

WORCESTER METHODISM.



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WORCESTER'S  
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH,  
COR. OF EXCHANGE AND UNION STS.

# WORCESTER METHODISM:

## ITS BEGINNINGS.

A PAPER

READ BEFORE THE N. E. M. E. HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

AND

THE WORCESTER SOCIETY OF ANTIQUITY.

By ALFRED S. ROE.

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## WORCESTER METHODISM.

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If Tyerman be right in his classification of Oxford Methodists, then the first Methodist sermon in Worcester was preached Wednesday, October 15th, 1740, by George Whitefield. Journeying from Boston to Northampton, he had reached Worcester at 8 P. M. on the 14th, and, with Governor Belcher, who had accompanied him from Marlborough, was the guest of Colonel John Chandler, 2d, perhaps at that time the foremost citizen of the place. The picture of the Royal Governor in his sixtieth year, thus enraptured by the glowing eloquence of the young Whitefield, not yet twenty-six, is an interesting one. Says the latter in his journal: "Wednesday, Oct. 15.—Perceived the Governor to be more affectionate than ever. After morning prayer, he took me by himself, kissed me, wept, and exhorted me to go on stirring up the ministers; 'for,' said he, 'reformation must begin at the house of God.' As we were going to meeting, says he, 'Mr. Whitefield, do not spare me any more than the ministers, no, not the chief of them.' I preached in the open air on the common, to some thousands; the word fell with weight indeed; it carried all before it. After sermon, the Governor said to me, 'I pray God I may apply what has been said to my own heart.'"

It is safe to conclude that this wonderful messenger was permitted to proclaim the Word on the Common without a written

permit. At any rate there is no record of any such permission having been granted, thus indicating that in "ye olden time," in one respect at least, customs were in advance of modern usage at the "Hub."

The population of Worcester in 1740 could not have been more than 1000, since in 1763 it was but 1478, and 1740 was only twenty-seven years after the permanent settlement of the place; and that "thousands" should have gathered to hear the Itinerant is the best possible comment on his wonderful fame. Nor was it on the Sabbath, when men had leisure; but it was in the middle of the week, in the busy Fall month of October. Under whatever denominational name Whitefield made his journeys in this country, we all know that his ways and manners were eminently Methodistic. To a people long lulled into fancied security, his eloquence came with the force of revelation. No wonder that men left their work and followed after him to hang upon the music of his speech. We are told that his meeting with Edwards at Northampton, was like putting fire to powder; nor is it strange, for in a long period of years, these two men seem to be almost the only instances of inflammable matter amid the general spiritual dulness and heaviness that pervaded New England.

Just half a century intervened before another representative of the movement which, according to Green, the historian, changed the whole temper of English society, appeared in Worcester. Whitefield for twenty years had been sleeping his final sleep in the crypt beneath the Old South of Newburyport, and John Wesley was nearing the Dark River, when our second Methodist itinerated hither. Whitefield's influence had long been felt. His intensity had so permeated the masses, that the slow written sermons of the day no longer satisfied. Isaac Burr, the pastor of Worcester's First Parish from 1725 to 1745, lost his hold upon his people, no doubt through his inability to awaken and prompt as Whitefield had done. In one sense at least this remarkable man seems to have imitated his Master, who came not to send Peace but a Sword. Certain it is that preachers and people were amazingly shaken up by his ministrations, and though there may

have been temporary troubles as a consequence, there can be little doubt that the final outcome was for the good of all. But when in 1790, Freeborn Garrettson rode into the town, there was little to remind him of the place of Whitefield's preaching. The orator and his hearers were alike silent. The successor of Isaac Burr, Thaddeus Maccarty, had been in Kingston noted for his sympathy with Whitefield and his methods; but he, in 1790, had been reposing six years in the Old Common Burying Ground, and the First Parish was without a pastor. A new parish called the Second had been formed, and over it Aaron Bancroft, father of the famous historian, was settled. Of Garrettson's visit here on the 30th of June, he makes the following entry in his Journal: "The two following days we travelled and arrived at Worcester about four o'clock, where I was kindly entertained by Mr. Chanler (Chandler),\* but the people appeared to have a small share of religion: I went from one end of the town to the other and could get no one to open the court house and gather the people. I went to the house of the Rev. Mr. B—— (Bancroft). I was asked to take tea. I drew near and inquired if it was not customary to ask a blessing? No, said he, not over tea; I then drew back from the table: his countenance changed and he said in a very short manner, 'You may ask a blessing over your dish.' Pinching want might drive me to eat and drink in such a case. I had an hour's conversation with him. It is lamentable for masters in Israel to deny the power of religion."

As there is no statement to the contrary, I conclude that the Itinerant was hungry, and so, driven by "pinching want," did eat in this Unitarian home, having first, in true Orthodox manner, invoked God's blessing on his own little dish. The old Bancroft house in which this entertainment was had is still standing on Salisbury street, and in much the same condition as then. Garrettson's visit was made on his second passing through New England, the first having been a return trip from Nova Scotia, whither he had gone by water. It is probable that he once more passed through the town in 1820, on his way from Boston to

\* Doubtless Samuel, referred to later as the entertainer of Bishop Asbury.

Hartford, the last visit, I think, that he made to New England. It may be remarked in passing that had the Unitarians then possessed a church, Garrettson would probably have been invited to preach. As it was, they were worshipping in the Court House, and permission to occupy it by others had to be obtained from the County authorities. There was no Town House—the “Old South” answering that purpose; and for an Itinerant to remain long enough in one place to canvass County officers was not to be thought of. Asbury, in his record, chronicles his disgust at having to stay three days in the same house. To be sure there was the big church, the Common, and how proud, religiously proud of course, should we be if, like Boston, we could point to some part of this grand old acreage as the place of beginning of our Worcester Methodism. But it was not to be. Garrettson was Garrettson as Jesse Lee was Jesse Lee.

*The Massachusetts Spy* of September 16th, 1790, has this story at the expense of our preachers: “Not long since, in a neighboring state, a sermon was preached by an itinerant Methodist minister; from the uncommon eloquence of the preacher and the visible effects upon the audience, the hearers had it in contemplation to get it printed, and probably would have done it had they not been prevented by an old woman, who observed to them, ‘Ah! you may print the words, but you can’t print the tone!’” All the pictures of the good itinerants of those days seem to have a marked similarity. The simplicity of the men verges on affectation, and one wonders if they all spoke with “The Bible Twang.” They were poor in purse, and so sought entertainment, not at an inn, but at private homes, hence the expression of “Methodist Taverns.” As converts were usually converted in pocket as well as soul, they looked upon the entertaining of the Itinerant as a pleasure rather than a cross; but there must have been wry faces in some Orthodox homes over the “Trust in Providence” spirit of the men who could sing with so much unction

“No foot of land do I possess,  
No cottage in this wilderness.”

