

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN MEDFIELD,

5th JANUARY, 1817,

NEAR THE 166th ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

INCORPORATION

OF

THE TOWN.

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1817.

SERMON.

“ Now, therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord, of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers.” I. SAMUEL 12, 7.

GOD has made all things to be *instructive* to us. Revelation is the highest instance of truth and certainty, because Deity discloses the principles, gives to them his sanction, while conscience feels their force, miracles ascertained their origin, the lapse of ages fulfils the prophecies, swells the triumphs of grace, and adds new proofs, that the whole is the cause of Jehovah. In the works of nature, we perceive much of the mind of him who contrived them ; we see him at his work ; we are made acquainted with many of the laws he adopts, the principles of utility on which he acts. No impious deceiver has any power to counterfeit or to alter these records of the Deity, inscribed by his own hand on all creation. In his wonder-working providence, we clearly see what God *is* by what he *does*. All is placed before our very senses. Here can be no want of evidence, and no fear of de-

ception. In the passing events of every day, the blind only cannot see the hand of the great Disposer of all things. Although winds, seas and unnumbered worlds all lie at his command, yet he often shows us that he can do without them, as well as with them. He attains his purposes by employing very inconsiderable means, the better to manifest his amazing skill and power. Often, he fulfils his intentions by means altogether unlikely to produce any such effects, his enemies do his work, the wrath of man praises him. In one age of the world, he makes preparations for great events which are to take place in the remotest periods of time. He has endless duration in which to work, and nothing is, in the least degree, hurried. The tide of events flows, while the plan of Jehovah meets neither with defeat or with interruption.

It is a pious employment always to keep our eye on the hand of God in *every* movement he makes. No doubt, the Being we serve is pleased, when we think of him in our daily labours, when we raise our best desires to him, when we admire his skill seen in his works, when we refer our mercies to his bounty, when we ascribe our safety to his care, when we resign our destinies to his disposal, and when we acknowledge his agency in the common events of every day. This is a constant homage, the force of pious feelings, superiour to the show of forms. When we read the history of ancient and of modern times, we are actually reading a history of divine providence. For this reason, by far the greater part of the holy scriptures is made up of mere history, a record of facts for the instruction of mankind. Kingdoms, individuals and events pass in quick and awful review

before us, from which we are made to extract lessons of wisdom, to give us the benefits of experience without its dangers and trials. The sacred records descend down to very minute particulars, to common life, to the purchase of a field, to the description of the smallest parts of a building, to articles of dress, and indeed seem to treat nothing as foreign to their design, when it belongs to human nature. These things employed the pens of apostles and prophets. The interesting story of Jacob going down into Egypt, and the march of the Israelites through the sea and wilderness into the holy land is repeated over and over again. We should find it difficult to say any thing about the common concerns of life, without being able to find it justified by some example in holy writ. Samuel, like the illustrious Moses, was not willing to quit the cares of publick life, until he had rehearsed "all the righteous acts of the Lord" in the hearing of his countrymen. It was the custom of our Saviour, from the ordinary events of every hour, to draw moral instructions and to awaken religious feelings.

If ancient history is so important as to be worthy of becoming a part of holy writ, it is not easy to see why the *modern* history of divine providence should be useless. Without it, we should be lost in ignorance, and the knowledge of events most interesting to us would never reach us. History is the witness of ages, the light of truth, the life of memory, the directress of human conduct, and the messenger of antiquity. Posterity depend for all their information on what we transmit to them. On this account, Moses says, "remember the days of old, consider the

years of many generations, ask thy father and he will show thee, and thy elders and they will tell thee." The psalmist speaks of a law in Israel, that "what we have heard and known and our fathers have told us, we should not hide from our children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, that they should make them known unto their children, that generations to come might know them, even the children that should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

As 166 years have rolled away since this town was *incorporated*, it may not be deemed improper to employ our thoughts on subjects connected with such an anniversary. As generation after generation is hurrying down to the grave, the knowledge of more ancient events is also swiftly passing with them into oblivion. The church and town records are also so very deficient, that great researches would be able to preserve but little.

Medfield may be reckoned among the *oldest* towns in New-England. It was the 43d that received an act of incorporation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Previous to its becoming a town, many inhabitants had been settled in it, when it was distinguished sometimes by the name of "the farms" and sometimes by that of "Dedham village." Probably, the settlement commenced within ten years after the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth in 1620. Tradition says, the *name*, which may signify "middle field," was so called on account of the large, beautiful field, or elevated plain, which forms the middle

of the town. Or as ancient Records spell the word "Mead-field," it might have received the name from the extensive Meadows which line the banks of Charles' River passing by it on the West, or from its pasture lands in general, as the word mead signifies.

