

**EARLY ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY
OF WHATELY: BEING THE
SUBSTANCE OF A DISCOURSE
DELIVERED JANUARY 7, 1849**

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Early Ecclesiastical History of Whately: Being the Substance of a Discourse Delivered January 7, 1849 by J. Howard Temple

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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

"I will utter—sayings of old; which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us."—PSALM 78: 2, 3.

A DEFINITE and full knowledge of men and generations of men, such as is distinctive of themselves, quickly fades away. They had a real importance in their day; they were the matters of fact, and their decisions and acts gave its character to the society of their day; but their day was brief, and after death, "their remembrance perishes from the earth, and they have no name in the streets."

This tendency to oblivion is common to traditional reports, and in a measure to official Records. The former soon become generalized, and confused; and the latter get mutilated. And as each is requisite to explain and illustrate the other, the true characteristics of individual men and events thus become obscured and lost.

This general remark applies to the men and events which constituted the early History of this Town. The Records, such as they are, of the civil and ecclesiastical matters of those times are now in existence; but being in single copies, they are liable to be destroyed by age and accident. A small remnant of the *second generation* of our ancestors is yet left, in whose memories are stored many facts, nowhere recorded, yet necessary to elucidate the written memorials. A desire to multiply the written accounts, and to save these traditions, as given by *first mouth*, led to the preparation of this discourse. I have extracted at large from the official Records, and gathered what was evidently authentic, from the memories of the aged. The result—chiefly relating to our Ecclesiastical History for the fifty years following 1770, is now sent forth, with the hope that I may be doing a service to the younger part of the people of the town, and to

those who may come after us. Possibly these pages may also interest the older people, by reviving some of the associations of their youth. And I am sure that all classes may derive moral profit, from the contrasts to our own favored circumstances here presented, and by tracing the hand of God in the works which He did in our fathers' days, "in the times of old."

The northern part of Hatfield, extending five and a half miles east and west, and three miles* north and south, "was incorporated into a Town by the name of *Whately*, by the great and general Court of this Province held at Cambridge, in the month of April, 1771."

The major part of the first inhabitants were branches of Hatfield families, who had taken lands within the limits of the new Town. Probably settlements began to be made as early as 1750. About that date several houses were built in the "Straits," (so called;) one by Joseph Belding, where Zebina Bartlett now lives; one by Sergeant John Wait, now owned by John Wait, a grandson; one by Elisha Smith, farther south, (known as the "Gad Smith place;") one by David Graves, known as the "Stockbridge Tavern;" and one by Joseph Scott,† where Jabez Pease now lives. These were the first dwelling houses erected in town. Oliver Graves, born in 1761, (whose memory has supplied many facts recorded in these pages) remarks, "they began to look old when he was a boy."

Within a few years from the above date, Lieut. Ebenezer Bardwell built a small house, where now is an orchard, south-westerly from Randall Graves', (the house was afterwards owned by David Scott;) Thomas Crafts built where Dexter Crafts now lives; and Dea. Joel Dickinson near where Calvin Wells' house now stands.‡ These houses were located on the "Chest-

* In 1805 (?) a tract about half a mile wide, was annexed to the north side from Deerfield, making the present width 3 1-2 miles.

† He first settled on the plain, farther south, on "Mother George," (so called.) He was poor, and had a large family. One Sabbath morning, a Deer was found in the barn-yard with his cattle. As they were out of provisions, his wife urged him to make a virtue of necessity, and shoot the Deer. But he refused, declaring that "if the Lord intended it for him, He would send it some other day." A few days after, the Deer came again, when he shot it.

‡ This house was "picketed" as a defence against the Indians, and was the fort of these three families. Probably these houses were erected in 1752.

nut plain street," (so called) and were the first buildings in the central part of the town. In 1759, Daniel Morton built on the place now owned by his son, Consider Morton; (the original house is still standing.) In 1761, Oliver Graves built where Jerry Graves now lives; and at near the same time houses were built by Oliver Morton, (his house is still standing, and is occupied by John Lyman Morton, his grandson;) by Salmon White, on the place now owned by Luke B. White; by Moses Dickinson, in the orchard west of Oliver Dickinson's; and in the westerly part of the town, by Nathan Graves, Peter Train, and Edward Brown.

During these and the few following years, as the territory was yet a part of Hatfield, the public history of these families properly belongs to that town.

