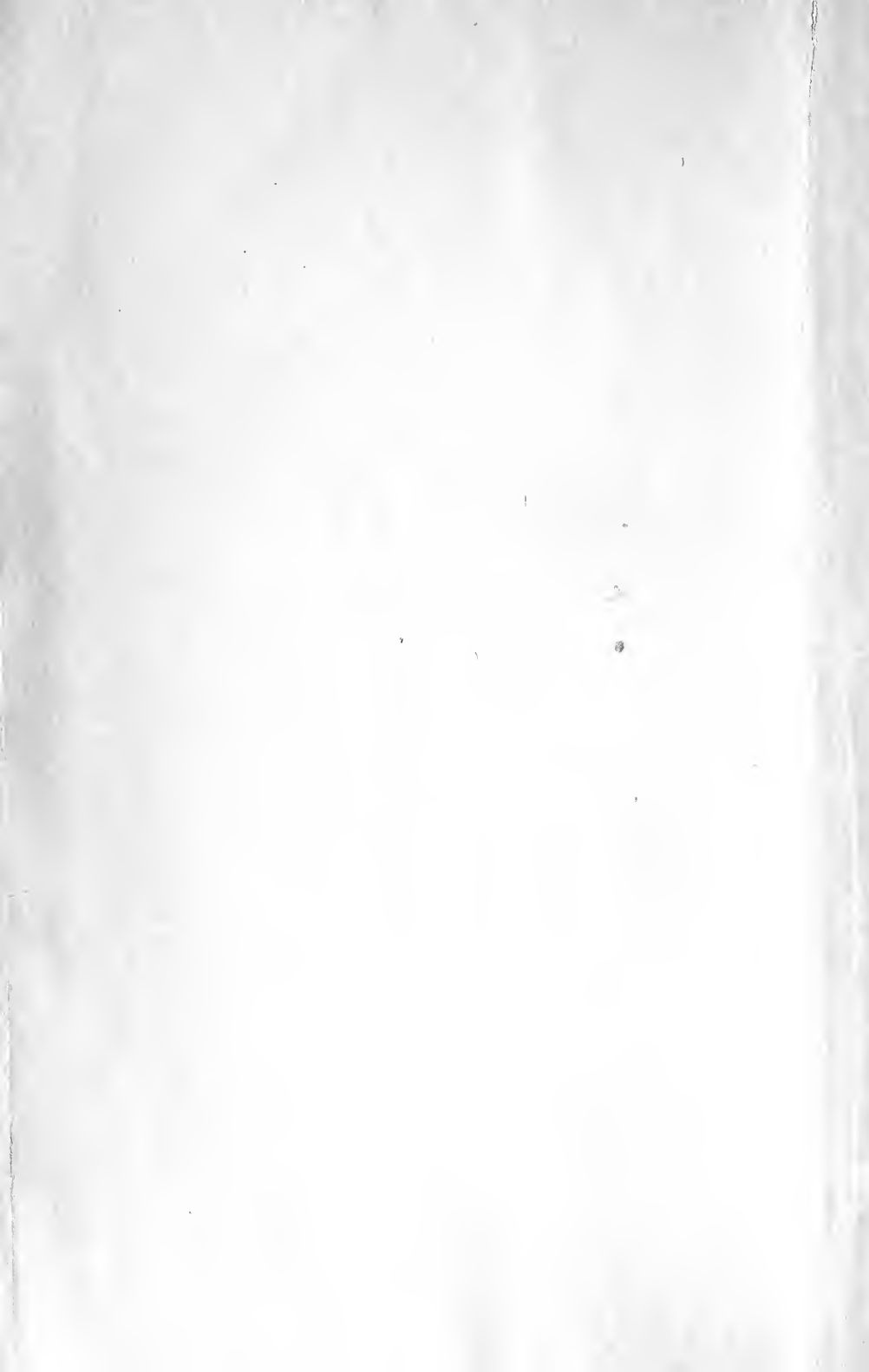


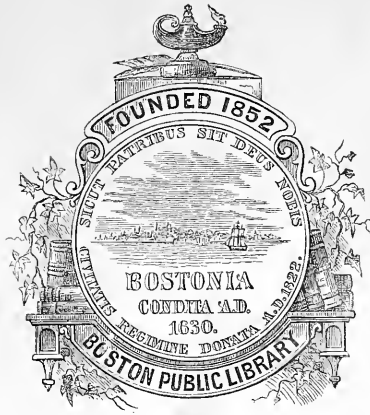


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SERMON,

DELIVERED

AT NATICK, JANUARY V, MDCCCXVII,

CONTAINING

A HISTORY OF SAID TOWN,

FROM MDCLI

TO THE DAY OF DELIVERY.

BY MARTIN MOORE, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN NATICK.

CAMBRIDGE:

PRINTED BY HILLIARD AND METCALF.

1817.

Pr.

DEDICATION.

To the Inhabitants of the town of Natick.

