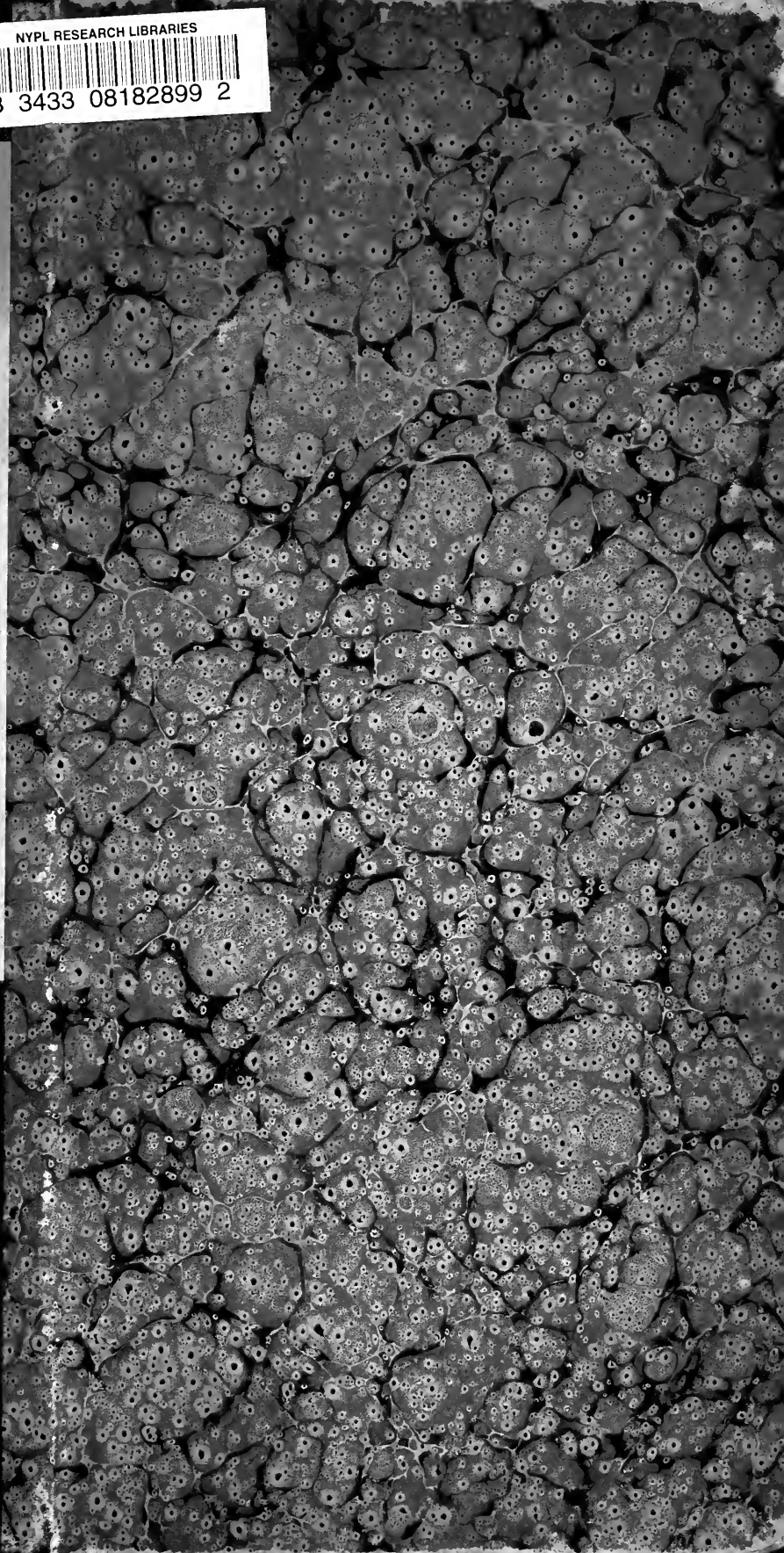
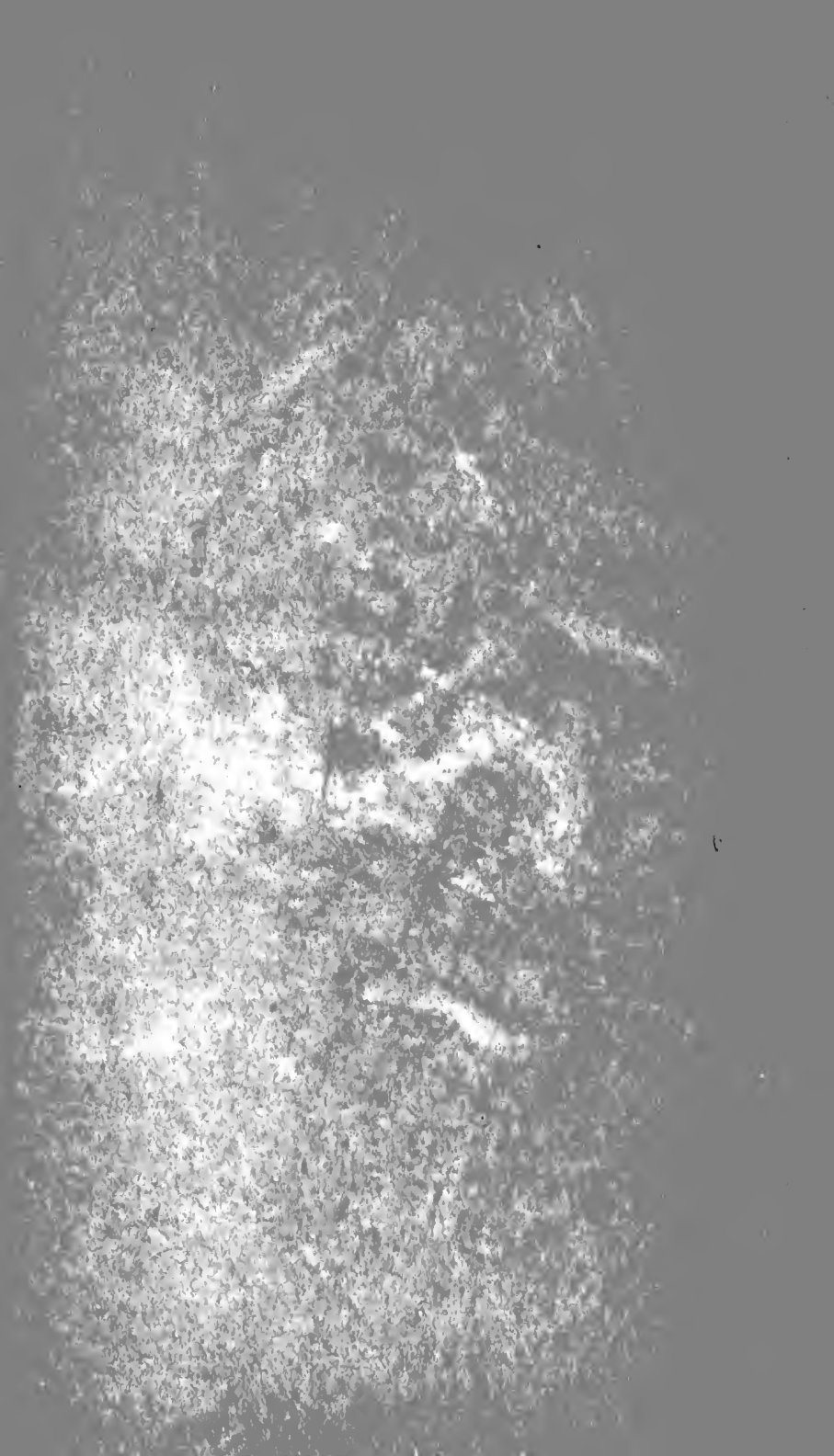


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ADDRESSES

DELIVERED BY

Rev. J. P. Sheafe Jr. and Rev. Horatio Alger,

— AT THE —

Semi-Centennial Celebration

— OF THE —

DEDICATION

— OF THE —

First Unitarian Church,

✓
South Natick,

NOVEMBER 20, 1878.

NATICK, MASS.

RYDER & MORSE, PRINTERS.

Citizen Office, 1879.







Eliot Church erected A. D. 1828.

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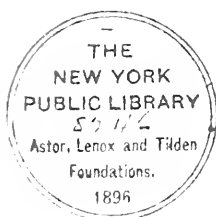
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BINDING
NUMBER
OF 1899. } 4324

Historical Address

BY J. P. SHEAFE, JR.

At a preliminary meeting of the committee of arrangements the part assigned me in the exercises of this day, was to tell the story of those early meeting houses which were built on the identical spot, or within a few feet of where we now stand; and also to recount those scenes and events of interest which cluster so thickly about the early religious life of this place. Surely this is an ample field, and the material abundant for the few moments which it is my privilege to occupy.

But where shall I begin? Full well I know where I must stop. This church was dedicated fifty years ago, to-day. I cannot pass that bound without trenching on another's field.