Medfield was originally a part of *Dedham*. That town in 1637 had 30 families, come together from different parts of Europe. Though most of them before their removal were strangers to each other, et 8 persons formed themselves the next year into a church state, and elected one of their own number to be their pastor. Having severely felt the evils of intolerance in their parent countries, they sought for the rights of private judgment in the wilderness. In admitting members, the chief regard was had to "soundness of grace;" and, next, they desired to exhibit such meekness of temper, such "amiableness of spirit and innocence of life as might win the love and the desires of all godly souls to come unto the church cheerfully." Small as the number was, they lost no time in settling an able minister of the gospel among them. The territory, first called "Contentment," afterwards receiving the legal style of "*Dedham*," now contains 8 townships,* [1] 14 religious Societies, and 9683 inhabitants, while their descendants have been removing to settle other towns of more recent date, now become as populous as the original towns they left.

The *first* town formed out of *Dedham* was *Medfield*. The distance from the place of publick wor-

*The figures in brackets refer to the notes.

ship and from the centre of business would naturally lead to this measure. The separation was probably effected with friendly feelings, and desired only for the sake of convenience. Nearly a century afterwards, many of the inhabitants of Dedham were accustomed to attend publick worship with the congregation in this place. In the year 1649, Edward Alleyne and others, in the name of the rest of the inhabitants of Dedham, procured by petition the grant of a new township, four miles North and South, three miles East and West, or twelve square miles, partly *within* Dedham on the East of Charles' River, and partly *without* the limits of Dedham on the West side of the River, to be formed within *one* year, and a week's warning to be given. Accordingly, on the first day of January, 1650, the town of Dedham, in a legal meeting, transferred to Medfield all its rights and jurisdiction over this territory. This event took place when John Endicott was governour of the Colony of Massachusetts, during the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell, nearly a year after king Charles the first was beheaded. About the same time, this land was purchased of an Indian sachem; and, in order that there might be no possibility of injustice, it was a second time bought of the natives [2] in 1685.

The two parishes of *Medway* were once parts of Medfield, but never constituted any part of the territory of Dedham. The *East parish*, by the Indian name of Boggastow, was included in the act of the incorporation of this town, 1st January, 1650. The *West parish*, styled "the new Grant," was added to Medfield in consequence of its petition to the General Court for 8 miles square, at the West, next to

“the lands of the country,” May, 1659. Medway was erected into a distinct town, 4th November 1743. The separation was effected in perfect harmony, with consent of parties. The next year, Medway built a house for public worship, and settled a gospel minister. The town now contains 1213 inhabitants.

Our predecessors were men of ardent *piety*. Medfield no sooner became a town than it provided evangelical instructions and discipline. The first minister was rev. *John Wilson* Junior. He was the eldest son of rev. *John Wilson*, the first minister of Charlestown, afterwards the first minister of the first church in the ancient town of Boston, whom contemporary biography calls one of the three first worthies in New-England, into which Hooker and Cotton brought prosperity, and the elder Wilson continued it. The rev. *John Wilson* of Medfield, when a child, was wonderfully preserved from instant death. He fell from the loft of a building four stories high into the street, struck upon his head, was supposed to be lifeless when taken up, and his restoration was attributed to the earnest prayers of his father. He graduated in the first class of Harvard College, 1642. He was ordained in 1649 a colleague “teacher” with rev. *Richard Mather* in Dorchester. After two years, he removed to this town, in order “that Medfield might have a minister.” He was installed here in 1651, and continued in office more than 40 years. “The Lord’s day preceding his translation, he preached both forenoon and afternoon fervently and powerfully. The Lord’s day he expired, the greater part of his church were present to behold and lament his removal from them.” He died, 23d Aug. 1691, at

the age of "three-score years and ten." He left no records, and no printed discourse. His church consisted of 25 male and 40 female members. During his ministry, on account of absence or sickness, he was often assisted by his son [3] John Wilson Jr. His people had it in contemplation to settle conditionally a mr. John White as a colleague in the pastoral office; but this measure was finally abandoned on account of disagreement respecting the means of support.