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS,

DEEMING it highly important that the early history of our own country, and especially of the place where we live, should be preserved, I have collected and put into the form of a Sermon, many facts that relate to the history of this town.

The same motive that led me to the composition of this Sermon, now induces me to consent to its publication. *Remember the days of old, the years of ancient times.* It is the ardent desire and prayer of the author, that God would abundantly bless you and your children, both in the present and future life. When our present connexion of minister and people shall be dissolved, may we meet together in the kingdom of our heavenly Father, which may God grant for Christ's sake. AMEN.

SERMON.

PSALM lxxvii, 5.

I HAVE CONSIDERED THE DAYS OF OLD, THE YEARS OF
ANCIENT TIMES.

THIS Psalm appears to have been composed, either in a time of personal distress of the Psalmist, or in a time of distress of the Israelitish nation. Whatever was the cause of the Psalmist's grief, it was exceeding sore. He could derive no comfort from contemplating his present situation. As his present prospects were gloomy, he was naturally led to review the past. He reviewed not only God's past dealing with him, but he extended his review to the Jewish nation. He recollected the many mercies and blessings that God had bestowed upon the nation over which he reigned. *I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.* Although we, my hearers, may not be labouring under any peculiar distress; yet it may be profitable for us, (as we have lately entered upon a new year,) to review not merely God's past dealings with us, as individuals, but extend our views further, and review God's dealings with this town, from the period, it is first known in history, till the present time.

Since Providence has cast my lot among you, I have naturally been led to inquire into the early history of this town. I was at first led to undertake the work for my own satisfaction. I was desirous of knowing the history of the place where I am station-

ed. As I progressed in the work, it occurred to me, that it might be interesting to the inhabitants of the town, especially to the younger part of them, publicly to communicate the result of my inquiries. Before I proceed with the narrative, it is proper to remark, that the history, that I am about to attempt, will be imperfect. After considerable labour and research, I have not been able to obtain some documents, and many of the records are defective. But such facts, as I have been able to collect, I will now proceed to relate.

The tract of land, which now composes the town of Natick, was originally a part of Dedham. It is said that the town of Dedham gave Natick in exchange for Deerfield. Deerfield was formerly owned by the Natick tribe. They had been subdued by a neighbouring hostile tribe. To ensure their safety, they put themselves under the protection of the English. Tradition says that they were for a while kept on one of the islands in Boston harbour. After they had made the beforementioned exchange, they came here to live. If this traditionary account be correct, it seems that the General Court sanctioned this proceeding. Hubbard, in his History of New England, informs us that this town, with several other places, was appropriated to the Indians in 1654.

“At this court, (in 1654,) Mr. John Eliot, minister of Roxbury, that had heretofore by them been encouraged to go on with preaching the gospel to the Indians, obtained several parcels of land for the Indians, that gave any sincere hopes of their embracing the Christian religion, as at Hasanameset, (now Grafton,) a place up in the woods, beyond Medfield and Mendon, and at Puncapoag, beyond Dorchester, as well as at Natick, near Dedham.”

Three years before this period, (viz. in 1651,) Mr.

Eliot had gathered an Indian church in this place. Mr. Eliot's labours to convert the heathen to the Christian faith were very great. By Mr. Eliot's and others' labours, about twenty churches were planted among the different tribes of these benighted pagans. There were at one period 1100 Indians that professed Christianity. Mr. Eliot translated the Bible into the Indian language.* "The New Testament was published in 1661, and the whole Bible soon after. He composed and translated other books, as a Primer, a Grammar, Singing psalms, the Practice of piety, Baxter's Call, and several other things. He took care that schools should be opened in the Indian settlements, where their children were taught to read; some were put into schools of the English, and studied Latin and Greek. In 1665, a brick edifice was erected at Cambridge, 30 feet long and 20 wide, for an Indian college." These efforts to convert the heathen were made principally by the instrumentality of Mr. Eliot. Mr. Eliot, from his laborious exertions to introduce the Gospel among the Indians, is generally styled *the apostle of New England*.

The Indians that felt the impressions of Mr. Eliot's ministry were quickly distinguished by the name of *praying Indians*. In Cotton Mather's life of the "renowned John Eliot," we have a full account of his gathering an Indian church in this place.

"Here it was, (says Cotton Mather,) that in the year 1651, those that had heretofore lived like the *wild beasts* in the wilderness, now compacted themselves into a town; and they applied themselves to the forming their *civil government*. *Our General Court*, notwithstanding their exact study to keep the Indians very sensible of their being subject to the En-

* Drs. Morse and Parish's History of New England.

glish empire, yet had allowed them their smaller courts, wherein they might govern their own smaller cases and concerns, after their own particular modes, and might have their *own town orders*, if I may call them so, peculiar to themselves.

