free of expense. Here, then in 1813, the members of the First church, numbering at that time only about 29 souls, found a local habitation, and here they worshipped, until their meeting house was built in 1822, on the present site.

The first years of Mr. Loomis's ministry seem not to have been very fruitful ones, and must have been full of discouragement to the ardent young minister. It is to be remembered that in 1811, when Mr. Loomis began his ministry in Bangor, its population was considerably less than 1,000 persons all

told, and they were mostly poor. The year 1811 is spoken of a particularly lean year; business was dull, "a very extraordinary time for bread corn, etc.; all provisions scarce," records a diary of the time. And what was even worse, there seems to have been an abatement of religious interest in the place—one of those ebb tides of morals which leave the mud flats of a town bare, unsightly and unsavory. Several chroniclers of this time speak of the lax state of morals in Bangor, especially of the prevalent disregard of the Lord's day, and the increasing intemperance and profanity. I do not know whether, judged by present day standards, the Bangor of that day would seem so lawless as it appeared then to Mr. Adams, who said that upon his first visit, he was so disgusted with the character of the place that for several years, when his business made it necessary to remain over night, he used to cross the river to Orrington (now Brewer.) At any rate the town, in its early years, seems to have had an unenviable reputation, and may have deserved it. It must have presented a somewhat rough and rugged field of labor to the minister of the town, and for the first three years the growth of his little flock was very slow; in 1814 only one member was received on confession of faith; but in November of that year a quickening of religious interest began, which deepened and broadened during the next three years, bringing into the church leading men and women, heads of households and representative people of the place, so that within a half dozen years, the moral tone of the community began to change for the better. Says Judge God-

frey in the History of Penobscot County: "Prior to the settlement of Mr. Loomis the Sabbath was little observed. The streets were thronged with idlers, whose disregard of the day was shameful. This was gradually changed after the establishment of regular meetings and the town became as well ordered on that day, as any New England town."

Mr. Loomis's salary continued to be paid by the town, in accordance with the agreement, being voted in town meeting, as other appropriations. In 1817 some opposition developed, growing out of an incident which happened during Sunday service in the old court house and I find in the town records of the year 1817, "Voted, not to raise by the town, any money to pay Rev. Harvey Loomis his salary"; but a special town meeting was afterward called, the vote reconsidered, and the salary voted as usual, and the squall blew over; an appropriation for Mr. Loomis's salary, which in 1821 was raised to \$870, seems to have been voted every year following until 1823, when other religious societies having been organized in the place, and the first Meeting House in Bangor having been erected and opened for public worship, his salary was thereafter raised, I suppose, by the Society. The cost of lot and building of the Meeting House was about \$8, 00, and on June 24 of the following year, 1822, the pews were sold for \$10,878; leaving the society with a balance on the right side, larger perhaps than it has ever had since. This building was burned to the ground in 1830, the circular communion table—which stands here—together with a small sofa being the only part of the old

church, except the metal of the bell, which has survived the days of Mr. Loomis's ministry.

### MR. LOOMIS THE MAN.

Now let us try to draw the portrait of Mr. Loomis the minister and the man. It is not easy to recover the personality of one who died about 80 years ago; and in this case, our sources are rather meager—only some few facts of his early life—the impressions left upon his contemporaries—the fruits of his ministry in Bangor—and a sheaf of his sermons.

A few facts of his life before his coming to Bangor may be recounted.

Born in Torrington, Conn., Feb. 27, 1786, he worked as a boy upon his father's farm, but being ambitious for an education, he fitted for college and entered Williams college, graduating with the class of 1809. It is worthy of mention that Loomis was one of the five students who gathered under the haystack in that historic prayer-meeting, which is commemorated by a monument as the birth-place of the modern movement for foreign missions and which resulted in the organization of the American Board; but as we have it from the survivor of the five, Loomis was the only one who opposed the project, hence we have never made very much of his connection with it. It ought, however, to be added, that his dissent seems to have been prompted more by the opinion that the undertaking was premature and inexpedient, than from want of sympathy with its purpose, and this, considering the times and the opposition which the foreign missionary movement met, both in this country and in England, does not appear strange to us. Mr. Loomis studied theology with



his pastor, Rev. Mr. Mills, and the Rev. Ebenezer Porter of Washington, Conn., afterward professor in Andover seminary, thus taking his apprenticeship in his profession after the practical method of theological education of that day which may have had its advantages. In 1811 Mr. Loomis married Ann Battell of Torrington, Conn.

