

## Diary of Ebenezer Parkman, 1729

1729 April 15.<sup>1</sup> About five months agoe I set down some account of the more remarkable Mercies of God to Me in the Course of His Providence in and Since that my memorable dangerous Sickness when I was a Young School Boy; Having made Some (though I confess very imperfect) Record of what went before, in a little Book bearing Date August 24, 1719, and Several other Dates from thence, but in a great deal of Confusion, and with too many other marks of my puerility, when I Scribb'l'd them however honest and upright my intention was to have Some Remembrances of those (to me) important Things by me; Having of late experienc'd So much of the divine Goodness as gives me new and the greatest Reason forever to esteem and admire the various Expressions thereof to me, and every way to manifest my greatfull Returns to my unspeakable Benefactor for what He has, in infinite Tenderness done for Me, I have here transcrib'd a Sort of Catalogue or Memorandum of those abovesaid Mercies to God to Me, have carry'd it along with what I have received Since.

### Divine Benignity and Providence

1. Recovery from a very Dangerous Fit of Sickness, and of near, if not altogether 4 Months Continuance, at the Time of the Meazles raging in this Country. I was taken in October -- had a Fever, then the Meazles -- then languished as aforesaid. But the Lord was gracious and redeemed my Life from Destruction.
2. My being Sent, and my admission into, Harvard College, in the Year 1717. Examin'd July 8, admitted July 11, and went up to dwell at Cambridge August 13. Under Mr. Leveret,<sup>2</sup> president, and Mr. Robie,<sup>3</sup> my Tutor.
3. The good measure of Health, and the Prosperity enjoy'd while I liv'd at College.
4. The Honours of Bachelor of Arts, conferr'd in the Year 1721, July 5.
5. What acceptance I met with (the Same year) in keeping School at Newton, and Preservation from the Infection of the Small Pox, by which many of my Friends were remov'd into the Eternal World.
6. My Brother Elias's<sup>4</sup> Kindness and Bounty when he took me to Board in His House and allow'd good and pleasant accomodattions there, in April 7th, 1722 and continuing the same for Near a Year and half, that is, till my more frequently going into the country to preach, which was July 27, 173 at Hopkington (or rather August 2 at Worcester) more occasionally, and afterwards (August 21) at Westborough more constantly, during the latter part of which Time, I did also

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<sup>1</sup>All of the material for April 1729 is found in the Natalitia.

<sup>2</sup>John Leverett (Harvard 1680).

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Robie (Harvard 1708).

<sup>4</sup>Elias Parkman of Boston.

reside at Times at Cambridge, where I kept a Chamber with Mr. Edward Hunting.<sup>5</sup> Indeed from the time of my first preaching at Wrentham (which was April 14, 1723) or before I was not constantly at Boston, but divided a part of my Time at Cambridge. Nevertheless I account that near a year and half I was at my Brothers, because thither I went as to my home when I was at Boston and kept my Library, etc. there, and had a Chamber Study and entertainment occasionally there, for the space of Two years I suppose.

7. My admission into the New North Church and the assistance in my preparation therefor, March 31, 1723.

8. The Assistance God was pleased to grant me, and what Acceptance I (undeservedly) met with in my Preaching, which began first of all (as abovesaid) at Wrentham, April 14, 1723. My Text was 1 Cor. 3.11. "Other Foundation can no man lay."

9. The Honour of a Second Degree at Harvard College, viz. of Master of Arts, conferr'd July 1, 1724.

10. The Blessing afforded me by my Marriage July 7, 1724 to Miss Mary Champney, Daughter of Mr. Samuel Champney at Cambridge, at which the Reverend Mr. Appleton,<sup>6</sup> with gracefull Solemnity officiated. And here I would Bless God for his wondrous Grace in restraining me from the Sin of Fornication, and carrying me through so many Temptations as Those pass'd in the Time of Courtship.

11. The Distinguishing Honours, and gracious Presence of God, at my Ordination, October 28th in the same year 1724. N.B. The Reverend Mr. Dorr<sup>7</sup> open'd the solemnity with prayer. The Reverend Mr. Prentice<sup>8</sup> preach'd on 2 Cor. 2.16. Reverend Mr. William Williams of Weston pray'd and gather'd the Church. Mr. Prentice gave the charge. Reverend Mr. Loring<sup>9</sup> of Sudbury the Right Hand. Sung Ps. 69.17 to 21.

12. Recovery from the illness that debarr'd Me the public Exercises, immediately after my ordination, Two Dayes of Service.

13. I look upon those Kindnesses receiv'd from my Westborough Nei[gh]bours, as the Favours of Providence to me and my Family, and do return Thanks to God for them.