"Backward," then, "turn backward, O time, in your flight," and we thread our way through the dim mists of the past, backward two hundred and fifty years, and we stand here in the great primeval temple, the first great house of worship, the house not made with hands, enduring as the rocky foundations of the earth. Behold the first grand house of God, yon lofty hills, more beautiful than Corinthian columns, as pillars support the arching dome of heaven. Here, in the grand Cathedral of Nature, the sons of the forest were wont to bow themselves in awe and to worship the Great Spirit. Freely they came and went through this beautiful vale two hundred and fifty years ago, and at that very time the man of genius and of power who was soon to reveal to them the God whom they ignorantly worshipped, the man who would soon organize among the Indians a church of the living God, had already completed his college course at Cambridge, England and was preparing mind and heart for the great work which would soon engross all his energies and powers.

That man was John Eliot, born in Nazing, England, in the year 1604. Bear in mind that England had not yet made a single permanent settlement in this western world. Jamestown, Quebec, Manhattan Island, and Plymouth Rock were only names without a local habitation; but he who was to be the Apostolic man among the Indians of this place, had already begun to imbibe the spirit and the love of God in a home where dwelt, according to his own words, "the fear of God, his word and prayer." He received a liberal education, and took his degree from College in 1623. Eliot began his public life as a teacher; but tradition informs us that he had a way and a will of his own, and so persistently did he maintain them that he was forbidden to teach in his native land. If one field was denied him, he would take another, and we find him in 1631, embarked in the ship *Lion*, bound for the *New World*. It was new; the Pilgrims had landed but 11 years before. This beautiful valley was then almost an utter stranger to the face or form of the white man.

The good ship *Lion* speeds upon her way, but how little did the master or the crew realize to what an extent the destinies of New England depended upon the safety of that passage. Had that ship foundered in the deep, how changed had been the duties of the chronicler of this, the "Place of Hills."

That watchful eye which suffers not a sparrow to fall unnoticed kept constant vigil over wind and wave. On Nov. 2d, 1631, John Eliot of blessed Memory, arrived in Boston. Furnished with eminent qualifications and filled with Christian zeal no time was to be lost, where the harvest might be abundant, waiting only for the husbandman. On the very same month that Eliot landed in Boston he was elected teacher in the First Church, Roxbury, and on Nov. 5th of the next year he was ordained pastor of the Society.* The work of Eliot was now fairly begun, only 15 miles from this spot. A man with such boundless sympathies for his fellowmen, could not long remain indifferent to the wretched condition of the Indians. Then as now they had hardly a right which the white man was bound to respect. They were between two

*Historical Sketch by Rev. D. Wight, page 26.

destroying elements; the stronger and more warlike tribes of the remote parts were more than a match for them in the field, and they were therefore obliged to draw in toward the English settlements for protection. But the English civilization proved a more insidious, though not less fatal foe. Eliot was moved with compassion for them and determined to give a part at least of his time and labor for their improvement. But their language! how could he ever find courage to contend with so great a difficulty? "Our readers will stand aghast" says Cotton Mather "at a few instances." The Indian word which corresponds to "our lusts" is a word of 32 letters—Num-mat-che-kod-tan-ta-moon-gan-un-non-ash. This little word is quite outdone by a word of 43 letters which signifies "our question."* I shall have to beg to be excused from pronouncing this word, as my knowledge of Indian is not very extensive. Such difficulties as these were powerless to quench the ardor of the apostle. Says Edward Everett in his address at Bloody Brook: "Since the death of Paul a martyr, truer, warmer spirit than John Eliot never lived. And taking the state of the country, the narrowness of the means and the rudeness of the age into consideration, the history of the Christian Church does not contain an example of resolute, untiring successful labor, superior to that of translating the entire Scriptures in the language of the native tribes of Massachusetts.†" Eliot, determined to learn the Indian language finds a young Indian who has lived in an English family and has learned the English tongue. This Indian, he tells us, seemed of much capacity, and Eliot took him to his own house, and there with marvelous patience taught him to read write and speak the Massachusetts language. When Mather stumbles on these words, he says "One would think that these words had been growing ever since Babel unto the dimensions to which they are now extended." But persistence and energy will make almost anything yield; and in the space of two years, Eliot was able to converse with the Indians in their own tongue. Just at this time in the year

*Biglow's History of Natick, page 48.

†Bacon's History of Natick, page 12.

1646, the Legislature of Mass., passed "An Act for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians." This made an auspicious opening for Eliot. He had some of the language at his command, and no time was to be lost. He sent word to the Indians who were then living at Nonantum, that if they desired he would come and instruct them in the word of God. Among this tribe of Indians was one Waban, a principal man and kind of chief justice among them. The Indians, men, women and children gathered into Waban's spacious wigwam, and there Oct. 23, 1646, Eliot preached his first sermon to the Indians,* not simply *his* first sermon, but the first sermon which was ever preached by a white man in the Indian's native tongue. What was the text of the first sermon to the sons of the forest? Ez. 37—9. "Then said he unto me Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy son of man, and say unto the wind, thus said the Lord God, Come from the four winds O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." What wisdom in the choice of the passage! There he was in the wigwam of Waban, and Waban signifies *wind*. Prophecy unto Waban, prophecy, son of man, and say unto Waban, Thus saith the Lord God. And the words were not without effect. I would we might have looked in upon that congregation, the service was three hours long and when Eliot asked them at the close if they were not weary, they answered No! But Eliot remarks, "We resolved to leave them with an appetite." In Eliot's account of this meeting, he shows that the Indian language was not quite as familiar as his mother tongue, for he says: "We began with prayer, which was now in English, we being not so far acquainted with the Indian language as to express our hearts therein before God and them." We hope to be able to do this ere long.†

It was a blessed sight he says to see these outcasts diligently attending to the blessed word. From this time the work went on rapidly. The Indians were assembled for service every two weeks, and at the end of the sermon they were asked if they understood what had been said, they answer-

*Bigelow's History of Natick, page 50.

†Sketch of Life of John Eliot, by Alexander Young.

ed—"All of it." They were also allowed to ask questions, some of which were as follows: Whether Jesus Christ could understand prayers in the Indian language? How all the world became full of people? If they were all once drowned? * And many other questions of like character which certainly evinced a good degree of common sense; and this is the constant affirmation of Eliot that the Indians are of good ability and apt to learn.

In 1650, Eliot sought a spot where he might build an Indian town, and establish a church. *This* was the favored spot. It was a part of Dedham, and in behalf of the Indians Eliot petitioned the General Court that it might be granted for that purpose. It was yielded by the town of Dedham in exchange for Deerfield, formerly owned by the Indians. Eliot was a man of dispatch. As soon as the land was granted, he moved his Indian families to the spot, and that same year, 1650, they cast themselves into form for the ordering of civil affairs, and bound themselves together by a covenant, a few lines of which I will quote. "We give ourselves and our children to God to be his people. He shall rule in all our affairs, not only in our religion and the affairs of church, but also in all our works and affairs in this world. Let the grace of Christ help us. Send thy spirit into our hearts, and let it teach us. Lord take us to be Thy people, and let us take Thee to be our God." †

This is the only covenant I remember to have seen among the record of this early people. It is beautiful in its simplicity and abundantly comprehensive in its scope. This covenant adopted by the first worshipers upon this spot would be most heartily endorsed by the worshipers who now assemble from week to week in this place. Nearly all the land of Natick was owned by John Speene, his brethren and kindred, at the suggestion of Eliot they all consented to relinquish their rights and on one of the lecture days publicly and solemnly in the presence of the Lord and all the people, John Speene,

* Biglow's History of of Natick. pages 22 & 23.

† Historical Sketch delivered in 1828, Nov. 20th at dedication of the Unitarian Church.

his kindred, friends and posterity gave up all their right and interest in the land in and about Natick, so that the praying Indians might make a town, reserving only their *Wyers*.* These were fences of stakes and stones built across the river for the purpose of catching fish. A little more than a year ago when the water was very low in the river, one of these wyers might have been distinctly seen about ten rods this side of Dover Bridge. The stones were so near the surface of the water that with a pair of boots one could easily walk across the river upon the wall of stones.

The land having been granted and ceded to the Indians, the town was laid out, on road on the South side of the river, two on the North side; and on these roads the land was divided into lots and distributed among the proprietors of the town. Along these roads the little Indian houses and wigwams were built. About this spot where we now stand was built a large handsome fort of a circular form, palisaded with trees. In front and spanning the river was a bridge in the form of an arch, 8 feet high in the centre and the foundations secured with stones.† This bridge Eliot taught them to build—another illustration of the versatility of his genius.

Now, my friends, within this circular fort we will build in our minds eye, a plain little wooden house, of the English style, 25x50ft. and two stories in height. Here we have in mind the picture, the roads, little Indian houses, the river, bridge, fort and sacred little house within. This is *Natick*, 227 years ago.

I said a sacred little house. That was the first Indian Church in America. This little Meeting House, the first upon this spot, was erected in 1651. It happened in this wise, gathered as they doubtless often were in the shadows of that venerable Oak which bears the Apostles name, the following is Eliot's account of the building of the first Meeting House "We must of necessity have a house to lodge and meet in and wherein to lay our provisions and clothes which

*Biglow's History of Natick, page 23.