The circumstances which led Mr. Loomis to Bangor are of interest to us. Having been duly commissioned by the Massachusetts Missionary society to preach in the District of Maine, he had preached for a few Sundays in Norridge-wock—where I believe he was invited to remain, when Father Sewall, who was detained from filling an appointment to preach in Bangor and had met young Loomis, sent him to take his place. Mr. Loomis' advent is thus described by Prof. Shepard:

"He came making his first introduction Saturday evening to Mr. Crosby's family in Hampden. Sunday morning, he presented himself to the assembled congregation in Bangor, greatly to the disappointment of the people. A stranger, a young man, in place of him they loved to hear! But they thought better of it at the close. Mr. Snow, a shipwright and Methodist rose in his place and said amen to the doctrine, and the people said amen to the man. They cared little for the doctrine, but they were struck with the man. He was fine looking, had a sweet voice, was a taking speaker, to crown all, he was evidently an agreeable man, and every heart and voice said, "he is the one for our minister." "They settled him," adds Prof. S., "and he was a wonderful fit."

To suggest Mr. Loomis's personal appearance, we have only this old portrait

which was painted probably from life by Deacon Hardy. But it is enough for us to know that "the outward man was attuned to the inward man."

### MR. LOOMIS THE PREACHER.

We can form, I think, a fairly clear estimate of Mr. Loomis as a preacher, both from the impression made upon his hearers and from his sermons. He must have had a remarkably flexible and musical voice—so many speak of it. Writes Dr. George E. Adams, a most competent critic:

"Mr. Loomis had the advantage of a fine person, and natural grace of manner, a countenance noble and full of expression, a voice rich and powerful (for singing as well as for speaking) in some of its intonations most impressive and thrilling, enunciation clear and distinct."

Of his preaching Dr. Adams goes on to say:—"In the pulpit Mr. Loomis was vivacious, graceful, forcible. If not as "powerful" as some men, nor as profound as others, he was at least, instructive, convincing, interesting, impressive. His scripture lessons and prayers took hold of the attention and hearts of the worshippers. The hymns, as he gave them out, ring in my ears today after the lapse of so many years. His sermons were short. I think rarely exceeding twenty-five minutes."

Of his sermons we have, fortunately, a dozen or so in manuscript of as many years, which a successor in his pulpit collected in the volume I hold in my hand. I have read most of them. They are clear, logical, earnest, solemn sermons, invariably closing with appeals to the impenitent. But as the body without the spirit is dead, so a sermon without the personality of the preacher and

especially the spiritual atmosphere of the congregation is dead also. The first sermon for example, on Justification, of the date 1812, is a clear unflinching exposition of the Calvinistic doctrine, as then generally held; but if the present minister were to take this self-same sermon and preach it word for word without note or comment in this pulpit next Sunday morning, he wonders what would happen! Nothing could better illustrate the change in the religious atmosphere of our churches, within a hundred years. It is like moving into another climate.

Another notable sermon in this collection, is a Fast day discourse of the year 1820. Maine had just been admitted to statehood along with Missouri; and Mr. Loomis, who, in common with many at that time, felt deeply the shame of the implied compromise, upon which Maine entered the union by the same door that received a slave-holding state, speaks in no uncertain voice concerning slavery in general and of this compromise with it in particular. He also discusses in this sermon the morality of duelling, which he does not hesitate to call "murder." It seems that the fatal duel between Commodore Decatur and Commodore Barron had just occurred and the preacher took this event for the occasion of as forcible and effective arguments upon the folly of duelling, as I have ever seen. One does not fail to catch the note of the prophet's voice in these musty, yellow old sermons.

A sermon of Mr. Loomis preached before the Maine Missionary society in Portland in 1823, and the only sermon or other writing of his ever printed and published, I believe, is also worthy of notice. It is a direct and practical dis-

course from the text: "She hath done what she could," in which the preacher pays a graceful tribute to the service of women ("females") who then as now were foremost in missionary interest; the preacher emphasizes the importance of work in the Sunday school; urges systematic giving; and betrays no lack in this sermon of missionary enthusiasm. "There is one thing all Christians can do," urges the preacher. "All can pray for the progress of Christ's Kingdom." It was the custom to take the annual collection directly after the sermon and if a sermon, like a tree, may be known by its fruits it is noteworthy, that the contribution after Mr. Loomis's sermon in Portland was by far the largest of many years, either before or afterwards, amounting to the sum of \$201.75, "and," the treasurer's report adds, "a gold ring," suggesting that the preacher's allusion to the devotion of "females" was not misplaced.

