

Memoir of my life & character written by my own hand & completed January 10 1843

By JOSEPH HILLIARD (1774-1843)

CHAPTER 1st

THE PLACE OF MY NATIVITY AND PARENTAGE.

THE place of my birth was Barnstable on Cape Cod. I was born June 25, 1774. No nightingale perched on the dwelling, as was the case with the pious Flavel,* with whose works I have been much acquainted. My father was the Rev Timothy Hilliard, who was subsequently minister of a congregational church in Cambridge Massachusetts. He graduated at Harvard university in the year 1769, was for *some* years a tutor in that college. He subsequently officiated as a chaplin at castle William an island in Boston harbor. He was afterwards settled in Barnstable, where he continued—about fourteen years. He died at Cambridge May the 9th 1790. A funeral sermon was preached at his interment by the Rev. *Joseph Willard*, president of the university. I was then in the 2^d year of my collegiate life, as was my brother, the Rev Timothy Hilliard of Gorham, Me—A dark prospect was before us, but my father looked thro to a brighter day.

* John Flavel, English Presbyterian, c. 1630-1691?

EDITORIAL NOTE: This Memoir was copied from the original in 1967 by Mrs. Frederick Drew, Jr., of Barrington, N. H. Small errors in the spelling and composition have been retained for the sake of interest and accuracy. The original manuscript was given to Harvard University in 1967 by Mrs. Samuel Hale and Mrs. Clifton Lomison. The portrait of Parson Hilliard is now owned by the Society and hangs in Hamilton House, South Berwick.

He was assured by his intimate and truly benevolent friend president Willard, of sufficient assistance, to defray the expense of our public education, which accordingly took place. The Rev Dr *Pearson* and Mr *Caleb Gannett*, were great benefactors, as were also the whole government of the college. I cannot express my gratitude enough for these favors, to that great and good being, “with whom the fatherless mercy.—I took my first degree at Harvard college, in Cambridge in the year 1793—I was employed in keep[ing] a school in Brooklyn Massachusetts, for the space of one year, which I spent very agreeably, having some very affectionate & substantial friends in that place. The names of *Aspinwall*, *Hyslop*, and *Jackson*, will be ever dear to my memory. Soon after closing my school in Brooklyn, I was approbated to preach the gospel by the Middlesex association, a[t] Waltham Mass. October 13 1795. The learned & worthy ministers, who were present, together with the president and professors of the college, have all gone to their rest, except the Rev Dr. *Homer* of Newton & the Rev *Thaddeus Fiske* of West Cambridge. I supplied the desk a few sabbaths in Quincy Mass. where I became acquainted with Ex president *John Adams* and his accomplished lady from whom I received much attention and kindness. Here I also became acquainted with the Honorable *Judge*

Cranch, and lady, who were remarkably intelligent and affectionate *friends*. They subsequently deceased together, and were buried in one grave. "In their lives they were lovely & pleasant, in their deaths they were not divided. Mrs Cranch was the daughter of the Rev Mr Smith, formerly minister of Braintree, Mass. I supplied the desk a few sabbaths in Milton Mass.—Here I became acquainted with the Hon. Edward Robbins, son of the Rev Chandler Robbins former minister of the place. About this time in the spring of 1795, I was invited to preach in the 2 parish in York Me. rendered vacant by the lamented death of my venerable father in law, the Rev Samuel Langton. I tarried with this people about 6 months during which time I supplied the desk and taught publick school. I believe my labors were not in vain in this place, but the people not being in a situation to settle a minister I took my leave of them in the autumn and retired to Cambridge to pursue my studies. I availed myself of the advice and instructions as well as example of my worthy teacher and guide the Rev David Tappan DD. professor of divinity in Harvard College. I might well say of him, my father my father the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof.—