†Biglow's History of Natick, page 25 ; also Bacon's History, page 69.
The bridge was 80ft long and 8ft high.

cannot be in wigwams" "I set the Indians therefore to fell and square timber; and when it was ready I went and many of them with me, and on their shoulders carried all the timber together"* One white carpenter assisted the Indians in raising the building and the structure was soon complete. We step inside and with Gookin's description we see, not rich carpets, and soft cushions, not even *pews*, for the Indians were strongly opposed to them, and when in the later Meeting Houses pews were introduced, the Indians seldom came. The lower story is simply a large plain room, "which serves as Meeting House on the Lord's day and School House on the week-days. There is a large canopy of mats raised upon poles for Mr. Eliot and his company, and other sorts of canopies for themselves and other hearers to sit under. The men and women were placed apart." Just what purpose these canopies served can we only conjecture.† But let us glance up stairs. "The upper room is a kind of wardrobe, where the Indians hang up their skins and other things of value. In one corner of this room Mr. Eliot has an apartment partitioned off, with a bed and bedstead in it." Here in this little house, just about one half as large as the present church, Meeting House, School House, wardrobe, safe, private apartment and study, all in one, Eliot toiled and labored with his Indian friends for more than a quarter of a century. How gladly would we follow him, did time permit, through those years of toil and hardship, of privation and discouragements, and of glorious success. It was a season of hardship, for many of the sachems and medicine men of the surrounding tribes were suspicious of him, or jealous of his influence. When he was threatened or thrust out, his answer was "I am about the work of the great God, and he is with me so that I fear not all the sachems in the country. I'll go on, and do you touch me if you dare."

Oct. 13, 1652, was the great questioning day, the divines

*Biglow's History of Natick page 18 and 19, also quoted by Rev. Alex. Young, in sketch of the Life of John Eliot.

†As the upper part of this building was used as a Store-house, for skins &c. the canopies may have been needed to protect the heads of the congregation below, from whatever might find its way through the cracks in the floor.

from all the neighborhood, their friends and interpreters met at Natick to judge of the fitness of the Indians to be admitted to Church Communion. About 15 made open and distinct confession of their faith, and a number were then baptised, but for some reason they were still kept on probation until 1660, when the first Indian Church was organized. Of this church no records can be found, not even to tell the number of which it was composed. We learn that in 1670 the communicants numbered from 40 to 50.

These years were years of incessant toil for the Apostle to the Indians. Aside from the work which must necessarily devolve upon him, we find continual records of his petitions and appeals to the General Court in behalf of the Indians, and for the maintenance of their rights. It is during these years that Eliot makes his Grammar of the Indian Language. It is on this very spot, and in that first meeting house, that he ponders over the scheme of the Indian Bible. Doubtless, much of the work was done in this place. We find him writing letter after letter to friends in England, and to the "High and mighty Prince Charles the Second," begging for money to have his Bible printed; and, at length, he succeeded. This was the first Bible printed on the American continent. The New Testament was printed at Cambridge, in 1661, and the Old Testament, in 1663. Glad am I that the town of Natick has been able to procure a copy of Eliot's translation of the Bible. It is a monument of the labor which has been performed here, and the town treasures it in her safest archives.*

1675 approaches—a sad time for the little community at Natick. It brings King Philip's war. The Government is suspicious of the Indians, fearing that, when the war-whoop sounds through the land, the praying Indians will take up arms against the whites; and had not Eliot and General Gookin come to their defense, the Government would even then have destroyed them. As it was, the Natick Indians, with several other establishments, were compelled to gather

*During the Anniversary Exercises this copy of Eliot's Indian Bible might have been seen upon the pulpit, and with the Bible was a copy of the Psalms translated into Indian, owned by Mr. Elijah Perry.

up what they could and be sent off to "Deare Island" in Boston harbor, where they passed a most wretched winter, amid much privation and suffering. After the death of King Philip, these poor Indians were allowed to straggle back to their homes as best they could, but their strength and numbers were sadly diminished by sickness and death.

The scholars and inhabitants of Natick read in history of King Philip's War, and how hostilities were begun because a friendly Indian was found murdered, probably by Philip's men, but do they know and realize how closely those events are connected with the history of this town? Do they know that the friendly Indian was perfectly at home on these lovely hill-sides and by this rolling stream? That Indian was none other than John Sassamon—educated by the English—the same who assisted Eliot in translating the Bible. He was converted to Christianity, and was once a school-master in this very town of Natick. It was he who so kindly and timely made the Government of Plymouth acquainted with the plan by which Philip intended to cut off every English settlement in New England.

In the Roxbury Church Records, Eliot speaks of him thus:

"The Winter past, John Sassamon was murdered by wicked Indians. He was a man of eminent parts and wit. He was of late years converted, joined to the Church at Natick, baptized and sent by the Church to Asowamsik, in Plymouth Patent, to teach the gospel." *

We must speedily pass the remainder of the Apostle's years. He rested from his labors May 20, 1690, at the age of 86. His last words were, "Welcome joy!" These words are a fitting close and commentary on such a life, so welcome and of such joy for those to whom he bore the glad tidings and the gospel truth. He was buried in the ministers' tomb at Roxbury, where a monument records his name. And, a few feet from this church, stands a humble shaft to commemorate his labors in this place. The Apostle provides a successor ere the time of his departure is at hand; and ordains an Indian minister, Daniel Takawambait, as shepherd

*Citation by Rev. Daniel Wight, Roxbury Church Records page 263.

of the flock. At what time he was ordained is not known, but it must have been some time before 1687. He died Sept. 17, 1716; and leaves an impression which says he was a good man and wise. The humble slab which records his name, age, and the date of his departure, may still be seen on the sidewalk, close to the fence, and nearly opposite this church.

But the Natick community sadly depreciated after the death of Eliot. In 1698, the record says:

"The Church consists of seven men and three women. There are here fifty-seven men, fifty-one women, and seventy children under sixteen years of age. No school-master; and but one child can read." *

Daniel Takawambait was followed by Shouks, an Indian, who remained about the place, and preached occasionally, until the time of Mr. Peabody, in 1721. May 11, 1719, we find a record that the proprietors are called together, and John Neesmunin is voted in as a proprietor.—"if," says the record, "he live and die in the Gospel ministry at Natick." He did not so continue, but very soon left the place.

Let us now pause, for a moment, upon a matter of considerable importance. You would hardly suppose that so large a thing as a meeting house could be lost in so small a place as South Natick. Such seems, however, to be the fact; and here is the evidence. I copy, word for word, the record made by Mr. Austin Bacon from the State files of 1699

"1699. Number, thirty families. The petitioners are the remainder of the Church of Christ, planted fifty years since by Eliot, but by deaths and removals we are greatly diminished and impoverished. Our Meeting House is fallen down and we are unable to build another, and wish to sell to John Coller, Jr., Carpenter, a small nook of our Plantation, of about 200 acres, to pay him for erecting a Meeting House." †

There are two important facts here. One—which so many have sought in vain to know—what became of the old Eliot first church, and at what date it disappeared? In 1699,

*Biglow's History of Natick, page 41.

†This quotation is very much abridged; for the full document, which I have copied verbatim from the State Files, and which is much more explicit, see appendix.

the Indians say of their church—and it can be no other than the original Eliot Church of 1651—"Our Church is fallen down." There is the old church in ruins, and the Indians are petitioning for the right to sell a small nook of their Plantation to pay for a new one. This petition is signed by eighteen Indians; and Thomas Sawin testifies to the truth of the petition, and that it is good for the Indians. Now, was this new meeting house built in about 1700? Consult the State files, volume 30, page 502, and you will read:

"John Collier, Jr., in 1702, petitions the General Court to grant him the Nook of Indian land upon which he is then living as pay for building the Meeting House, saying that he had been obliged to expose his own estate for sale, in order to meet the expense of building the House." *

That his claim was a just one is evident, for he retained the land with undisputed right, and the deeds are still extant showing that he conveyed it right and title to others, and that right has never yet been questioned. † This, then, is the second meeting house. In 1721, Mr. Oliver Peabody comes as a missionary to this place. It has been but twenty-one years since the Collier meeting house was built, but the people appear to think it necessary when they have a new minister to have a new house for him. Therefore, we read that in 1720 a meeting of the people was called to consider the plan of building a new meeting house. There seems to have been no opposition, and a committee was chosen, and empowered to have the new house built near the spot on which the old one stood. And the records say that, Sept. 13, 1721, a meeting of the proprietors was lawfully warned, at which time they granted unto Moses Smith, of Needham, forty acres of land on the southwesterly side of Pegan Hill; said land to pay for finishing the meeting house. ‡ This, the

*See petition of John Collier, Jr. in appendix, from the State Files Vol. 30 page 502.

†This petition was granted in the Council and agreed to in the House of Representatives. See appendix from State Files Vol. 30 page 504.

‡Biglow's History of Natick page 28. At this meeting Major Fullam and Lieut. Thomas Sawin were chosen a Committee, "to see that the work be well done."

Peabody House, is the *third* meeting house.*

As the people went from Sunday to Sunday in and out of this third meeting house, they used to step across the old ditch which surrounded the circular fort in the days of Eliot. We are told that the circular ridge of the old fort could be distinctly seen when the ground was broken for the building of this church.† By some strange mixture of dates, we are told, by the various histories of Natick, that the Badger meeting house—which was the *fourth*—was raised in 1753 or 4. But the record made at the time, by the Deacon of the church, Mr. John Jones, Esq., Justice of the Peace, reads thus: "On June 8, 1749, the meeting house was raised." And if you consult the records of that year, you will find the deacon's record was correct.‡ This house was finished in 1767, and remained standing until 1812. But in this brief period of forty-five years, the meeting house had outlived its usefulness. It was abandoned by the worshipers, probably very soon after Mr. Badger finished his public ministry, which was in the year 1799.

