

Box No. 50  
Pamphlet No. 27

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

AND

Poem

DELIVERED IN THE NEWMAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,  
IN EAST PROVIDENCE,

JUNE 7TH, 1893,

IN

Commemoration of the 250th Anniversary

OF THE

FOUNDING

OF THE

Newman Congregational Church

AND

ANCIENT TOWN OF REHOBOTH.





NEWMAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,  
A. D. 1810.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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EAST PROVIDENCE, June 15, 1893.

At a meeting of the Newman Congregational Church of Seekonk and East Providence holden this day, it was unanimously voted that the thanks of this Church be presented to Rev. Leonard Z. Ferris for the very able Historical Address he delivered on the 7th instant, it being the 250th anniversary of the founding of this Church and of the town. Also to Hon. Thomas W. Bicknell for his original poem he read on that occasion, and that the chairman of the anniversary exercises communicate with the above named gentlemen, and request a copy of the Address and Poem for publication.

I herewith forward to you the vote of the Church and request a copy of your Address for publication, and it is with pleasure I can add, that the community generally desire the publication of your valuable address, that the historical facts therein contained may be preserved for the benefit of the present and future generations.

JOSEPH BROWN, *Chairman.*

Seekonk, June 15, 1893.

REV. L. Z. FERRIS.

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*Dea. Joseph Brown, Chairman of Committee on 250th Anniversary:*

DEAR SIR:—Your very kind note of the 15th instant, conveying the vote of the Newman Congregational Church, has been received. I wish in reply first to assure you, and those for whom

you have written, of my grateful appreciation of the action taken, and the sentiments expressed. And while cheerfully acceding to the request, I avail myself of the opportunity to add the hope that the address, however defective, may not be altogether profitless in recalling the past, or giving a true and abiding inspiration for the future.

Very Respectfully Yours,

L. Z. FERRIS.

East Providence, R. I., June, 1893.

SEEKONK, June 15, 1893.

I herewith forward to you the vote of the Newman Congregational Church, with a request of a copy of your Poem for publication, and it gives me great pleasure to assure you, that it is not only the desire of the Church, but of the people generally who attended the anniversary exercises.

Truly Yours,

JOSEPH BROWN, *Chairman.*

HON. THOMAS W. BICKNELL.

BOSTON, June 19, 1893.

*To Joseph Brown, Esq., Chairman Anniversary Exercises:*

MY DEAR SIR:—I am in receipt of your polite note of the 16th, conveying to me the vote of thanks of the Newman Congregational Church, with the request that a copy of my Poem be sent for publication. I am grateful for the kind appreciation of my poetical effort, and am willing you should use it for publication, if it will add to the interest of the record. Whatever the value of the poem, my heart was larger than my words.

Sincerely,

THOMAS W. BICKNELL.

## HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

“Reboboth the Lord Hath Made Room for Us.”

*Reflection* and *prophecy* met together in those words spoken by Samuel Newman 250 years ago. Our thought will dwell therefore, in the line of this, their significance, as we linger awhile to-day on the spot Newman and his people then first trod.

### I.

We shall soon begin to realize their *retrospective* meaning in the light of some examples especially familiar to the student of this region's early history.

We know too well the story of the Pilgrims of Plymouth to need its rehearsal here. A simple reference thereto will call to mind that neither in England nor Holland was there room for such men and women as they.

William Blackstone came to this country in 1623 with Captain Robert Gorges. When Gorges returned to England, he settled in Boston for a time, dwelling alone. But when the Puritans came thither, he left for this wilderness, saying—as the story goes—“I came from England because I did not like the Lord-Bishops, but I cannot join with you because I would not be under the Lord-brethren.” And that he might have *room* he pitched his tent on the banks of the river that now bears his name, the Blackstone, whose every mile is to-day so burdened with population and musical with the buzz and whirr of busy machinery.

Roger Williams found no rest for the "sole of his foot" even by the spring at the bottom of yonder hill, and Providence kindly called him to the other side of the river for room to dwell in.

John Hassell (or Hazell) came out too, in those days, and settled beside the "Patucet," evidently because he would have more freedom of movement or opinion, or of both, than he found within the boundaries of the "Bay" or of New Plymouth.

And still another man of worthy memory came to find a freer breathing place than even in the town of the Pilgrims.

John Brown, having left the mother-land, lived for a time in Plymouth. He became one of the Governor's assistants in the Colony Court, and held the position many years. But we soon find him living in Cohanett (now Taunton), and after "Seacuncke" was settled he came thither also. In 1641 Mr. Brown and Mr. Edward Winslow bought of Ussamequeme, the "eight miles square." <sup>a</sup>

But, eighteen years before the Pilgrims started across the Atlantic Sea, Samuel Newman was born, almost under the shadows of old Oxford. Two months before they landed at Plymouth, he took his degree from Oxford, Trinity College. Into those "piping times" the young man set forth. Before 1635, it is stated, he had *seven* places of preaching, all of them too strait for his thought and desire. In that year he crossed the ocean in the good ship "James." He remained for a time with his friend Mr. Mather in Dorchester, working on the famous Concordance which bears his name. In 1638 he was called to the pastorate of the church in Weymouth.

Of the *condition of things* there, we need to take a moment's notice.

About 1635, the same year Newman came to America, two towns within the limits of "Massachusetts Bay," Weymouth and

Hingham, seem to have entered into an ecclesiastical *storm*, which overshadowed them for several years. In 1637-8, we are told, there were four ministers claiming the one pulpit in Weymouth.

Mr. Newman had, however, been called in to heal the wounds and put away differences. But the three other "Rev'end" claimants remained in the town; and, as may be supposed, added little to the lightness or facility of his task. In the meantime (1638) Thomas Cooper, Stephen Paine, Joseph Peck, John Sutton and Henry Smith had come to *Hingham*, not to find a paradise of harmony there.

In 1641 Mr. Stephen Paine of Hingham and Mr. James Parker of Weymouth were together in the Massachusetts Bay General Court. There they evidently talked over the troublous condition of things. And either before or soon after the purchase of "Seacuncke," they had communication with Mr. John Brown as to that territory. For on July 9, 1641, we have this entry: "At a Court of assistants held at Plym aforesd the vj day of July, in the 17th year of his Maj., in the Raigne of England, before Wm. Bradford, (gent), Gov., Edw'd Winslow, Wm. Collyer, Thomas Prence, Capt. Miles Standish—Mr. Parker had a view of the patent and that clause in writing w'h concerned the bound from Narragansett Bay to the utmost p'ts and limits of the country called Pockanockett—in regard the Baymen would have Secquncke from us."

As there arose a dispute between the two colonies as to which jurisdiction "Secquncke" belonged, there seems to have been a little delay in completing the purchase. But in August, 1642, a formal request was made by John Porter, Thos. Lorine and Stephen Paine of Hingham to the Court of "New Plimouth," to which the territory had been adjudged to belong, for permission to emigrate thither. Evidently the sale had by this time been consummated. While there is, so far as I can learn, no record made at the

time, of sale or grant, yet in 1685 there is recorded a *Confirmation Deed* rehearsing that "the first grant of the said township being eight miles square (was) granted in the year 1641 unto Alexander Winchester, Richard Wright, Mr. Henry Smith, Mr. Joseph Peck, Mr. Stephen Paine and divers others."