“With respect hereunto, Mr. Eliot, on a solemn fast, made a public vow, that seeing these Indians had not any form of civil government, he would instruct them in such a form, as we had in the word of God, so that they in all things might be a people ruled by the Lord. According he expounded unto them the eighteenth chapter of Exodus; and then they chose rulers of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens; and therewithall they entered into this covenant. We are the sons of Adam; we and our forefathers have a long time been lost in our sins; but now the mercy of the Lord beginneth to find us out again, therefore the grace of Christ helping us, we do give up ourselves and our children unto God, to be his people. He shall rule us in all our affairs; the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us; the wisdom, which God hath taught us in his book, shall guide us. Oh, Jehovah, teach us wisdom; send thy Spirit into our hearts; take us to be thy people, and let us take thee to be our God.

“The little towus of the Indians being pitched upon this foundation, they utterly abandoned that polygamy, which had heretofore been common among them; they made severe laws against *fornication, drunkenness, and sabbath breaking*, and other immoralities; and they next began to lament after church order among them, and after the several ordinances and privileges of church communion. The churches of New England have usually been very strict in their admission to church fellowship, and required very signal demonstrations of a *repenting and believing soul*, be-

fore they thought men fit subjects to be entrusted with the rights of the kingdom of heaven. But they seemed to augment rather than abate their strictness, when the examination of the Indians was to be performed. A day was therefore set apart, which they called *Natootomuhteackesuk* or a *day of asking questions*, when the ministers of the adjacent churches, assisted by all the best interpreters that could be had, publicly examined a good number of these Indians, about their attainments in knowledge and virtue. And notwithstanding the great satisfaction then received, our churches being willing to proceed *surely*, and therefore *slowly*, in raising them up to a church state, which might be comprehended in our *Consociations*, the Indians were afterwards called together in considerable assemblies, convened for that purpose, to make open confession of their faith in God and in Christ, and of the efficacy which his word had upon them for their conversion to him; which confessions, being taken in writing, from their mouths, by able interpreters, were scanned by the people of God, and found much acceptance with them."

Richard Mather, grandfather to Cotton Mather, the first minister of Dorchester, who was present on this occasion, gives the following account. "There is so much of God's work among them, as I cannot but count it a great evil, yea, a great injury to God and his goodness, for any to make light of it. To see and hear Indians, opening their mouths and lifting up their hands and eyes in prayer to the living God, calling on him by his name, *Jehovah*, in the mediation of Jesus Christ, and this a good while together; to see and hear them exhorting one another from the word of God; to see and hear them confessing the name of Christ Jesus, and their own sinfulness; sure this was more than usual! And though they spake in a lan-

guage, of which many of us understood but little, yet *we* that were present that day, *we* saw and heard them perform the duties mentioned, with such grave and sober countenances, with such comely reverence in their gesture, and whole carriage, and with such plenty of tears trickling down the cheeks of some of them, as did argue to us, that they spake with holy fear of God, and it much affected our hearts."

Such is the account given us of the planting of an Indian church in this place by Eliot, that *truly devoted missionary of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Eliot traversed the woods, and entered the wigwams of these benighted pagans, to teach them the knowledge of the true God. He had the same spirit of *missions*, as had Paul and the first preachers of Christianity.

The apostolic spirit has been revived upon an extensive scale, at the present day. Many in Europe and America have come forward, and devoted themselves to the work of preaching the gospel to the heathen. In obedience to their ascended Saviour's command, they go forth to teach all nations what he has commanded them, *baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. *The great I Am will be with them always, even to the end of the world*. Mr. Eliot's labours here were occasional. There were two Indian ministers that used to officiate, when he could not attend.

In the early history of the New England churches it was usual for the churches to have two ministers, the one styled *Pastor*, and the other *Teacher*. The church at Roxbury was thus furnished. Mr. Eliot was teacher, and a Mr. Thomas Weld was pastor. As the church had two ministers, Mr. Eliot could be spared a part of the time.

How long this church continued, or how it flourished, it is difficult at this period to ascertain. But

there are some facts that render it probable, that it continued some time in a flourishing state.

In the year 1670, the church contained between 40 and 50 communicants. It is known where are the graves of several Indian ministers. There is one or more instruments, now in existence, by which an Indian minister conveyed away certain lands.* But owing to some cause or other, the church, formed by Mr. Eliot, became entirely extinct. The probability is, that after Mr. Eliot's death, (which was in 1690,) there was no one raised up to *water* what he had *planted*, and that the Indians gradually returned to their heathenish state.

When Mr. Peabody came to this town in 172f, (which was thirty one years after Mr. Eliot's death, and seventy after the first organization of the church,) he could find no traces of the former church. He thus notes in the beginning of his church records; "It must be observed, that after my most diligent inquiry and search, I can find no records of any thing referring to the former church in Natick; nor who were the members of it, or baptized, till my coming to town." Mr. Peabody preached in this town for the first time, on August 6, 1721. At this time there were but two white families in the town. One of these was an ancestor of the Sawin family, and occupied the place where Mr. Thomas Sawin now lives. Mr. Peabody continued to preach till 1729, before he was ordained. On the 21st of October, 1729, a committee of the Hon. Commissioners, viz. the Honourable Adam Winthrop and Edward Hutchinson, Esqrs. and another from the Reverend Corporation of Harvard College, viz. Rev. Messrs. Flynt, Appleton, and Wigglesworth, came to

* Capt. David Bacon, of this town, has in his possession a deed, by which Daniel Takawombait, minister of Natick, conveyed away a piece of land. This deed is dated April 8, 1692.