CHAPTER 2

MY SETTLEMENT IN THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.—

In the spring of 1797, I supplied the desk six sabbaths in old York. I resided as a boarder in the family of the Rev Isaac Lyman, where I was very agreeably situated. While in this place I was invited to preach in the 2^d church in Berwick—rendered vacant by the lamented death of the Rev Matthew Merriam. I sup-

plied the desk thro the summer, when I recieved an invitation from the church and parish to settle with them in the gospel ministry. I gave an affirmative answer, and was ordained their pastor October 11 1797. The examination was one of deep interest; the performances were solemn and impressive, to a large and attentive assembly. The sabbath after my ordination, I preached two occasional sermons, which were published by subscription, and I have reason to think that these sermons were blessed to the temporal and spiritual good of my people. Some individuals in my parish, who had been opposed to my settlement, were turned quite about, and became my warmest friends. When I settled in Berwick there was an unusual number of aged people, I might say Christians, male and female, from whose counsels, —prayers and examples, I derived signal benefit.—And I have viewed it as a peculiar favor in providence that my lot was cast among such a pious people. "The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness." The names of *Lord, Libbey, Norton & Hodsdon, Downs & McCalley* and *Wentworth* will be ever dear to my memory. In the lower parish, & Somersworth, the names of *Hamilton, Lord, Cushing, & Ricker*, were embalmed on the tablet of my heart. "Our fathers where are they, & the prophets—do they live forever?" In the autumn of the year 1797, I was joined in wedlock with Miss Sarah Langton, the youngest daughter of the Rev *Samuel Langton*, who was the pious and exemplary minister of the 2^d parish in York, for the space of 40 years. I removed my wife to Berwick, soon after our marriage, and for the space of 20 years, we enjoyed an unusual share of

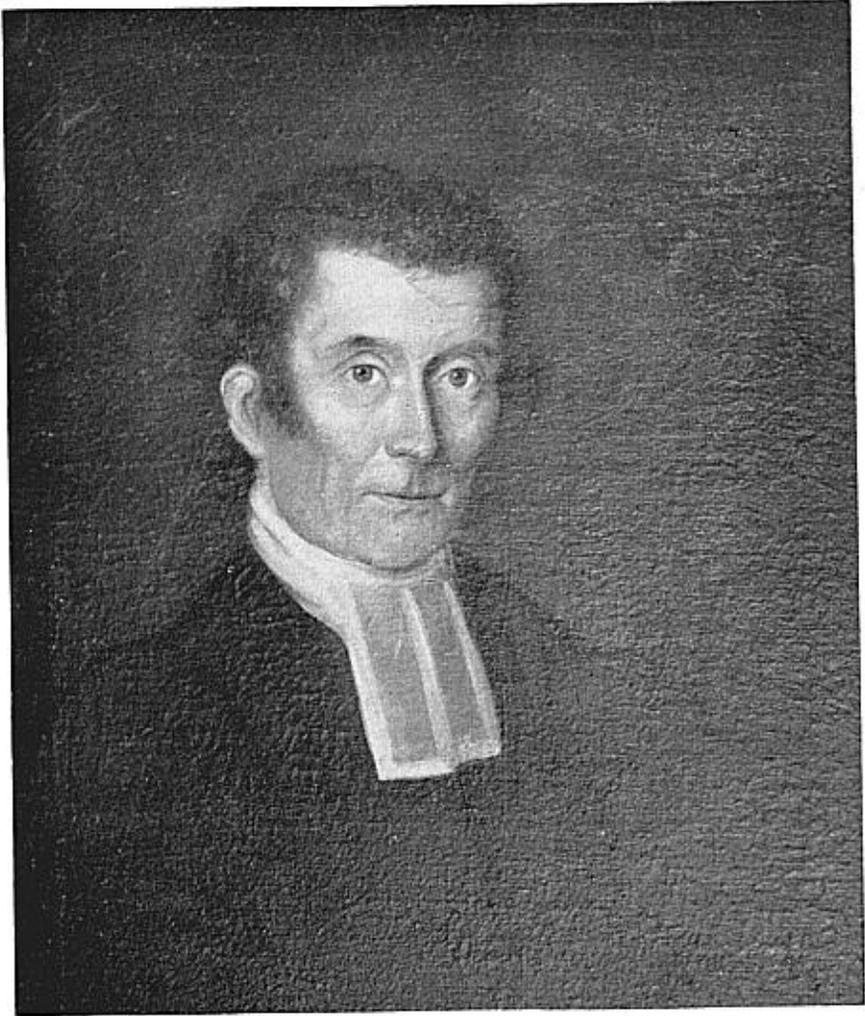
health and prosperity, both in a temporal & spiritual way. My oldest son Timothy Hilliard was born August 13 1798 on the sabbath. My eldest daughter Julia Hilliard was born April 1st 1800. I have had 8 children. One died in infancy, my daughter Hannah at the age of 16. Hope in her death. Nothing very special occurred in my parish untill the year 1820. At this time God was pleased to revive his work with power. I preached from these words, "O that I had a lodging place in the wilderness, that I might leave my people and go from them" I felt a great burden upon my mind, from what cause I know not. About this time I appointed a conference meeting, which was well attended and followed with the happiest results. I was induced to appoint this meeting from reading Essays to do good by the Rev Cotton Mather. Prayer meetings were held frequently, and almost the whole neighbourhood by the meeting house were hopefully converted. The work spread rapidly in various parts of the parish, and about 30 were added to the congregational church as the fruits of this revival. The converts were mostly heads of families, with their eldest children in many instances. The greatest part were persons in the meridian of life, and of wealth & influence. The Rev Mr *Jewett* of Lebanon, attended one of these meetings & preached from these words, "I am the way" to an attentive & waiting audience. In admitting members to the church, my practice was to have a written experience, read in public by the minister. I think this method had a very good effect, & I should recommend it as being highly useful in our churches—I think my manner of preaching for some months previous to the revival, was more *impressive* than in former years. How-