A just estimate of Mr. Loomis as a preacher, while not assuming that he was either a great scholar or a profound theologian, presents to us an interesting, forcible and effective speaker, whose character and personal grace lent reality and persuasiveness to his words.

#### AS A MINISTER.

We pass now to consider the work of Mr. Loomis, the Minister. His methods were simple. He relied solely upon the regular ministrations of the church—the service of worship and preaching Sunday morning and afternoon; the Sunday school; the personal conversation with inquirers at his home; the pastoral call; and the Wednesday Conference meeting. It is interesting to note that during the



entire ministry of about thirteen years. Mr. Loomis relied solely and absolutely upon these simple and regular instrumentalities, and that even in time of special religious interest—in revivals that continued for years—he introduced no other methods, added no special services, called in no evangelist.

The Wednesday evening "Conference," as it came to be known, deserves further notice; for it was established by Mr. Loomis at the beginning of his ministry, and it became, under his leadership, a remarkable instrument of spiritual power. It was, as the name implies, an informal meeting for mutual conference; in which Mr. Loomis's rare tact and skill in dealing with men found free expression.

In the history of Penobscot county, Judge Godfrey says: "Mr. L. established a meeting for religious conference on Wednesday evening which has been continued in his church to the present time, and that evening was, during his life, and for many years after his death, regarded with as much reverence as Sunday itself, especially among the people of his society. No parties were held upon that evening and amusements were discountenanced."

Prof. Shepard refers to "these weekly prayer meetings, continually growing in size and influence, passing to larger and more capacious rooms, generally thronged. And the spirit of God was there, year after year, making a perpetual revival; and the strong men of the place—the rugged lumbermen, the merchant, the lawyer, bowed to the claims of God."

The Conference met at first in the Hadlock building on Exchange street but afterward went to an academy room

on Columbia street—a rather gloomy room, lit only by tallow candles; but Mr. Loomis' fine voice which led the singing of Bangor and other solemn tunes, and "his benign countenance and gracious manner gave it an aspect of cheerfulness." At any rate, certain it is that, when Mr. Loomis died, he was missed in his place on one side of the large fireplace in that Conference room, "more perhaps, than even in his pulpit." For several weeks thereafter, we are told, no one ventured to occupy his seat.

At this point we are reminded of a poem, entitled *The Desolated Conference Room*, written by one, whose graceful pen has often adorned our city's annals; Mrs. Eliza L. Crosby—then a young lady—a member of Mr. Loomis' church; this poem was reprinted in full 50 years afterwards in the *New York Observer* of Jan. 2, 1875, recalling the circumstances which occasioned it. Many of you, doubtless have read the verses, beginning with the lines

"Ye need not hang that candle by the desk;  
Ye may remove his chair and take away  
his book—

He will not come tonight. He did not  
hear the bell

Which told the hour of prayer," etc.

I have spoken of the simplicity of the methods of Mr. Loomis' ministry. It is worth remarking that he was a faithful pastor; in the sick room and house of mourning he came as the friend and brother. When a mother says that her pastor never failed, for six successive weeks, to visit her house, at least once a day, from the distance of more than a mile, to pray with her sick and dying child, we have a glimpse of why his people loved him.

Many good stories have come down to us which illustrate Mr. Loomis' unflinching tact and good taste. We can take the time for but two or three:

"Soon after Mr. Loomis came a young lawyer, one of the leading men of the place, who was very fond of dancing, called and questioned the candidate as to his opinion of this amusement. Mr. L. replied "Mr. Mc—— I think that all things are not equally important, and that some things have a claim on our attention prior to that which others have. Now it seems to me that the most important thing for you is to become a Christian man. I would advise you to attend to that immediately and afterward you can dance as much as you think proper." The lawyer, we are told, did not proceed to crossquestion the witness, but took the advice and eventually became a worthy member of Mr. Loomis' church. A somewhat similar anecdote is told of a young and rather uneducated girl, who wished to unite with the church, but had been told by some friends of a stricter sect, that Congregationalist women were very proud; they wore curls and ruffles; troubled by this inconsistency, the girl went to talk with her minister about it. Having heard her story, Mr. Loomis, in a quiet, kind, serious manner, said:—"Fanny, pride is a great sin; and it is a very common sin. Different people are proud of different things. Some are proud of their straight, smooth hair, and some are proud of their curls; some are proud of their straight, square collars, and some are proud of their ruffles. But God does not look at the curled hair or the straight hair, the collar or the ruffle; but at the heart, and if he sees pride there, He

abhors it." And so Fanny's mind was relieved.

Perhaps the finest illustration of Mr. Loomis' grace, was given under very trying circumstances. It seems that two brothers, who boarded at the home of a lady who was a member of Mr. Loomis church, but who differed decidedly from him in their religious views, had taken offense at something Mr. L. had said or done. One of these brothers died, and Mr. Loomis was asked to conduct the funeral services at the house where they boarded. A large number came to the funeral, and at the moment the services were about to begin, the surviving brother arose, and in a somewhat excited manner said:—"Mr. Loomis, I wish you to understand that I have invited you to attend my brother's funeral simply because there is no minister in the place of my way of thinking, and out of respect to the lady of the house who is a member of your church. I wish you to make no remarks (as was then the invariable custom) but only to offer prayer." All eyes were now turned to the minister. There was a painful pause. In a few moments Mr. Loomis rose, "and with his calm, deep-toned voice, as if nothing untoward had occurred uttered a most tender, sympathetic and solemn prayer—and thus closed the service."

#### AS A CITIZEN.

"We have left little room to speak of Mr. Loomis, the citizen and the man. As I have read over this sketch, I feel that I may not have emphasized enough the firmness and moral courage of the man. There was iron in his blood. He did not win men by becoming all things to all men but by being true to himself and



by the sincerity of his convictions. With all this pliancy of manners, this power of social pleasing there was an inflexibility on the platform of principle. We are told that it was generally felt, when Mr. Loomis was first introduced to Bangor, "that a man of his gentlemanly manners, fine person and superior talent would be an honor to the place and an inducement to respectable persons to move in;" and so men who didn't care much personally for his doctrine, readily voted their taxes for the man. There is a tale oft told of a large timber owner in Bangor and vicinity at that time, who heard Mr. Loomis preach when he first came and went to him the next day with the following proposition: "Mr. Loomis, I don't believe a word of your doctrine myself but it is just what is wanted here for these miserable villains who strip my land and steal my logs. I want you to settle here and preach hell-fire to these wretches as hot as you can make it. And if you will do so, I will give you a hundred acres of land to begin with." "A good speculator, he," remarks Dr. Shepard, in telling the story, "for he knew that his other hundreds of acres would be nearly doubled in value if Mr. Loomis's doctrine could be put into the hearts of the people."

It may be of interest to add that this same large timber owner was the man who afterwards presented this church with the Paul Revere bell, which still hangs in the belfry and calls people to church. But whether the type of doctrinal preaching which now obtains here continues to answer the donor's purpose may be open to question. Evidence is not wanting that Mr. Loomis became, as was anticipated, one of the first citizens

of Bangor, and for many years held his unique position as the minister of the town of Bangor. He early became a member of the superintending school committee, was re-elected every succeeding year, and was chairman of the board, I believe, at the time of his death. I wish we knew more of his connection with the public schools.

#### OTHER EARLY PREACHERS.

It is hardly accurate, it ought to be said, to speak of Mr. Loomis as "the first settled minister of Bangor," for, as early as 1786, the Rev. Seth Noble, a patriot of the Revolution, and later a representative to the general court of Massachusetts, was employed by the town to preach at a salary of \$400 per annum and was installed "under a white oak tree at the junction of Washington and Hancock streets," Sept. 10 of that year.

Mr. Noble preached in Bangor and neighboring towns for eleven years; indeed it was Mr. Noble who is said to have christened the town with the name of his favorite hymn-tune, Bangor—but further than naming the town his ministry seems to have left little impression upon it. "There is no evidence that in all that time (11 years) that there was a single conversion, if any," adds Prof. Shepard, "they were still born—never saw the light and never shed any;" and it is certain that no church grew out of his ministry.