Very few cherished any sacred associations with the building; many regarded this meeting house with feelings quite the reverse. So it was neglected, and even mutilated, by the villagers. It was used, at last, for a store-house and barn. The farmers housed their produce here, and it proved a convenient place for hay and corn-stalks. This building became, at length, an eye-sore to the community. Those who with zeal had helped to build, would now gladly be rid of it. Though a feeling of sadness must have attended the falling to pieces of this old church, yet it was not without its humorous side. Many amusing anecdotes are related at the expense of the old meeting house. To one of these I will refer. It appears that when the first meeting house in

*For proof that this was a distinct Meeting House, and not the old one refitted, see appendix.

†Biglow's History of Natick page 25.

‡Deacon John Jones was a man of very marked ability in the early history of this town. He was *great great* grand-son of Lewis Jones, who came from England about 1640. The 6th, 7th and 8th generations of the descendants of the original settler are at the present time constant attendants at this Church.

the north part of the town was completed, in 1799, it was not very beautiful or picturesque. Without exaggeration it might have been called *quite plain*; so thought the good man, Mr. Loring, who preached there between 1806 and 7. He was wont to speak rather lightly of the appearance of the house, until one day the deacon, Samuel Fiske, took him down to see the old Badger meeting house. As they approached, he beheld with consternation the hay and corn-stalks protruding from the windows, and the clapboards torn off as high up as they could be reached. In amazement the good man halts, and we can seem to see him raise his pious hands as he exclaimed, "Oh, Lord, I have heard of thy house; but now mine eyes have seen *thy barn*." * But even as a barn it was not long to remain. May 27, 1812, it was pulled down by the young men, in an election-day frolic, and distributed upon the various wood-piles in the neighborhood.† Thus falls the Badger meeting house, the fourth which had been built upon or within a few feet of this very spot.

I have now traversed a space of almost two hundred and fifty years. I have seized but a fragment here and there along the way. Such as I have gleaned I cordially submit to you, without note or comment. And I do so with the firm conviction

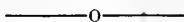
"That all the good the past hath had,
Remains to make our own time glad."

And as we worship upon the same spot where our forefathers worshiped, so let us ever maintain their zeal of spirit, their singleness of purpose and their purity of heart. Then shall we have reason to rejoice in the hope that the good work which they began we may carry forward and perpetuate. "Thus the old order changeth to the new, and God fulfills himself in many ways."

*Historic Notes by Mr. Austin Bacon.

†Biglow's History of Natick, page 19.

Appendix Notes.



It seems a very singular fact that the various writers upon the history of Natick should all have overlooked the second Indian meeting house, which was built upon the spot where the Eliot Church now stands ; so singular, indeed, that many persons are incredulous, and, failing to see the authority, fail to believe in its existence. I was put upon the track of this forgotten meeting house by a kind suggestion from Mr. Austin Bacon, and I take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to him. I have made a careful study of the matter, and have obtained abundant proof and explicit testimony for the existence of an Indian meeting house, erected about the year 1700, upon the spot, or very near where the Unitarian Church now stands. That I may substantiate the statements of the foregoing address, *viz.* that the present Unitarian Church is the fifth meeting house which has been built upon this site, I append three petitions which I have carefully copied, word for word, from the original manuscripts preserved in the State files at the State House. These documents are peculiarly interesting, and I have endeavored to preserve the curious expressions, abbreviations and spelling of the original.

State Files, Vol. 30, page 503:—"To his Excellency, Richard, Earl of Bellmont, Captain General & Governor in Chief of his Ma'ty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay, &c., and to the Hon'ble Council and Representatives of the said Province convened in General assembly, May 31st, 1699.

The humble address and petition of his Ma'ty's Subjects, the Indian natives of Natick, containing about 20 families,

In most humble wise sheweth, That your Petitioners are the remainder of the Church of Christ there planted about 50 years since by the Reverent servant of Christ Jesus, Mr. John Eliot, deceased, and by the death of many, & removall of others, who during the time of the late wars have been

sojourning among the English for their support, and are not yet returned to their plantations, wee are now greatly diminished and impoverished. Our meeting house where wee were wont constantly to meet Sabath days & lecture days, to worship God is fallen downe and wee are not able to build us another.

Our humble request to your Excellency and the hon'ble Court therefore is, that wee may be licensed to sell unto John Collier junr. Carpenter, a small nook of our plantation, containing about 200 acres, the Plat where of wee have here unto annexed, it lying remote from us wee shall not be damnified by our parting there with, and with the price there of, wee shall by him have built for us, a place for our comfortable meeting together. Wee pray therefore your favour for your consent here unto and wee shall remain as in duty wee are bound humbly to pray &c."

The person who presents this petition is evidently familiar with the affairs of the Natick Indians, and at the end of the petition he writes these words:

"I can and do testifie to the truth of what is above written, & do apprehend it a good to ye Indians, & for this end I do put my name." To this testimony, a later hand has affixed the name "Thomas Sawin."

This petition, with its confirmation, shows clearly that in 1699, the old Eliot meeting house had fallen down, and that the Indians were very desirous that another should be built. It is evident from the petition that the Indians had consulted "John Collier junr., Carpenter." and knew that for the nook of land "they could have built for them a comfortable place for meeting together." The question now is, Did John Collier, junr., build the meeting house? In answer to this question, I submit the petition of John Collier, which I have copied from his own hand-writing:

State Files, Vol. 30, page 502:—"To his Excell'cy Joseph Dudley, Esqr., Govern'r, &c. These are Humbly to inform yr Much Hon'rd Great & General Court now assembled in Boston,

That I the subscriber have built & erected a Meeting house for the Publick worship of God amongst ye Indians of

Natick according to agreement with ye Town of s'd Natick and also the advice & direction of the late Hon'ble Lt. Governor and ye Hon'ble Mr. Danforth. And I now living upon a corner of Land in s'd Natick which ye s'd Town did agree to Grant to me for s'd building, Provid they did obtain Liberty, as by reference to their Petition & Plat of s'd Land, now in Court may more fully appear. And I being Exposed to make Sale of my former settlement to answer the charges & carrying on of s'd Building, and now being settled upon s'd Tract of Land and having no other means to live upon but ye same, Do therefore Humbly desire this Great & Hon'ed Court to consider the s'd Petition of the Indians in order to a further confirmation thereof. * * * * *

Your Hon'es Humble Servant

JOHN COLLER."

"1702. June 3d. Read."

There can be no better proof than an original manuscript like the above. You will observe that it reads "*I have* built and erected a Meeting house, etc." As proof of the statement the subscriber had been obliged to sell his own settlement to meet the expense of the building. The Coller meeting house, evidently, was built about the year 1700; certainly, before June 3d, 1702. When John Coller presents his petition, June 3d, the attention of the House is called to consider the petition which the Indians had presented. That petition is taken up at once; and upon the back of the Indians' petition we read the following:

"In the House of Representatives, June 5, 1702. Ordered that the prayer of the within petition be granted, & the Indians within mentioned be allowed to sell & confirm the land mentioned, to John Coller in satisfaction for his Building them a meeting house according to the Platt thereof Exhibited to this Court, entering upon Mr. Wm. Brown's line on the nothern side of s'd land."

Even after this decision, the petition had several readings. At the fifth reading, however, this final decision is made, and we read:

In council June 6, 1705.

Read and concurred. Provided the Quantity of Land exceed not 200 acres, and that the Plat & Deed thereof to be made and laid before the Governor & Council for their allowance.

ISAAC HADDINGTON,

Secretary.

Agreed to in the House of Representatives,

THOMAS OAKES, Speaker.

The third Meeting House was the Peabody House, of 1721; but 21 years is so short a period to represent the life-time of a Meeting House, it has been suggested, that this Meeting House was only the Collier House repaired and refitted. To prove that such was not the case, and that the House of 1721 was an entirely distinct building, I have transcribed the following document, which is a translation of the Indian letter to the Governor. The House is built by one Jebis by name, who is a regular cheat, a perfect type of those traders who came among the Indians solely for what they could make out of them. Jebis builds the Meeting House so poorly, and charges so much for his exceedingly defective work that the Indians write to the Governor, desiring him to compel Jebis to make restitution.

For this manuscript see State Files Vol. 31, p. 97 et. seq.

The Governor Generall of Boston &c.

The Indians pray him to give attention to what they represent to him, relating to the building their church.

1. At the begin'g of the work, the workmen would not undertake the work, but by the day, seeing they should do the less work & be well pay'd. In effect although three of those workmen had never handled an ax, being tailors by trade or Shoemakers or Weavers, they had each of 'em a beavor skin a day, & Jebis & the negroe had each of 'em one & almost a half. Thus were they pay'd every Saturday, & for their labour having rec'd 213 Beavors, they advanc't the building no higher than the rising of the windows, which are six feet high.

2. After this they were bid to leave off or to work by the great, there was but 10 feet more in height to be done, for the building should be 16 ft. high, 55 long & 24 broad. All the carpentry for the roof & bellfry being made and prepar'd, Jebis undertakes it & asks 600 lbs of beavor, promising that in four months time he would finish the building as far as concerned the Carpenter work. That for the boards they must make another bargain. The desire they had to see the building finisht caus'd 'em to agree with his demands, viz : 600 lbs. beavor.