But the year 1643 came. The legal forms of purchase, etc., had been all observed.

October 24th, 1643, at *Weimuth*, "at a general meeting of the plantores of Seacunck, it was ordered :

- (1.) That the lottes shall not exceed the number of sixty-five.
- (2.) The ground that is most fit to be planted and hopeful for corn, for the present be planted and *fenced*.
- (3.) Those that have lottes \* \* \* \* shall fence by the 20th day of April next, or else forfeit their lottes." <sup>b</sup>

The next meeting was, also, in Weymouth the 10th of December, 1643. At this, arrangements were made as to the planting of corn and the share to be given to the teacher. Bliss copies from the Proprietors' Records : "About the year 1643 a joynt agreement was made by the inhabitants of Seaconk alias Rehoboth for the bringing in of their estates, &c." A list of names is given. In this catalogue there appears, for the first time, the name of Mr. Samuel Newman, who became, henceforth, the leader of the enterprise. A good part, though by no means all, of those whose names are in the lists given from time to time, are evidently members of his Weymouth church, now following him into the wilderness.

The *winter* of 1643 O. S. is wearing away. If, as Mr. S. C. Newman thinks, the Council of the Proprietors met the 3d of January again, it clearly shows that they were earnestly getting ready for an early start. If they must have their lots fenced in before the 20th of April, 1644 ; and they must depend on the corn and vegetables they can plant that Spring for the sustenance of them-

selves and their families thenceforward, a body of thirty or more farmers will not delay till the "May moving" before they are on the ground, getting settled and ready for their *Spring work*. The day, the month even, is not given us. <sup>c</sup> We do not know *where* they gathered for their wilderness march. We do know they felt that they were removing, from the Puritan limitations, out into a domain where they could think and act for themselves. Their leader worn with and tired of the chafing and anxiety of the last few years, was glad to be free from that environment.

I can see them, as they leave the "Old Burying Hill" of Weymouth that morning in the early Spring—men, women, children—for a freer air in the roominess of the frontier. Their neighbors gather around them there. Some are in tears. Perhaps some are glad they are going.

The little caravan gets into form. But stop—a signal has been given, for waiting and for silence. Every head is bowed. And the pastor commends his old neighbors who are to remain to the God of safety and success. And, then, pleads His guidance and continued blessing on the "little flock" leaving their homes to-day. 'Tis done. The last good-byes are said. They are on their way—a serious, yet merry band. They move through the heart of the Weymouth of the present. Then they come out into the lands where Abington, Bridgewater and Raynham have since been. They are marching to Cohanett (Taunton); for here their friend and coadjutor, Mr. John Brown, now lives, and will doubtless meet them with welcome and substantial cheer.

The first day is gone ; and they pitch their tents for rest. It is a dark night in the woods. But in the midst of night and forest the tired sleepers are startled by the cry of "fire, fire." It is the tent of Goodman Peck. The tent burns to the ground, the good man barely escaping with his life. <sup>d</sup>

But morning comes. And though some are footsore and weary with yesterday's tramp—all, with courage because only a few miles remain to journey, travel on.

Have they sent before some to *locate* the ground for them? No one knows. But not long, at least, after mid-day they stand together on this historic "plain."

Tents go up. Cranes are improvised for the kettles. Fires are kindled for the cooking. The children run here and there to see the novel surroundings. The women busy themselves in preparing that first meal in the new home. The men working in groups, talk of past and future. The leader stands apart—and looks over the scene. As far as the eye can see there is no human habitation. Sixty-four square miles their little commonwealth! Outside of the limitations as well as the limits of the *Puritan* Colony! With companions after his own freedom-craving heart, the wide wilderness shutting out the past, and—"The future all to him unknown,"—how like a voice from the ample dome above comes to the mind of this man unsurpassed in Bible lore, and he utters it as though inspired: "*The Lord hath made room for us, Rehoboth!*"

So far Reflection. The Prophecy is yet to unfold.

## II.

That next morning the making of history—by Town and Church in Secquncke—began in good earnest. Allotments were to be made. Portions were to be staked out. Habitations for man and beast were to be begun and builded as soon as possible. Those fences—provided for last October—were to be put up before the 20th of April. The ground in garden and field must be fitted by clearing, plowing, harrowing, spading, before sowing and planting time came. It was a busy spring, we may feel well assured, as the days of 1643 O. S. passed into those of 1644.

Apparently as soon as they could get a day in that busy season, a proprietors' meeting came. The date is gone. But the Records of the next meeting show that this must have been early in 1644. In this meeting it was voted: "that nine men should be chosen to order the prudential affairs of the plantation," and that "the meeting house shall stand in the midst of the town." Two things are, at once, apparent here, the appointment of a "Council" or "Board of Selectmen," and the assumption that the Town is to establish and regulate the institutions of Public Worship. Truly the Meeting House was to stand in the midst of the town. And in the life of each the other was to be a vital and prominent factor—how prominent and vital will partially appear as we trace the next fifty years, the *Second Era* of our history.

And here most conveniently we may refer to other facts and considerations exercising a notable influence on the career of this miniature state:

(1.) This, as we have seen, was a province of farmers. And so it was to remain for almost centuries to come. It is interesting to note the entries of acts, in the Records of the town meetings, until King Philip's war. Scarcely was there a town meeting, except to elect officers or to consider church matters, in which the great bulk of discussion and voting was not in this direction. Division and fencing of lands; valuation of estates; allotments of wood lands; wages for workmen; places for planting corn; apportioning of meadows and salt marsh; division of freemen for road-making; taxes upon persons and landed properties; caring for cattle, hogs and sheep; making of pounds; lots for the ox-pastor; prices of corn and other grains; destruction of animals injuring flocks and crops—these items, and such as these appear, year after year, as the grand staple of legislation.

(2.) The Court of Plymouth early passed an order that "The



Chief Government (of the towns in its jurisdiction) be tied to the town of Plymouth, and the governor for the time being be tied there." The towns of the colony were, therefore, represented by Deputies in the Court of Plymouth. Also one or more freemen from each town "sat" on the Grand Inquest, which was held in the Colony Seat. But in June 1647, permission was granted Rehoboth to have a Town Court of its own, with the privilege of appeal. This was accepted in February 1647. It will be seen at once how practically autonomous this left the *enlarging* territory. For it is to be remembered, that, during this period, again and again, sections were added to its "*ward*"\* at least, until its motherly wings sheltered nearly all between Wrentham on the north, Taunton on the east, Narragansett Bay on the south and Providence Plantations on the west.

(3.) Bliss, in his history, gives a copy of "a joynt agreement made by the inhabitants of Sea-conk, alias Rehoboth, for the bringing in of their estates that soe men's lotment might be taken up." The fifth person in this list is "The Schoolmaster £50." The schoolmaster was abroad, then, in 1643. And when the lots were drawn for the "Great Plain," June 1645, "The Schoolmaster" had one of them.