Another memorable man who preceded Mr. Loomis was the Rev. John Sawyer, who in 1808 was employed by the town to keep school through the week and to preach on the Sabbath for the sum of \$200 a year—and even this

munificent salary was withheld by a town government which differed from him in politics and took this way of punishing him for being a Federalist; but that made no difference to this Christian gentleman who went right on preaching the gospel and ministering to the sick and dying, just the same.

One year he was allowed by the town \$50 for funerals and a fearful epidemic breaking out he had to officiate at over a hundred funerals in that year, so that it does not appear that he was overpaid. It seems that Father Sawyer, tho' an excellent and godly man, was not a popular preacher, as it is said his "once more, my brethren," and his "twentieths," were too frequent.

No review of the decade in Bangor's religious annals before Mr. Loomis came would be complete without a more full allusion than we can now make to the occasional ministries of Father Sewall, whose ministry extended throughout the length and breadth of the state.

But we have no time now for all this—the point I wish to emphasize, by this hurried allusion to some of his predecessors, is this: That the primary significance of Mr. Loomis's work is that he laid the foundations of the organized religious life of Bangor. He was an architect, a master-builder. Like the apostle to the Gentiles might he have said: "According to the grace of God which was given unto me as a wise master-builder, I laid a foundation and another buildeth thereon." Mr. Loomis as a preacher may not have been more impressive than Mr. Noble, or as a pastor, more faithful than Father Sawyer, or as a missionary, more devoted than Father Sewall, but with Mr. Loomis be-

gins the continuous religious life of the community. The thing which will strike anybody in reviewing the fragmentary annals of these early times is precisely the point which impressed Dr. Shepard and which he emphasizes in his invaluable sermon on the Early Religious History of Bangor and Vicinity: "In searching through this early period one is struck with the want of system, order, no sort of organization so far as religion is concerned—religion with most was a mere circumstance, an extraneous contingency, hanging and dangling to the body politic anyhow it could. Pretty much so till Mr. Loomis was settled."

On the day of Mr. Loomis' ordination, as we have already marked, a Church of Christ is organized; a church, to be sure, of only four members—the organization of a church of Christ is a very simple thing: "Two or three gathered together in His Name;"—yet this is the tremendously significant thing in the religious history of this city; and in these days, when many of us are inclined to think that it is the tendency to over-organize religious life, that perhaps we have too many churches, and when it has become somewhat the fashion to speak slightly of the church as an organization anyway, as if we might get along quite well without it, it may be wholesome and refreshing to go back to this primary lesson in the history of our own community: Before 1811 and the coming of Mr. Loomis we find no trace of a Church of Christ in Bangor; no constant services of public worship; no Sunday school; no regular gathering of Christian people for prayer; no orderly sacraments of religion; almost exact to say, no Sabbath. Look here, upon this



picture, and then on this: With the coming of Mr. Loomis in 1811, the First Church of Bangor is organized; beginning with four members, it numbered, at the time of Mr. Loomis' death 127—143 persons having joined it at different times during his ministry; the regular services of worship and preaching are well attended; a growing Sunday school has been gathered; the Wednesday evening conference has become a recognized institution of power and influence. The Lord's day is generally observed by the community as a day of rest and worship, and at the close of Mr. L.'s ministry, the town of Bangor has earned the reputation of being as well ordered as any New England town.

It is not too much to say, therefore, that Mr. Loomis' ministry of a little more than thirteen years had changed the moral tone and the religious atmosphere of the place, having laid broad and deep the foundations for its future religious growth and prosperity. Mr. Loomis' work was strategic, constructive. We need not exaggerate its importance or overstate the facts in order to appreciate the debt this community owes, under God, to this man; and when we recall the fact that he was only thirty-nine years old when he died, we wonder the more at his life-work. If ever a man was chosen and called for the time and to the place in the plan of God, we may be sure that this man was. As Dr. Shepard puts it: "A man created of God to be sent to this place, and he was sent." If anything could make us believe in the doctrine of election which Mr. Loomis used to preach, it would be his own life.

I quote from Dr. George E. Adams in

the Annals of the American Pulpit. "It was Mr. Loomis' lot to be settled in the ministry in Bangor almost at the beginning of its history, at the turning point of its moral and religious destiny.