The first meeting for the election of Town officers was held at the house of Daniel Morton, Innholder, May 6, 1771. To show what families had now a residence in town, and who were regarded as the more prominent citizens, a list of the officers then chosen is subjoined.

Salmon White, *Town Clerk*, and *Town Treasurer*; Joseph Belding Jun. and Henry Stiles, *Constables*; John Wait, Simeon Wait, Edward Brown, Salmon White, and Philip Smith, *Selectmen*; Edward Brown, Philip Smith, and Salmon White, *Assessors*; Thomas Crafts, *Sealer of Weights and Measures*; Thomas Sanderson, *Sealer of Leather*; Peter Train, Oliver Graves, and Benj. Smith, *Surveyors of Highways*; Israel Graves, Noah Bardwell, and John Wait, Jun., *Fence Viewers*; Benj. Scott, Jun., John Brown, and Joseph Crafts, *Field Drivers*; Elisha Belding and Noah Bardwell, *Tything-men*; Benj. Smith, Perez Bardwell, and Abraham Turner, *Wardens*; John Crafts, Martin Graves, and Elisha Frary, *Deer Reeves*; Thomas Crafts, *Surveyor of Shingles*; Peter Train, Gad Smith, and Lemuel Wells, *Hog Reeves*.

Thus much of general history seemed proper, as introductory to the account of ecclesiastical affairs.

At a meeting held, probably by adjournment, May 9th, three days after the formal organization of the town, it was voted,

"To raise thirty pounds for preaching,"—of such prime importance were the institutions of Religion esteemed by our fathers. June 4, 1771, the town voted, To hire Mr. Rufus Wells of Deerfield, to preach six weeks upon probation. Simeon Wait, John Wait, and Philip Smith were chosen a committee to engage Mr. Wells. The same committee were instructed to provide a place for Mr. Wells to board at; who attended to the duty, and engaged board at Daniel Morton's. Mr. Wells continued to board here, and at Salmon White's, till his marriage in 1776.

At the expiration of the six weeks' probation, the town voted, To give Mr. Rufus Wells a call to settle in the Gospel ministry with us. The conditions offered were as follows: a "settlement," as it was termed, of one hundred and thirty three pounds, six shillings, and eight pence; a *salary* of fifty five pounds for the first year; and to rise forty shillings yearly till it amount to seventy five pounds. It was also voted, That Mr. Wells be allowed six pounds yearly for *Wood*, to take place at such time as he sets up housekeeping. The committee to make these proposals to Mr. Wells were Nathan Graves, Daniel Morton and Salmon White.

A *pound* as then reckoned, was equal to three dollars, thirty three and a third cents. Hence the *settlement* would amount to 450 dollars; and the full *salary*, including the allowance for wood, to 270 dollars per year. This sum sounds small, compared with Ministers' salaries at the present day. But it is to be considered that money is valuable according as it procures the necessaries of life. Taking the price of *wheat* as a standard, 270 dollars then was equal to about 360 dollars now; with the wages of *labor* for a standard, which is probably more just, the 270 dollars was equal to 550 dollars at the present time; taking the price of *land* as the standard, 270 dollars then was equal to 2000 dollars now.*

The *settlement* was paid in *land*; the town making over to

* Mr. Justin Morton, born 1760, (to whom I am indebted for many facts herein stated) informs me that the ordinary price of Land at that time, was 20 shillings (\$ 3,33 1-3) per acre; Wheat, 4 shillings the bushel; Rye, 3 shillings; Corn, 2 shillings; Flax, 8 pence per lb. The wages of labor, for an able bodied man, was 3 shillings (50 cts.) a day in haying time, and 2 shillings for ordinary farm work. In 1797, laths were 4 dollars per M.

Mr. Wells the lot lying east of the old Parsonage, extending from land now owned by Calvin Wells on the north, to land of J. P. Dickinson on the south, and containing near 60 acres.

After giving Mr. Wells a call, (as above) the town, it appears, applied to some of the neighboring Ministers for advice in the case, and received an answer as follows: "Whereas the inhabitants of Whately have applied to us for our advice respecting the settlement of Mr. Rufus Wells in the work of the Ministry among them; we hereby signify that we well approve of their choice of the said Mr. Rufus Wells, and do freely advise to his settlement in the ministry in said Whately; provided no sufficient obstacle shall appear in the way of his settlement there.