It is true we *hear* no more of the schools till the year after Philip's War. But the first item the historian notes, *then*, implies that the town had by no means neglected its children in the previous years. Indeed it may be that there is somewhat of truth in the words of quaint old Peters: "This pious clergyman, with his pious companions, went and formed the settlement of Rehoboth; the scite being pleasant, the air salubrious and the prospect horrible. \* \* \* There they worshipped the Creator with great devotion and Cruden (Newman) taught their children the arts and sciences gratis. That town, (he continues, and he was

writing after the Revolutionary War), is yet famous in New England for the education of its children."

(4.) Allusion has been made to King Philip's war. This conflict has been so many times, and in such detail, described, that it needs only a word here. Yet, but for the setting off of Wannamoiset in 1667, nearly the whole of that war had been on the soil of ancient Rehoboth.

On the 24th of June 1675, hostilities began in dead earnest in Swansea. As the men were coming home from "the meeting of humiliation and prayer, the Indians attacked them, killed one and wounded another, and killed two men who were going for a surgeon, beset a house in another part of the town, and then murdered six more." On the 30th of June, Captain Prentice's troop came to "Seaconke alias Rehoboth" to lodge at night. In the morning, as they went back to Swansea, they found the Indians burning houses on the way, and, giving chase, killed several of them. Soon after, the Colonial forces thought they had entrapped the great chief in the swamps of Tiverton. But while they were trying to starve him there, lo, the people of Seekonk Plain saw him and his braves crossing their bounds to the Indians in what is now central Massachusetts. The Rev. Noah Newman at once led a party in pursuit, and, in the battle, killed twelve. The old historian says: "Mr. Newman, the minister of Rehoboth, deserved not a little commendation for exciting his neighbors and friends to pursue thus far after Philip, animating them by his own example and presence." The "Battle of the Plain" (Pierce's Fight), which occurred so soon after, by its sad result calls out from Newman himself: "It is a day of the wickeds' tryumph, but the sure word of God tells us his tryumphing is brief. \* \* \* Our extremity is God's opportunity." On the same day as "Pierce's Fight," at "Nine Men's Misery" the nine men, so

remembered, were slain, scalped and left lying upon the rock around which they had fought for their lives. Then came Rehoboth's turn. The Indians appeared in such force as to render all opposition vain. The families in the "Ring of the Town" had barely time to escape to yonder Garrison House and to another building near by, when the savage chieftain himself, sitting in the now historic chair, and doubtless remembering the flight before Newman the short time before, gave the signal to set fire to all the houses.

Bliss says: "When the sun arose the next morning it beheld only a smouldering ruin. Only two houses were left standing." Yet "the Meeting House in the midst of the town" certainly escaped, since it stood until 1717. Though only one person was slain, yet the property, books, papers, etc., all had been destroyed by the merciless flames.

But God's opportunity, so implicitly relied upon by Noah Newman, soon revealed itself.

A little while, and Canonchet (Miantonony), the haughty and warlike chief of the Narragansetts, was taken, near the limits of Rehoboth, and executed at Stonington. Then Philip himself fell at Mount Hope. On August 28th, Annawan, Philip's most efficient captain, the bravest of his braves, was taken prisoner at Annawan's Rock.

"Clouds broke and rolled away,  
Foes fled in pale dismay,  
And war was done."

Ancient Rehoboth had borne the brunt of it. Its men had served in the thickest of the fight. It had given the blood of its citizens on the battlefield. Its property had been the spoil of the savage invaders, and its homes had been consumed by their torches. And it had contributed to the expenses a sum equivalent to little less than \$20,000 of to-day. "

We can little appreciate how the hardships and sacrifices of this war bound the people together. And as little, perhaps, can we realize how it endeared the brave pastor to his flock. And we so speak because the very first vote, noted by the historian, after the war, recalls us to relations of Town and Church and Pastor. It was that "Lieutenant Hunt and ensign Nicholas Pecke should assist the deacons to go from house to house to make inquiry what persons have or will do for this present year, for the maintenance of our Reverent Pastor; to see whether it will amount to fifty pounds, and also to take care that it be effectually paid in season." "The Meeting House" is still "in the midst of the Town."

But *it* has had a story worthy of remembrance since Mr. Samuel Newman named the country around, "Rehoboth." Scarcely had a half dozen years passed after the settlement, before trouble came just there.

By whomsoever or whatever was done—it seems that that good pastor felt that the officers of the Colony had greatly failed in their duty. He doubtless spoke strongly of the matter. And so I find in the Plymouth Records, on "June 6, 1649, Mr. Samuel Newman, teacher of the Church in Rehoboth was presented" by the Grand Inquest "for delivering such things in publick meeting as tend to the defamation of the magistrates of this Colony." There seems to have been nothing done with this presentation. But Newman had strong friends in the "Bay" still. And in October of that year, the "Colony of the Bay" sent an urgent letter to the Plymouth Court, pressing civil action against sundry heretics in their dominion. It mentions specifically those "at Sea-cuncke". And it goes on: "We are united by Confederacy, by faith, by neighborhood, by fellowship in our sufferings as exiles, and by other Christian bonds, and we hope neither Satan nor any of his instruments shall by this or any other errors disunite us,

and that we shall never have cause to repent us of our so near conjunction with you." <sup>n</sup>

It is no wonder that after this so plain a hint—which indeed, was almost a declaration of hostilities, at that era, if unheeded—it is no wonder that we find the next year steps taken as to those heresies in Rehoboth. In October 1650, then, the Grand Inquest, of which Deacon Thomas Cooper was one, say: "We, whose names are here underwritten, being the grand inquest doe present to this Court, John Hazell, Mr. Edward Smith and wife, Obadia Holmes, Joseph Tory and his wife, and the wife of James Man, William Deuell and his wife, of the Town of Rehoboth for the continuing of a meeting upon the Lord's Day, from house to house, contrary to the orders of this Court, enacted June 12, 1650." Evidently, however, no punishment followed this indictment. For we find Obadia Holmes, who had become the recognized leader of the dissentients, very soon after preaching in Lynn. The opportunity for the "Bay" authorities was too good to be lost. They at once seized Holmes and some of his associates and took them to Boston. There he was imprisoned; and finally publicly whipped, 30 lashes, September, 1651.

John Hazell was with Holmes, and fined for even expressing sympathy for him after the cruel castigation. Hazell died before reaching home. But Holmes came back to Rehoboth. Yet the Puritan power was too near him there, and the next year he removed to Newport, R. I. It need not be repeated here, what has been so fully demonstrated again and again, that neither Town nor Church of ancient Rehoboth had anything to do with this episode, and, so far as I can learn, the case against those going off from the original Church was not pressed further. <sup>1</sup> Indeed, it needs ever to be kept in mind that this cruelty was perpetrated upon *Holmes*, neither by his neighbors nor by the Pilgrims of the

Old Colony, but by the Puritan Commonwealth and on Massachusetts Bay soil.