14. Gods appearing for my Wife in her hour of Peril and giving us a Daughter (which was Mary) September 14, 1725.

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<sup>5</sup>Edward Hunting (Harvard 1725). *Sibley*, VII, 542-543.

<sup>6</sup>Reverend Nathaniel Appleton.

<sup>7</sup>Joseph Dorr of Mendon.

<sup>8</sup>John Prentice of Lancaster.

<sup>9</sup>Israel Loring.

15. Three weeks after her lying in my wife had a very Sore Breast, which broke twice, and brought us into a great Affliction. I would thankfully remember the Deliverance out of that Grievous Trouble.
16. My Fathers recovery out of dangerous Sickness in January 1725/6, I would always number amongst Gods mercies to Me, and particularly because I then look'd upon my Self very unprepar'd to entertain his Death, as I ought.
17. My Wife's Restoration and Recovery from her great pains and illness (Laps-uteri) July 1726, under the Care of the Reverend Mr. Barrett<sup>10</sup> and Mrs. Whitcomb. This is to be remembered as a Special appearance of God for us.
18. The Lords Compassion in healing My Daughter when very ill. July 3, 1727, is to be observ'd by Me.
19. Deliverance to my Wife when in Travel [*sic*] the Second Time, and giving me a Son, August 20, 1727. This I call'd Ebenezer, Saying with Gratitude Hitherto hath the Lord helped.
20. I would record the Salvation vouchsaf'd us in the Time of the uncommon Thunder, Lightning and Wind in this Month, August (1727).
21. Still greater and more memorable Salvations in the Great Earthquake, and I would that more Special Notice be taken of it because I would lay those Threatenings in Divine Providence, with the awakenings of His word publicly delivered the Day before; which compleating the Third year Since the gathering our Church and my own ordination, I preach'd on Luke 13.7.
22. The Goodness of God to me in the time of uneasiness touching Mr. Josiah Newton and preventing Divisions among us. April 4, 1728.
23. Recovery of my Son out of Sickness which he Labour'd of in the Months of September and October, of this Year 1728.
24. My Recovery from my Ague in November, Seizing Me the 7th at Night and continuing to the 15th a great part of the time in much Extremity.
25. Healing my Son in December in the Same Year.
26. I would put into this Account the Favour of my Library, So much larger than (considering my Circumstances) I might have expected it to be, Though I would humbly wait for the Divine Goodness in further Additions to it still, but especially beg for Grace to improve it to the Glory of God.

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<sup>10</sup>Samuel Barrett of Hopkinton.

27. I would reckon also the Comforts pour'd on in from my Farms. But I pray God to preserve me from Worldly mindedness and Covetousness which may prove to the Detriment of my Spirituall State, and to my Studies and Ministrations. And thereby not a little to the Dishonor of God, and the Holy Ministry, and to the Disservice of the Interests of Religion. To that I would be not a little concerned on this Score.

28. I must ever remember with hearty gratitude My Recovery out of Dangerous Sickness, weakness and Pains that I was brought low with in March 1729. I was first of all Seiz'd February 11 and kept from public Service the 16th, But was So well on the 23rd as to go to Meeting again. I was again disorder'd on the 28th and March 1, was faint and feeble the 2d, yet ventur'd to meeting and preach'd all Day and had extremity of pain in my Limbs, and oppression in my Stomach. The nights after the 7th and 8th I had such fits my Physician call'd my Distemper and Rheumatic Fever as were not without Difficulty to be born; and I fear'd a 3d would be more than Nature Could resist. The 9th I had, through the omnipotent Mercy of God, a instigation, and escaped the Danger. I was in the beginning of my illness under the Care of Reverend Mr. Barrett and afterwards of Dr. Roby.<sup>11</sup> However I was under Confinement and in Weakness, in Pain and [*illegible*] for weeks after. April 6. I went to meeting part of the Day, the 13th all Day. On the 20th I preach'd in the forenoon but could not undertake more than to baptize a child, in the afternoon.

29. I would Set it down among the Divine Mercies that after the Difficulties, weakness, pains in my Stomach, faintness, etc., on my Journey to Boston June 2d, 3, 4 which put me and my Relatives into great Fears and Concern. I was carry'd through and brought home to my Family June 6, though continuing in much feebleness and in Fear and Care about the Event. I would record my Thanks also that I found my Son So recovered from the illness he had been for some time labouring under, and that he was much afflicted by, when I went from home.

30. July 3, 1729. The Salvation of God was Seen, and my Wife brought forth a Second Son, and upon Consideration of God repeating his Blessing in this kind, as well as my having an ancestor of that Name, I call'd him Thomas.