At the decease of the first pastor, the Society continued destitute of a settled minister for nearly six years. After employing 32 candidates, the rev. *Joseph Baxter* was ordained, 21st April, 1697 [4]. Nearly three years before this, he had preached in this town at the early period of eighteen years of age, and, after waiting a long season on account of his youth, was ordained before he was twenty one. He was born in Braintree, 4th June, 1676; graduated at Harvard College, 1693; and died of the dropsy, 2d May, 1745, in the 69th year of his age, and 48th of his ministry. He left no records of the acts of the church, nor are any printed sermons of his now known. He was much respected, and generously supported. In his day, it was customary to make contributions, if not every sabbath, at least once in a month. He admitted 373 persons into the church, 228 recognized the baptismal covenant, and 1175 received the holy ordinance of baptism.

Previous to his decease, he had given his *written* assent to the settlement of a colleague. But the ordination of rev. *Jonathan Townsend Jr.* his successor, the eldest son of the first minister of Needham, was

not effected till the 23d Oct. 1745. He received his first degree at Harvard College in 1741. He continued in the ministry nearly 24 years, when his pastoral labours ceased. In the year 1776, the *small pox*, that dreadful scourge of the human race, now almost exterminated by the substitution of vaccine inoculation, was spread into every section of the country. In attending on a friend, unexpectedly affected with the disease, he also received the contagion, was removed to a hospital in Dedham, where he died, 12th Dec. 1776, and where his remains still repose. Under his ministry, 61 were admitted members of the church, 22 owned the baptismal covenant, and 334 were baptized. His publications are three sermons [5] on different subjects.

His successor was the rev. *Thomas Prentiss*. He was born in Holliston, 27th Oct. 1747, second son of the pastor of the church in that town. He was admitted to the first degree at Harvard College in 1766. Having become a member of the church in Charlestown, in a little more than a year after he began to preach he was ordained at Medfield, 31st Oct. 1770. The honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him in 1808 by the University in which he had been educated. After a short illness, he died of the peripneumonia notha, on the 28th Feb. 1814, greatly beloved and lamented. During his ministry, 207 were admitted members of the church, one only owned the baptismal covenant, and 401 were baptized. His printed works [6] are eleven sermons, two charges at ordinations, and one right hand of fellowship.

It is an interesting subject for piety to review the state of *religion* for so many generations of our ancestors. It is probable that more than 700 persons have been admitted members of this church, and more than 2000 have received the holy ordinance of baptism. In every case of vacancy in the pastoral office, resort has publicly been had to God, "the repairer of breaches, the restorer of paths to walk in," and divine direction has been sought "with fasting and earnest prayer." Attendance on public worship has always been, and still continues, full and exemplary. Several times, the members of the church have, in a public and solemn manner, *renewed* their covenant with God and with one another. There have been several *revivals* of religion, a special one in 1727, which continued for two years. In 1742, there was a most memorable revival throughout all New-England, when vast numbers became believers and professors of religion. In these affusions of the Spirit, the inhabitants of this town enjoyed a happy part. In about two years, nearly 70 were added to the numbers of visible believers. In 1802, there was more than an ordinary degree of religious attention. Divine grace is as rich and free as ever. We are now straitened in ourselves; in God is inexhaustible fulness. "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad."

Time has taken away the means of ascertaining *when* this church was organized. Its four first ministers were men of distinguished abilities and classical erudition. In general, their ministry was

long, peaceful and happy. The *form* of church government was an early controversy, but the Congregational prevailed over the Presbyterian, and the decision was very formal, that *ruling* elders should not be distinct from the *teaching* elder. Since the year 1700, there have been eleven deacons in the church, two of whom survive, the last elected into office is the oldest man in town. Within 43 years, eleven graduates from Harvard College have been admitted members of this church. At the close of the ministry preceding the present, there were in full communion 34 males and 63 females, in all 87 professors, 22 only more than at the close of the first ministry.

Three houses of public worship have been erected. The first, built in 1656, which stood a few rods East of this, was "thatched with straw," and by constant repairs lasted 50 years. The second, erected in 1706, lasted 83 years. The present was built in 1789, has already stood nearly 28 years, is more spacious and elegant, more correspondent with the increase of means and the improvement of taste. At an early period, the people were summoned to publick worship by beat of drum. The present bell [7] is, however, probably the fourth. There are large and increasing funds [8] for the support of the gospel ministry, which will soon render the burden of support very inconsiderable. Among the largest benefactors of the church, we may reckon Theophilus Freney of Boston, Hannah Pratt and Moses Bullen.