It may be said, in passing, that this trouble among the settlers, through the action of Holmes, Hazell and others, must have been one of peculiar keenness, in that they *all* had come into the wilderness for freedom and harmony, but seem never to have suspected that in their very aim they carried the seeds of just such an outgrowth.<sup>k</sup>

It, indeed, seemed for a little time as though "Rehoboth" was to prove a misnomer. But the years passed on, and the solid, intelligent character of the inhabitants more and more confirmed the truth of Newman's prophetic name.

Samuel Newman died in 1663, having accomplished a mission as a minister and leader seldom given to a man by Providence. As author, preacher, the pioneer of a settlement on the then very frontier of civilization, he will ever hold a high place in the annals of New England. Mather says of him: "He loved his church as if it had been his family." And he left his people overcome with grief at his sudden, but rapturous departure.<sup>1</sup>

His son, Noah Newman, followed him in the pastorate. The bravery and promptness of this man we have already seen in the story of King Philip's war. His people's regard and care for him appear in many records, in which his house, salary, fuel and the like, are attended to with evident thoughtfulness and liberality. In 1678 he died, in the prime of life; and having been in the pastorate only 10 years.

The Rev. Samuel Angier, afterward fellow of Harvard College, who followed him, remained till 1693, the year after that in which Plymouth Colony (and, of course, Rehoboth,) became a part of the larger Massachusetts, under the new charter of William and Mary.

The next year, 1694, Attleborough was incorporated; and the area of the old town by so much diminished.

The 17th century had passed. It left the old meeting house of Rehoboth standing yet where now rests the "Proprietors' Tomb." The faithful drum still called the people to their Sabbath worship. The house, built for the accommodation of those who were accustomed to come away from the North Purchase, and Palmer's river and Wannamoiset, had not yet wholly "lost its occupation." The dignified deacons still sat close down by the lofty pulpit, and the tithing man cared for the unruly and the ruly with delightful impartiality. Stoves and furnaces had not invaded the Sanctuary, for they had not yet been seen in the home. Not even friction matches added their convenience as well as their dangers to the household store. The pine knot was found sufficient to give light to a people among whom every man, woman or child was expected to be in bed by 9 o'clock. And no newspaper presumed to come in and tempt to reading *before* or after nine. While tramps and travelers alike found no encouragement in the wilderness roads that still connected towns even along the New England coast. The 17th century had passed. The 18th century—

OUR THIRD ERA—

opened a new set of problems for solution. It found Rev. Thomas Greenwood as the very popular pastor of the Church.<sup>m</sup> In June, 1700, the Town called him also to the mastership of its school; a position which, however, he held only a year or two. In 1703 the town voted to have the school "at *Palmer's River* half the year." This "*Palmer's River*" now begins to appear with frequency in the Records. It had, however, a genuine surprise for church and settlement, when in 1711 a petition suddenly came before the General Court for dividing the Town of Rehoboth into two "precincts" for the support of the ministry, and that each precinct should have, and support, its own minister. This was promptly and strongly opposed. And the majority of the town at once proposed to build a new Meeting House in the old location, evidently intending so to head off the new movement. It was

voted to build the new Meeting House. But Palmer's River succeeded in part. And in 1717 two meeting-houses were being erected—one here, one there. They were completed—the one in 1718, the other in 1720 or '21. And the church at Palmer's River was gathered November 29th, the latter year, this being the second branch from the parent stem; the first, Attleborough, having gone in 1712. The Town now legislated for its *two* churches, and paid its *two* ministers right along. In 1736, we find also £10 granted, in town meeting, for the support of the Gospel in the northeast of the Town. "This," says our historian, "was probably granted to a Baptist Congregation." Three years later, 1739, the town voted to grant a salary "to the elder of the Baptist Church." Ten years later, £40 are voted to Mr. Checkly, minister of the Church of England, residing in Providence.

Clearly the Town meant to do its duty to all accredited sects within its borders. All could say: "The Lord hath made room for us." "The Meeting House (*was*) in the midst of the Town." But it will be seen, at once, that while this connection of Town and Church was the natural heritage of this people, yet now, when the population and churches were so widely scattered and variant in belief, it, of necessity, must have become cumbrous and burdensome. This seems to have been so patent that, after the resignation<sup>n</sup> of Rev. John Greenwood, who had followed his father in the pastorate, it was felt that *something* must be done about it. There were now *six* churches at least—two Congregational and four small Baptist. Action was taken to simplify matters. Without going into into details, it may be briefly said: two Congregational "*precincts*" were incorporated—the one including the western part of the Town as the first precinct of Rehoboth, the other, Palmer's River and vicinity, as the second precinct in Rehoboth—each to do its own work, and the town as such was severed from them. Each Congregational precinct, however, seems to have

comprised *all* the freemen—of whatever belief—within its territorial limits. Herein was mischief; as we shall ere long see.

But, now, just a century from the close of the old Indian War, another storm appeared in the horizon. Seven years the Revolution lasted. No hostile foot touched the soil of ancient Rehoboth. But its people, from the very beginning, were stirred by patriotic impulses. Men and means were most freely given.

With Washington at White Plains, and with Sullivan in Rhode Island, Rehoboth soldiers proved their devotion to country and liberty in camp and battle. No draft was unhonored. The men of 1776 showed themselves unsurpassed in loyalty and bravery by those of 1676. And that is praise enough.

How great the strain and sacrifice were, however, in those stern days, may be seen, in a degree, from the reaction at the close of the war, against the Federal Government itself, which was naturally, though *unreasonably*, held responsible for the then almost desperate condition of affairs throughout the land. Shay's Rebellion was the outcome of this, and it is evident, from the records, that the majority of the men of Rehoboth were in warm sympathy with that insurrection. But through the influence of Col. Thomas Carpenter, who had been their ablest leader in the conflict with Great Britain, and of others of like sentiments, wiser counsels prevailed.

The Town had hardly settled down from this war and its immediate effects when internal dissensions came.

Soon after the two precincts became distinct in 1759, some trouble arose in the western or First Precinct in connection with the settling of Rev. John Carnes. A very strong minority at once appeared antagonistic to the new pastor. Mr. Carnes, though a man of superior ability and of unblemished character, after a few years, resigned because of this strife.

He was followed, in the pastorate, by Mr. Ephraim Hyde. This

man, ordained here, was exceedingly popular, but died in the prime of his usefulness, 1783.

After a time the Rev. Jno. Ellis was engaged as a supply. He was liked so well that, after preaching several months, he was settled at a salary of £100 a year. All went "merry as a marriage bell" until the dilatory and deficient payment of his salary forced him to ask more prompt and complete returns. The precinct *voted* this and the necessary assessments. The assessments, however, were more easily levied than collected. A further attempt to *compel* their payment created instant dissatisfaction. Then arose positive and aggressive opposition. Very many in the precinct were not in sympathy with the ordinances of the Church. Many did not believe in "salaried ministers." Soon the feeling flooded the community. The opponents of minister and church were a majority. They took exclusive possession of the Meeting House, and endeavored to do the same by the *funds* which had accumulated in the past. This action resulted in a petition to the General Court for the dissolution of the *precinct* and the organization of a Parish, comprehending only those who were in the main, at least, agreed as to doctrines and methods of worship. The petition was granted, and the *incorporation* made June, 1792.