Without any masonic pass-words or signs these men knew each other, even at a distance, as when Jesse Lee, on his way from Providence to Boston, in 1790, encountered Freeborn Garretson who was journeying homeward from Nova Scotia. This is the way the story is told:—"When he had proceeded about ten miles, he saw a sight that greatly surprised him. At some distance up the road appeared, approaching him on horseback, a man dressed and accoutred in the distinctive style of a Methodist preacher." Their meeting resulted in such a jubilation that the natives were astonished. A dislike for such peculiarities may have been one of the reasons for the long delay in planting Methodism in Worcester.

The *Spy* for April 28th, 1791, has this item:—Died, "In England, Rev. John Wesley, aged 88, the original founder of the Sect distinguished by the name of Methodists." Again, August 23d, 1792, this:—Ordained, "At Lynn, the Rev. Jesse Lee of the Methodist Church." This was at the Conference of that year, held in Lynn, at which were present ten men including the Bishop. The turning of leaves of the *Spy* files for many years subsequently, is quite fruitless, and one concludes that in those days, the editor supposed that folks at home knew all that was going on in their immediate vicinity, and so gave little attention to local matters; but went in heavy on the condition of the State and Nation. Such searching is dreary work. That the editor was presented with a cord of wood, a bushel of potatoes, or a big turnip, would be a relief from the general dreariness; but we don't find even that. The advertisements tell better what is doing in the town or city than the nominal reading matter. In fact, the general substance was little better than ancient history, the day it was printed.

The next Itinerant to press the soil of Worcester was the man to whom American Methodism owes so much—Bishop Francis Asbury. He was on his return southward from his first visit to New England, and from Shrewsbury came to our town on the 13th of July, 1791. He says, "Mr. Chandler, received us with kindness more than common, and courtesy anxious to please, calling his family together with softness of address, and in all

things else being agreeable ; perhaps more so than any man I have met with in America. This exception shall comfort us a little in our toil. From Worcester we journeyed on," etc.\*

Of the subsequent visits of Asbury to Worcester we have scarcely more than inferential authority. Tuesday, August 7th, 1792, he "rested" here on his way from Shrewsbury to Brookfield. To pass from Westborough to Brimfield, he very likely passed through this place, September 14th, 1798. Again on July 19th, 1805, he must have ridden through our streets on his way from Shrewsbury to Wilbraham. On the 8th or 9th of June, 1807, he passed through from Westborough to Wilbraham, which, even in those days, was a sort of Methodist haven. On Friday, June 26th, 1812, he "took the Worcester road to Brookfield." Thursday, June 1st, 1815, he rode through from Leicester to Needham, a man seventy years of age, and less than a year from his final triumph. It is safe to say that no one man ever travelled so many miles in this country to further the cause of Christ, and it may be doubted whether Wesley himself, in all his goings to and fro, compassed so much space as did this "man on horseback," who "rambled through the United States."

But in all his passing through our town, we have no record of any preaching, nor even of a visitation, save when he spent the night with Mr. Chandler. There seemed to be very little encouragement for labors such as his, though his diligence in neighboring localities may have insensibly affected this "stony ground." In his Journal for Sunday, August 12th, he remarks that Eastern people are too much accustomed to systematical preaching to be moved by a systematical sermon, even from a Methodist ; but they have their feelings, and touch but the right string and

\* This, probably, was Mr. Samuel Chandler, who, with his brother Charles, was in business in the town, and who, according to the family historian, Dr. George Chandler, was noted for his hospitality to strangers. His home was on Summer street, where now stands the house of Mrs. Edward Earle. He was a grandson of the Col. John Chandler who, years before, had been the host of George Whitefield, and a brother of Lucretia, wife of Rev. Aaron Bancroft. Thus three times have we seen members of this family giving comfort to representatives of the Methodist Church.

they will be moved. The wisdom of the Bishop's words in time appeared. His remarks against church steeples, bells and organs however, seem very queer in these ornate and showy days.

That others of the Itinerant force which Methodism was sending abroad passed through Worcester, is possible and probable ; but the turning of many leaves of biography and history has revealed nothing. When Jesse Lee made the tour of the inland counties he may have seen our village, and when Lorenzo Dow journeyed by stage from Springfield to Waltham in 1804, he too, probably passed through this central place ; but the location of Methodist communities to the southward of us drew the most of the ministers to that range rather than this. I have bestowed considerable thought as to just why Worcester was not earlier made a Methodist center, and I can explain it in no other way than on account of the nominally conservative character of its citizens. Early in the Eighteenth Century Scotch Presbyterians had found it impossible to maintain their worship in the place where they had essayed to settle. Opposition even went to the extreme of destroying the edifice which they were trying to erect to the worship of God. The Baptists, our immediate predecessors here, found a deal of hostility to their progress. From 1795 to 1812 they had no accessions to their four members,—indeed at the later date there was only one survivor. Dr. Austin of the First Parish openly preached against them before his congregation.

Such being the soil, there is little wonder that Methodist seed found no lodgment. It had to be sprouted elsewhere, and, then, transplanted, by careful and assiduous attention it has grown and developed into a goodly tree. Before, however, the settled siege began there were desultory attacks on the stronghold, as in 1823 and 4, the Rev. John E. Riskey, then travelling the Milford circuit, preached here five times ; four times in the school-house in New Worcester, and once in a private house in the north part of the town, probably Burncoat plain. He himself has said that there were but two or three families of Methodists in New Worcester, and none whatever in the other place. The old school-house where Riskey preached disappeared in 1858. This was

very early in the good man's ministry, as it was only in 1822 that he was received into the New England Conference, then held in Boston. His colleague was Hezekiah Thatcher, and as there were two preaching places in the town, it is not improbable that Thatcher also preached here. Mr. Risley's account of his outfit, first with jumping horse, and then with one so slow and lazy that ministerial pounding was needed for encouragement, would discourage the average Methodist of to-day.