Attention was early given to *schools* [9]. Handsome funds have been assigned for their support, and a committee is chosen every year to visit them, in

order to witness the improvement of the scholars, and to encourage good instruction, morals and discipline. The first school-house was built in 1666. In the three now erected, about 200 children are daily instructed. There is also a female academy established in the centre of the town. We have also profited by the ancient and venerable University in the vicinity, from which so many useful, pious and illustrious men have proceeded, during the long period of 175 years. All the ministers of this society have received their education there. Besides these, 19 others [10] are known to have been graduated in that seminary, of whom 9 are dead, 10 were in the profession of Divinity, 3 of Law, and 3 of the healing art. Three [11] are now undergraduates in the same literary institution.

In 1786, there commenced a collection of books for a *library*, which has proved a rich source of light and usefulness. The principles of organization comprise the means of large and constant increase of books. Its plan serves as the model of many similar institutions in adjacent towns. The books are kept in an upper hall of the Academy, and the library now consists of 716 volumes, besides pamphlets. Among these, is the British Encyclopedia, with many other works of great value.

The *population* of the town amounted in 1810 to 786 souls. During the ten preceding years, the increase was only 41 persons. The emigration into new countries has been very considerable. The towns of Sturbridge and Southbridge, at first called New-Medfield, were chiefly settled by persons who removed from this ancient town.

In the *Revolutionary* war, the inhabitants of this place contributed a full share of support, and took a spirited part in maintenance of its principles. Several of the resolutions by them adopted were written with great force of argument and pungency of remark, alike honourary to their authors and to the country. Several of our citizens lost their lives in each of the wars which have been waged, the French and Indian, the Revolutionary and the recent one.

Those, whom providence has placed in a state of *want* and *sickness*, receive a very kind publick maintenance as well as every token of tender sympathy. [12] Several societies are formed in liberal aid of most of the noble objects which now occupy the minds of the pious, benevolent and charitable throughout every section of the whole christian world.

Several *distressing* occurrences have, at times, been witnessed. Four persons were drowned, at one time, in Charles' river. The ravages of the *great* sickness in 1754 were felt here less than in neighbouring towns. The year 1776 proved peculiarly mortal by the prevalence of the small pox. It is worthy of memory, that the dysentary, which carried so many to the grave in other places, did not rage here with its usual virulence. In 1806, a very singular but fatal disorder prevailed among children. In a short period, 8 fell victims to its power. It had the appearance of what has since been known by the vulgar name of "the spotted fever." This is the first place in which it commenced its ravages, destined soon after to be so prevalent and mortal in the Northern States, in the cold season of the year, heretofore so propitious to health.

There is but one place for the *burying* of the dead. The land was given the town by Joseph Metcalf. The first person laid in it, as tradition relates, was one Sampson, and the stones, near the centre of the yard, erected over his grave are distinguished by being each perforated. It is probable that the remains of about 1900 persons now rest in that one silent mansion of the dead. In the great deficiencies of early records, a calculation on 100 years, last past, makes it appear that 1164 have *died* within one century. In the last 64 years, as many persons have died as are now living, viz. 790. In the latter 50 years of the century, 6 more only have died than in the former 50 years. During the last 100 years, the least numbers, who have died in any *one* year, were two in 1734; and the largest numbers were 36 in 1776. The average number of deaths in a year is between 11 and 12. In the last year, 16 have deceased; 6 were above 76 years of age; and one was about 90. Though but few tombstones are erected in proportion to the whole number of the dead, yet we may count on them 76 persons between 70 and 90 years of age, and 15 between 90 and 100. One female, Mrs. Margaret Wight, lived to the great age of 103. It is remarkable that no child, under 24 years of age, has died for nearly two years. The average period of ministerial service, calculated on the four first ministers, is about 39 years. There are, now living, 15 widows, between 80 and 88 years of age.

The *religious denominations* are two. That of our baptist [13] brethren is composed of persons partly from this, but principally from neighbouring towns. As they have houses of worship both in Medfield and

Dedham, they meet, in stated turns, at each. "The Society was formed in 1752. The Meeting house here was built in 1772. In 1776, the church was constituted. In September following, rev. Thomas Gair was ordained. His pastoral relation terminating in 1787, he became pastor of the second Baptist church in Boston. Occasional supplies were obtained, until the rev. William Gammel was ordained, 22d August, 1810. The funds of this society are considerable and accumulating."