Then came the really desperate struggle. The recalcitrants took possession in dead earnest. For two weeks or more, night and day, without cessation, they literally "Held the Fort." It is too long a story to tell here. It was only possible that such a condition of things should be where all, of however diverse opinions, within a certain territory *must* belong to the society and be *legally* compelled to sustain a given institution, still having the legislative power therein in their own hands.

But after the "Long Meeting," and the longer contention in the Great and General Court and before Judge and Jury, the minister and his people were adjudged to be the true occupants of the dis-

puted House and went back to their sanctuary. The old bands, however, that had bound Church and State in one, had been burned in that fire. The "Long Meeting" was the final struggle between the ancient regime and the new conceptions of Christian liberty whose germs were implanted in the breasts of Samuel Newman and his friends 150 years before. It was a great blessing, though the combatants saw it not so.

We have seen that the first Precinct became extinct as such before the final contest. It may be well to add here that the second Precinct was soon after also reorganized on the same plan. So that in 1793 both parishes were substantially as they are to-day in this regard.

The next year, 1794, those who, in this portion of the town, held the tenets of Roger Williams, formed themselves into a Church yonder in whose prosperity we all so devoutly rejoice and for whose widest influence for good we most earnestly and always pray.

But another dissolution, requiring another Cataclysm, was close at hand. It was a long distance from Palmer's River and its vicinity to the old Meeting House on the Plain, which, even after the church in the former place had been built, was still used for the Town Meeting. The interests, too, of that part of the territory became naturally and legitimately, in great part, distinct from those of this section. For a century this had more and more shown itself. The inhabitants, however, were united by so many ties of family, of sacrifices, of toil and effort together in peace and war, of mutual pride, and mutual help in education and morality, it seemed impossible to better the condition of things. But the tension became too great, and the "Fighting Town Meeting" was the culmination. It became then more than evident that the two sections were better apart. And the division into the Towns of Rehoboth and Seekonk was effected February 26th, 1812, though only three weeks before the freemen voted against it

328 to 18. It will be observed that *this* separation was just about a century after the petition from Palmer's River for a new precinct and Church there. Thence the logic of events had been as sure as time itself.

So as our history swings out of the 18th century fully into the 19th,

—OUR FOURTH ERA—

we find again new conditions and new forces at work—yet still how legitimately evolved from the soul-stirrings and the environment of the men and the measures of 1643.

The Rev. John Hill had become the Pastor of this Church in 1802. He was honored not only as an able minister but also as a superior scholar and very successful Teacher. After fourteen years of efficient service here he died from an injury by a vicious horse.

Meanwhile the war of 1812 came and went without seeming to scarcely ruffle the quiet current of life here. The old Meeting House was replaced by the more convenient structure which is the body of that in which we meet to-day.<sup>o</sup>

But another separation or partition was preparing. During the last decade of the 18th century, at the instigation of Mr. Moses Brown of Providence, Samuel Slater, an Englishman, had put in operation the first cotton mills in America on the western banks of the Pawtucket. The first one built on the east bank, and in Seekonk, was erected in 1813. Other manufactories and industries also clustered there. Soon a large and rapidly growing village was located along the stream. So in 1828 the portion of Seekonk in that vicinity was set off and incorporated as a town. The next year the Congregational Church of Pawtucket was organized—another off-shoot from this parent stem, though the original nine came from Attleboro.

Five years before this, Mr. James O. Barney had been ordained as Pastor of the old Church in this place. He

speaks to-day from the portrait that so fitly adorns the parlor below us. "Father" Barney, as he is still so lovingly called, remained, with a short interim, forty years as pastor and teacher here. None of those who knew him speak of him or his pastorate but with an almost reverential praise. His was a ministry so replete with good that not even the tithe can be mentioned here. A few of the more noteworthy items must suffice. He secured the acceptance of the Creed of the Church substantially as it is to-day. He arranged the first printed Manual we possess. He introduced to his people, early, the great Missionary enterprises of the time. He made the Prayer and Conference Meeting a regular and permanent thing. He established the Sabbath School in its present form. He gathered its first library. He was foremost in all matters of true Reform. If I read rightly, he was the first person named in Seekonk (1829) as one of the Town School Committee. And in still other directions he was quietly active outside his Church. So that for two scores of years he was an unobtrusive but all the more efficient factor in the civil and social welfare of the community.

The civil matters of the town remained with no noteworthy event to mark them until 1861. Then came the War of Rebellion. The community and the Church did their duty therein. And for years after the conflict, we are told, the "Memorial" services were held in this House.

But still another event of the first importance occurred in the second year of this war, fraught with significance to Seekonk and the ancient Church—another division; this time between sovereign states. And what is still Seekonk remained in Massachusetts, while that which now lies within the limits of East Providence became a benediction to Rhode Island. The Church edifice, that had stood so long on Massachusetts soil, now found itself in the Commonwealth of Rhode Island

and Providence Plantations. But the boundaries of the Parish were yet the same, enclosing the two towns. The *legal name* was, however, changed and remains to this day "The Parish of Seekonk."

"Father" Barney resigned the pastorate in 1867.

Mr. Samuel E. Evans, a graduate of Harvard College and Chicago Theological Seminary, and a soldier in the years '63 and '64, was ordained pastor in 1868. Ardent, devoted, self-sacrificing, spiritual, he is still remembered with deep affection by many who enjoyed his short, but fervent, ministry. He, too, has gone to his reward

"In the land beyond the River."

The earnest and successful work of Rev. Hiram E. Johnson followed from 1872 to 1879. The welcome presence of the present pastor of the United Congregational Church of East Providence precludes the speaking in more fitting words of the pastorate which so enshrined him and holds him still in the hearts of an appreciative people.

The Rev. Leverett S. Woodworth came hither from the busy city of Brockton in June, 1880. The same happy reason, which has just been adduced for not speaking more fully of his predecessor, denies us more complete expression of the very enjoyable pastorate of nearly eight years of our Congregational Rhode Island "Bishop at Large." Mr. Woodworth found a rapidly growing population in the southwestern portion of the parish, and in 1881 the Church at Riverside was organized. Mr. Woodworth, also, while attending to the needs of the more central portion of his still broad field, with characteristic and indefatigable zeal, felt that there were places for two more Congregational Churches within its borders.

In the meantime the old Church, which had been, from the beginning of the history of that body, a member of the Taunton,

(Mass.) Conference, because of its closer contiguity to the Rhode Island State Conference, joined the latter in 1887. It had, the year before, elected to be called henceforth, in honor of its founder, THE NEWMAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH of Seekonk and East Providence. In the same year in which the Church united with the Conference of Rhode Island, the Home Missionary Society of that State, having seen the work done here by him, said to the Reverend Pastor, "Come thou into a yet broader field." And, though at the cost of removing a beloved pastor from a beloved people, still we all feel to-day that it put "the right man in the right place." For the privilege of that choice Rhode Island owes a debt to the people of this Parish, both for bringing the elect one hither, and then giving him *room* for preparation for the wider "diocese."