At this date there were but two or three Methodist families in the town, and their names even have disappeared. Rev. George Pickering of delightful memory is reported to have preached here through the influence of Rev. Luther Goddard, who was the pastor of a Baptist church in that part of Shrewsbury known as Podunk. Mr. Goddard himself was a come-outer from the Congregationalists, and was the father of Perley Goddard, late of the Central (Worcester) Church, and Daniel Goddard, deceased in Worcester in 1884, for more than fifty years a deacon in the Baptist Church. All the family, from the first Luther to the present time have supplied members for the business of selling and repairing watches and clocks. From the beginning the Methodists and Baptists were on very good terms, frequently receiving and giving Christian courtesies.

John Wesley's Class Meeting, in early days so essential to the prosperity of his people, is found in Worcester as the very foundation of the Church. In 1828, Elijah Brigham,\* active in Methodism, came from Marlborough to this place. He it was who invited the Rev. Ephraim K. Avery, subsequently so noted in his trial for the alleged murder of Sarah Maria Cornell, to preach here. Avery, who was a Conference class-mate of John E. Risley, before mentioned, was then travelling the Needham Circuit, and he came here and preached once in the vestry of the Baptist Church, and once in Brigham's house. In 1829, Revs. Isaac Jennison and Daniel Fillmore were appointed to the Needham Circuit, and both preached in Worcester a few times. Mr. Jennison says, "Mr.

\* In a history of Marlborough, I find an Elijah Brigham, born in 1804, who married Mary Lodar, and in 1847 was living in Boston.



Elijah Brigham lived in a small house near the Canal. Only ten or twelve persons ventured to come into our meetings. The people seemed afraid to attend Methodist meetings, so we did little there." A class however was organized, and Mr. Brigham was appointed leader. Of the names of members, we have only those of the leader and his wife, a Mr. Whitney, and Miss Emeline Upham, afterwards the wife of Rev. William B. Olds. This beginning of Methodism was of brief duration, and on the removal from the city of Brigham, a blacksmith, the organization slumbered for a while. There were here during those years people of Methodist rearing, who did not seek out each other, but readily became assimilated with other Christian bodies.

In 1830 the peculiarity of a Methodist blank in Worcester, determined the appointing powers to send some one here to seize occupy and hold the ground. Accordingly from the Conference, held in May at New Bedford, Bishop Hedding, presiding, Rev. Dexter S. King was sent to organize classes and to live upon the people. King was a native of Leicester, and I suppose it was thought that he would be well acquainted with the "lay of the land." At any rate he came, and along with societies in other places, located one in New Worcester. In Worcester Brother King found his first wife, a Methodist lady, Miss Nancy Brigham, resident in the north part of the town. Her brother Moses joined us in 1839, and was licensed to preach, but he afterwards went to the Old South, where he became a deacon.

Methodism had fought its hardest battles elsewhere in the State, and was forty years old in Lynn before it obtained this small foot-hold in the "Heart of the Commonwealth." Had Worcester been surrounded by a wall, and all admitted at its gates carefully searched on entering, and every contraband article removed, then, as soon as possible, been put out at opposite gates, exclusion could not have been more perfect than that which "The Standing Order" exercised for nearly half a century in this place, towards our Sect. But twelve hundred Methodists in the out-lying towns of the County, with nearly ten thousand in the Commonwealth, constituted a host against which even this rock-ribbed town could not always hold out. When Garrettson

and Asbury came, we have seen them guests of Unitarians; and when the time came for Methodist occupation, we find these same Unitarians, whom we call unevangelical, showing more favor towards our infant movement than the people whom we denominate Orthodox. The schism from the Old South, when Dr. Bancroft organized the Second Parish, was a revolt against Calvinism; and little wonder that his followers hailed with pleasure the advent of a people who had drawn as far away as possible from that most pernicious and inconsistent tenet. In later years Dr. Hill, the successor of Aaron Bancroft, preached in the Park street Church.

In the New Worcester class are found the names of Eleazar Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Jesse T. Lesure, and three brothers, Stephen, John and Saville Metcalf. These had all accepted our forms elsewhere. Though there were spells of lagging and discouragement afterwards, we may now reckon Methodism as permanently established in Worcester. Though the foregoing names are those of persons who died in the Faith, it is sad to think that in at least one case parental example was not followed. I wonder just how far we are to be held responsible for the rearing of our children. The Metcalf brothers moved away years ago, but all were, I believe, constant to the end.

The next year our infant society was a part of the Wales and Leicester circuit, with two preachers, Revs. Horace Moulton and Joel Knight. Our place was at the eastern extremity of the charge, and the Itinerants preached once in two weeks in the New Worcester School House, the same one in which John E. Risley had begun Methodist services eight years before. The Class was still maintained with sundry additions, as Mr. and Mrs. William Henshaw, and Mrs. Sarah E. Eldridge, both families afterwards moving to Spencer. The Class still met in private families, as at the home of Eleazar Baker in New Worcester, and at Lesure's and Eldridge's in Leesville, a Worcester hamlet on the confines of Auburn.

In 1832, Worcester was attached to the Brookfield circuit, and Messrs. Samuel Davis and Ebenezer T. Newell were the travellers. Newell was a native of North Brookfield, and must have known

this section pretty well. In his Autobiography, published in Worcester in 1847, he has this entry: "In New Worcester, some promising young men were baptized, and the Holy Spirit cheered our hearts with joyful prospects that the life and power of pure religion would revive and spread in all the region in spite of dead formality, pride and unbelief." What would we not give for the names of those young men whose baptism so cheered the heart of our Itinerant Veteran! It was Newell who prevailed upon Solomon Parsons to attend a camp-meeting at Marlborough, and both he and his wife were converted. They joined the New Worcester Class, and soon established Prayer and Class meetings at their own house, three miles from the town. They were joined by John Shaw, an English Methodist, who had just moved from Clappville to Cherry Valley. During this year the ministers were assisted by the Rev. Jotham Haven, father of Bishop Erastus O. Haven, for the first six months, and then by the Rev. Samuel Coggeshall, who was just beginning his labors, and who, in true old-fashioned way, travelled the large circuit on foot, and acted the part of a colporteur also.

