

ANNALS

OF THE

AMERICAN PULPIT;

OR

COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES

OF

DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN

OF

VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.

WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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JOSEPH BADGER.*

1786—1846.

JOSEPH BADGER was a descendant, in the fourth generation, of Giles Badger, who came from England about the year 1635, and settled in Newbury, Mass. He was the son of Henry and Mary (Langdon) Badger, who, after having resided at Norwich, Conn., and afterwards, for a while, in New Jersey, removed to that part of Springfield, Mass., which is now called Wilbraham. Here Joseph was born on the 28th of February, 1757. His parents were both professors of religion, and were careful in the religious training of their children. In 1766, the family removed to Partridgefield, (now Peru,) in Berkshire County, which was then a new and uncultivated place, and without any school or other means of intellectual improvement. The counsels and prayers of his parents at this period made a powerful impression upon his mind; though he was subsequently led by youthful vanities to the verge of ruin.

In February, 1775, when he had just completed his eighteenth year, he entered the army, about three weeks after the battle of Lexington, being enrolled in a company of Colonel John Patterson's regiment. He waited on the Chaplain of the regiment, the Rev. David Avery, for about two years. He was present at the battle of Bunker Hill, and was afterwards for some time with General Arnold in Canada, serving in the different capacities of soldier, baker, and nurse; suffering at one time from the small-pox, and at another from fever and ague; and often subjected to the most imminent perils. Having, in 1777, received his discharge from the service, he went to visit some friends in New Preston, Conn., and arrived there two days before the British destroyed Danbury. He immediately joined a party who went forth in pursuit of the enemy, under the command of a recruiting officer, and, after participating in one sharp contest with them in Wilton, and another in Fairfield, he returned to his friends in New Preston.

Shortly after this, he enlisted again as an Orderly Sergeant, until January, 1778, and was stationed first at Milford, Conn., and afterwards at White Plains, N. Y. At the expiration of this term, he visited his friends in Massachusetts, but returned to New Preston before the close of February, and hired himself out in the business of weaving, until the next October; in which time he wove more than sixteen hundred yards of cloth. Having earned a little more than enough to pay for his clothing, he resolved to spend the remainder in acquiring some more knowledge than he had of the elementary branches of spelling, writing, and arithmetic,—intending, after a short time, to return to the army. As there was no school in New Preston, which he could attend, with the prospect of much improvement, he placed himself under the instruction of the Rev. Jeremiah Day, in whose family he became a boarder. Here he spent the winter of 1779–80, engaged in study; but in the spring he found his funds so reduced, that he was under the necessity of again resorting to the loom.

About this time his mind became deeply impressed with the truths of the Bible. Without experiencing any great excitement, he gradually gained

* Autobiog.—Amer. Quart. Reg. XIII.—Kennedy's "Plan of Union."

the evidence, as he believed, of a thorough change of character, and, after a few weeks, became a member of Mr. Day's church. He now relinquished his intention of returning to the army, and resolved to enter on a course of study with a view to the ministry. He immediately commenced the classics under the instruction of Mr. Day, and, though he was repeatedly interrupted for a considerable time in his studies, both by sickness and by teaching a school to provide himself with necessary funds, he was enabled to enter the Freshman class in Yale College at the Commencement in 1781. During his college course he was dependant on his own exertions for support; but, through the indulgence of President Stiles in granting him all the favours in his power, and by teaching a school, and performing certain humble services in the College for which he received remuneration, he was enabled to advance respectably with his class to the close of his college course. In his senior year, he constructed a *Planetarium*, which cost him about three months' labour, and for which the Corporation paid him one hundred dollars. He was graduated in September, 1785.

The next year after his graduation, he taught a school in Waterbury, Conn., and studied Theology under the direction of the then aged Rev. Mark Leavenworth; after which, he was licensed to preach by the New Haven Association. During the next winter, he supplied the pulpit at Northbury, (now Plymouth,) Conn. On the 24th of October, 1787, he was ordained Pastor of the Church in Blandford, Mass.,—the Sermon on the occasion being preached by his friend, the Rev. Mr. Day.