In 1888 the Church at Luther's Corner took for its kernel a Colony from the Newman Church. In 1889 another body went forth, from this, to become the beginning of the United Congregational Church of East Providence. This is, therefore, the youngest of the daughters of a not small or unworthy family—a family, I am told, containing thirteen or more daughters and granddaughters, all doing good work for God and humanity. Surely, situated thus, to-day—recalling with gratitude unspeakable the marvelous development so briefly traced of 250 years, and so equipped in membership, means and environment for the hastening Future—may the Church of Newman say: "*The Lord hath made room for us.*"

## III.

Our task is substantially done. The incidents of a more public character, filling these 250 years, have necessarily crowded out even reference to a *multitude* of most interesting items, thrilling and picturesque events, and persons worthy of extended mention, remembered so well by those in this presence.

Of names of pastors, we have recalled the Newmans, father and son; the Greenwoods, father and son; Angier, Carnes, Hyde, Ellis, Hill, Barney and Evans—all gone home. But two remain to gladden this hour with their presence and words.

Of those who have "purchased to themselves a good degree and great boldness in the faith," there come to mind—of the past and present—the Coopers, the Reeds, the Frenches, the Browns, the Ellises, Carpenter, Kent, Wheaton, Walker, Shorey, Pearse and others.

The tablet, of ancient Rehoboth's military names, bears those of Cols. Carpenter, Walker, Brown and other officers, with a roster of yeomen soldiery, the pride of any province.

Hon. John S. Brayton, in words uttered seven years since in the present Rehoboth, spoke of the men of letters and the professions nurtured within the olden limits: two presidents of Brown, Maxcy and Robinson; Benjamin West, the mathematician and friend of Franklin and Rittenhouse; Dr. Nathan Smith, Professor in Dartmouth and Yale; Bliss, the historian of his native Town; Blanding, the lawyer; the Millers, unsurpassed in surgery in their day. And we may add here that these are only a few even of the brighter stars that shine in these heavens whose zenith is above "the Meeting House in the midst of the Town."

Within these sacred precincts of the "Ring of the Town," the chosen ground of *our* Ancient Seer, we stand, and behold to day—where once spread out in wilderness-folds the segment of a savage Kingdom, bought of its dusky Chief for a string of shells, "ten fathoms of wampum,"<sup>r</sup>—a cluster of miniature Commonwealths: Cumberland and Pawtucket and East Providence, Attleborough and North Attleborough and Rehoboth, Swansea, Warren and Barrington in part, and fair Seekonk with her garden-farms in the midst. Where Hazell and Blackstone—and they so far apart—alone showed the white man's face when Newman and Payne and



Peck came, now nearly 30,000 inhabitants dwell, and the aggregate valuation is at least 30,000,000 of dollars.\* Within these limits, where the first Pastor gathered all the children of a "little flock" around him, and taught them science and saintliness together, countless schools of city and town exist, unsurpassed even in peerless New England—and, to-be-counted-by-the-score are the spires that

"Point the way to Heaven, to God."

Surely it is right to feel the thrill of a great joy on this day as we reverently repeat: "The good hand of our God (has been) upon us." But something more than joy and gratitude—beautiful and fitting as are these gems in our Jubilee Crown—is due here. The inspiration of this auspicious hour—

it is to larger conceptions of God's goodness in His own ceaseless guidance of those who supremely trust in Him—(Ps. 89 : 15-17); it is to take to ourselves the profound lessons of strong convictions, deep and abiding earnestness, firm and holy purposes, self-sacrificing devotion to high ideals of right and freedom, and *willing* entrance into and endurance within every toil rightly bespoken by neighbor, or country, or God; it is to a great and lasting desire to prove ourselves to be true inheritors of all that is noble and substantial in this past, and to *transmit* it full worthily on to the generations yet to come.

Two hundred and fifty years from now will they stand here, and—across the centuries—see the light, the beacon light, *we* hold up to-day, in line with that of 1643, and say: "They dimmed not the ancestral flame by aught in character or deeds." It were a plaudit worthy to stand beside God's own

"Well Done."

## APPENDIX

<sup>a</sup> "From the quit-claim deed of Philip, given in 1668, it appears that the first purchase of land \* \* \* was made of Ousamequin, more commonly known by the name of Massassoit, in 1641, by Mr. John Brown and Mr. Edward Winslow. A tract of land of eight miles square, lying and being both on the east and west side of a river called Palmer's river." Bliss, H. of R. pages 21, 22. The original deed has never been found; but that from Philip and one from the Court of Plymouth are still in existence.

<sup>b</sup> "Weimoth the 24th of the 8th month, 1643. At a general meeting of the plantores of Seacunk it was ordered:

(1) That the lottes shall not exceed the number of sixty and five, (etc.)

(2) It is agreed that the ground that is most fit to be planted and hopeful for corne for the present be planted and fenced by such as possess it.

(3) It is ordered that those who have lottes granted and are \* \* inhabitants shall fence the one end of their lottes and their part in the common fence \* \* \* by the 20th day of April next, or else forfeit their lottes to the disposal of the plantation; and likewise to remove themselves and family to inhabit \* \* by this time twelvesmonth, or else forfeit their lottes againe to the plantation, allowinge them their necessary improvements as they in their discretion shall think meet.

(4) That if any damages shale fale out by anny man's particular fence, the owner of the fence shale pay the damage, and if \* \* \* genrall fence, then those persons that one the fence to pay (torn off)." Rehoboth Rec. by Bliss.



Peter H. Wheaton	(chosen)	1824:11:24
William Ellis	"	1825:3:31
John Shorey	"	1839:6:2
Peter H. Brown	"	1839:6:2
Robert M. Pearse	"	1858:12:1
Joseph Brown	"	1858:12:1
William W. Ellis	"	1872:5:30
Albert R. Read	"	1872:5:30

<sup>k</sup> And it is here to be noted that those *leading* in the trouble were not those who came from Weymouth with Newman, but before as Hazell, or afterward as Holmes and Myles.

<sup>l</sup> See Bliss' Hist. of Rehoboth, p 54. His death occurred July 5th, 1663.

<sup>m</sup> Rev. Th. Greenwood writes in his Records, "I was ordained Pastor of the Church of Christ at Rehoboth the 24th of October, 1694."

<sup>n</sup> In the 2d Vol. of Rev. Jno. Greenwood's Records we have: "1758, May 25. At a C<sup>h</sup> meeting at the meeting-house at 3 P. M., the result of Council of the 18 of this instant, May, was Read by Rev. Mr. Townsend who was present, upon which, I said to the C<sup>h</sup>, that the matter was not clear to me, yet I submitted to the advice, and asked of the Church a Release from my Pastoral Relation to them, who manifested their compliance by a full vote.

JOHN GREENWOOD, Pastor."

<sup>o</sup> As a thorough discussion of the history of the three Sanctuaries was given at the Re-dedication May 17, 1891, it has been only alluded to here.

<sup>p</sup> The almost numberless facts so omitted, I the more cheerfully pass over, as so many of them have been so carefully and graphically stated in an address printed in Providence Journal,

May 23, 1884, or contained in a still unprinted address, both delivered the day before by Rev. Leverett S. Woodworth.