The *first* settlers had many trials and severe hardships to endure. Their greatest distresses arose from the savages, the most subtle, the most cruel, and the most dreaded of all enemies. They had always felt great apprehensions. At length, the Indians concerted a plan to exterminate the white people from New-England, or to perish in the attempt. They were headed by Metacom, second son of Massasoit, better known by the name of king Philip, a native Prince, deep in counsel, bold in action, and wholly devoted to his people. He had spent a long time at the West and North, securing allies, rallying forces and preparing for action. Early in the Spring of 1776, they began the work of massacre, spreading terror and havock before them. Having arrived in a vast body at Wachusett mountain in Princeton, they divided for more extensive mischiefs into two parties. One proceeded towards Concord, Chelmsford, Woburn and Haverhill. The other burnt Lancaster, Marlborough and Sudbury, and soon reached Medfield. The Sunday before the assault, they were seen on the heights of mount Nebo and Noonhill, as the people came out from publick worship. There were then

four [14] garrisons in town. Nearly 300 soldiers had arrived for its defence ; but these had been billeted out upon the inhabitants in every direction. The rev. Mr. Wilson had charged his flock to be vigilant against surprise and guarded against dangers. Monday morning, 21st Feb. 1676, was the fatal period. During the night preceding, the Indians had spread themselves over every part of the town, skulking beside every fence and building. At the first dawn of day, about 50 buildings were set into a blaze at the same instant. Many of the inhabitants through great perils were able to reach the garrisons, others were shot down as they rushed out of their houses, and one was burnt in his own dwelling. At length, the savages were compelled to retire over a bridge in the South-West part of the town. Burning the bridge in order to cut off pursuit, they retired to a savage feast on the top of the nearest hill, in view of the ruins they had occasioned. Philip had been seen, riding upon a black horse, leaping over fences, exulting in the havoc he was making. Though he could neither read nor write, yet he caused a paper to be left, threatening to visit them every year for twenty years to come. He did not live to fulfil this promise.

The destruction commenced at the *East* part of the town. Most of the houses and barns were consumed between the meeting-house and the bridge leading to Medway. Nearly 50 buildings and two mills were destroyed. The best houses and all the garrisons escaped. The damages were estimated at about 9,000 dollars. It was supposed that there were 500 Indians in this engagement. Their dread of cannon hastened them away. Soon after, they

carried destruction to Rehoboth, Pawtucket and Providence. Here, John Fussell, aged about 100, was burnt in his house. Eight inhabitants were killed, four were mortally wounded, besides three soldiers who fell, amounting in all to fifteen [15].

On the 6th of May following, the Indians met with a notorious *repulse* at the stone-house near Medfield, in the Northeast corner of Medway. On the 2d of July, there was, near this, a new conflict in the woods, and more execution was done upon the enemy. Among the captives recovered, a slave gave information of an intended attack upon Taunton with 200 savages, which information proved the preservation of that town by timely auxiliaries sent to their protection. July 25th, 30 of our men and 90 christian Indians from Dedham and Medfield pursued the savages and captivated about 50 of them, among whom was Pomham, the great sachem of the Narragansetts. Soon after, the Savages retired from this part of the country, to carry new distresses into more distant regions. But neither time nor the occasion will permit me to lay before you many other interesting particulars, which yet ought to be left on everlasting record, the memorials of divine protection and of the perils escaped by our ancestors in the desert in preparing the garden of the world for their sons.

It pleased God to place our forefathers in the midst of great *trials*. Fleeing for religious liberty to the American Wilderness, they there found temptations and dangers. At length, God cast out the heathens, and brought our fathers into a large place. The fields you cultivate were once moistened with their blood. Your sleep is not disturbed by the sound

of the war-whoop. Your path is not ambushed amidst the labours of the day. Your privileges enlarged, your means of enjoyment multiplied, you must find, wherever you turn your thoughts, new reasons demanding more lively gratitude to God, and entire devotedness to your divine Benefactor who has made you to differ from those who have gone before you.

To us, 166 years are a vast period of *time*. This period has borne down to the grave several entire generations of men. Time has well nigh buried in oblivion the very names of those who have been before us. Their sufferings have closed, and their agonies are over. The consequences of their conduct only will remain to them. They have quitted their loved possessions, they have left their earthly all to their successors, whom they never knew. Another race has arisen in their places, and is in turn swiftly marching with large strides to the same land of forgetfulness. Here, all is succession and change. The lips of the first ministers have, long since, been sealed in perpetual silence. The first members of the church have been sent to the last account. God and the Redeemer only are the same. The God of our fathers lives. His religion opens prospects, which will not fade, of future rewards, of better things for the righteous.