While residing in Mr. Day's family as a student, Mr. Badger formed an intimate friendship with Lois, a daughter of Stephen Noble, of New Milford, and a sister of Mrs. Day. He was married to her in October, 1784,—a little less than a year before his graduation, and three years before his settlement in the ministry. By this marriage he had seven children—three sons and four daughters.

He continued Pastor of the Church in Blandford thirteen years. On the 24th of October, 1800, he was dismissed from his pastoral charge, having been appointed by the Connecticut Missionary Society to labour as a missionary in the Connecticut Western Reserve. Accordingly, on the 15th of November following, he set out for that new and distant field of labour; and, after a tedious and somewhat perilous journey, he reached Youngstown a little before the close of the year. He immediately commenced visiting the small settlements, and preaching to the few families that composed them. The winter and spring he spent in the Southern part of the Reserve; but, in June, as soon as the waters were fordable, he visited the interior settlements,—passing on from Hudson to Cleveland, and thence still farther to the North. He also made a tour to the Indians on the Maumee, to ascertain their condition with reference to the establishment of a mission among them. Returning to Hudson in October, and thence striking across to Austinburg, he organized a church in the latter place, on the 24th of that month, consisting of ten males and six females. This was the first church organized by a New England man, on the Reserve, and the second and only church after that at Youngstown, organized in this field before the year 1802. The church at Youngstown took the Presbyterian form; that at Austinburg, the Congregational.

Mr. Badger now set out to return to New England, by way of Buffalo. His health was feeble when he started on his journey; but the fatigue and

exposure to which he was subjected, brought on a fever by which he was confined for some time at Buffalo, with only a doubtful prospect of recovery. He was enabled, however, at length, to proceed on his journey, and, after some further detentions by repeated attacks of illness, he reached his family and friends,—having been absent from them a year and forty-seven days. After spending a week or two with them, he repaired to Hartford, and made a report concerning his mission to the Missionary Board, which was accepted.

Having satisfied himself from actual observation that the soil of the Western Reserve was good, and would admit of a dense population, and that a door was open for extensive ministerial labours in that region, he resolved to remove his family thither; and, accordingly, having made the necessary arrangements, they set out, on the 23d of February, 1802, with all their movable goods, in a wagon drawn by four horses, to find a home in the wilderness. They reached Austinburg about the last of April, and shortly after got into a rude cabin of their own, with flooring enough to spread out their beds, but without chair or table, and without a door being hung, or the chinks stopped. In this plight he left his family to make their garden, and went on a missionary tour, from which he returned about the middle of June. After spending several weeks in providing for the comfort of his family, he sallied forth, in the early part of August, on another missionary tour of about two months, during which he visited nearly all the settlements in the South part of the Reserve. In December, he commenced his winter's tour, and, after a succession of arduous labours and perilous adventures, was with his family again in April, 1803. On reaching home, he found letters from the Missionary Board, renewing his appointment, but reducing his salary to six dollars per week. He regarded this reduction as unreasonable, and, after some correspondence on the subject, which did not result agreeably to his wishes, he came to the resolution in January, 1806, to resign his appointment from the Connecticut Board, and accept one from the Western Missionary Society at Pittsburgh. Under their patronage he laboured among the Wyandotte Indians, in the Sandusky region, for several years.

In the autumn of 1807, Mr. Badger moved his family to Sandusky; but, on account of the unhealthiness of the climate, he moved them back the next year. In November, 1809, he set out with his wife on a journey to New England, and while she stopped with her friends at New Preston, he proceeded to Boston, where he collected nearly eleven hundred dollars in aid of his mission.

On his return, he went to his missionary station at Sandusky, and, after making some necessary arrangements, repaired to Pittsburgh, and made a report to the Missionary Board, and then returned to his family. Before he reached home, he was met with the melancholy tidings of the death of one of his daughters. After spending a few days with his afflicted family, he went back to his missionary field, and pursued his labours with the Indians until about the middle of November, when he received a letter from his wife, informing him that their house had been burnt, with nearly all their provisions and furniture. He immediately hastened to his distressed family, and by aid kindly furnished by their neighbours and friends, he quickly succeeded in building another cabin, and placing his family again in comfortable circumstances.