31. August 18. The Goodness of God was manifested to us and to my little Daughter Mary in preserving her when She had Sadly wander'd away, and was a long time lost in the Swamp; and directing a Young Man (David Maynard, Jr.) to her Deliverance.

32. February 17, 1729/30. In my great Weakness, the Reverend Mr. Campbell<sup>12</sup> of Oxford visited me, and persuaded me to ride. We rode to Marlborough and then proceeded to Cambridge. My Wife also went with me but it was, above all, a kind and merciful God who sustain'd me. The Glory to His Name! The 19th Day was Fast at Westborough on my account.

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<sup>11</sup>Ebenezer Roby (Harvard 1719), a physician of Sudbury. *Sibley*, VI, 336-339.

<sup>12</sup>John Campbell.

N.B. The affectionate Regard which the Reverend Mr. Breck<sup>13</sup> show'd me in the Exercises at the Fast which was kept at Westborough on the foresaid occasion: in particular in his Sermon which was from that Text Phil. 2.27. "For indeed he was sick" etc. Reverend Cushing<sup>14</sup> also assisted in the Fast.

33. Deliverance to my Wife when Travailing with my Second Daughter, Sept, 20, 1731. On account of the Singular Love and Affection, and numberless<sup>15</sup> kind Regards of my Wife's sister, Miss Lydia Champney, we Thought fit to call this Child by her name, Lydia.

[1729 May 14. Parkman was in Framingham at the home of the Rev. John Swift (1679-1745). The following is inscribed in a bound volume of manuscript sermons by the Rev. Samuel Parris (1653-1720) at the Connecticut Historical Society:

["The Gift of Mr. Noyes Parris (son of the author) to Ebenr. Parkman at the Rev. Mr. Swifts May 14, 1729. Inscribed on front fly leaf: This book was given to Jona Moore by his Father in Law the Rev. Mr. Ebr. Parkman of Westborough, & by the said Moore is now given to his daughter in law Janna Parkman Barstow, Granddaughter of the said Rev. Ebenezer Parkman, witness Jona Moore May 4, 1812. Inscribed on verso of fly leaf: Presented by S.P. Barstow to Rev. Thomas Robbins by Mrs. Barstow of New York, Aug. 1838."]

[Noyes Parris (1699-before 1748), Harvard 1721, was one of Parkman's classmates. *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, 6:527-28. Shipton, 528, notes Parris's gift of the sermons to Parkman.]

1729 July 8.<sup>16</sup> I have warnings from God by my Infirmities, that I must remove from my Temporal Possessions (and I had them from God but for Temporal). This Clay Tabernacle I now inhabit Cracks and threatens me that it must Dissolve, 'tis but Earthenware, and it doth not Sound whole. A Little matter will dash it to pieces.

Now what do I know about any Right I have to an Eternal Inheritance, to a Building of God, an house not made with Hands Eternal in the Heavens, wherein I may spend an Happy Immortality, Since I am upon the Move.

1729 September 4.<sup>17</sup> How Shall I best employ my Self to Day? It being the last Day of my 26th Year.

Answer 1. In Solemnly Praising God for his mercies throughout my Life, particularly in the Course of this Year.

2. In humbling my Self for my Sins especially those of this Year.

<sup>13</sup>Robert Breck of Marlborough.

<sup>14</sup>Job Cushing of Shrewsbury.

<sup>15</sup>[Walett transcribed this a "memberless."]

<sup>16</sup>All of the material for July 1729 is to be found in the Natalitia

<sup>17</sup>All entries for Sept. 1729 are from the Natalitia.

3. In preparing my Self for Tomorrow's Business. Reading over what I have heretofore done, and what others have transacted, on Such Dayes, etc. All which may be well assisted (perhaps) by waiting upon the Exercises of the private Meeting at Mr. David Brigham to Day (when I am very much importun'd to be present). But (alas) the weakness of my Body, and the Confusion of my mind at Seeing So much Business to do, and So Slender Ability to accomplish it! But besides, Providence calls me to Work for others, as well as for my Self to Day. I must attend to what may fit me there fore, and then Return to my private Concerns. The Grace of God enable me, under my Infirmities, and magnifie His Power through my Weakness!

1729 September 5. 1. Bless God for the Light and Liberties of This Morning, and petition Direction and assistance in Such an Observation of the Day as may be most for the Divine Glory, and my Souls Comfort.

2. Let the Exercises of the Family (although not formally or noticeably by others) contribute as much as may be to the Holy Business of this Day.