3. What Jebis promist to do in four months is not finisht in four years. He came hither for nothing almost, but to bring where-with-all to trade with the Indians, and return'd after some days to carry away the beavor of his trade, and what was given him in advance for his work as he demanded it. This double profit which he made carry'd him away to prolong the work.

4. This last spring he came to make a bargain for the boards for the covering for the roof and ceiling (or floor.) There must be 8,000 feet. He asks for the boards shingles and nails 104 £. 5 s. in money. They agree to his demand on condition that the building shall be finisht the fall. To which he answer'd that if he did not finish it, he would never handle an ax. The bargain concluded, he departs to go see his Father at Menaskonkus saying he would return in eight days. He demands on this last that they advance 200 lbs. of beavor. They let him have 134 lbs. Towards the end of the Summer not being yet return'd they sent to him twice to tell him that if he did not come and finish the building against the end of the fall he should come no more here. But he did not regard what was say'd to him, having carry'd away 134 lbs. beavor. Thus Jebis has behaved himself although they always treated him well. The mischief nevertheless would be more tolerable if he had wrought well, and that he had made a handsome and good building. But whoever will view it, will find these defects.

1. He has plac't it just as the ground was, instead of digging to the firme earth as he ought to have done.

2. In squaring the pieces he has kept no measure, nor made use of any rule, that he might have done the sooner, therefore there is not the same thickness in the pieces, but all of different thickness which has occasioned the building to be larger above by 10 inches than it is below.

3. Of the fine doors that there are, there is not one yt is well. This appears at first sight to the eye, there is not one that is on a levell, & all larger above by four fingers than below. It's just so with the windows.

4. The boards could not be worse saw'd than they are. They are on one side a great deal thinner than on t'other & all saw'd twisting.

5. The joists to uphold the ceiling, all ill cut, & bending under 'em like rushes.

6. The bellfry is not all solid, the two workmen that cover'd it, not without fear advis'd not to put a bell there, a-fearing 'twould fall down as soon as 'twas rung. Nevertheless we have two to put there.

7. The covering of Shingles is ill made, it's easy to see the holes that are in it.

8. I leave the other smaller defects, in a word, one may onely see the building to judge that it is ill done, altho' he has been pay'd much more for it than it is worth, one could not believe it, but we put down the particulars.

I. Two hundred & thirteen beavors, to the height of the windows.

II. 600 lbs. beavor for the rest. This has all been pay'd & regulated.

Here is what he should have furnish't on the last bargain respecting the boards, the shingles, & nails. He should have supplied with 8,000 feet of boards, 16 thousand of small nails, 5 thousand a little bigger for the boards, this is what he said & what was agreed on. Here is what he has furnish't. For the covering & roof 3,420 pieces of boards, for the vault 2,250 feet without placing them. He made the Shingles for the covering. He knows what that is worth. The small nails were enough for the covering. As for the others there was scarce enough to nail the boards of the cov-

ering, & he say'd in the agreement that he had brought 5,000, & that we might depend on it. We believed him, & likewise for the price 38 shillings per. thousand, altho' we very well knew that they cost but 14 shillings. This is all he has done & furnish't relating to the last agreement. This is evident to the eye, for which he has rec'd at divers times as he demanded it, 24 lb. 1-4 beavor with one Otter.

53 lb. beavor. 41 " " 43 martins.

28 " " 134 " " He can deny nothing of all this & he agrees to it in effect. He has made the last agreement by reckoning by shillings. We also make the pay'm't by shillings, the pound of beavor 3s. 6d., the same each martin. Let us suppose now what he has done & supply'd with what he has rec'd 'twill be found that he is indebted 300, or near 300 s., that on the contrary, if we are indebted to him, he would have no reason to ask pay'mt for his bad work, to prolong the time of work, & in fine for abandoning it. He that quits the game loses it. There is no place in the world where justice is kept, where they were not commanded to mend what has been considerably ill done, that if they refus'd it, others should do it at their charge, or he should be condemn'd to return what he shall be adjudged to. This is what the Indians represent to the Gov'r General of Boston. All that the Indians represent to the Govern'r they say'd to Jebis here in full council, to which he could give no answer. But otherwise he will make use of lying to defend himself."

"Letter from the Indians to the Govern'r. *Translated* 1720."

Historical Address.

BY REV. H. ALGER.

PSALMS: XXVI, 8. "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth."

The spot on which we are assembled is consecrated ground. Here successively at least four houses for public worship have been erected, the first having been built more than two and a quarter centuries ago. For nearly forty years it was the scene of the pious labors of one of the most devoted and self-sacrificing missionaries the world ever saw. Though endowed with popular talents which would have placed him in the first rank among the divines and men of education and culture of the colony, yet the degraded condition of the aborigines excited his compassion, and early determined him to devote a large part of his time to their instruction. The translation of the whole of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments into the Indian language, which he had acquired for the purposes of his mission, would alone have been sufficient to constitute the work of a life-time. This enterprise had in his view an importance which it has long since ceased to have in the view of those of later times, and which stimulated him to persevere, amid discouragements, with slender means and with little assistance in the execution of a work "performed not in the flush of youth, nor within the luxurious abodes of academic ease, but under the constant burden of his duties as a minister and preacher, and at a time of life when the spirits begin to flag." Though he had been the minister of the first church in Roxbury almost sixty years, he will ever be known and remembered as the apostle to the Indians. His indefatigable labors, begun and prosecuted with no reference to worldly distinction, will cause his name and character to be remembered and revered

when those of most of his contemporaries shall have been forgotten.

The earlier meeting houses on this spot were all missionary churches, the ministers being in part supported by the society in England for the propagation of the gospel in New England, and the congregations consisting of Indians and such white people as had settled in the place. During the latter part of Mr. Peabody's ministry and the whole of Mr. Badger's, the number of Indians having dwindled and that of the white people much increased, and a considerable portion of the latter not being accommodated by the location of the meeting house, a bitter controversy arose about that location, and it never ceased until after the close of Mr. Badger's ministry, when a new church was built in the centre of the town. No services were held here after 1798; the meeting house gradually fell into decay, and was finally demolished in 1812.

During the first quarter of the present century there was no place of public worship in this part of the town. A portion of those who had attended on Mr. Badger's ministry here became worshippers in the new church erected in the centre of the town. A larger number joined the parish of the Rev. Mr. Noyes of West Needham. Some went to the neighboring churches in Sherborn and Dover. For several years before the erection of this church, the fiftieth anniversary of whose dedication we commemorate to-day,—with the increase of the population, a desire sprung up here to have again a place of public worship in their midst. Informal meetings of the inhabitants were, no doubt, held from time to time, having a view to organize a religious society, petitioning the Legislature for an Act of Incorporation, and building a meeting house. We have the record of but two of those meetings, previous to the incorporation of the society, the first having been held on the 11th of February, 1828, which is entitled "A meeting of the subscribers for the purpose of building a meeting house in the south parish in the town." It was held at Brooks' tavern agreeably to public notice; Captain John Bacon being Moderator and Leonard

Perry, Clerk. At that meeting a committee of three was "chosen, and authorized to let out and contract for the building of a meeting house on or near the spot where the old meeting house in the south part of Natick stood or such as shall be designated by the Society about to be incorporated." Elijah Perry and Thomas Phillips were the contractors who undertook the erection of the house, the latter with Nathan Phillips of West Dedham being the carpenters who superintended the doing of the work. It was voted at this meeting that "the payments be made to the contractors, one third April 10th, one third August 10th, the remainder when the house is completed." At a meeting of the subscribers, held Oct. 3, following, a committee* was chosen "to superintend the finishing of the common around the meeting house in such a manner as their judgment shall dictate." At an adjournment of the same meeting a committee was chosen to procure a bell. †

The south parish in Natick, for whose use this church was built, was incorporated by an act of the Legislature, March 1st, 1828. The names of thirty persons are given in the act as constituting the society. "with such others as may hereafter associate themselves with them."‡ A meeting to organize under the act was held April 8, 1828, at which a committee of five was chosen to locate a site for the meeting house. The parish committee was also authorized to hire preaching, but it does not appear that any meetings were held for public worship until after the dedication of the church. At a subsequent meeting, a committee was appointed to appraise the pews, who were directed to assess \$3500 upon them, which was probably about what the house cost. At an adjournment of the meeting they reported such an appraisal, and their report was accepted. There was never any sale of pews, and no pews ever became the property of individuals.

*The committee consisted of Amory Morse, Lowell Perry, Josiah Bigelow, Thomas Phillips and Job Brooks. The work was done according to a plan exhibited for that purpose by Josiah Bigelow.

†This committee consisted of Phares Sawin and Col. Abraham Bigelow.

‡For a list and some notices of the corporators see the appendix at the end of the Discourse.