In the spring of 1810, he removed with his family to Ashtabula. Here, and in the neighbouring settlements, he laboured in the ministry, receiving his support, partly from the people, and partly from the Massachusetts Missionary Society.

In September, 1812, General Perkins' brigade was ordered to the Westward to guard the frontier. A request came to Mr. Badger to visit the camp, and, shortly after, General Harrison, without consulting him on the subject, appointed him Brigade Chaplain,—which was almost immediately followed by a commission from the Governor. He was also, about the same time, appointed Postmaster for the army. He returned to his family about the middle of March, 1813; and had scarcely reached home when one of his sons was taken with an epidemic fever, and died the third day.

On the 4th of August, 1818, his wife, after a brief but severe illness, died in her sixty-fourth year. She was a person of uncommon excellence, and had proved an efficient coadjutor with her husband in the self-denying labours of missionary life. In April, 1819, he formed a second matrimonial connection with Abigail Ely,—a lady from Wilbraham, Mass., who was then on a visit to her sisters living in Salem, O.

Mr. Badger continued to preach as usual, without any stated support, until 1826, when he reported himself to the War department as a soldier of the Revolution, and was placed on the pension roll at ninety-six dollars a year. In the spring of this year, in compliance with an invitation from the people of Gustavus, in Trumbull County, he removed to that place; constituted a church of about thirty members, and was installed as Pastor by the Grand River Presbytery, in October following. Here he preached for eight years, and was privileged to see no inconsiderable fruit from his labours. About the close of that period, his voice began to fail, and his general health was somewhat impaired, so that he proposed to his people to allow him to give place to another minister. They, however, declined to do so, and he continued to preach, as he was able, until June, 1835, when he was, at his urgent request, dismissed by the Presbytery of Trumbull County. In October following, he removed to Wood County, to reside with his only surviving daughter. He died at Perrysburg, in perfect peace, in the year 1846, in the ninetieth year of his age.

Mr. Badger always retained his preference for Congregationalism, but united with the Presbytery of Ohio, on the Plan of Union, shortly after he went to the Reserve, and continued in connection with the Presbyterian Church till the close of life.

FROM THE REV. TIMOTHY MATHER COOLEY, D. D.

GRANVILLE, Mass., May 4, 1857.

My dear friend and Brother: You will not expect from a man who has passed eighty-five, a very extended communication on any subject; but I cannot decline your request for my recollections of Mr. Badger, especially as I am almost the only person left whose memory embraces the portion of his life that was spent in this neighbourhood. He was a member of the council that ordained me, and took part in the services of the occasion. And from that time till he migrated to the West, he was one of my nearest ministerial neighbours. I knew him intimately, and have always regarded him as an extraordinary man.

One of the most remarkable features of his character was his wonderful versatility. It seemed as if there was nothing to which he could not turn his head or

his hand with perfect ease. I remember noticing in the museum of Yale College a beautiful *Planetarium* which he constructed while an undergraduate; and which was regarded as one of the most curious objects in the whole collection. He was a bookbinder, a weaver, a carpenter,—any thing that the present exigency might demand. An infidel in his parish sent him Tom Paine's *Age of Reason* to bind; but I do not remember to have heard how he treated either the book, or its unprincipled and impudent owner. When, at one time, he wanted the means of support, he betook himself to the loom, and earned them. When, at another time, he found himself in need of a barn, he took his broad axe, square and compass, and formed the frame work with his own hand. His universal genius seemed to render him independent of artificers of every kind.