ever I endeavored to preach the doctrines of the gospel, from my first settlement, warning every man & teaching every man, that I might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. A few years previous to this period I removed my family from the vicinity of the meeting house at Blackberry hill, to the Salmon fall road, in the vicinity of what is now called Great Falls. At this time my health failed me & I thought it best to be dismissed from the parish; after taking the advice of the ministers of the Piscataqua association, assembled at Somersworth who were unanimous in their recommendation of this measure. I accordingly relinquished my salary, and also the parsonage fund, after having the benefit of it two years after my dismissal. Some of my best & most confidential friends, were opposed to my being dismissed from the church & that relation, has never been dissolved by a council, tho from a sense of duty, I had my relation transferred, to the congregational church in the Great Falls village, where I usually attend publick worship.

CHAPTER 4

MY BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY, WITH WHOM I HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED.

I had the pleasure of being acquainted with the Rev Isaac Hasey, who for the space of 47 years, was the able and worthy pastor of the congregational church in Lebanon Me. My second wife Sally was his youngest daughter. We were married by the Rev Mr Chandler of Elliott Jany 1st 1820. Mr. Hasey settled in Lebanon, when it was quite a wilderness, and had to conflict with many privation, for the sake of his blessed mas-



PORTRAIT OF THE REVEREND JOSEPH HILLIARD PAINTED BY
A. FOLSOM IN 1835 WHICH NOW HANGS IN THE HAMILTON
HOUSE, SOUTH BERWICK, MAINE

Photograph by F. E. Drew, Jr.

ter. There were several interesting revivals of religion during his ministry, which added greatly to his own comfort and to the welfare of the people. His wife was the daughter of Mr William Owen—merchant of Boston. My mother in Law, Mrs Rebecca Hasey was every way worthy of the station which she occupied. Her eldest daughter married with Thomas M. Wentworth Esq. Her second daughter with Mr *Ezra Kimball* of Dover. She has remained a widow since his decease, & is a mother in Israel. The 3 daughter was the wife of Dr *Nathaniel Adams*, of Lebanon, & was a lady possessed of ardent piety, and an amiable disposition. Soon after I came to Berwick I united myself with the Piscataqua association. But one of my colleagues now survives, the Rev *Huntington Porter* of Rye who is now at a very advanced age waiting, waiting to be dismissed from this tabernacle.