Within the interesting period we have been reviewing, wonderful events have occurred in our *own* land. Mercies and judgments have been mingled together. The once dreaded natives of the land are well nigh extinct. Frightful earthquakes and stormy winds have shaken this old and crazy globe. Famine and

pestilence have carried fear with them, and destruction has followed their steps. Frosts and other frightful agents of nature have shown, that dependance can be had on Jehovah alone. A small, unprotected people, mere wanderers in a wilderness, three thousand miles distant from the parent country, to which they looked for help and found oppression, have made their way to independence and empire, and are still sending out their millions to the almost unbounded regions of the West and the South. The most expanded mind is not able to calculate results at once so rapid and amazing. In *other* parts of the globe, whole empires have been overturned; nations, scarcely known before, have arisen into power; and revolutions most astonishing have changed the very condition of the world. New discoveries have been made; and vast improvements have been introduced into all the arts and sciences. Such men as Newton and Addison, Washington and Franklin have arisen to throw the light of their minds, and to shed their benign influence in rich blessings, on the rest of mankind.

We live in an age full of *information*, and full of most *memorable* events. The most remote portions of our race are drawn near each other by closer ties and a more generous sympathy. Men's hearts are enlarged, and they begin to look beyond themselves to the benefit of posterity and of nations most remote. Recently, the powerful rulers of the Eastern Continent stop, in the midst of the career of victories, to declare, before the world, that the only legitimate principles of government are those of Revelation, which henceforth they would make the rules which should

direct them. Never before, were there so many literary, humane, charitable and religious institutions formed. Never, since the apostolick age, did the religion of Christ receive more attention. The bible has been sent to do good into almost every region. The heralds of the gospel proclaim divine truth, and strangers to it listen. Idols fall to the ground, while incense rises to God. The Islands of the sea receive the law of duty, and the earth begins to be one great temple, vocal with the praises of Jehovah. The work is God's; it must succeed. It is too late to learn the art of doubting.

We have been reviewing the period of 166 years. But you, my hearers, have nothing to do with so *long* a period. Before such another series of years shall have elapsed, you and your children will have been with your fathers, where duration will not be measured by suns and centuries. The interests of this world will soon be nothing to you. The great objects of Christian faith will be every thing. Learn to prize nothing highly, which is not immortal, which you cannot take with you out of time. Live as in sight of the world of realities, and think less of mere shadows upon earth. The consequences of your tempers, habits and actions will, very soon, be all which shall remain to you of this vain life. Posterity will depend on what you do for them. Their inheritance will be your present exertions and examples. Animate your children in the ways of well-doing, and set them in the road to glory. Then, your virtues will live many times in your race. Rising up in long successions of generations, they will call you blessed, while you will be the means of peopling the mansions of heaven.—AMEN!

NOTES.

1.—THE towns formed out of Dedham, with the religious societies, times of incorporation and numbers of inhabitants are as follow : Medfield, two, 1st Jan. 1650, O.S. 786 : Wrentham, two, 15 Oct. 1673, 2478 : Needham, two, 5 Nov. 1711, 1097 : Bellingham, one, 27 Nov. 1719, 766 : Walpole, one, 10 Dec. 1724, 1098 : Natick, one, 19 Feb. 1781, 766 : Dover, one, 7 July, 1784, 518 : Dedham, four, 8 Sept. 1636, 2174.

2.—The land of Medfield was originally purchased of Chickatabutt, an Indian Sachem in Stoughton. It was again bought in 1685 of his grandson Charles Josias at Josias Wampatuck, with the advice of his counsellors old Ahawton, Wm. Ahawton and Robert Momontage, with the consent of his guardians William Stoughton and Joseph Harding, for the valuable consideration of 14,10, paid by Thomas Thurston and John Harding, to whom the deed was executed in behalf of the town.

3.—John Wilson Jr. united in himself the three offices of preacher, physician and schoolmaster, at the same time. The contract on record is curious as well as minute, providing against interferences in these three branches of business. In 1694, he had 125 for keeping school a year, including board, with liberty of absence two days in a week when he preached, and deduction was to be made in his wages when called away as a physician.

4.—Descendants of this family yet remain in town, and others are known in this State under the names of Gardner, Buckminster and Peabody. The salary of rev. mr. Baxter did not exceed 160 ; and his settlement was 150. In 1743, the salary

was £55, lawful money, or £220, old tenor. Sometimes, a gratuity of £50 per year was made him by the town. Voluntary or "free" contributions on the sabbath, usually exceeded £10 a year, besides presents from Dedham neighbors who attended his meetings. He corresponded with the famous Jesuit Ralle in Latin. He was concerned in iron-works, and was a man of business and property.