Natick in order to consider what might be proper to be done in order to have a church gathered, and a minister ordained.

“It was then thought proper, as the affairs then were, a church should be gathered, partly of Indians and partly of English.” Accordingly, on the 3d of December, 1729, a church was gathered, consisting of three Indians and five English male members. The Rev. Joseph Baxter of Medfield preached on the occasion. Mr. Peabody was ordained at Cambridge, December 17, the same year. Mr. Peabody’s ministry was little more than twenty two years from the time of his ordination. He died February 2, 1752.

From the best information that I have been able to obtain, Mr. Peabody was a faithful and laborious minister of the New Testament. No worldly motives certainly could have induced him to have offered himself as a missionary to the Indians. When he first put himself under the direction of the Commissioners, it was contemplated to send him to a distant part of the continent, but no door opening in Providence, he was sent to this place. It must have required no small share of self denial to have renounced the pleasures of civilized life and become an associate with Indians. To have been useful and successful among them, he must with the Indians, in some respects, have become an Indian.

Mr. Peabody did not labour wholly in vain among the natives. In a letter to the convention of ministers, who were assembled at Boston, from the New England provinces, on the 7th of July, 1743, to express their gratitude to God for the revival of religion in this part of the Lord’s vineyard, he observes; “Among my little people, (I would mention it to the glory of the rich grace, and of the blessed Spirit of God,) there have been very apparent strivings and operation of

the Holy Ghost, among Indians and English, young and old, male and female. There have been added to our church, of such as I hope shall be saved, about fifty persons of different nations, since the beginning of last March was two years, whose lives witness in general to the sincerity of their profession."

A writer in the *Panoplist* for July 1811* observes of him; "He embraced the religious principles of our Puritanic fathers, and has left us abundant testimony in his publications and manuscripts, that *he had not so learned Christ*, as to make the precepts of the gospel bend to suit the vices of men. He was bold and zealous in the cause of truth; but his zeal was not that of an enthusiast. It was an ardent desire to promote the glory of God, and the best good of his fellow men. It was a fixed, uniform, benevolent affection, which was not satisfied with moderate attempts to do good, in so important a cause as that of the Redeemer."

Mr. Peabody was gone one year on a mission to the Mohegan Indians. As he was of a slender constitution, this mission very much impaired his health, and he never was well afterwards.

Little more than a year intervened between Mr. Peabody's death and Mr. Badger's ordination.

Mr. Peabody died 2d of February, 1752. Mr. Badger was ordained 27th of March, 1753. Although no mention is made in the church records, of the dissolution of Mr. Peabody's church, or the gathering of one before Mr. Badger's ordination, yet it is evident that it was dissolved, and another gathered. Mr. Badger, in a communication made to the Historical Society in the year 1797, says; "Immediately previous to my settlement in this place, a church was gath-

* Whoever wishes to become further acquainted with Mr. Peabody's character is referred to this number of the *Panoplist*.

ered, which consisted partly of Indians and partly of English." From the publications of Mr. Badger, that I have seen, I should suppose that he was a man possessed of a strong mind and respectable acquirements.

Of his theological sentiments or general manner of preaching, I have not sufficient documents to enable me to form an opinion.

Mr. Badger closed his public services, July, 1799. He was in the ministry 46 years, died August 28, 1803, aged 78.

When Mr. Badger closed his public labours, the church was again dissolved. The present church was embodied in the winter of 1802. The precise time of its embodying is not noted in the church records. But the first meeting after its embodying, when the deacons were elected, was March 13, 1802. The church and society discovered a very laudable spirit, in their efforts to have the settlement of the gospel ministry among them. On the 22d of April following, the church gave Mr. Samuel Brown an invitation to take the pastoral care of them. The town shortly after joined with them in their invitation.

Mr. Brown was shortly after attacked with a disorder, that terminated in his dissolution. His sickness and deranged state of mind prevented him from ever giving an answer to his call.

The Rev. Freeman Sears, your late worthy and beloved pastor, was ordained January 1, 1806. His labours were short, but I hope not entirely unsuccessful. Although he saw no general revival of religion among you, yet I have reason to hope that there are in your number, *seals of his ministry, that will be crowns of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord.* Although he is dead, still let him speak to you. Call to mind the many solemn warnings and exhortations, which you have heard from his lips, whilst he stood in

this sacred desk. "Through him, the violated law spake forth its thunders; through him, in strains as sweet as angels use, the gospel whispered peace." At the tribunal of the great Jehovah, you must give an account how you heard the word preached, and how you profited under its hearing.