The following year we are again changed in circuit relations, and belong to Leicester and Millbury, under the spiritual care of Samuel Drake. As there was only one preacher, and the territory extensive, the work did not progress, but rather declined, though some additions were made to the Class, among whom as we have seen, were Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Parsons. Of this New Worcester Class, Stephen Metcalf was the leader. For three years and more our people had confined their services to the outskirts. Now they were about to enter the citadel, and to no one person was this advance more directly owed than to the Rev. Jonathan L. Estey, of the New England Conference, who, now, a superannuated member, follows the trade of type-setting in the office of the *Boston Transcript*, an art which he learned in the rooms of the Worcester *Spy*, and to gain which he came to this place in January, 1832, from Andover, when fourteen years old. He is a native of Middleton, a town lying near Andover. Under the ministrations of the Rev. Rufus Spaulding, he had been converted in Andover, and by him was told on leaving,

that the nearest Methodist service to his new home would, probably, be at Leicester. Notwithstanding his diligent searching, he was unsuccessful in his efforts to find kindred souls in his immediate vicinity. The small Class at New Worcester was not generally known in town ; but in his seeking he betrayed good Methodist qualities in visiting the outlying towns, as Holden, Millbury and Leicester. As Brother Estey has given much time to reminiscences of these days, he may here tell his own story. "At length, one pleasant Sunday morning, I left home at an early hour, for the purpose of searching for, and if possible making a Methodist acquaintance. At the hour of morning worship I had reached Leicester Hill, having been advised however, in Cherry Valley that this people was but little known in town, and that if I found them at all it would probably be at Clappville [a hamlet in the south part of Leicester]. Having listened to Dr. Nelson's Twentieth Anniversary Sermon, I walked to Clappville at noon, and attended Episcopal service in the afternoon, after which I returned to Worcester determined to visit the place again at no distant day. The distance travelled was seventeen miles, a large Sabbath-day's journey for a young lad."

"Three weeks afterward I revisited Clappville, reaching the Episcopal Church before service. I inquired if there was Methodist service in the vicinity, and was directed to a school-house, back upon the hill. With a relieved heart, I retraced my steps, and in that humble structure listened to two discourses by the Rev. Joel Knight. Not presuming to obtrude myself on any one's attention, having heard the appointment for preaching in two weeks, by the Rev. Horace Moulton, I was again homeward bound. Before I had gone a great way I was overtaken by Bro. William Henshaw, then of New Worcester, who told me of the Class in his neighborhood, and that the circuit preachers came thither from Clappville on Sunday evenings. Now I was at home. God, in his providence, had given me an acquaintance, and with a light step I was soon at tea in Worcester, meditating a return to New Worcester in the evening. This second journey was duly accomplished, making eighteen miles of travel in one day."

It is just such devotion and perseverance as this that have carried Methodism forward in the world. Such examples are worthy of emulation. The Boy Methodist soon connected himself with the New Worcester Class; but later in the spring he made the acquaintance of William Lucas, a copper- and tinsmith, who had just come to the place from Utica, N. Y., where he had joined our denomination; and also that of Daniel Ellinwood, a stone mason, who had come from Athol, he too, being of the Methodist persuasion. These three worthies made the rounds of the preaching places in each others' society. About this time they are joined by William Routledge, a machinist, who had recently come from England, and who, also, was a talented local preacher. He alternated Sunday nights with the regular preachers. Subsequently moving from Worcester, he went to Xenia, Ohio, where he became a travelling minister in the Ohio Conference.

In 1833 the center of the town is reached, when a room is hired of Simeon Coes, on Mechanic street, in which these people are to hold Class and Prayer Meetings. The building was a small wooden one, standing well down towards what is now Bridge street, on the site of the present Litch's block. Lucas hired the room, and Routledge was leader. In the house lived several families, as Mrs. Harrott, who was very zealous, one Geer, and Peter Edwards. Mrs. Harrott was noted for the length of her stature, her husband for the brevity of his. He had the distinction however, of having served under Wellington. They were in some way related, and Edwards afterwards married a niece of Lucas. He was a painter by trade, and a Methodist of the shouting kind. "I have known him," said a man who worked with him, "to drop his brush in the midst of his work, and to pray and shout most lustily." He afterwards went to Fitzwilliam, N. H., where he now resides.

This move to the middle of the town was a successful one. The leader, Routledge, preached occasionally in the First Baptist Church, and in the Vestry of the Third Congregational (Central) Church on Thomas street, and this too with great acceptance. It is an interesting fact, that this Vestry, after serving its day for the Congregationalists, passed into the possession of the Dis-

ciples, and finally to the Swedish Methodists, who now flourish there amazingly. The Class received many valuable accessions, among whom were Mrs. Ephraim C. Stowell from Brookfield ; Mrs. Samuel R. Jackson from Maine, and her sister, Miss Sarah Winchell ; also Jane Howe, and the wife of William Lucas, whom he had just gone back to Utica to marry. She was a Gray, and of excellent Methodist antecedents, and was long a shining light in Worcester Methodism. As a dress-maker and milliner she was truly a helpmeet to her husband. After this marriage the Class meetings were held at Lucas's house on Thomas street. The first wife of Pitt Holmes, from Thompson, Conn., early became a member of the Class. Her home was at South Worcester. These people, when they did not go to New Worcester or Clappville, worshipped with other Evangelical bodies in the town, as the Baptist and Old South. The pastor of the Central Church, the famous John S. C. Abbott, inquired particularly of Lucas about the Methodist Class meeting, and expressed the opinion that some such spiritual means might well be introduced into Congregationalism.

Hitherto the warfare waged in Worcester by our church militant was little better than skirmishing, but in the autumn of 1833 a petition was circulated praying for the use of the Town Hall for religious purposes. This movement was made in spite of the fears of many, after much prayerful consideration. To this paper were appended eighteen names, viz.—

Solomon Parsons,	William Routledge,	S. R. Jackson,
William Henshaw,	P. Metcalf,	Wm. P. Jenks,
Lewis Holmes,	George Willey,	Henry Knowles,
Eleazar Baker,	Jesse T. Lesure,	George Edwards,
Silas Eldridge,	Rufus Rockwood,	Benj. F. Gale,
Joseph Haynes,	William Lucas,	Stephen Metcalf.

To me a study of these names is an interesting exercise. Parsons, a farmer, is living, but an Adventist. Henshaw, a machinist, went to Spencer—all right. Holmes, a brother of Pitt, and a carpenter, moved to Washington. Eleazar Baker, machinist, dead. Eldridge, a manufacturer of cotton cloth, went

to Spencer—correct. Joseph Haynes, a laborer—lost sight of. William Routledge, went to Ohio—preacher. Both the Metcalfs, machinists, and died well. Willey, a farmer, died in New York State—good. Lesure, from Uxbridge—don't know. Rockwood, a farmer—know nothing more about him. Lucas, living, but not in the fold. Jackson, already described. Jenks, carpenter, went West. Knowles, not known. Edwards, shoemaker,—clear to the end. Gates, not known. In a farming community every name in this list could have been traced out as clear as a die. The Town meeting of November 11th, 1833, granted the request, and the Rev. Ira M. Bidwell, then of Webster, was invited to come and preach in it.