3. Thankfully review the Divine Mercie to me and mine through my Life past, particularly Such as we have receiv'd in the Course of this Year, and Solemnly offer unto God the Praise. Read and Sung Ps. 145 in Tate's Version.

4. Bewail my Iniquities before God.

1. Sin, in General: its
  1. Turpitude, Vileness, and Offensiveness especially to God most Holy and glorious
  2. Fatal Consequences.

2. In Particular:

1. The Sin of my Nature, and thereby
  1. The Weakness and Darkness of my Intellectual Powers;
  2. The Perverseness and Corruptness of my Elective Powers.
2. The Foolishness and wickedness of my Childhood and youth
  1. Falseness. Ps. 58.3. Brother William, Mr. Fl. [?], Mr. L.[?]
  2. Thievishness, apples, corn.
3. The Vainness, Impurity and Impiety of my Youth and more Mature age.
  1. The Vainness in
    1. Dress
    2. Company
    3. Studies: Romances and Tales; Poems and Playes.
    4. Waste of Time. Impertinence. Walking about Town, etc. See

my Journals No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

2. The Impurity.
  1. Heart uncleanness and adulterie, through The Eye – Pictures, etc; The Ear -- Songs, etc.
  2. Wantonness in Carriage and Actions in various Instances and Respecting which I have Great Cause Exceedingly to bewail.
  
3. Impiety.
  1. Restraining Prayer sometimes.
  2. Superficial performance of that and other Duties and formal attendance upon ordinances, The Word, Sacraments, etc.
  3. Unaffectedness at Providences, Mercys -- publick, private
    1. Public Calamities.
    2. Personal Sufferings.
    3. Domestic and Relative Evils, Deaths, Sickness, etc. My Father, Mother, etc., etc.
  
4. Unfaithfulness of my whole Life unto
  1. God, under
    1. My Baptismal Covenant.
    2. My Covenant of September 15, 1719.
    3. My Profession Engagements, March 31, 1723
    4. My Marriage Covenants. July 7, 1724 and September 1, 1737.
    5. My Ordination Vows, October 28, 1724, O.S.
    6. My frequent, especially September 5, Pretences and daily Devotions (which are so many Engagements) to Walk with God.
  7. Special Providences, as
    1. Mercies: Deliverances and Recoveries, to me, my wife, children and other Relatives – and to my Friends.
    2. Afflictions. Sickness and pains: my own, my Wife's my childrens.
  
2. Man, unto
  1. Parents, Brothers, Sisters.
  2. Acquaintance and Friends.
  3. Christians in Communion with me.
  4. Wife

5. Children and Servants.
6. People of Westborough and other Congregations where I have preach'd.
7. Neighbours.

5. My self, as to (1) My Outward, (2) and (3) Spiritual and Eternal Interests. My Unfaithfulness, Impiety, etc. of my more mature Life may be further set down in this form following.
  1. My Hypocrisie and Insincerity.
  2. My Slender, partial Obedience.
  3. Neglect of Divine Dealings with me
  4. Covetousness, Love of the World and Disrelish of Divine Things.
  5. Disquietness, Discontent and Envyng.
  6. Slothfullness and Idleness. Unseasonable Sermonizing.
  7. Forbearing to reprove Sin, through Fear, Favour.
  8. Unsabbatical Behaviour.
  9. Equivocating.
  10. Eating and Drinking more than answer'd the Ends to be propos'd therein and what I count Exceeding Christian Laws therein.
  11. Breaking out to angry Resentments.
  12. Vain Glory, Self Conceit and Self Dependence.
  13. Detractions.
  14. Unbelief.

The Fifth Thing on this Day was that which next followeth, and which was in this Form.

5.<sup>18</sup> Whereas it hath pleased the Almighty Author of my Being and the God of my Life out of his abundant mercy and Grace, to permit my Lot in a Land of Gospel Light, my Birth of Religious Parents, my Dedication to Him Early by Baptism, and my Education not only in the Nurture and instruction of the Lord, but with some peculiar happy Circumstances, both to fit me for and Engage me to His Service and Glory. Since also I have openly profess'd my Self a Disciple of Christ and in a Sacred manner bound my Self to the Strict observance of His Divine Commands, and have been Moreover, with utmost Solemnity Consecrated and Set apart to Him and his peculiar work. To all which the Dispensations of his Providence of Grace have been added and conspir'd together to affect me with my indispensable obligations to Fidelity to Him. But inasmuch as by too many Evidences it appears that without the special Restraints and Assistances of Divine Grace, my natural Corruption proves many times prevalent over all my Professions and Resolutions and even my most Sacred Ties; that I may do whatever in me lies for the [*illegible*] thereof, and that I may be the better defended against future Assaults and Temptations (Yet without Relying on any other Endeavours of Mine, but only upon the Mediation and Merits of my Blessed Lord Jesus Christ and the Aid of His Spirit) I would, as the

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<sup>18</sup>This additional entry for Sept. 5, 1729 is also from the *Natalitia*.



best revealed Expedient, in Sacred Form Renew my Covenant with God and Solemnly Sign this Instrument. [N.B. The then design'd Instrument is that in page 2, but it was not drawn out till some time after this, though I now renew'd my Covenant Dedication.]