He has gone to give an account for *preaching*; you will shortly go to give an account for *hearing*.

He, as you recollect, was visited with a pulmonic consumption, and went to Savannah to better his health. But change of climate did not remove his disorder. Whilst he was absent, he felt a tender and anxious solicitude for your spiritual welfare. You recollect the affectionate and faithful letter that he wrote you, during his absence.* He returned home, not to enter again on his ministerial labours, but to die. He lived only about four weeks after his return. He closed his life on the 30th of June, 1811, in the 32d year of his age, and sixth of his ministry. You performed the last sad office of friendship and affection to your deceased pastor; you bedewed his grave with your tears; you have paid to him a just tribute, by erecting to his memory handsome and elegant grave stones.

Two years seven months and a half intervened between the death of your late pastor and the ordination of your present. During this period you heard a number of candidates,† and made one unsuccessful attempt to resettle the ministry among you. It is four years this day since I first preached in this place. I was then here three sabbaths, and after an absence of six months returned. The call of the church bears date November 18, 1813. The concurring call of the

* See note at the end.

† The candidates that preached at Natick, during the vacancy occasioned by Mr. Sears' death, were Messrs. Samuel Parker, Joel Wright, Calvin Wait, Isaac Jones, John Taylor, and several others.

town was given December 6th. An affirmative answer was communicated January 2, 1814. On the 16th of February following, I was solemnly set apart to the work of the gospel ministry among you. Nearly three years have elapsed since my ordination. During this period nothing has occurred to interrupt our mutual happiness.—*May we always know how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

At some seasons I have been ready to despond, and at others have taken courage. *I know that neither he that planteth is any thing, nor he that watereth, that it is God and he alone that giveth the increase;* yet such is our natural constitution, that we desire success to attend us, whatever may be our employment. It is, as you may well suppose, peculiarly trying to the feelings of a minister, to preach sabbath after sabbath, and month after month, and still discover in his hearers an indifference to the great truths of religion.

Brethren, pray for me. Pray that the Holy Spirit of God may accompany a preached word, that it may be the power of God and the wisdom of God to many precious and immortal souls in this place.

The number of Indians that composed Mr. Eliot's church at its organization is not known.* In 1670, there were between 40 and 50 communicants. During Mr. Peabody's ministry there were admitted to the church 130 English and 35 Indians. Mr. Badger admitted 69 to Christian profession. When the present church was embodied, the number of persons that covenanted together was 23. Mr. Sears received 15 into the church. Since my ordination, 14 have been added to the church. The number of Indian baptisms under Mr. Eliot is unknown. Mr. Peabody baptized 161 Indians and 413 English; 29 Indians and 22

* Drs Morse and Parish's History of New England.

English were baptized in Natick, before Mr. Peabody's ordination. The number of baptisms during Mr. Badger's ministry was 318. The number baptized between the embodying of the present church and Mr. Sears' ordination is unknown, as no record is made of them. Mr. Sears baptized 45. In the interval between Mr. Sears' death and my ordination, 6 were baptized. Since my ordination, there have been 25 baptisms. The whole number of recorded baptisms is 4019.

The whole number of persons that have attached themselves to the Natick churches since Mr. Peabody's ordination, including a period of eighty eight years, is 286.

The number of persons that have sustained the office of *deacon* is eight,* two of whom hold that office at the present time. One of this number was an Indian.

The number of English births recorded is 4109.

The number of English deaths on record is 313.

There are on the church records the names of 335 Indians, that died between the years 1721 and 1771.

The number of marriages that have been solemnized in this town, I have not been able precisely to ascertain, owing to a deficiency of the records during Mr. Peabody's ministry. Three marriages only are recorded as having been solemnized by him.

The whole number of recorded marriages is 248. Mr. Peabody married 3, Mr. Badger 169, Mr. Sears 48, neighbouring clergymen 6, civil magistrates 39, your present pastor 13.

Natick was incorporated as a parish or religious society, in 1742. It was erected into a district, Feb-

* Deacons Joseph Ephraim, (Indian,) Ebenezer Felch, Nathaniel Chickering, Micah Whitney, John Jones, Nathaniel Mann, Abel Perry, William Goodenow.

ruary 23, 1762, with this excepting clause; *Provided, that the present meeting house be not removed, nor any new meeting house erected within the same, without the special license of this court.*

Natick was incorporated as a town, February 19, 1781.

There have been four meeting houses erected in this town; three of which were situated near Charles river, at the south part of the town. Two houses for public worship were erected by the Indians. The reason, why they were situated so remotely from the centre of the town, was to accommodate the Indians, whose wigwams were mostly in that neighbourhood, and the white people, who first settled in that part of the town. At what periods the three first meeting houses were erected, I have not been able to ascertain.