Signed,

JOSEPH ASHLEY.
JONATHAN ASHLEY.
JOHN EMERSON."

August ye 2d, 1771.

Up to this time, no Church had been organized in the limits of the town; the people going to Hatfield centre to attend public worship, till the engagement of Mr. Wells. Such a step now became obviously necessary. And we find at a Town meeting held August 13, 1771, it was voted, That Wednesday the 21st day of this August be kept as a day of Fasting and Prayer by ye inhabitants of ye town of Whately.

Voted, That Messrs. David Parsons of Amherst, Joseph Ashley of Sunderland, Jonathan Ashley of Deerfield, Samtel Hopkins of Hadley, and John Emerson of Conway, V. D. M. be the persons to perform the services of the day of Fasting.

August 21, 1771. On this day of Fasting and Prayer, (writes Mr. Wells in his Church Records) there being present on the occasion, Rev. Messrs. Parsons, Jona. Ashley, Hopkins, and Emerson, after the public services of the day were finished, the members in full communion in Whately were embodied into a church, being recommended by the church of Christ in Hatfield, to which church by far the greatest part that were embodied did belong, and had communed there in all the ordinances of the Gospel.

The Certificate of recommendation, above alluded to, was in the following words: These may certify, that the within men-

tioned persons are members of the church of Christ in Hatfield, in regular standing; and as such are recommended to be embodied in a church state among themselves.

By vote of the Ch.

OBA. DICKINSON.

Hatfield, August 19, 1771.

The members embodied had the following Confession of Faith, and Covenant, read to them, to which they consented, and which they subscribed.

We believe that God who is the Creator, Lord and Judge of the world, hath discovered his sovereignty over man, and showed his mercy and goodness to him, in the clear and full Revelation of his will in all things that concern man's duty to God, his neighbor, and himself, and the way of his salvation and happiness, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; which we acknowledge and believe to be a perfect Rule of our Faith and practice, and that no new or further Revelation is to be expected.

We believe concerning God, that he is the first, the greatest and the best of Beings, in whom all perfection dwells, to whom nothing can be added, and from whom nothing can be diminished.

We believe that God is one, and that in the unity of the Godhead, there are that are called persons, three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are one in essence, equal in power and glory.

We believe God to be the Creator, Governor, and Judge of angels and of men, that nothing escapes his knowledge, and that he rules in the kingdom of Nature, Providence, and Grace; and according to the council of his own will doth all his pleasure in them.

We believe that God made man male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, after his own image in moral rectitude, capable of knowing, serving and enjoying him, and yet capable of falling; that God made a Covenant with man,—on condition of perfect obedience he was to continue in the favor of God,—and on his failure or disobedience, annexed death, the just wages of sin, as a penalty; that in this Covenant our first father stood and acted as the public head, representative of the whole human species; that he broke covenant with God by

eating the forbidden fruit ; that he and we by him came under the curse of God's righteous law, and forfeited the blessings of the first Covenant.

We believe that God the Father so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to be a Mediator between God and man in this his lapsed state ; to be born of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem man and his posterity from the curse of the law, and to purchase eternal Blessedness for them ; who as Mediator sustains the office of Prophet, Priest, and King, and is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption to all that receive and believe in him as offered in the Gospel ; and that on such and only such he will confer everlasting life and happiness, whom alone he hath predestinated to eternal life and blessedness.

We believe the Immortality of the soul, and that there will be a Resurrection of the body from the dead, and an equal distribution of rewards and punishments to every man according to his deeds done in the body, by God, who without respect of persons will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to his Gospel.

We believe that it is the duty of all men constantly to observe and faithfully to attend, secret, family and public worship, and particularly the Ministry of the word, Prayer and Sacraments of the New Testament, in and by which we believe that the Holy Spirit works upon the souls of men, and makes them effectual to their salvation, by the righteousness and complete obedience of him who is the great Head of the Church.

Lastly, we believe that it is our duty as a society of Christians, to join together as a Church of Christ, to set up, attend upon and support a faithful Ministry among us.

COVENANT.

We whose names are under written, being as we apprehend called of God to enter into the Church state of the Gospel, for the free and constant enjoyment of God's worship and ordinances, do in the first place acknowledge our unworthiness to be so highly favored of the Lord, and at the same time admiring and adoring the free grace of God which triumphs over so great un-