CHAPTER 5

MY SENTIMENTS UPON THEOLOGICAL SUBJECTS AND CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

My creed is the bible in all its length and breadth, without note or comment. I view it to be a matter *essential* to my salvation, to believe in the being, perfections and character of God as displayed in his character & in his word. That all power belongeth unto God, unto him also belongeth mercy, and also strict justice, for he will render unto all according to their works. I believe in the doctrine of the holy & ever blessed Trinity, in Unity, that these three are one, i.e. one God; One in nature, in essence and operation. I believe in the divine inspiration of the holy scriptures; tho I think there

are various kinds and degrees of inspiration. The highest kind is that of immediate suggestion, the lowest that of Superintendency. For in writing, the historical part of the old testament, in relating facts, which are well known, we need not advert, to a particular divine revelation. Because the facts being already known, a new discovery is needless; God does nothing in vain. Isaiah in his holy predictions was under the influence of immediate suggestion, while Moses in narrating the history of the Jewish nation, was only preserved from *errors*, by the—Spirit of God.—Paul makes a difference in some things, he says, I speak not the Lord. This statement does not all clash with his language in other places. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, & is profitable for doctrine, reproof—correction & instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. But it is not my design to be very *particular* in stating my religious opinions. I believe all that God has *revealed*, let that suffice. I have however one remark to make, in stating the doctrines of the gospel. In regard to the subject of depravity, so as to exonerate the supreme being from the charge of creating any being in a sinful or unholy state. For he is not the author of sin, nor *can* be. In regard to the ancient, calvanistic doctrine, that Christ died for the elect only; those who call themselves Hopkinsians, have made a valuable improvement,—viz, that Christ has by his death made satisfaction for the sins of all mankind; but those *only* are interested in it, who believe in Jesus Christ, as the Savior of lost sinners, and trust in his atonement as the only ground of acceptance

with a holy God, which faith uniformly produces good works. That the benefits of Christ's death are applied to believers only. Christ is said to be the Saviour of all men but especially of such as believe.— On the other hand—there are some changes, which are much for the worse. For instance, where it is said that the sinner can change his own heart at any time, & that any man can repent when he pleases. That the influences of the holy spirit are not necessary at all times, but that they are only *periodical*. These doctrines are not according to godliness, & I can truly say I “have not so *learned* Christ. As to my views of experimental religion, they are about the same with all serious Christians. I think that I know in whom I have believed & that he will keep what I have committed unto him untill *that day* I am determined to serve the Lord, tho I am an “unprofitable servant.”

CHAPTER 6 & LAST.

MY VIEWS OF DEATH, JUDGMENT & ETERNITY.

I do not view death at all times, as I can not see God & live, I feel *willing* to die to see him,

“When in this veil—
Of flesh I see—
With eyes of love
He looks at me.—

I believe that judgment is in the conscience of the sinner; “the spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear. I am inclined to think that heaven is a state, rather than a place & so is hell. “The mind in its *own place & itself* can make a *heaven of hell, a hell of heaven*”—I expect to meet my beloved people at the general judgment, & a *solemn scene* it will be.

In the review of my precarious & unprofitable life I have great cause for gratitude 1st That I have had my birth and education in a land of gospel privileges, & sabbaths and meetings—2/ That I descended from Christian parents who were careful to give me a *religious* as well as a *liberal education*. When both my parents forsook me the Lord hath taken me up.”

—I am determined to *persevere* in *religion*. How long shall thy journey be & when shalt thou return? I am this day in my 69th year—Tho I should pass thro valley of death— I – shall fear no evil, thy rod & thy staff comfort me.

Berwick Jany. 10, 1843.