<sup>r</sup> "1 Nov., 1641, New Ply<sup>m</sup>.

At a Court of Assistants held at Ply<sup>m</sup> afores<sup>d</sup>, John Hassell affirmeth that Ussamequeme chose out X fathoms of beads at Mr. Williams, and put them in a Baskett and affirmed that he was fully satisfied there<sup>w</sup>th for his lands at Seacunck, but he stood upon it that he would have a coat more, and left the beads at Mr. Williams and willed him to keep them untill Mr. Hubbard came up. He affirmed the bounds were to Redstone Hill, viij miles into the land, and to Annawamscoate vij miles down the water."

<sup>s</sup> In response to request, the Clerks of the following towns once wholly or partially within the bounds of the Ancient Province, have very kindly given the following figures for the Year 1892:

	Population	Val.
Attleboro,	7577.	\$4,254,839
Rehoboth,	1788.	730,220
Warren,	4484.	3,393,450
Swansea,	1400.	799,645
Seekonk,	1300.	867,879
East Providence,	8422.	7,150,000
Pawtucket,	29,000.	26,892,726
Cumberland,	8090.	7,475,192

(3)

# AN ORIGINAL POEM

READ AT

THE NEWMAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

EAST PROVIDENCE, R. I., JUNE 7, 1893,

BY ITS AUTHOR,

THOMAS W. BICKNELL.

## EARLY PILGRIMS.

We meet where ancient altar fires  
Were kindled by ancestral sires,  
And grateful homage here we pay  
To worthies of an earlier day.

Our Mecca this, a sacred shrine,  
Made holy by the Face Divine;  
Our Salem, where with joyful lays  
The tribes once met for prayer and praise.

'Twas Israel's wont, at Zion's seat,  
The story and the song repeat  
Of captive days, of grand release  
From Pharaoh's bonds to Canaan's peace.

They sang again sweet Miriam's strains  
That echoed over Goshen's plains,  
As horse and rider filled the sea,  
"Jehovah triumphed gloriously."

At Marah's springs they drank anew,  
Till bitter waters sweeter grew;  
'Neath Elim's palms they slaked their thirst  
And gained new strength by days of rest.

POEM.

35

Across the desert sands they stray,—  
Their guide the pillared cloud by day;  
In darksome night, the stars their tent,  
O'erarching God's high firmament.

Ere yet the Promised Land they spy,  
For Egypt's leeks and corn they cry;  
E'en Joshua's speech of fruitful vines  
And corn and wine are empty signs.

But on they press at Moses' word  
And reach the Sacred Mount of God,  
Where blessed anew with Law and Love,  
They pledge their faith in Heaven above.

Through Moab's land, past Nebo's cave  
Where Israel's leader found his grave;  
His strength still new, his vision bright,  
He rested there, 'neath Heaven's sweet light.

"On Jordan's stormy banks they stand,"  
And view their Canaan, promised Land.  
Its waters feel their Master's wand  
And swift obey His great command.

These earlier Pilgrims find their home,  
Where God has made them plenteous room;  
The rocks yield honey, milk their kine,  
They seek His precepts all divine.

To the high theme of Pilgrim days  
In modern lands, our thoughts we raise,  
And trace the path the fathers trod,  
Who lived and walked and died with God.

## FROM OLD TO NEW.

Stout of heart and strong of hand,  
Were the men who journeyed from old England,  
Who broke the chains of a despot king,  
And with freemen's shouts made the welkin ring.

"Charles is a tyrant," they boldly said,  
And under the banners of Cromwell led,  
These sires of ours won their spurs of yore,  
On Naseby's fields and at Marston Moor.

The King of Kings was their leader then ;  
They feared no foes of the sons of men,  
But forth to battle and death they went,  
As unto some holy sacrament.

Some called them Roundheads as in scorn ;  
Others named them Puritans and low-born.  
Both they confessed and proudly chose  
To die with these than to reign with those.

A stern resolve fired these noble men,  
Their faith in God well served them then ;  
" We had rather brave the new world's fears,  
Than to dwell on a soil sown with bitter tears.

This land of our birth is now desolate,  
The Church is corrupt and worse the State.  
We will not bow to an earthly crown  
That tramples the laws of God's kingdom down.

Across the seas in the Golden West,  
Lies a newer land where the soul may rest.  
Where the foot of the tyrant has never trod,  
And with freedom of faith we may worship God."

The Mayflower brought of the choicest stock ;  
They planted their feet on Plymouth Rock.  
The seed of three realms was the freight they brought  
In that little ship, men counted naught.

I see her prow as it parts the waves  
To the land of the free from a land of slaves ;  
A pillar of cloud was their guide by day,—  
The lamp of Hope led their nightly way.

How strange was the sight that met the view  
Of these pioneers to a land so new !  
The shores and the woods like the waves were wild,  
For Nature alone on these scenes had smiled.

'Twas God's dear welcome alone they sought,  
As into this wilderness they brought  
Their wives and children and household stuff ;  
With the Church and the School, they were rich enough.

But list to the sound that floats on the air,  
Methinks it's the chorus of praise and prayer  
That rises from hearts in that cabin lone,  
And mingles and swells at God's high throne.

This promised land they hold in trust,  
To Heaven they pledge allegiance first ;  
Then with their faith in fellow man,  
They knew not race nor creed nor clan.

These tenets bold the Pilgrims gave,  
As principles the world to save.  
The winds took up the bold refrain,  
And swept them westward o'er the main,—

Till o'er the land Columbus saved  
And seized from out the Western wave,  
One song shall fill all souls with praise,  
And crown earth's latest, sweetest days,  
" The brotherhood of man maintain,  
The Fatherhood of God proclaim."

#### ON THE MARCH.

Out of the East, ere the sunrise, in the dawn of colonial st  
While the red streaks of the morning were lighting the plains and the forests,  
Gathered the neighbors at Weymouth to speak their good-byes at the fording.  
Late yester-night it was ordered the march should begin on the morrow.  
Prayers had been offered at hearthstones and around the old Weymouth  
pulpit.  
Newman, the elder, their leader, was to be of the new flock their shepherd,  
To lead to the pastures of Seekonk beside the still waters of Blackstone.  
Trusty, the Indian guide, who knew the long trail through the forests,  
Knew where the camps should be made and the Titicut's stream could be  
forded,  
Knew where the alewives swarmed and the nuts had been stored by the  
squirrels,  
Knew where the goose laid its eggs, and the hedgehogs fashioned their  
burrows ;  
Knapsacks strapped to their backs, and their horses well laden with baggage,  
Clothing from over the sea, and stores from old Wessagussett ;  
Men astride English-bred horses, and women on pillions behind them,  
Babes on their arms or their backs, and barefooted children as footmen.  
Narrow the trail through the woods that leads to the Western horizon,  
Where these first pilgrims shall rest, on the march to the farther Pacific.  
Green and mossy the carpet that is spread o'er the floor of great Braintree ;  
Sweet are the songs of the robins, and the redwing is joyous with music ;  
The catkins are green on the willows, and brilliant the blush of the maple ;  
The mayflowers are modest as maidens, and the cowslips drink gold from the  
brooklets.