According to J. L. Estey, Mr. Bidwell's first sermon was preached in the Town Hall in January, '34, while the preacher himself writes that it was in October. He describes his audience in the daytime as small, and it would have been much smaller had not people come in from the surrounding towns. The evening services were much better attended, and were times of great power. "After this," he states, "we did not want for congregations in Worcester." But Mr. Bidwell had another charge on his hands, so the first Dr. Daniel Dorchester, then Presiding Elder, was asked to send aid, which he did in the shape of the Rev. Pardon T. Kenney. These two men stood at the helm till the Rev. Joseph A. Merrill, Conference Agent, came and asked Bro. Bidwell to give the Worcester work into his hands. On application to the Bishop, the privilege was granted, and Worcester Mission was put into Merrill's keeping, he being paid from the mission funds of the Conference.

In this connection I have recently received the following communication from the Rev. John W. Merrill, of Concord, N. H., son of Joseph A. He says, "In the year 1833, Rev. Joseph A. Merrill, my father, was appointed an agent to raise five or six thousand dollars to clear the debt incurred by the trial of the Rev. E. K. Avery, charged with the murder of Maria Cornell. This he effected, and having several months on his hands before the season of the Conference, he opened religious services in Worcester, in the Old Court House on the Common, I think, and

there formed the nucleus of the First Methodist-Episcopal Church in Worcester. At the Webster Conference of '34, he was made Presiding Elder of the Springfield District, and resigned the Worcester charge into the hands of Rev. George Pickering, his early and lifelong friend."

While in Worcester Bro. Merrill boarded at Ephraim Stowell's in Mechanic street, and at S. R. Jackson's on Central street. He was a strong man, and won unreserved respect.

The minor difference in these two accounts is not worth discussing; but it does seem a little queer that the famous Avery trial, and the cost of Jeremiah Mason's eloquence should have been the means of sending to Worcester its first regular Methodist preacher. A grandson of Joseph A. Merrill, Charles A., son of John W., is now a lawyer in our city.

The work in the Town Hall progressed so well that the members felt justifiable in asking the Conference for a regular pastor, a request that was granted, as we have seen; but before this, February 8th, '34, under the advice of Bro. Merrill, the new people met in Town Hall, pursuant to a warrant issued by Emory Washburn, Esq., and were duly organized as "The Methodist-Episcopal Religious Society in the Town of Worcester," thus assuming the powers and privileges of corporate bodies, but not to escape other parish taxation, the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution, ratified by the people in November of the preceding year, having done away with that iniquity.

During this year, a Board of Trustees was organized, and they bought a lot of land for \$600 at the corner of Front and Spring streets, for a church edifice. As they were, however, very poor, and as one of the trustees ran away to avoid imprisonment for debt, the deed was not taken. Whittier's couplet of "might have been" is suggested here, for we cannot help thinking that Methodism, planted on Front street, would have fared much better than it did in the place subsequently taken.

During George Pickering's stay in Worcester, his family continued to reside in Waltham, he receiving nothing, save actual expenses, as board and travelling, from the Society, though he



received something from the Missionary Society of the Conference. His home was with Ichabod Washburn, who seemed to have a warm place in his heart towards the new body of Christians. Bro. Pickering was noted for his regular, systematic habits, and for his invariable gentleness and kindness. When a rough in his audience threw at him a quid of tobacco, and hit his face with it, he merely removed the noxious article, saying, "Thank you, sir, I don't use the weed." His preaching, aided by the Revs. Abram D. Merrill and Reuben Rawson, was blessed with a revival. This was, I believe, the famous "Four Days'" meeting, following some special work in other churches from which we were barred out,—a period of great awakening, among whose results were many additional members reported at the next Conference, and a deeper work of grace in other churches. Sometimes people went to play but stayed to hear. "Joe" Haynes went in drunk and slept through. When awakened and led out, and asked what he thought of the sermon, he proclaimed it the best he had ever heard. This item became a by-word in the town; but the name of Joseph Haynes appears among the petitioners for the use of the Hall.

Samuel Perry and Ichabod Washburn, both Congregational deacons, were found kneeling at this Methodist altar. Among other converts was Miss Charlotte Eaton, whose great-grandfather, Adonijah Rice, was the first white child born in Worcester. She subsequently became Mrs. Benjamin Walker, and now, in her recent widowhood, we find her a lovely illustration of God's sustaining grace. "It took a deal of strength and zeal to be a Methodist in those days," she recently said to me. "I went into the church alone and in the face of much opposition. I laid aside my curls and jewelry and have never resumed them." The Quaker austerity and its repressive characteristics have disappeared from our church. Who can tell whether the change is for the best.

Andrew J. Waite came in at this time, while Joshua Freeman and Philander Sears, already members, and in the employ of Washburn, made the entrance of our Methodist clergyman into

the latter's family easier. Charles Davis was a stately man, having only one arm, who had long felt a call to preach ; but even the loss of his arm, though it flashed through his mind that it might be a penalty, could not draw him into the work. He was a book-keeper in the wire works. He afterwards withdrew with his wife to the Union Church. About this time too, came John Dudley and wife from Northbridge, and lived on the Hadwen farm. They joined, as did their daughter, now Mrs. Francis Strong, and Mrs. Caleb Cutting. This is, too, the time for William Wheat. Week-day prayer meetings were held, first on Pleasant street, opposite Lincoln's nursery, where afterwards lived John Johnson, who, with his family, was converted. Afterward it was transferred to Millbury street, then to the home of Andrew J. Waite's mother on Front street, and there continued till the first church was built, though sometimes overflow meetings were held at the houses of Bros. Davis and Barrows, in the same neighborhood. Classes were held at the houses of Bros. Lucas, Stowell and Davis, and at other places. As this is a record of first things, it is proper to state here that the first Quarterly Meeting in Worcester was held November 10th, 1834, Orange Scott, Presiding Elder, Worcester then belonging to the Providence District.