The dedication took place Nov. 20th. The services on the occasion were as follows: Introductory prayer by Rev. John B. Wight of Wayland; selections of scriptures by Rev. John White of Dedham; dedicatory prayer by Rev. Ralph Sanger of Dover; sermon by Rev. Charles Lowell, D. D., of Boston; concluding prayer by Rev. Daniel C. Sanders, D. D., of Medfield. Original hymns were prepared for the occasion by William and Josiah Bigelow. The sermon was from Haggai, II. 9, "In this will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts." The doctrine being that union of sentiment among Christians is not essential to peace. Of those who took part in the services of the occasion the venerable Mr. Wight of Wayland, now nearly ninety years of age, who, we hoped, would be able to be with us to-day, has for many years been the sole survivor.*

In looking over the list of incorporators and of those who were prominent in the establishment of the society, we find several of the names of Biglow, Bacon and Perry. The name of Isaac Biglow heads the list. Abraham and Isaac, Jr., were also among the incorporators, and Josiah was an early member. The Biglows were among the prominent families of the town. William Biglow, a graduate of Harvard College in 1794, was one of this family. At one time he was the principal of the Boston Latin School. He was a poet and wit of no ordinary powers, and furnished good hymns, as did also his nephew, Josiah, for both the dedication of the church and the ordination of the first minister. In 1830, he published an authentic and valuable history of the town. His father, Deacon William Biglow, was the Deacon Badger of Mrs. Stowe's "Old Town Folks." The mother of Professor Calvin E. Stowe was one of this family. John Bacon, Sr., was one of the largest contributors to the expense of building the church, and he and his sons, John Jr. and Oliver, were among the leading members of the society. John Bacon, Jr., early removed to New York. Oliver, recently deceased, always felt a strong interest in the society, and, at his death, made a bequest of \$5,000 to the parish for the sup-

*His letter replying to his invitation may be found in the appendix.

port of worship here. The name of Elijah Perry stands second among the incorporators, and he was among the most active in the movement for erecting the church and sustaining the society. As has been stated, he was one of the contractors who undertook the building of the house. His son, Leonard Perry, was one of the first deacons of the church, continuing to hold the office as long as he remained in town. Hon. Amos Perry, now of Providence, R. I., was, in his youth, connected with the first Sunday School, and played an instrument in the first choir. Some of the family have continued active members of the parish to the present time. John Atkins, Esq., was not one of the original incorporators, but, after the completion of the house, he became one of the active and influential members of the society, and did as much as any one to promote its prosperity. He was, for many years, a ship-master, removing here towards the end of the last century, [1795] from Truro, Cape Cod, of which place both he and his wife [Jane Avery] were natives. After the death of the Rev. Mr. Badger, he became the agent of Mrs. Badger for the management of her business and the care of her property. After his death Mr. Blanchard preached a funeral sermon which was published. Thomas Phillips, also one of the incorporators, has already been mentioned as one of the contractors for building the church and superintendents of the work. He became a member of the church at its formation, and was soon made one of the deacons, which office he held till his death in 1873. He was especially attached to the liberal views of truth which we hold, and was a worthy example of the pure character and exemplary deportment which they are fitted to produce.

There were others worthy to be remembered, some of whose names I can only mention, as Phares, Calvin, Thomas and Baxter Sawin; Charles, Amory and John Morse, 2d; John Mann; Stephen H. Spalding, M. D.; Moses Eames and Pardon Albee. The number of active members of the society soon after its organization and at the settlement of their first minister was larger than it has been at any time since.

After the dedication, stated services were held, and a Sup-

day School maintained in the church on the Sabbath, the pulpit being supplied, for a while, by ministers of the neighboring churches, and afterwards, by young men from Cambridge, among whom was Mr. James W. Thompson, a member of the Divinity School, whose very acceptable services secured him a unanimous call, Dec. 31, 1829. He accepted the call, and was ordained Feb. 17, 1830. The public services on the occasion were as follows:—

Introductory prayer by Rev. Mr. Sanger of Dover; selections from scriptures by Rev. J. L. Sibley of Stowe; sermon by Rev. Alexander Young of Boston; charge by Rev. James Thompson of Barre, father of the minister elect; right hand of fellowship by Rev. Luther Hamilton of Taunton; address to the society by Rev. Charles Briggs of Lexington; concluding prayer by Rev. Bernard Whitman of Waltham. Three original hymns were sung, written by William and Josiah Biglow. Mr. Young's text was John, viii, 12, "I am the light of the world." The subject, "Christianity designed and adapted to be a universal religion." Of those who participated in these services Mr. Sibley, the venerable Librarian Emeritus of Harvard University, is believed to be the only survivor.

On the 11th of March, 1830, a church was gathered and embodied, consisting of members dismissed for that purpose, from the churches of Natick and Dover, together with some other persons who offered themselves for membership. Rev. Mr. Sanger of Dover, being present and acting as moderator, read a Declaration and Covenant which received the signatures and assent of those seeking membership, the ordinance of baptism being administered to one of them.* A sermon was preached on the occasion by Mr. Sanger, when it was publicly announced that a church had been regularly formed agreeably to congregational usage. The Lord's Supper was first administered in this church on the 28th of March, 1830, to twenty-two communicants.

*Thomas Phillips, afterwards elected deacon.

This first ministry, commencing under such favorable auspices, and so eminently harmonious and prosperous while it lasted, was destined to be of short continuance. Mr. Thompson, having received a call from the Barton Square Society, Salem, this society reluctantly consented to the dissolution of his connection with them at the end of the second year of his ministry. His large success and distinguished usefulness in other fields of labor intensifies the feeling of regret that he could not have continued here.

After the close of Mr. Thompson's ministry the pulpit continued vacant about a year and a half. In May, 1833, Mr. Edward Palmer commenced preaching here, and at length, Oct. 12, received a call to become the minister of this parish for three years. He had been recommended to this society by Rev. Bernard Whitman of Waltham, who preached the sermon at his ordination on the 30th of October. Mr. Palmer was young and inexperienced, and his services did not long continue satisfactory to the people, and, on the 2nd of September, 1834, after a ministry of ten months, his relation to the parish was dissolved at his own request.

After an interval of a few months, the parish united in a call to the Rev. Ira Henry Thomas Blanchard to become their minister. Mr. Blanchard, a native of Weymouth, Mass., graduated at Harvard College in the class of 1817, and having held the office of tutor in the college, at the same time pursuing, in his leisure hours, his theological studies, was at length settled over the first Congregational church in Harvard in the beginning of 1823. There he remained eight years, till a severe and long-continued illness compelled him to relinquish his pastoral charge. After a few years he so far recovered his health as to accept the call of this parish for a term of five years, and was installed Feb. 25, 1835.* His ministry here was a harmonious and useful one, continuing to the end of the five years for which he had been engaged. It was during his ministry that the Ladies' Social Circle, who had always done their full share in keeping up the religious life and interest of the church and in contributing to its material needs, under the influence of Mrs.

*The order of exercises at his installation may be found in the appendix.

Blanchard, a woman of high character and rare worth, who was always active in all good enterprises, established a library for the use of its members, which has been increasing ever since in size and usefulness. For many years it was under the careful charge of Mrs. Oliver Bacon as its efficient librarian, and, after her death, her husband erected a neat and commodious building to receive it, which stands in the shaded enclosure containing the Eliot monument, and presented to the Ladies' Social Circle, out of regard to the great interest which his wife had taken in it, and as a tribute to her memory. And, at his own death, Mr. Bacon made a very liberal bequest of a very considerable sum to erect a spacious fire-proof building and to constitute a fund, placing it in the hands of trustees, to establish and sustain a free library for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town, to which he was undoubtedly moved by the interest which he and his wife took in this village library.

At the end of the five years for which Mr. Blanchard had been engaged, the parish, highly appreciating the value of his services, proposed to him to renew his engagement, but the precarious state of his health and his wish to devote himself to the care and comfort of his aged and widowed mother, led him to decline. He, however, offered to supply the pulpit three months longer, which offer was gratefully accepted. He removed to Weymouth, his native place, where he survived about five years.* These last years were years of much weakness and suffering. He was able, however, occasionally to supply vacant pulpits, and declined one call to another settlement. He at length became the victim of consumption, his death taking place April 9, 1845. If he had enjoyed good health, his more than ordinary ability and his great excellence would have insured him a distinguished rank in his profession.

During the next two years the parish were without a settled minister, the pulpit being occupied by transient supplies. In 1841, a subscription was raised to paint the church and repair the fence around it, and it is presumed that these repairs were made at that time.

Early in the spring of 1843, the parish invited the Rev.

Thomas Brattle Gannett to take the pastoral charge of the society for five years. He accepted the invitation and entered upon his duties without an installation. Mr. Gannett had previously been, for nearly twenty years, the pastor of a church in Cambridgeport, where he "approved himself a faithful and devoted minister, conciliating the affection and commanding the respect of the flock by his exemplary life and devotion to their service."* At this time more than usual interest was manifested here by the addition of about twenty new members to the parish. A code of by-laws was also adopted, relating chiefly to the conditions of membership; and the regulation of the finances of the society.

It was during the ministry of Mr. Gannett, in Oct., 1847, that some public-spirited individuals, headed by Rev. Mr. Gannett, Hon. Henry Wilson and Mr. Oliver Bacon, caused the monument to be erected to the memory of Eliot now standing within the enclosure embracing a part of the Indian burying ground. The pleasant grove in the enclosure around the monument was set out about this time. A large and venerable red oak, which some maintain to have been *the* Eliot Oak, rather than the large white oak now standing,—formerly stood near where the town pump now stands, which having become somewhat decayed, was cut down about that time by a citizen living in the vicinity. Its fall caused much regret and indignation on the part of many leading inhabitants who believed that it might have been preserved for many years.