The location of these meeting houses so far from the centre of the town gave occasion to that unhappy dispute, that subsisted so many years, respecting the spot to erect a meeting house. Respecting this unpleasant dissension, I have never taken much pains to inform myself. But it is probable, that in this, as in most controversies, some degree of blame was attached to each party. Thus much I will venture to say, could the town again be united in forming one religious society, it would contribute much to its *peace, happiness, and respectability.* The law for altering the line between Natick and Needham, by which the tract of land, formerly known by the name of Needham leg, was set to Natick, and a corner of Natick was set to Needham, passed June 22, 1797. The same act gave permission for sundry persons in Natick, to sign off to the religious societies in Dover, Needham, or Sherburne.

The vote of the town to build the house, in which we are now assembled, was passed September 18,

1798. This house was erected on the 6th of June, 1799.

What number of Indians were ever in this place, or what number at any given period, I have no means of knowing. But there are some incidental circumstances that render it probable they were pretty numerous. Tradition says, that they once numbered three hundred fighting men. In the year 1677, two hundred fighting men, together with 40 English, were sent to fight hostile Indians at the eastward. Hubbard, in his History of New England, says, "The Indians, thus making daily inroads upon these weak, unfenced places, (meaning new settlements in the eastern country,) the governour and council resolved to raise new forces, and having had good experience of the faithfulness and valour of the Christian Indians about Natick, armed two hundred of them, and sent them, together with forty English, to prosecute the quarrel with the eastward Indians to the full."

There were at this period probably three or four times as many Indians, as there are inhabitants in this town at the present time. As they came to be surrounded with white neighbours, their number continually lessened.

Mr. Badger, in his communication before alluded to, says, "During several of the first years of my ministry and residence among them, I joined more Indians in marriage, and baptized more of them, than of the English inhabitants; after which, military expeditions at different periods and in different directions were set on foot, and in the several wars that took place between 1754 and 1760, many of them engaged in the service, and not a small number died in it; others returned home and brought contagious sickness with them; it spread very fast, and carried off some whole families. This was in 1759. In the space of

three months, more than 20 of them died; all of the same disorder, which was a putrid fever. It carried them off in a few days." At the time that Mr. Badger made this communication, (which was in 1797,) he supposed that there were about 20 Indians that were either resident here, or that belonged here. This number is now reduced to two or three.

I have now related such facts and events, as I have been able to collect respecting the history of this town. It has been attended with considerable labour on my part, to collect materials necessary to compose this discourse. Should it prove acceptable to the inhabitants of the town, I shall think myself amply rewarded.

In reviewing the history of this town, we are taught several important lessons.

1. The goodness of God towards us as a town demands our grateful acknowledgment.

He has given us a fruitful soil, and a competency of the good things of this life. The town, since its settlement, has been favoured with a good degree of health. It has been preserved from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday. At an early period in the history of New England, God was pleased to visit the natives, who were then proprietors of this town, with a *time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord*. By the instrumentality of Eliot, a good number of these benighted pagans were *turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God*. The names of Eliot and Brainerd are praised in all the churches. In the days of Whitefield, when the New England churches were visited with a shower of righteousness, this town received a portion of this blessing. At this period, fifty were added to the church. God evidently gave you a blessing in your

late pastor. Although his ministry was short, and at some periods he had cause to take up the mournful lamentation of the ancient prophet; *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* yet the word preached by him *accomplished what God pleased, and prospered in the thing whereunto he sent it.* The church in this town has been repeatedly dissolved; but it has as often been gathered again. God has never permitted it to be extinguished. It continues to this day. I trust the language of God at this time to it is, *Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give unto you the kingdom.* I trust there are in this place, as there were in the church at Sardis in the days of the Revelator, a "*few names that have not defiled their garments.*" In view of all the goodness which God has caused to pass before you and your fathers, *this day*, say with the Psalmist, *Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us, bless his holy name.*

2. You have cause to be humbled under the frowns of Providence.

God has given you occasion to sing of mercies. He has also given you occasion to sing of judgments. You have not at all times had that peace and harmony, which constitutes a considerable portion of human happiness. Although men under such circumstances are disposed to free themselves from guilt, and lay blame upon the opposite party; yet the fact is, that in the heat of controversy, many things are said and done on both sides, that are wrong. If the point can be obtained, the means of obtaining it are not so much regarded as they ought to be. Sin is always the procuring cause of misery. Dissensions should be viewed as the fruits of sin, and as evidences of God's displeasure against it. In view of dissensions that have existed heretofore among you, you should be led to

mourn for sin, which was the procuring cause of these dissensions. Each should say, What evil have I done? Each should turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart to serve him. Each should from the heart forgive his brother that has trespassed against him; then God will also forgive him his trespasses. Were this disposition universal, there would be no difficulty in devising the means again to unite the town in forming one religious society. Let each pursue this course of conduct, and we shall soon know how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. We should meet together, not merely as we do now, to transact our civil business; but every Sabbath we should unitedly present our supplications to the throne of grace; we should join our hearts and voices in songs of praise; we should be one family, partakers of each others' joys and sorrows. The deadly wound would be healed. The God of peace would be with us and bless us.