5—Rev. J. Townsend's publications were, a sermon, to this import, the baptism of infants, or children included in the Abrahamick covenant; a caveat against strife among christian brethren, Gen. 13, 7, 8, Medfield, 13 Nov. 1748; and a thanksgiving sermon on the reduction of Quebec, Est. 9, 20, 21, 22, Medfield, 25 Oct. 1759. He was settled on a Salary of £200, old tenor, and £400 settlement, besides firewood and use of parsonage lands; £12 a year were sometimes made him as a gratuity. Three children survive, Miss Sarah, Horatio, A. M. Esquire, and Mr. Gregory Townsend.

6—His publications were 1—sermon on the duty of offending and offended brethren, Mat. 5, 23, 24, Medfield, 1773. 2—sermon at the Ordination of rev. H. Wight, Bristol, R. I. 2 Cor. 6, 34, 1785. 3—Sermon at the ordination of rev. Pitt Clark, 1 Cor. 3, 2, Norton, 1793. 4—Right Hand of Fellowship at the ordination of rev. L. Wright, Medway, 1798. 5—A discourse on the 4th July, 1799, Medfield. 6—A sermon at the ordination of rev. Thomas Mason, 1 Cor. 3, 5, Northfield, 1799. 7—Idleness reprov'd, Mat. 20, 6, Holliston, 1802. 8—Religion and Morality united, Mic. 6, 8, Medfield, 1802. 9—Charge at the ordination of rev. Joshua Bates, Dedham, 1803. 10—On death, the last enemy, 1 Cor. 15, 26, at the funeral of rev. Jason Haven, Dedham, 1803. 11—Evil speaking, Rom. 14, 16, Medfield, 1804. 12—The sin and danger of strengthening the hands of evil doers, Jer. 23, 14, Medfield, 1805. 13—Sermon on the National Fast, 28 Psalm 9, Holliston, 1812. 14—sermon before the Massachusetts Society for promoting christian knowledge, 2 Thess. 3, 13, Boston, 1813. 15—Charge at the Ordination of rev. Martin Moore, Natick, 1814. Rev. Dr. Prentiss had a settlement of £160, and £71, 9, 4, Salary, together with the use of parsonage lands. His widow and all his children survive, viz, Mary, Abigail, rev. Thomas A. M. of Charlestown, Elizabeth, Catharine, Henry member of the senior, John

member of the junior class in Harvard University, Mercy and William.

7—There was a *bell* in 1676 ; but in 1684 Zac. Barber was hired to beat the drum on sabbath days for half the year.

8—The *funds* consist in the avails of lands in 1691 given the church for the support of the gospel ministry by Theophilus Frarey, worth \$1030. Hannah Pratt, in 1752, gave lands, sold for \$978. Moses Bullen Esquire gave land in 1802 valued at \$540. By will he has left property to a considerable amount to be put to the same use on the decease of his very respectable widow, now nearly 90 years of age. In 1762, mr. Eliezer Bullard made a donation of 15. He gave also a silver cup, as did mrs. E. Richardson another, for sacramental uses. Sundry persons, about the same time, gave to the amount of 162, 10, old tenor. Adam Peters Esquire bequeathed \$100 to be paid on the decease of his widow, 24 May, 1816. There is also other property belonging to the Society arising from the sale of pews.

9—In 1683, the town hired mr. Johnson to keep *school* one year for 111, twenty shillings of it to be paid in money within a fortnight, the rest in town pay, with leave to be gone two weeks in the spring to practise physick, and he was to deduct all other time so lost from his wages. In 1723, the town voted 126 for a grammar school.

10—The *graduates* belonging to Medfield are, *rev. Joseph Morse, A.M. 1695, settled at Stoughton ; *Joseph Baxter, A.M. 1724 physician, died of the small pox, Dublin, in Ireland ; *rev. Ebenezer Morse, A. M. 1737, Shrewsbury ; *rev. Elisha Harding, A. M. 1745, Brookfield ; *Barachias Mason, A.M. 1742, Medfield ; *rev. Amos Adams, A.M. 1752, Roxbury ; Joshua Armsby, A. M. 1773, Sutton ; Sylvanus Plimpton, A. B. 1780, physician, Woburn ; rev. Henry Wight, A. M. 1782, Bristol, R. I. ; Horatio Townsend, A.M. 1783, Dedham, law ; *rev. Job Wight, A.M. 1784 ; *Timothy Dwight, A.M. 1774. physician, Long-Island, N. Y. ; rev. Stephen Baxter, A.M. 1788, Western ; rev. Pitt Clark, A.M. 1790, Norton ; James Richardson, A.M. 1797, law, Dedham ; Daniel Adams, A.M. 1799, law, Medfield ; *Elias Mann, A.M. M.B. Medfield ; rev. Joseph Allen, A.M. 1811, Northborough ; and rev. Thomas Prentiss, A.M. 1811, Charlestown.