Until the early part of 1848 this had been the only place of worship in this part of the town. In February of that year, the Baptists organized a church here, worshipping in the Hall of the Public House, but, three years later, in February, 1857, they removed to the centre of the town, where they erected a church in which they have ever since worshipped.

At the end of the five years for which he was originally engaged, Mr. Gannett was reëngaged for a further term of service, and continued his pastorate till April 1, 1850. After

**Christian Examiner*, for July, 1851, page 130.

the close of his ministry, he continued to reside at South Natick, in failing health, where he survived about a year, and died on the 19th of April, 1851. Though not possessing brilliant talents, or the highest intellectual endowments, he was yet "known and trusted for his moral excellence, his kind affections, his sound practical judgment in regard to the duties and exigencies of life, and his efficient usefulness." In a tribute to his memory, written soon after his death, it is truthfully said, "It belonged to Mr. Gannett's nature to shrink from publicity, but his tenderness of conscience never permitted him to neglect a duty while his sound discretion guided him to the right performance of it. Many within the walks of the profession which he loved have been more eminent, but few more esteemed. And when the distinction which the world and the church confer upon genius and eloquence and learning shall be lost in the more enduring distinctions of virtue, we believe that our friend will be found with them 'of whom God is not ashamed to be called their Father, having provided for them a kingdom.'"

On the 1st of October, 1850, Rev. James Thurston, who had recently been the minister of the Unitarian society in Billerica, was engaged to become the minister and pastor of this church and society for six months, at the end of which, the engagement was renewed for one year. His connection with the church and society terminated in April, 1852. He graduated at Harvard in 1829, and from the Theological School, in 1835. He was a man of much culture and scholarly attainments, and his ministry here was a harmonious and prosperous one. As a member of the school committee of the town, he was active, in connection with Judge Bacon, in the original establishment of the High School in the town. The last years of his life were spent in West Newton, where he died of consumption, in 1872.

Rev. Nathaniel O. Chaffee succeeded Mr. Thurston in the charge of this pulpit, and remained one year till April, 1853, when Rev. Edward Stowe, a native of Framingham, a graduate of Brown University, in 1835, and of the Cambridge

**Christian Examiner*, for July, 1851, page 160.

Divinity School in 1839, took his place. On entering the ministry, he preached awhile at the West. Returning, he was settled a few years at Barnstable, Mass. Subsequently, for ten or twelve years, he ministered successfully to the societies in Calais, Bucksport and Hallowell, Maine. He remained here as minister two years, closing his ministry the last of May, 1855. Mr. Stowe was a good and acceptable preacher, a diligent student, a faithful and highly esteemed pastor, earnest and conscientious in his work, and a person of great purity of character. He was much interested in Natural History and scientific studies, and, a few years since, was elected an Honorary Member of our Historical and Natural History Society. After leaving here he went to Framingham to take the care of his aged parents, where he died, somewhat suddenly, in 1877.

After about two years' interruption of the continuity of the pastoral relation, in May, 1857, Rev. William G. Babcock came here from Harvard, Mass., and assumed the pastoral office for one year. Having first labored as minister at large in the city of Providence, and afterwards filled the ministerial office in Lunenburg and Harvard, he brought to his work here considerable experience, and so far met the wishes and expectations of the people as to be reëngaged for two years more. He closed his labors here in February, 1860. It was in the last year of his ministry that an orthodox Congregational society was organized, and its first minister ordained.* After a short ministry in Scituate, Mass., Mr. Babcock became the minister of the Warren Street Chapel, Boston, where he still remains. We are very happy to have his aid in the services to-day.

In May, 1860, I commenced the supply of the pulpit, and continued in the ministerial office here till April, 1874, a period of almost fourteen years. I have not proposed to myself to give any account, on this occasion, of my labors during those years. But I feel constrained to improve this opportunity to bear witness to the uniform courtesy and kind

*The services of ordination were held in this church, on Wednesday, November 16, 1859, when Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, a native of this place, preached the sermon.

appreciation, on the part of this people, of my poor labors in their service, to their liberality in doing what they could for my support, and to their sincere and heart-felt sympathy in my sorrows, as I have often sought to bring them comfort and hope in theirs. I would fain hope it may prove, as they have seemed to believe, that some good and worthy results have come from my labors among them. Though my ministry has been about twice as long as the longest of my predecessors, it was a satisfaction to feel and know that they were willing and desirous that I should serve them yet longer; and after I ceased to be their minister, they have never been wanting in heart-felt respect and kindness to me in my declining days. Not knowing where else I could find so pleasant a home in my loneliness, I propose to cast my lot here; and, varying slightly the words of the apostle, I would say to this people, "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I remain with you, or being absent, I may hear of your affairs. that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel."

In less than six months after my resignation, September 30, 1874, my successor, Rev. Joseph P. Sheafe, Jr., was ordained to the ministry here, and he has already entered on the fifth year of his service.* He has brought to this, his first charge, an excellent spirit and a degree of energy, enthusiasm and zeal, that, with a hearty coöperation on the part of the people, which, I trust, will not be wanting, promise the best results in the future. Thus, I will not permit myself to doubt, he will strengthen the things that remain, and will be able to build up,—if not a large society in the *near* future,—one strong in its unity of spirit, an active parish and a living church.

To return, for a moment, in conclusion, to the meeting-house, the point from which we set out. Many improvements have been made, within the half century of its existence, to which I may refer. About a quarter of a century ago, an organ was placed in the church to supersede the use of the

*For the order of services at his ordination see the appendix.

bass-voils, violins, clarionets and flutes, which had been used as an accompaniment to the music before. Since 1860, when I became the minister, the wall, and the stone posts and steps have been put around and in front of the church, the roof has been slated, new windows of stained glass have been put in, the projection for the pulpit has been built out, the interior has been frescoed, and the aisles carpeted, the house has been painted within and without, and a new tower has been erected and a clock has been placed upon it. This last—the clock—was purchased at the expense of the village, and is not exclusively parish property.

In all these changes and improvements, we have had the indispensable aid of one of our summer residents and fellow-worshippers,* whose works of quiet, unostentatious beneficence have come from the love of doing good for its own sake, and of whose innumerable and little-known acts of charity and mercy—it will never be realized how many and great they have been, until he is no longer spared to do them.

I think we may safely claim that our church, at present, is a more commodious and tasteful and pleasant place of worship than that in which the fathers met fifty years ago to-day. If those who come after us, fifty years hence, shall wish and seek for a better church, may they, by building into it so much of the Christian spirit of self-consecration, and love, and purity, make good the claim that the glory of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former.

*H. H. Hunnewell. Esq.

Appendix.

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As stated in the foregoing discourse, the Act of Incorporation of the South Congregational, now the First Unitarian parish of Natick, was dated March 1, 1828. The following are the thirty names given in the Act as constituting the Society:

Isaac Biglow,	who died April 18, 1854,	aged 77 years.
Elijah Perry,	" " November 19, 1845,	" 74 "
Pharez Sawin,	" " December 7, 1836,	" 66 "
Abraham Biglow,	" " October 16, 1873,	" 85 "
John Bacon, Jr.,	" " in New York, August 15, 1853,	" 59 "
Leonard Perry,	" " in Baltimore, June 4, 1856,	" 60 "
Charles Morse,	" " in Dover, April 23, 1843,	" 60 "
Benjamin Bird,	" " August 27, 1836,	" 63 "
William Perry,	" " August 15, 1860,	" 83 "
Lindall Perry,	still living in Woburn.	
Amory Morse,	who died March 19, 1856,	" 60 "
John P. Barnes,	It is not known what became of him.	
Oliver Bacon,	who died April 13, 1878,	" 81 "
Mrs. Hannah Draper,	" " in Needham, September 24, 1851,	" 90 "
Isaiah Bacon,	who removed to Vermont in 1829, and died soon after.	
William Drake,	who kept the Hotel in 1828, but early left the town.	
Dexter Whitney,	who removed to Charlton, where he died,	
Samuel Jones,	who died January 29, 1839,	aged 64 years.
Lowell Perry,	" " November 17, 1860,	" 66 "
Pardon Albee,	" " in Waltham, August 23, 1832,	" 33 "
John Atkins, Jr.,	" " January 6, 1872,	" 85 "
Thomas Phillips,	" " July 1, 1873,	" 76 "
John Breck,	His history is unknown.	
Stephen H. Spalding,	M. D., who died July 15, 1865,	" 76 "
Baxter Sawin,	who died September 15, 1854,	" 55 "
John Mann,	" " January 14, 1858,	" 69 "
John Morse, 2d,	" " December 31, 1864,	" 65 "
Calvin Sawin,	" " in Dover, December 26, 1847,	" 59 "
Isaac Biglow, Jr.,	" " April 22, 1859,	" 58 "
Job Brooks,	who removed to Boston, where he died a few years ago.	

Only one, Lindall Perry, was living on the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the meeting house.

The names of sixty-six additional members were added by or before April, 1831, making, with the thirty incorporators, ninety-six members of the Society.