3. We are reminded of the changeableness of all human things.

Where are the natives, that were the original proprietors of this town? Not only those are dead that were alive, when the white people began to settle among them, but the tribe has become nearly extinct, and their language entirely lost.

Where are the first settlers of this town? They are all gone to their long homes. A few only of the second generation are in the land of the living. Many of the third and fourth and some of the fifth generations have passed off the stage of action. Our children will shortly inquire, where are their fathers. Soon we that are busy and active shall be gathered unto our fathers, even as they were gathered unto theirs. Time is ever on the wing. The grave already opens its mouth to receive us.

“ Each moment has its sickle, and cuts down

“ The fairest hope of sublunary bliss.”

During the year past, a number of us have been bereft of friends. Some of us have been called to part with a father,* some with a brother, some with sisters, and some with children. During the last year, death made inroads upon this society. Seven were numbered with the dead. We have lately entered upon a new year. In all human probability, it will be said unto some one of us ; *This year thou shalt die.* Which family death will enter, which seat he will make vacant in this house, no one knows but God.

We know not at what hour of the night our Lord will come. Hence we ought always to be ready. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, to eat and drink with the drunken ; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall appoint him a portion with hypocrites ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Shortly it will be said, *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. In the grave, whither thou goest, there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom ; whatsoever therefore thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and shall be seated upon the throne of glory, all nations shall be gathered before*

* The speaker was called to part with a kind and affectionate father in April last.

him, and he shall separate them one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. At this *solemn, interesting, joyous day*, may you be among that number, to whom the King shall say, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world!* AMEN.



HYMN.

Let children hear the mighty deeds,
Which God performed of old ;
Which in our younger years we saw,
And which our fathers told.

He bids us make his glories known,
His works of power and grace ;
And we'll convey his wonders down
Through every rising race.

Our lips shall tell them to our sons,
And they again to theirs ;
'That generations yet unborn
May teach them to their heirs.

Thus shall they learn in God alone,
'Their hope securely stands ;
That they may ne'er forget his works,
But practise his commands.

WATTS.

NOTE.

Savannah, January 25, 1811.

My dear people, over whom I am placed in the Lord! Dear-ly beloved in Christ Jesus! Though absent, and feeble in body, I have not forgotten you. My health was such, when I left you, that I was unable to give you such directions and counsel, as became a faithful minister, on separating from his people for a season. My health is no better, but rather worse. In the afternoon, I have a high fever; cough very much in the evening; have cold sweats at night, and sleep very little. Today my physician talks more discouraging, and I heard that he told other people that I could not continue six months. At first, my feelings almost overwhelmed me, and rose superiour to my better judgment. But I am in the hands of God, who *can* and *will* protract the brittle thread of life, so long as it will be for his glory, and the best good of his kingdom, which ought ever to be the summit of my wishes.

With this thought fixed in my breast, however natural feelings operate, I am *still!* I am not without hope, that I shall return to you again, in the land of the living. But all this I leave with Him, who *never does wrong*.

It is for the benefit of my dear people, that I now write; and I wish you to receive it as the pledge of love. I do not say it is my last advice.* I may yet preach to you for years; but it is such advice and counsel as my conscience would approve on a dying bed, for I feel something, at present, like a dying man.

On a critical and prayerful review of my ministerial labours among you, I find myself in many respects deficient; not that I regret the plainness of my preaching, nor the doctrines that I so frequently inculcated; these, together with the threatenings denounced against the ungodly, and the comforting of saints, afford me pleasure to reflect upon. I do not think of any doctrine, that I have advanced among you, that I am not willing to seal with my death. I must therefore solemnly exhort you to continue unshak-

* It was, however, the last public communication that he made his people, and they should receive it as the words of a dying man.

en in all the *great and glorious doctrines of grace*. But this is not all, there must be a principle of indwelling religion, which like a never failing spring, always refreshes the thirsty traveller. That religion, which has not its seat in the heart, is of very little avail. Christians! I call upon you to know how you stand. I doubt not your tenderness towards me, and that your prayers have often ascended to heaven on my behalf. You feel your lonely situation, that you are like sheep without a shepherd. But have you not reason to fear, the angel of the churches hath somewhat to write against *thee*? Either that "you have left your first love," or are indifferent to things which demand your first attention? As in life, so in death I must declare to you, that the condition of the hypocrite, is of all others the most desperate and alarming. To have only a name to live, whilst in reality we are dead, is deplorable in the extreme.

But if ye are Christ's in reality, as I fully believe some of you are, He will provide for you. Like the primitive disciples of our Lord, meet often together; spread your wants and your sorrows before God; trust in his promises; heartily believe what Christ told his disciples, that he would not leave them comfortless. And though your pastor be absent, you may draw comfort from the never failing fountain, Christ Jesus!