It would be difficult to add much to the history of George Pickering, whose memory is so fragrant in New England ; but two or three instances of his quaintness linger in our midst. He was sixty-five years old when he assumed the Worcester pastorate, and at that age was not anxious to "go down into the water," etc., to please the immersion prejudices of some of the converts. He even invited a Baptist<sup>r</sup> Brother, Luther Goddard, to do the work for him, and the story goes that at the water's edge the good clergyman took it upon himself to deliver a lengthy discourse on the Baptist view of the subject, claiming however in this case, that he was only Mr. Pickering's servant—he didn't say "sheep washer," but that was what he meant. Much to his astonishment the Methodist had one candidate for baptism who wanted to be sprinkled, and when the proper time came, Bro. Pickering administered the ordinance, giving his views in the case, upon all of which the Baptist piously turned his back. However, the old

gentleman could not always get others to act for him, and so occasionally was obliged to perform the task himself. Obviously he had read up in the matter, for his system, though peculiar, had the sanction of early usage. He made the candidate kneel, and then throw himself forward, thus standing on hands and knees. In this posture, the minister could give him a rocking motion forward, and thus cover with water, while the baptizer escaped with only a slight wetting. Damon Johnson, a convert, who was always anxious to go forward into duty, was told that he had his wish as the clergyman shoved him under. Often the candidates would lose their command of themselves, and, in their efforts to regain their true poise would resemble nothing so much as exaggerated frogs. It is to be feared that the ceremony did not always possess the solemnity that it ought.

The Conference of 1835 sent as Mr. Pickering's successor the Rev. John T. Burrell, who remained two years. He subsequently became a clergyman in the Episcopal Church in Chelsea, I believe. His success and popularity in Worcester seem to have been unqualified, and his people thought the "Two years' limit" taking him from them a harsh one. Dr. Smalley, in his "Worcester Pulpit," says, "Nor was his popularity confined to his own Society. Christians of other denominations highly esteemed him for his talents and were delighted with his preaching." The Society still continued to occupy the Town Hall; but events were ripening which were to hasten the building period.

Orange Scott, Presiding Elder of the District, was filled with zeal, not only on religious subjects, but also on the question of slavery. Already he had, himself, subscribed for one hundred copies of Garrison's *Liberator*, to be sent to his fellow ministers of the New England Conference. Such a man would "cry out" at all times and in all places. Early after Burrell's coming, August 10th, Scott gave a lecture in the Town Hall, on the subject then just coming into prominence in American affairs. How the meeting progressed is best told in an article from the *Spy*, dated August 12th, 1835 :

"BREACH OF THE PEACE. A lecture on the subject of Slavery was delivered at the Town Hall on the evening of the 10th inst.

by Orange Scott, a distinguished member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Presiding Elder of the Providence District, to a large and respectable audience, among whom were some of those who have sustained and still hold some of the highest offices in the County and State. We learn, for we were not present, that the speaker treated his subject in a cool, dispassionate manner, without having uttered a sentiment that could be offensive to any, and was finally drawing to a close, uninterrupted except one or two abortive attempts to create disturbance by a few individuals, when Levi Lincoln, Jr., and Patrick Doyle, entered the Hall and walked directly up to the desk. The former stepped directly up in front of it, seized the lecturer's notes and deliberately tore them in pieces, while Doyle, who is a stout Irishman, passed around into the desk and laid hold upon the lecturer with the apparent intention of dragging him out. One or two persons present then interfered, and remonstrated with Doyle on the impropriety of his conduct. The meeting then broke up without further disturbance."

The *Palladium*, at that time the *Spy*'s rival, alludes to the affair thus: "A *person* by the name of Scott, said to be a Methodist clergyman at Springfield," etc. The chances are that the *Palladium* writer, if living, now claims that he was an original abolitionist. There was a deal of bickering between the two papers over the matter, the *Spy* even intimating that the assault was arranged by the *Palladium* editors. Now as to the sequel. In the first place, the Selectmen told the Society that any more antislavery preaching or lecturing would result in their losing the Hall. The Selectmen in '35 were Pliny Merrick, John W. Lincoln, Benjamin Butman, Lewis Chapin, Guy S. Newton, Jonathan Harrington, Simon S. Gates and Ebenezer L. Barnard. It seems hard to believe that Pliny Merrick consented to any such restriction of free speech. Though Mr. Burrell told the Town Fathers that he didn't think he should promise to preach from the Bible and not touch on the subject of Slavery, it is apparent that he thought "Discretion the better part of valor," and that thereafter the walls of the Hall were not vexed with antislavery remarks.

Levi Lincoln, Jr., was the eldest son of the ex-Governor, and had been a midshipman in the Navy. He died unmarried in 1845, at the early age of thirty-five. Possessing much of the proverbial Lincoln ability, he seemed quite lacking in the qualities of perseverance and application, to say nothing of discretion and fairness. Patrick Doyle was a fellow of immense stature, who had charge of a gang of hands employed in building the Western railroad, i. e. the extension of the Boston and Worcester road. He had been told that the lecturer was George Thompson, the English agitator, and as in the fairy story, this giant

“Smelled the blood of an Englishman.”

In this presence it may be in place to state, that Doyle got retributive justice afterward in full measure, though perhaps we do not believe in punishment *here* quite so much as certain friends of another denomination. In this particular instance, however, I rejoice that full justice was done the subject this side the *hereafter*. It seemed that he had refused to pay a certain bill for milk furnished his gang by one Sam Hilliard, a farmer. On this account Hilliard secured the backing of Bill Ibbets, a gigantic negro, and went in to take his payment out of the Irishman's person. The battle was a fierce one, and so many finally were embroiled that every constable in town had to be summoned to quell the disturbance. As to the end, we are interested only in knowing that Doyle was laid up a long time through his share in the business. “Love your enemies” certainly, but the enemy in hospital is a safer foe than when fully armed and ready to attack.

At the ensuing Conference Scott himself, because he would not promise to abstain from antislavery discussion, lost his Presiding Eldership, and finally, as we know, was one of the early Wesleyans.

Antislavery excitement was increasing, and the fact that the Methodists were fully alive to its importance, and also the fact that they could not discuss the subject in the Town Hall, aroused for them a deal of sympathy, so that people of other denominations were ready to assist in building. In the autumn of 1836

measures were taken to erect a structure for the Society that it might have a home of its own. Samuel R. Jackson, who owned land in the Meadows, so called, and had built a house for himself there, donated a site for the Church. He was not himself a member though his wife was. He was prominently connected with the Worcester and Providence Canal, and had come to this place from Providence, though originally from Maine. He afterwards returned to Rhode Island, and I have heard it stated, that later by many years, after so long an absence that everybody thought him dead, funeral services were held, into which, in the irony of fate, it was his lot to walk alive and well, an interested beholder of his own funeral.