Westborough November 24, 1729<sup>19</sup>

A Solemn Covenant was drawn out fair and in all Seriousness (as I was able) sign'd and ratify'd before God. The Form was that in page 2.

1729 December 5.<sup>20</sup> It is a Day of great Darkness and Distress with both me and my Family. My own Weakness and Infirmitys increasing daily upon me and trouble of my heart greatly enlarged by my Disorders mocking the force of all Medical methods with me hitherto. My Wife also, under much Indisposition and trouble with her Breast. The Children likewise afflicted with Cold and very peevish under their uneasinesses. But Especially Maro at the Point of Death. The waves and Billows roll and roar out of the Deeps. I would Cry: Lord hear my Voice! Let not the Water floods overflow us, neither let the Deep Swallow us up!

1729 December 6. The Hand of God is still heavier upon us. Exceeding weak, low and faint, my Self, almost ready to lie down under my prevailing Infirmities. But when both my Flesh and Heart fail, God is still the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for Ever. But Dark as it has been with us it is become much Darker at or about the Sun setting. The Sun of Maro's Life Sat. The First Death in my Family! God enable me to See His Sovereign Mind, and Comport with his holy Will!

As my Servant is Summon'd to go before, So God only knows whether his Master is not Shortly to follow after; and so the former to prove as an Harbinger to the latter. O that the whole Family may be getting ready, in another Sort than ever heretofore! But Especially O that God would enable Me to Live apace, Seeing I am Dying apace; to give Diligance, to work with my might, and to stand Waiting all the few Dayes of my appointed time, till God shall call; that when I hear the Summons, I may, with Serenity, Say, Speak Lord, thy Servant heareth, may Depart in Peace, and See the Salvation of God!

While God is Stripping me of Outward Enjoyments I humbly trust God will let me have more of Himself and bestow more of Spiritual, invaluable Blessings.

Every Comfort is that to us, that God makes it, and is so long with us as He pleases to Continue it.

Conclusion of the Year 1729

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<sup>19</sup>From the Natalitia.

<sup>20</sup>All entries for Dec. 1729 are from the Natalitia.

It is Said in Psalm 55.19. "Because they have no Changes, therefore they Fear not God." (By which it obviously appears to be intimated, that Changes are very usefull and proper, nay very needfull means to excite the Fear of God.) I would then, from these words, Infer 1. That they are to be well observ'd and esteem'd as they are Such excellent means of Grace and God is to be praised for them. 2. Such persons fall under a no less Severe, than just Reprehension, who, although they have Changes, yet fear not God, and 3. It is matter of Melancholly Consideration whom those that meet with many Changes, have notwithstanding, but Slender Effects wrought upon them, by So powerfull means and but little more (if any) of the Fear of God excited in them thereby.

#### Reflections

I have pass'd through many Changes, Especially this Last Year has been a Year of Changes. I would Humbly and Devoutly take notice of the Hand of God in them. I would humbly acknowledge and revere the Sovereignty and Majesty, and adore and magnifie the Righteousness and Holiness, the Wisdom and Goodness of God therein. I would humbly submit and resign my Self to his Sovereign and all wise Disposal with Satisfaction, remembering that I am in my Faithfull Creator's and Compassionate Redeemer's Hands, and I would, with Religions Fear and Care, Enquire after the holy Ends and Designs of God in his Several Visitations; and would give my Self to all Endeavours ([two Greek words]) to answer the Divine Demands. But before I proceed any further I would Look back with Shame and Sorrow on the Provocations offered to God, to punish and afflict me, as He has, in the various Sufferings I have been brought into, and would with Regret and Grief Observe the but faint Influence I have permitted My Changes to have upon me, and that there are so few Signs of the true Fear of God in me. And Finally would Earnestly beseech God to accompany all his Methods with me, with his Almighty Grace, that they may not fail, hence forward, to produce both his own Glory and my spiritual and Eternal Good. And Oh that the more and the Greater Changes I pass through the more I may fear, and glorifie God whom alone I am to acknowledge in them.