Sinners! What shall I say to you! Gladly would I weep over you as Jesus did over Jerusalem, if that would touch your hearts. I know not all the feelings of the wicked towards me, but I think I know my own towards you. Although I have borne pointed testimony against some of your conduct, my conscience bears me witness that I love your souls.

Think for a moment on your condition; *Enemies of God by wicked works—exposed to his wrath—your feet on slippery places—and hell beneath ready to receive you*. What if your feet should slide! I tremble for you, and once more, not from the desk and face to face, but from a distance, and with a trembling hand, I most affectionately warn you to flee from the wrath to come. *Make no delay. Tarry not in all the plains. Escape; it is for your life!*

Finally, brethren and friends, farewell. May the God of all grace bring you to his kingdom, in the end, where, if not on the earth, I hope to meet you.

Yours, &c.

FREEMAN SEARS.

Mr Sears set out from Savannah, on his return home, about the first of April. In his feeble state of health, he attempted to perform this lengthy journey on horseback. When he arrived at New York, he was unable to proceed farther on horseback. He took the New York packet, and came by water to Providence. He reached home, June 4th. He died June 30th, and was respectfully interred, July 3d. The Rev. Mr. Bates, of Dedham, preached on the occasion.

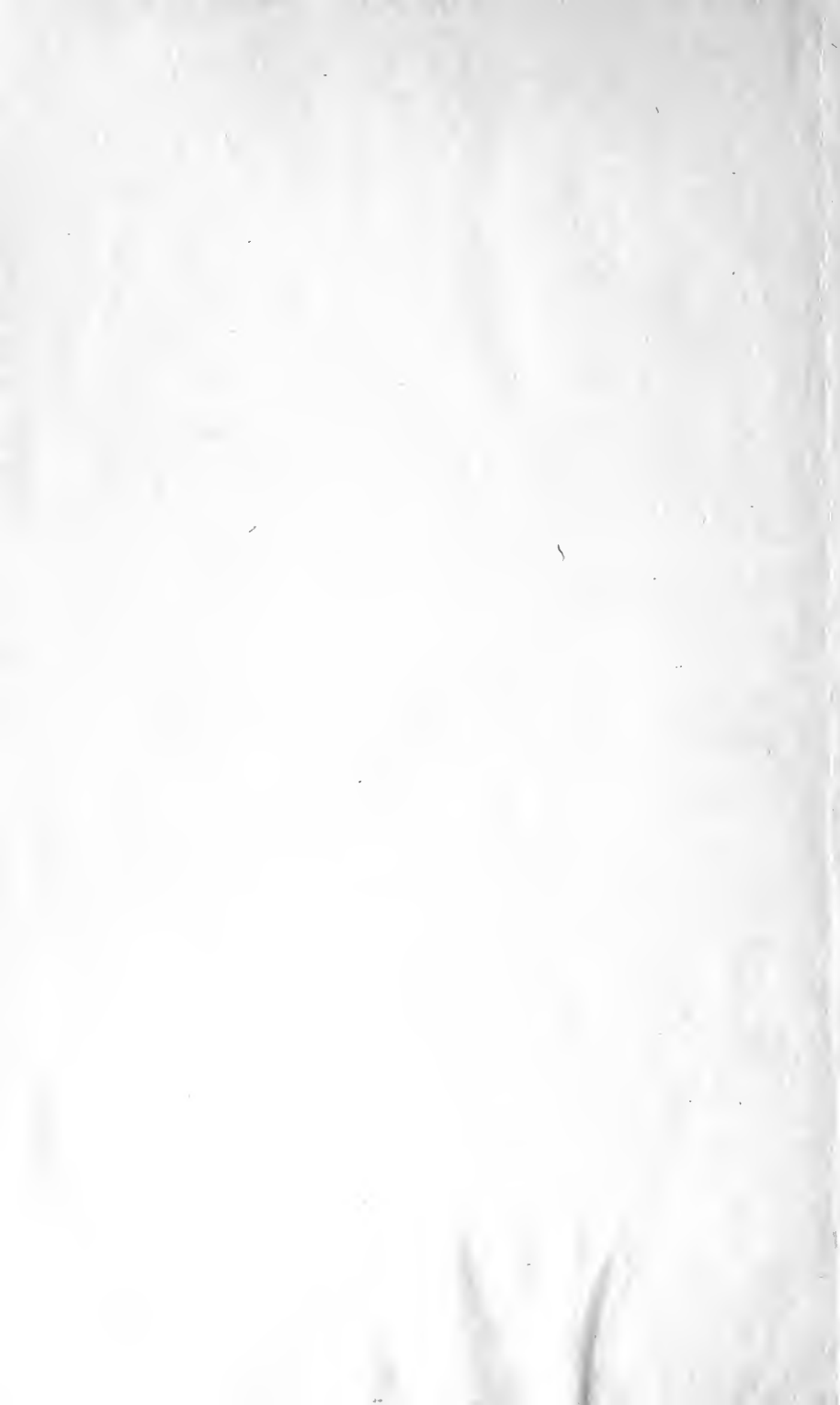
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