You might suppose that this quality to which I have now adverted would be very likely to interfere with his spirituality, and to discover itself in ways hardly consistent with the highest degree of ministerial usefulness. But thus it was not. The duties of the ministry were evidently, in his estimation, paramount to every thing else; and the various kinds of handicraft to which he resorted, were all rendered subservient to the ulterior object of the "furtherance of the Gospel." In religious conversation he was pleasant, instructive, discriminating and experimental. In prayer he was eminently gifted, and apparently highly devout. In his sermons he made up in vigorous and well digested thought, for any defects which, owing to his imperfect early education, might be apparent in his style. He never hesitated to rebuke sin either in private or in public; and I doubt not that he could say with another distinguished minister now gone to his rest,—“I am not aware that, in preparing my sermons, I ever inquired what would please or displease my hearers.” I well remember that in a sermon I heard him preach before the Hampden Association, he brought out some of the higher points of Calvinism, with a directness and pungency almost startling. One of the ministers present, whose orthodoxy was, to say the least, not of the most rigid type,—when it came to him to criticise the sermon, remarked as follows:—“Brother Badger's sermon reminds me of old Mr. Moorhead's third proposition—‘I shall speak from the text,’ said he, ‘in three propositions—1. I shall tell you something that I know about, and you know nothing about. 2. I shall allude to something which you know about, but I know nothing about. 3. I shall speak of what we don't any of us know anything about.’”

Mr. Badger possessed a spirit of courage and perseverance, unsurpassed. His personal trials and sufferings, during much the greater part of his long life, exceeded those of any other minister in this country within my knowledge. Few, if any, clergymen could have been found in New England who would have thus cheerfully—I may say heroically—relinquished the charge of an intelligent people, to encounter the deprivations and perils of a missionary, in the then trackless wilds of Ohio. His record is in Heaven.

With the warmest affection,

your brother in Christ,

TIMOTHY MATHER COOLEY.

FROM THE REV. GEORGE E. PIERCE, D. D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE WESTERN RESERVE COLLEGE.

HUDSON, O., March 24, 1857.

Dear Sir: My opportunities for personal acquaintance with the Rev. Joseph Badger have not been great. I came to the Reserve in 1834, and he closed his labours, as Pastor of the Church in Gustavus, the following year,—after which, he preached but occasionally for the remaining ten years of his life. Having, however, resided upon his former field of labour, my own impressions in

regard to him have been confirmed by intercourse with those who knew him more intimately.

In person, he was above the medium size, of a strong and muscular frame, and yet not peculiarly corpulent. The features of his countenance were strongly marked, bold, expressive and manly. In his manners he was frank, open, benevolent and sympathetic. A stranger soon felt at home with him, and prepared to receive with confidence information on all points of interest within the field of his labours.

His talents in the pulpit were above mediocrity. Though not eloquent according to the refined notions of rhetoric, yet, with a strong and vigorous intellect, and sincere devotion to the great end of preaching, he was clear, forcible and discriminating in the presentation of Gospel truth and Christian duty. His public labours were held in general estimation, as always instructive, and calculated to make a happy impression on the minds of his hearers. His Theology was in accordance with the best standards in Litchfield and Berkshire Counties, in the days of Griffin, Porter, Mills, Shepherd, and Hyde.

Though a Congregationalist in New England, he entered into cordial co-operation, upon the Plan of Union, with the Presbyterian ministers in this vicinity. In the spirit of peace and Christian fellowship, he assisted them in the administration of ordinances, according to their forms, and received their assistance in the Congregational Churches which he organized. At the beginning of his missionary labours, the Presbyterian Churches were in the enjoyment of powerful revivals of religion, attended with certain well known peculiarities. These peculiarities he ascribed to the power of God, and they were no hindrance in the way of co-operation. The great peace and prosperity of the Churches on the Reserve, for the first quarter of a century, were in a good degree the result of the wise and unsectarian arrangements of their first missionary.