The following was the Order of Services at the Installation of the Rev. I. H. T. Blanchard as pastor of the South Congregational Society in Natick, February 25, 1835:—

I. Anthem. II. Introductory Prayer and Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. J. W. Thompson. III. Original Hymn, written by Josiah Biglow. IV. Sermon by Rev. Convers Francis of Watertown. V. Prayer of Installation by Rev. Alvan Lamson of Dedham. VI. Charge by Rev. Francis Parkman, D. D., of Boston. VII. Right Hand of Fellowship by Rev. E. S. Gannett of Boston. VIII. Address to the Society by Rev. John Pierpont of Boston. IX. Concluding Prayer by Rev. Chandler Robbins of Boston. X. Original Prayer, written by Mrs. Sarah A. Dowe. XI. Benediction by the pastor.

The order of services at the ordination of Rev. Joseph P. Sheafe, Jr., September 30, 1874, was as follows:—

I. Invocation, by Rev. Horatio Alger of South Natick. II. Selection by the choir. III. Reading from the Scriptures, by Rev. Alfred E. Mullett of Sherborn. IV. Hymn. V. Sermon by Rev. Rufus Ellis, D. D., of Boston. VI. Ordaining Prayer, by Rev. C. C. Fverett, D. D., of Cambridge. VII. Hymn. VIII. Charge, by Professor Edward J. Young of Cambridge. IX. Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. D. M. Wilson of Melrose. X. Anthem. XI. Address to the People, by Rev. W. H. Cudworth of East Boston. XII. Concluding Prayer, by Rev. S. D. Hosmer of South Natick. XIII. Doxology, "From all who dwell below the skies," etc. XIV. Benediction by the Pastor.

Commemoration of the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the Dedication of the Unitarian Church, November 20, 1878.

At the annual parish meeting of the First Unitarian Society, held March 27, 1878, after discussion, it was unanimously voted to commemorate the semi-centennial anniversary of the dedication of the church by suitable public services, and a committee was chosen to make the necessary arrangements for the commemoration. Rev. Horatio Alger, Rev. Joseph P. Sheafe, Jr., Oliver Bacon, Elijah Perry, Elliot Perry and the Standing Committee of the parish, Aaron Wheeler, E. M. Phipps and Henry Hancock, were chosen as said Committee of Arrangements. In accordance with the vote of the society, and in pursuance of the arrangements made by the committee, the services of commemoration took place in the church on Wednesday, November 20th. The weather proved stormy, thus deterring many who would otherwise have attended from being present.* Nevertheless, a goodly number appeared at the church and participated in the interesting exercises. Among them were a few—some seven or eight—who were at

*A friend who was present at the dedication fifty years ago informs us that the weather was also stormy on that occasion.

the dedication fifty years ago. All the surviving ex-ministers were present.

At 10-45 o'clock, A. M., the exercises of the day were opened by an anthem from the choir. Rev. William G. Babcock of the Warren Street Chapel, Boston, formerly a pastor of this church, then read appropriate selections from the scriptures. An impressive prayer was next offered by Professor Edward J. Young of Harvard University. The choir then sung the following hymn, written by Josiah Biglow, and sung at the ordination of the first pastor:—

Here first, O Lord, the red men woke
 Their wild, untutored song to Thee;
 Their altar was the forest oak,
 Their temple, heaven's high canopy.
 And where the hearth, with cheerful blaze,
 Welcomes a more enlightened throng,
 The desert heard their simple praise,
 And echoed back their grateful song.
 O, where is now the gathered band,
 That met in olden time to pray?
 And where that holy man, whose hand
 First led them on their pilgrim way?
 Peaceful they slumber, side by side,
 Where they Thy holy name avowed;
 The warrior's plume, the chieftain's pride,
 Before a stranger race are bowed.
 Rich in the fulness of his days,
 That veteran of the cross is gone;
 His spirit heard the toil-earned praise,
 "Thou servant of the Lord, well done!"

Rev. J. P. Sheafe, Jr., next proceeded to deliver the first of the foregoing historical addresses. This was followed by the singing of the following original hymn, written for the occasion by Horatio Alger, Jr.:—

Eternal God, whose mighty power
 Controls the slowly circling spheres,
 And yet whose all-pervading love
 E'en in the humblest life appears,
 Thy people, shielded by the care,
 Have walked in peace these fifty years
 In other lands, Thy worshippers
 Have reared, with toil, vast, stately piles,
 And unto Thee their reverent eyes
 Uplift in dim cathedral aisles;
 We, in this humbler temple met,
 Have shared the sunshine of Thy smiles.

Beneath this roof the song of praise
 Hath blended with the voice of prayer.
 As, week by week, thy children met
 To thank Thee for the guardian care
 That guides our steps and keeps us safe,
 Not only here, but everywhere.

Our Father, in the years to come,
 Be with us as in days gone by!
 O, fill us with a sacred joy
 When the last summons comes—to die,
 And from this lowly temple lift
 Our spirits to Thy home on high!

The foregoing semi-centennial address was then delivered by Rev. Horatio Alger.

At the close of the services in the church, the audience adjourned to the School House Hall, where a collation had been provided by the Society.

Having returned to the church, at 2 o'clock, Rev. S. W. Bush, pastor of the church at Needham, at the request of the Committee of Arrangements, acted as Chairman. Rev. Mr. Alger read the following letter from the Rev. John B. Wight of Wayland, now in his eighty-ninth year, and the sole survivor who took part in the dedicatory services of fifty years ago:

Wayland, Nov. 20th, 1878.

Rev. Horatio Alger, South Natick.

Dear Sir:

The infirmities of age preclude me from hoping to be bodily present with you at the approaching commemoration of the first fifty years since the dedication of your house of worship. I hope, however, I may be able to be in some measure present with you in spirit and thus participate in the pleasant recollections, the holy feelings and the heavenly hopes, connected with the interesting occasion.

With high regard,

JOHN B. WIGHT,

in the 89th year of my age.

There were other letters expressing regret at their inability to attend from friends, who, it was hoped, would be present.

After some appropriate eulogistic remarks by the Chairman on the character of the New England clergy, he introduced Rev. Dr. Thompson of Jamaica Plain, the first pastor of this church, who touched a tender chord in loving reminiscences of his South Natick congregation, and gave a brief characterization of some of the neighboring pastors. He gave some personal recollections of Rev. Dr. Sanger of Dover, and of Messrs. William and Josiah Biglow, and made a tender reference to Mrs. Oliver Bacon. When his pastorate ceased, many years ago, he gave the people his youthful benediction; he now wished them to receive an old man's blessing.

Rev. William G. Babcock, also a former pastor, described the audience-room as he knew it. Though the times were troublous, from various causes, yet a loving spirit was shown. He referred to the mental activity of Moses Eames, Esq., and the honest goodness of Deacon Phillips.

Rev. S. D. Hosmer of South Natick, being called on, responded, playfully preferring, for personal safety, a church semi-centennial to a Medfield bi-centennial. Alluding to the establishing of another church here, he spoke of the desire to honor Eliot by its name; and as the old church was called the Eliot, the new one had to be called the John Eliot church.

Mr. Elijah Perry stated some interesting family facts. John Perry, his ancestor, six generations ago, came over in the same ship that had brought Eliot; and Lewis Jones, ancestor on the maternal side, came in 1640. His maternal grandfather was one of the deacons of Parson Badger.

Hon. Amos Perry of Providence, R. I., said that fifty years ago to-day he played a flute in the choir. He also referred to his early connection with the Sunday School.

Rev. J. Edwards of Grantville, expressed his interest in the valuable papers read in the morning; and Mr. William B. Trask of Dorchester, a member of the Historic Genealogical Society, narrated some incidents of Eliot's life, reading an account of the good man's narrow escape from drowning.

Rev. Mr. Pinch of South Natick, and Rev. A. B. Vorse of Grantville, also made short addresses.

The music was excellently rendered, and the services through the day, in spite of the weeping skies, were highly appreciated and enjoyed.

The following hymns were sung by the choir in the afternoon:—

Semi-Centennial Hymn, Written by Rev. S. D. Robbins.

O! Thou, who changest not though centuries roll,
Of all we are or have, the Sun and Soul!
Thy truths sublime the generations keep
Within Thy temples, though the fathers sleep.

We bless Thee for the light that streams each day,
Fresh from Thy mind, to guide us on our way:
We thank Thee for the love that flows so free
Forth from Thy heart to lead us up to Thee.

Thine are the spirits of the pure and just,
Who walked among us, true to every trust:
The fragrance of their memories shall rise
As incense with our daily sacrifice.

Our Father! on that happy, heavenly shore,
 Where separation shall be known no more,
 Safely enfolded on Thy faithful breast,
 Thy children all shall share Thy holy rest.

Dedication Hymn, Written by Josiah Biglow.

Thou Mighty One! whose boundless sway
 Pervades all worlds and fills all space,
 To Thee we bow, to Thee we pray,
 To Thee we consecrate this place.

Here first the forest sons were taught
 To know Thy name and own Thy word;
 Here first Thy beams of truth they caught,
 And nature's children owned Thee Lord.

Our fathers, on this hallowed ground,
 From olden time have knelt and prayed,
 And we, their children, would be found
 To tread the footsteps they have made.

Again, O! Lord, 'Thine altars blaze,
 Again Thy temple decks the land,
 Where stranger-nations mingled praise,
 Led by the Savior's guiding hand.

God of all people! we would bring
 The offering of our praise to Thee:
 And, while our lips Thy glories sing,
 May every heart Thy dwelling be.

This humble effort of our powers,
 This lowly temple, we have given;
 O! may it prove to us and ours,
 The house of God, the gate of heaven!

Benediction.