"Mr. Loomis was just the man for Bangor at that time. And although it would be absurd for me to say I have not known superior men, yet if another such place as Bangor were presented to me today, and all the ministers I have ever known were before me in their prime, including Mr. Loomis, I would select him for that place. He was fitted for the place, and the place needed all the qualifications he had. Had he been less a gentleman, less apt and shrewd, less considerate and discreet, less popular as a preacher, in a word less agreeable and attractive, he could not have obtained a settlement in Bangor, nor if he had settled could he have maintained his position a year. Had he been less earnest and faithful, or less firm in his attachment to the great truths of the gospel, he would have accomplished very little good in such a place. In fact probably he and his people, though they might have retained the forms of religion, would have felt and manifested little of its power."

In the winter of 1818 Mr. Loomis was critically ill of a fever—in fact the attending physician gave up all hope of his recovery, and his people who had met to pray for him, supposed he was dying; when some friends, going to his room expecting to find him dead, were amazed to see the doors all open, from the street to his chamber—though a cold winter's night—the curtains removed from his bed, and Mr. Loomis bolstered up in bed, his reason restored, his strength revived, talking to those who had gathered about

him. It seemed as if he had been raised from the dead; at any rate he lived to preach and labor more earnestly than ever, for about seven years more. The tragic circumstances of Mr. Loomis' death, when it did come, left a deep impression upon the community. The Bangor Register, of Thursday, Jan. 6, 1825, contains a brief account; the story has often been told, but I will tell it once more, in the words of an eyewitness of the event, in whose beautiful handwriting it was given to me a good many years ago (Mrs. Crosby).

"In these days when the least interesting incident in the life of the most insignificant individual is made available for a newspaper item, perhaps the sudden death of such a man as Mr. Loomis would not have produced the sensation it did at that time; would not have been told so far or remembered so long. Everybody heard of it with startled interest, and it was not forgotten while that generation lasted. It was Jan. 2, 1825, that he left his house, situated nearly opposite the Bangor House, though the Bangor House then was not. The storm was severe, the way was hard, the hill was steep. Mr. Loomis at length reached the church, stamped the snow from his feet, shook his cloak, took the muffler from his neck, shook it and brushed the snow from his shoulders. All these little movements were remembered afterwards. He climbed the stairs, sat down. The people came in, and waited, waited, until some one looking with wonder toward the desk, that the service was delayed, saw no one there—but at the instant Mr. Loomis raised his head showing an agonized countenance, then dropped, and the cry was heard: 'Mr. Loomis has

fallen.' There was a rush. He was brought down unconscious, and laid in the vestibule while efforts were made to restore him. He groaned once. He was taken to a house near by, that of Asa Davis, and a warm bath was tried and whatever else anxious love could devise, but the spirit was gone. That was the way Mr. Loomis died."

The curious fact should be added that the sermon which Mr. Loomis had prepared for that New Year's Sunday and which he took into the pulpit where he fell, was from the text in the book of Jeremiah, the 28th chapter and the 16th verse: "This year thou shalt die."

In the Davis lot at Mt. Hope cemetery may be seen a plain stone of fine white marble, which marks the resting place of Mr. Loomis's mortal body, and bears the following inscription:

Rev. Harvey Loomis  
Born  
at Torrington, Conn.,  
February 27, 1786;  
Ordained  
as Pastor of the  
First Congregational Church  
and Society in Bangor,  
November 27, 1811;  
Died  
in his Pulpit  
On Sabbath morning,  
January 2, 1825.  
"He walked with God, and was not,  
For God took him."

I wonder how many people living have visited his grave, read this inscription, know or care that he is buried there? This suggests to us all the trite reflection, how quickly—measured in generations, men, even men of distinction in their time, are forgotten. "A century hence, as Prof. Shaler says, "it



will be only in some chance bit of record that our names survive, and for 99 in 100 even this trifle of a name will be denied."

In view of all these facts, therefore, it has seemed an eminently appropriate thing that some fitting and durable memorial should be erected in this city to the memory of a man to whom it owes so much; and in this First Parish Church, of which he was the first minister—in whose pulpit he laid down his life.

It is a grateful service, therefore, which we unite with the friends of this old church and the descendants of Mr. Loomis in rendering, as we now unveil this tablet of enduring bronze.