The location was most unfortunate, save that it was central. So marshy was the vicinity that one could get across much of the territory only by stepping from one tuft of grass to another. Nevertheless the gift was opportune, for the Society was poor, and we should never look gift horses in the mouth. To secure firm foundations piles were driven, and even then the people failed to follow Scriptural injunction, "To build upon a rock." The region was entirely new, on the corner of what are now Exchange and Union streets, the site of the Merrifield building, and approaches were always difficult. The Building Committee were Pitt Holmes, S. R. Jackson, Joel B. Fuller, William Henshaw and William S. Wheat; and besides what members gave, they were assisted by people outside. For instance, Unitarian James Green and Hon. John Davis contributed, as did Baptist Isaac Davis, while Edward Earle, a good Quaker, gave under protest because the edifice had a steeple. W. T. Merrifield also was a contributor. His wife was a sister of the Nancy Brigham who married Dexter S. King.

In due time the house was completed at a cost of \$4150, and was dedicated March 8th, 1837, the sermon being preached by Dr. Joseph Holditch, of Wesleyan University. It is discouraging to look through contemporary papers for accounts of the event. For two weeks the *Spy* had paid advertisements of the approaching Dedication, but of the event itself and of the building dedicated not a word. It was a comfortable house, capable

of seating four hundred people. Its appointments were good, and as a survivor states, "We were proud of our church." In outside appearance, except the spire, I understand it much resembled the present Laurel street edifice. Ichabod Washburn gave the lamps, Elizabeth Stiles the cover for the communion table, while Miss Charlotte Eaton (afterwards Mrs. Walker) with Mrs. William Lucas, S. R. Jackson providing horse and carriage, rode many miles through the neighboring towns to secure means to pay for some of the furnishings. Of all of these, only the communion table is now in existence, and that belongs to Grace Church, rescued from a dirty place in the basement of the old Park street Church (now in the hands of the Roman Catholics) by Charles H. Carpenter, a most active and efficient Steward of Grace. This table was about all that was saved from the fire which destroyed the church edifice in 1844.

Some idea of the disagreeableness of the situation may be gained from Father Taylor's remark when he first visited the place: "Why didn't you put your church in a cow yard and be done with it." For a Baptist church its watery surroundings might have been quite apropos; but for a denomination that yielded only quasi assent to the doctrine of immersion, there was much that seemed out of place. "To get to it," says one sister, "we had to take the Canal tow-path, dodge under railroad bridges, or trip along on boards which hardly ever answered the purpose for which they were laid down." However the Church prospered, and even while building, the Society maintained a successful revival, resulting in the accession to the number of believers of many earnest Christians. Following the Dedication came a series of meetings, at which Abel Stevens, the celebrated Historian of Methodism, preached several times, his first sermon having been given on the evening of Dedication day. Sixty probationers came in after these meetings.

In 1837 came James Porter, a name well known in Methodism. With him came business depression, and the consequent moving away of many of the members. But careful, prayerful labor succeeded in making good the losses. Beginning a series of meetings the town became stirred to a fever heat. Though assisted by

Revs. William and Richard Livesey, Jotham Horton, and William H. Richards, his own work was immense. For five months the work went on. I am not sure but this was the time when to the question, "How much longer are you Methodists going to run your meetings?" came the reply, "Till the town is converted." Though 175 probationers were received into the M. E. Church, it was only a small part of the good that was done, for many awakened here connected themselves with other churches. Though Rodney A. Miller of the Old South advised his people not to attend, he and his had no objection to receiving those converted there. At an examination of those desiring to enter a Congregational church, the answer became so general to the question, Where and when were you awakened? "Down in the Meadows at the Methodist meetings," that one of the Deacons, alarmed lest the reputation of the shouters should be too great, slyly nudged the next relay, saying, "You needn't tell just where you made your start." In these meetings S. R. Jackson, the Church's benefactor, A. F. Henshaw, and Frederick Eaton were converted. The latter was a brother of Mrs. Benjamin Walker, and was for twenty years a class leader.

Mr. Porter's one year's pastorate was followed by that of the Rev. Jotham Horton, whose administrations were successful, and the Church prosperous. He afterwards joined the Wesleyans. Up to this time the Church property had been held in an anomalous manner; but on the 6th of May, '39, it was legally transferred to the following Trustees: Pitt Holmes, Leonard Flagg, William Henshaw, Thomas H. Butterfield, Wilkes Roper, Samuel D. Barker, Eli Goulding, thus coming into line with Methodist usage. It is a sorry reflection, that only two names in the above list are those of men who preserved their Methodism unclouded to the end. Flagg went into Adventism, so deeply that he died insane. Eli Goulding became a Spiritualist, and so far fell away from his old associates as afterwards to stigmatize them as a set of horse jockies and thieves. "Ah well," said the good lady to whom he said this, "were they such when you belonged? and they are as good now as then." Butterfield, the first Secretary of the Board, went to the Universalists, while S. D. Barker went to



the Union (Congregational) Church, and finally to the Adventists. Here is his request for dismissal, June 17th, '39 :

“S. D. Barker, being a member of this Church and Society, and notwithstanding his full fellowship with the doctrine and members of the Church, yet feeling that his Domestic happiness would be augmented by a disconnection with them, requests that this Board favor him with a Dismissal and a Recommendation if Proper to Br. Smalley's Church.”

As he afterwards became an Adventist, one naturally wonders how his “Domestic happiness” fared then. In this history, we have often recurring to us the name Reuben, if not occasionally Ichabod. At any rate there are many illustrations of seed falling where was not much deepness of earth, and forthwith springing up, under the noontide rays of temptation it withered away.

After one year's stay Horton was succeeded by Moses L. Scudder, only a short time out of college. He remained two years, noted for zeal in the temperance cause, and for his general interest in public affairs. He left a pleasant memory in the town. Perhaps not so spiritual as some himself, he nevertheless administered, on one occasion, a merited rebuke to certain people conspicuous for their noise in meeting. Sometimes under the spur of shoulder tapping and loud “Amens,” some of the brethren would get so vociferous that thinking, saying nothing about speaking, was out of the question. So the preacher told them one night what he thought, and the lesson was efficacious. “There is,” said he, “a certain clique here that much prefers shouting for the king in the camp to fighting for him in the field.”