As a man, Mr. Badger had some prominent traits of character, of much avail to him as a missionary in a new country. His powers of endurance, determination, and perseverance, were put in requisition, when, leaving his family scantily provided for, he traversed dense forests alone, with only an Indian trail or pocket compass to direct his way, and sought every remote settlement, to encourage and cheer the lonely inhabitants, and instruct and edify them with Gospel truth. His knowledge of human nature and power of adaptation made him, to the people, profitable and interesting. Though not a physician, he was often in families where other medical advice could not be had, and, in such circumstances, did not hesitate to administer medicine, and perform the minor class of surgical operations. By his mechanical skill, he could assist the farmer in repairing the broken implements of husbandry. If his horse lost a shoe in the woods, he could replace it, having the article, with nails and hammer, in his saddlebags. When a loaded wagon had broken an axletree, ten miles from any habitation, with an axe, an augur, and a pocket knife, he spliced it, fitted it to the wheel, and went on his way.

His medical and mechanical skill availed him in the camp, as well as on the missionary field. He entered the Revolutionary army at the age of eighteen. In the hospital at Fort George, there were many sick and in very distressing circumstances. Not a dish of any kind could be found from which to administer drink or medicine. Resort was had to dishes made of bark and chips scooped out with a knife. The commanding officer sought for a man who could turn wooden dishes. Mr. Badger, who was acting the part of a nurse, volunteered for the service, tools were ordered, and soon a good supply of dishes were furnished.

When he served as Chaplain in the War of 1812, he was attached to a regiment stationed at Lower Sandusky, now Fremont, in this State. The settlement was small, and the army, encamped in the woods, was short of provisions,

and suffered especially in that they had no means for grinding their corn. Mr. Badger, by boring and burning, scooped out a large oak stump in the form of a mortar. In this he placed an upright shaft, fitted at the end for a pestle, and gave it motion by means of a horizontal spring pole, fastened to the neighbouring trees, and thus the corn was pounded. When he had got his machinery in operation, he called on Colonel Darrow, the commanding officer of the station, now living in this township, and from whom I have the statement, and asked him if he ever heard of priestcraft? He replied, "Yes." "Would you like to see a specimen?" "Yes." So he took him to the woods and showed him his contrivance.

Many incidents might be related, showing Mr. Badger's labours and perils as a missionary. The story of his encounter with a bear is familiar in many families, and bids fair to be handed down, as one of the tales of the nursery. On the eve of a dark rainy night, the streams being much raised, he came to a ford on Grand River, and crossed, intending to encamp on the bank. He was prevented by the snapping and growling of some animal near. It soon became so dark that he could not see his hand holding the bridle, and he knew by the noise, that a bear was continually approaching. Having a horse shoe in his hand, and guided by the noise, he threw it, but without effect. He reined his horse right and left, that he might find a tree, and climb from danger. Succeeding in this, he fastened the bridle to the smaller limbs, rose upon his saddle, and ascended the tree. The bear came to the root, and, as he supposed, began to climb. Gaining a firm footing, he drew a sharp knife, and prepared for battle. But, as the bear did not approach, he ascended about forty feet into the top of the tree, found a convenient place to sit upon a limb, and tied himself to the tree with a large bandana, that he might be more safe, if he should fall into a drowse. The night was most dreary, with storm, and wind, and heavy peals of thunder. Providentially the horse was not frightened, but remained a quiet sentinel at the foot of the tree. Being drenched with rain, he shook his saddle, and so frightened the bear, that he retreated a few rods, where he remained growling and snapping his teeth till near daylight, when he left the premises, and the missionary went to his home in safety.

Yours respectfully,

GEORGE E. PIERCE.

ASHBEL GREEN, D. D.*

1786—1848.

ASHBEL GREEN was born at Hanover, Morris County, N. J., July 6, 1762. His father was the Rev. Jacob Green, who was, for many years, minister of the Presbyterian Congregation in Hanover, and his mother was a daughter of the Rev. John Pierson, long Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Woodbridge, N. J., and granddaughter of the Rev. Abraham Pierson, first President of Yale College.

He was prepared to enter College, chiefly by his father. It was his father's original intention that he should be a farmer; and he accordingly engaged a pious and respectable farmer of his congregation to take charge of him and his elder brother, with a view to their becoming acquainted with the different branches of husbandry. It being apparent that this son had a

* Autobiography edited by Rev. Dr. J. H. Jones.—MS. from Hon. James S. Green.