* Dead.

11—Silas Allen senior, Henry Prentiss senior, and John Prentiss junior are now in Harvard University.

12—On the first sabbath in 1817, a *contribution* was made in order to commence, on a small scale, a fund, to be increased by the same method every year, for the benefit of the poor, in hopes that, in process of years, it would supersede the necessity of a poor tax. More than 100 dollars were collected on the first sunday of 1817, of which sum Miss Sara Townsend, daughter of the late rev. J. Townsend, generously gave \$50.

13—In 1752, Ebenezer Mason exhibited to the town a certificate that he was a member of a Baptist Church in Boston.

14—The *garrisons* stood where mr. Johnson's tavern now does, near mr. Simeon Chenery's, and mr. Amos Mason's; and a part of another now forms the back wall of mr. Abraham Harding's house. Remains of Indian arts are found every year; and the discovery of a serpent sculptured from stone would lead to the suspicion that it had been an idol.

15—John Fussel, Henry Adams, John Bowers, John Bowers, Jr. Thomas Mason, Zechariah Mason, Jonathan Wood, and Elizabeth Smith were killed, and three soldiers, William Williams, of Boston, John Cooper, of Boston, and Edward Jackson, of Cambridge. Margaret Thurston, Samuel Thurston, Daniel Clarke and Timothy Dwight were wounded. Elizabeth Adams was accidentally shot, next day, by the discharge of a musket in a garrison. A couple were married on the day of general massacre; the lady was from a Bowers family.

A large number of *weavers* were among the *first* settlers of the town. *Slaves* were common and numerous. The rev. mr. Baxter went to reprove goody Lincoln for the sin of practising *witchcraft*, and felt a strange pain in his leg on his return, which was attributed to her ill influence. The *first parish* was organized 3d Feb. 1816. The *church* Records do not commence till 6th June, 1738.

The *deacons*, as far back as they can be ascertained, with the time of their election, are as follow.

John Thurston, 1st Jan. 1699, Capt. Samuel Barber, 28th May, 1710, Samuel Rocket, 28th May, 1710, Peter Balch, 25th Nov. 1739, Ephraim Wheelock, 9th Dec. 1739, David Morse, 19th Jan. 1746, John Pratt, 19th Jan. 1746, Peter Coolidge, 25th April, 1753, James Boyden, 15th April, 1761, Hon. Daniel

Perry, 8th Sept. 1779, Samuel Morse, 8th Sept. 1779, Enoch Adams, 1st Dec. 1779, Obed Fisher, 24th June, 1795, Jonathan Wight, 5th Sept. 1804.

The *prices* of the articles following are of the old tenor currency, whose value varied with the increase of depreciation, being in 1743 as 4 to 1 of lawful money, and ended, about the middle of last century, as $7\frac{1}{2}$ to one, 45 shillings making one dollar. In 1700, a barrel of powder was at $l8$ —60 lb. bullets at 6s—300 flints at 6s8—boarding for 38 days at $l1$ 2s—sweeping the meeting house 2 years at $l1$. In the year 1699, Cider, a barrel, was at 8s—1 bushel apples at 1s—7 lb. hog's lard 1s9—1 lb. flax at 1s—1 plough at 5s—430 rails at $l1$ —In 1702, Rye was at 4s—wheat at 5s—corn at 2s6—3 lb. tobacco at 7s—day's work by man at 2s—horse "new shod all round" at 3s—setting a shoe at 3d—hat and band at 5s6—wool at 1s—making a coat at 4s—bible at 5s—binding an old one at 3s—men's shoes 6s—women's shoes at 4s6—bonnet at 1s6—butter at 7d—man's year's service at $l10$ 1s—5 cwt. iron at $l12$ 10s—1 year's board for a son at Harvard College at $l10$ —ditto for tuition at $l2$.—Board at College was then increasing at the rate of $l2$ a year for the three following years.

The first grist mill was erected in 1652. Samuel Bullen built the first house, a few rods north of where Mr. Daniels Hamant now lives, and his family was the first that moved into town. The first settlers had from 6 to 12 acres assigned them in the middle of the town, and pasture and mowing lands at a distance. In 1697, of those who attended a town meeting the proprietors were 98. The last minister was settled, 24 May, 1815. The town is gradually improving; and the mind is cheered with good prospects for distant posterity, when, instead of the fathers, shall be the sons.