During the winter of '39-'40, the Church built a Vestry on Exchange street, which subsequently passed into the hands of Zion's African Methodist Church, and was burned in '54. On January 5th, 1841, a fire damaged the Church somewhat. In 1841, June 30th, the first session of the New England Conference in Worcester was begun, Bishop Hedding presiding; and Miner Raymond was appointed to Worcester, where he remained two years. He too had unqualified success, though his pastorate came in the very height of the Millerite excitement, it taking from the Church some of its brightest examples. There were

characters in those days—people who were not afraid to speak their minds. Eli Goulding's sister Harriet had been a Baptist, yet she would score her old friends unstintedly, saying that if she had stayed with them she would have been in hell long before. Looseness of tongue seemed a family failing. How she would lecture everybody when the singing lagged. "Such singing on, singing on," she would say, "there's no spirituality in it." In spite of her ways she was a great help to the Church; but she too was smitten with Adventism, and spent her last days surrounded with pictures of creatures that, if possible, would have gladdened the soul of Barnum.

Our Church was early a refuge for the colored people, many of whom became exemplary members. There was Peter Waters, from Gov. John Davis's family, who in praying and singing was a great help to George Pickering; but the memory of David Roberts lingers longest in the memories of oldtime Worcester Methodists. When the revival fervor was on, the Rev. Mr. Swaim, of the First Baptist, though he could "see no signs," fearing that his people would grow cold, appointed several meetings, if possible to stir matters up. This pastor was the man who once forbade a woman speaking in his church; but the meetings were held, and they were dead enough. One night Roberts happened in. After a "poor dying rate" for some time, Mr. Swaim remarked again that he couldn't see any signs. Whereupon the colored brother rose to his feet, and lectured the leader thus: "De brudder is all wrong. He is looking for signs abroad when he should look for dem at home. De revival must begin, fust ob all, in dis bery house, in dese bery bredren, an' above all in de bery heart ob de minister!" It is consoling to reflect that this church did have a genuine revival afterward.

In the days of '43, the Adventist excitement ran rampant, and on account of his eloquence and power these people were very anxious to secure David Roberts. One evening, he was present, and after hearing much about the second coming of Christ, and of the white robes in which the elect were to arise, thus escaping "the cold, dark grave," he arose, and his first remarks pleased his hearers mightily, they thinking that he had cast his lot with

them sure, for said he, "I hab all along beliebed in de comin' ob Christ. He come a long time ago an' filled my soul. I got him dar now, bless de Lord! Oh yes, I beliebe in his comin'. An' den as to de cold, dark grave, 'bout which you's so bery 'fraid, 'Since Jesus hab lain dar I dread not its gloom'." It was obvious that Roberts' Adventism was not that of his hearers. He was sincere.

Robert Wilson was a character. Born a slave, he was smart enough to escape from bondage. Hidden in a crockery crate, he made his departure from Dixie's Land; but so near capture that, at one time, in searching for him, the very crate in which he was lying was rolled over. He was for many years a packer for Firth & Co., crockery dealers. At this date no one of the early worthies is more often quoted than this son of Africa who, in spite of color, was the soul of eloquence, and who had the love of God deep down in his heart. There are many who can recall his manifestations when the Spirit moved him. Beginning to jump, he would go higher and higher, till he could clear the settee at every leap. Then swinging his red bandanna, he would describe the New Jerusalem with its golden streets and pearly gates, saying, "Den dis ol' nigger 'll wear his silber slippers an' he'll see de Lord, an' dar'll be no mo' sorrow, but light an' happiness for eber mo'." However grotesque this may seem as told, it was not so to those who listened, for however restless the young people might be before Wilson began, he always had their undivided attention. There was not a scoffer among them who did not believe unqualifiedly in the black man's sincerity. His employer has been known to steal carefully up the stairs to listen to his servant's voice in prayer, and when he lay on his bed of anguish it was for Wilson he sent, that the supplications of this untutored child of Nature and of God might comfort him. The mutations of trade took Wilson to Springfield, Mass., where he died several years since, happy and glorious to the last.

It were possible to record, here, a long list of names of those who fell away from the Church on account of the new ism of Miller, but to what end? The most of those who ran after new lights have long since tested the truth or falsity of their attitudes.

I must, however, name Solomon Parsons, for among odd characters he is confessedly king. As some people have all the diseases that appear, so his mind readily absorbed every ism that came his way. One notion was that he should eat no meat, nor animal food of any kind, nor wear woollen clothes nor leather shoes or boots. So for long years he lived on nuts and fruit, and clothed himself in cotton and India rubber. Then taking the Millerite craze in its very worst phase, he deeded a part of his farm to the Almighty, and had the document deeply cut in granite rock on a portion of Rattlesnake Hill, it being understood that this would be one of the ascension places. Near by he constructed the oddest shaped edifice in the county, and dubbed it "Solomon's Temple," and in it anyone might lecture who would take the trouble to climb the hill. Some rascally boys, two or three years ago, burned all there was combustible about it. So then this old man, whose names, both sir and christian, comprise so much of wisdom and goodness lingers. There is no doubt that he is good, but as to wisdom—who knows?

After Raymond came Charles K. True, this in 1843. A native of New England and a graduate of Harvard, he had much to recommend him to this conservative community. Early in his pastorate the question of moving the Church to a more favorable locality was earnestly mooted, and on the 5th of January, 1844, the Quarterly Conference voted to remove the building to some place near the Common if possible. Before, however, this plan could be carried out, fire saved the people the trouble of moving, for on Monday night, February 19th, '44, at about twenty minutes past ten, flames were discovered on the northwest corner of the house where the stove was situated. Built of wood, it was speedily wrapped in fire, and all efforts to save it were unavailing. The spire soon fell, bearing down the vane and ball that William Lucas had made. "I well remember," says a man who looked on, "seeing Eli Goulding carrying ice and snow to throw on the granite steps, thus preventing their cracking through excessive heat." This was before Eli had spiritually wandered away. The clock and some furniture, according to the *Spy*, were saved, but of the clock I can find no trace, and of the furniture I know only of the table before

named. There is a tradition that some chairs, etc., were saved, but where they are the antiquarian knoweth not.

“It is an ill wind that blows no one any good.” The Church was insured for \$3000, and very few were satisfied with its location. One good survivor of those days said to me recently, “I never enjoyed a fire so much in my life !” Now was the time to build again, and to avoid the folly of the first attempt. The old building was in ashes, but bad though its situation was, it had many hallowed memories. Whatever the difficulty in reaching, it was a good anchoring place when inside. More pretentious houses could not tell more of God’s saving power. One thing was certain, the sacred edifice could never be transformed into a shop, store, hotel or livery-stable, the fate of so many Protestant structures once solemnly dedicated to God.

To the Town Hall the Society again resorted, and there where they began their worship, where Pickering, Scott, Burrell and others had preached to them, while the embers of their seven years old church are yet warm, for the present we leave our Worcester Methodists.





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