Onward they make their way, with serious mood, yet glad-hearted.  
 Looking with hope for the day when their future new home should be sighted  
 Near to the land of Mosshassuck, on the borders of blue Narragansett,  
 Where Williams, the exile from Salem, had made an asylum for freemen.  
 Early their first camp they made, in sight of the blue Massachusetts,  
 Bedded beneath the pines near the waters of white-pebbled Mashpaug.  
 Early next day on the trail they meet with the Chief Metacomet,  
 Sagamore now of the tribe that rules over wave-washed Sowamset.  
 Welcome he gives to the band, which holds in its girdle the legend  
 Written by Massasoit, their deed to the broad Wannamoisett.  
 Royal the Puritan pageant, the reface now leads the processions,  
 Winding across the plains till Titicut's waters are forded.  
 The camp is set for the night, with Indian warriors for sentries,  
 Near the great hill on the south, where later the beacons were lighted.  
 Joy fills the heart of the people, for well they know on the morrow  
 They will feast on the bivalves of Seekonk and drink from the waters of  
 Blackstone.

On the third day ere the nightfall, they reach this land of their purchase.  
 Here Samuel Newman, the elder, now well within his possessions,  
 Gratefully pours out his soul in a prayer of deepest devotion,  
 Voicing the hearts of his church in the wilderness here to be planted,  
 Sacredly sets up his standards and christens this new land Rehoboth.  
 "For," said the Puritan leader, "This is the land full of promise.  
 Here hath the Lord led his flock to the pastures and waters of plenty.  
 Its name shall henceforth be Rehoboth, for here there is room for our planting.  
 Mother of towns shall she be and of churches so true and so faithful,  
 Blest of the Lord in the life which here on these plains we have planted."

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#### THE CHURCH AND HOME IN THE WILDERNESS.

Across the years and lives of men,  
 The Church and Home have welcome been.  
 Each in its sphere a power for good—  
 A power more felt than understood.

Each near the other found its place,  
 The Home for life; the Church for grace.  
 Like sentries firm their watch towers stand  
 To guard the treasures of the land.

The earliest thought of Newman's flock  
 Was planted first on Plymouth Rock,  
 But seed like this finds ready root  
 In soils that tempt no other fruit.

At Providence, across the tide,  
 Brave Williams and his church abide.  
 There exile saints and sinners meet  
 At freedom's common mercy seat.

At Study Hill, Blackstone's retreat,  
 The hermit settler thinks it meet  
 To flee the priestly lord of men;  
 And tyrant more—the lord brethren.

On Seekonk's plains, in sweet accord,  
 With these true followers of the Lord,  
 Samuel, the seer, of English blood,  
 Reverses the oracles of God.

He plants the church on corner stone,  
 Where priest and prophet meet in one.  
 He rears the humble Bethel roof  
 On soil that thirsts for Heaven's own truth,

The sacred desk he weekly fills,  
 And from his lips Heaven's dew distills;  
 The hour glass tests the sermon's length,  
 Its *doctrines* try men's faith and strength.

Two preachments on each Sabbath day,  
 A weekday lecture, grave, not gay—  
 Discourses suited to an hour  
 When men must hew their way to power.

---

#### NEWMAN AND HIS FLOCK.

Teacher and pastor was our Newman, too,  
 His hands some tasks were always near to do.  
 The sick had healing, comfort the distressed,  
 The dying solace and the weary rest.

To feed his flock the pastor must be fed,  
 Himself must lead to pastures rich with bread.  
 God's word to him was daily manna blest,  
*Newman's Concordance* tells the story best.

With axe or hammer equal was his skill,  
 As with the faithful but relentless quill.  
 He wrought by day; no midnight oil he burned,  
 Because forsooth pine knots were all he earned.

His salary was fifty pounds a year;  
His work was broad, yet many called it dear.  
That ancient flock had need of various care  
A modern pastor ne'er would try or share.

He led the sheep by pastures fair and large,  
The lambs he nurtured as a shepherd's charge.  
The Church was foremost, yet in things of State,  
He oft was called the town to moderate.

Physician, too, he knew the art and skill  
To practice with the knife or murderous pill.  
A Judge he was, in suits not always civil,  
The case went hard that savored of the devil.

The meeting house, quite like the pastor, too,  
Had uses for all times and seasons new.  
Its high-backed pews concealed the deacon's nod  
Who bowed to *Somnus* while he worshipped God.

The sounding board high o'er the pulpit tower,  
Resounded with the preacher's vocal power,  
While on town meeting days the county squire,  
Set all the town ablaze, with lungs on fire.

The galleries above were filled with youth  
Who went to meeting *more for fun* than truth.  
The tithing man, though patient as a rule,  
Found here a task as hard as keeping school.

The Church and State united here in one;  
The pulpit was the forum and the throne.  
All human wrongs were righted at this court,  
They prayed and quarreled when they came to vote.

The deacon's hat crown was the voter's box,  
Where every freeman cast his written prox.  
The kangaroo and ballot were unknown,  
The seeds of ballot stuffing were not sown.

'Tis well to call it consecrated ground,  
Where men and deeds of primal stock are found.  
Old Seekonk's plains, though waste as a Sahara,  
Are brilliant yet as diamond-decked tiara.

For here the Church has stood the centuries' shock,  
And round her hearthstone many a loyal flock  
Has gathered since the days of "forty-three,"  
To make the Church and State both strong and free.

Newman, the scholar, was their leader then,  
A true-born son of God and king of men.  
Across these fields his active pathway lay,  
"Allured to brighter worlds and led the way."

Thrice blessed he who saw that early day,  
Before these times when saints hunt heresy;  
Who made his doctrines square and orthodox,  
Because forsooth, there was no other dox.

'Twas Father Newman to the elder men,  
And Parson Newman to the younger clan.  
He taught true faith, great hope and charity,  
Untrammelled by the weight of a D. D.

Time fails to tell of grand, heroic souls,  
And women, too, bright stars on history's rolls,  
Who lived and labored, loved and journeyed on,  
From life's bright morning till its setting sun.

Who set the standards of our later times  
Of honest service and of well-earned dimes;  
Who sought not honors nor earth's poor reward,  
But righteous living, richest gift of God.

Around us are their sons who run the town;  
Their names are Peck and Allen, Hunt and Brown,  
Walker and Martin, Carpenter and Bliss,  
Cooper and Holmes, and lots of names like this.

Brave Thomas Willett, Captain of the State,  
Standish's successor, with a fame as great,  
Who laurels won at old Manhattan's town,  
And at Rehoboth's feet did lay them down.

Peace to their ashes, resting 'neath the sod  
Of yonder graveyard; souls, they rest in God.  
Living, they come to cheer our burdened way,  
And lift our souls to Heaven's eternal day.

#### THE FIRST BAPTISM OF BLOOD AND FIRE.

The wilderness now has been vanquished,  
The wild briar was fragrant in June,  
The cornfields were bright for the harvest,  
And the farmers were resting at noon.

When lo, on the southern horizon,  
A storm cloud quick threatens the land.  
'Tis charged with the lightning of vengeance,  
From the hearts of a barbarous band.