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April 4, 1861

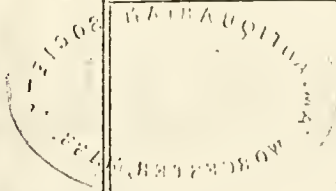
Rev. C. D. Parker

A
RECORD
OF THE
FIRST PARISH
IN
WATERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS.

COMPILED BY
ARTHUR B. FULLER,
MINISTER OF THE FIRST PARISH.

WATERTOWN :
1861.

F74
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MOUNT AUBURN:
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Historical Sketch

OF THE

FIRST PARISH (UNITARIAN), IN WATERTOWN.

A COMPANY of early emigrants from England, whose principal leaders were Sir Richard Saltonstall, Rev. George Phillips, and Elder Richard Browne, came to Watertown, as settlers, in 1630. The town was incorporated, after the manner of that day, by a colonial enactment, Sept. 17, 1630. The First Parish (now the Unitarian Society) was established the same year, and its affairs were then identified with those of the town. Watertown was so called from its abundance of water in the river, and the springs, and ponds in its then limits. It originally included in its boundaries what now are the towns of Waltham, Weston, Belmont, and a portion of territory since forming a part of Lincoln and Cambridge, besides what is to-day the town of Watertown. There were also the "Watertown farms," or lands given by the colonial legislature to this town in Princeton, near Wachusett mountain. It will be seen that our town has been largely shorn of its original possessions, and much circumscribed in territory. The Church in this Parish, which word was then synonymous with that of township, was organized July 28, 1630, and is the most ancient in the colony of Massachusetts Bay, except one — the First Church in Salem. It was the only Church in Watertown for sixty-six years. Rev. George Phillips became its pastor on the day of its organization. He had previously been settled in England. He was extremely liberal and charitable in his theological opinions, and the earliest advocate of strict Congregationalism and Independency in the colony. Indeed, until the arrival of Rev. John Cotton from England, he stood, in this respect, alone among the clergy in New England. He also, in advising the town to resist a colonial tax, was the earliest assertor, in colonial affairs, of the doctrine that "taxation without representation is tyranny," the ground-principle, many years subsequently, of our American Revolutionary struggle. Mr. Phillips died July 1, 1644.

The Church also fully sympathized with its pastor in liberal

views and love for strict independency. It was the first church which adopted *thorough* Congregationalism and entire independency of other churches and human authority as its basis, and for a long time stood alone in their advocacy; it was regarded as somewhat heretical in ecclesiastical matters then, though its Congregational system is now prevalent throughout New England as the method of church government. Some of the earlier members of the church were distinguished for their liberality of views, and tolerant spirit. Among these, Hon. Richard Saltonstall, who, after his return to England, wrote a letter to the magistrates of this colony in favor of toleration, and Elder Richard Browne, who averred that even the Romish churches, in spite of many errors, were nevertheless churches of Christ, were preëminent. The parish and its ministers were also uniformly in favor of civil freedom, so that the town, then identical with the Parish, was selected as a place of refuge for the General Court during the Revolutionary struggle.

Rev. Mr. Phillips was sole minister of the church and parish till Dec. 19, 1639, when Rev. John Knowles was ordained by the Church as a colleague pastor with Rev. Mr. Phillips. Mr. Knowles had never been settled elsewhere. It was an early custom to have two ministers of each church, one as pastor, the other as teacher, but this distinction was never observed in this Parish. Mr. Knowles was set apart to the work of the ministry by the action of his own church and parish only; no ministerial council was called, nor were the neighboring churches and ministers asked to assist, or even notified. This is in conformity to the principles of strict Congregationalism, though it caused some complaint by other ministers at the time. The right of each congregation to ordain or install its own ministers, wholly by itself, is clear and unquestionable, the expediency is a separate consideration.

Mr. Knowles continued colleague pastor till the death of Mr. Phillips, and for some years subsequent, but in 1650 he returned to England, where he died, April 10, 1685. He also was a strict Congregationalist, and esteemed in his day, too liberal in ecclesiastical matters.

Rev. John Sherman became colleague with Mr. Knowles in 1647, and remained pastor after Mr. Knowles's return to England, until his (Mr. Sherman's) decease, Aug. 8, 1685. He was a good, and a just man, and of marked intellectual ability, as had been his predecessors. These three pastors were the sole ministers of Watertown, for the first fifty-five years after its settlement.

Rev. John Bailey was installed as Mr. Sherman's successor, Oct. 6, 1686. This was the first *installation* in Massachusetts. It differs from ordination by the omission of the practice of

"laying on of hands." Mr. Bailey took the ground and strenuously maintained it, his Church assenting, that having been once ordained, consecration anew to the work of the ministry was unnecessary, and seemingly called in question the validity of the original act. Rev. Thomas Bailey, his brother, was also employed as his colleague, until his (Thomas') death, Jan. 21, 1689. It does not appear from the records that he was ever ordained or installed over the church, though he was one of its regular pastors, for fourteen months.

In 1692, Rev. John Bailey left Watertown, and returned to Boston and became there the assistant minister of the First Church. His change of residence and pastorship was doubtless occasioned by his depression of spirits, owing to the death of his beloved wife and of his brother, which led him to feel that change of scene and labor was absolutely requisite. No dissatisfaction between him and his people is anywhere mentioned, and we have his private journal, as well as official records. He died Dec. 12, 1697.

Rev. Henry Gibbs was invited to be assistant pastor with Mr. Bailey in 1691. He accepted the call, and entered at once upon his duties, but was not ordained or installed until Oct. 6, 1697. He continued pastor till his death, Oct. 21, 1723.

Rev. Seth Storer was ordained July 22, 1724. He died Nov. 27, 1774, aged seventy-two, after a useful ministry of over fifty years. After his death, Rev. Dr. Cooper, of Brattle Street Church, Boston, resided in this town for some time, Boston being in the possession of the British. He supplied this pulpit during his temporary residence here, and it was not until April 29, 1778, that any successor to Mr. Storer was found. On that day the Rev. Daniel Adams was ordained. His ministry was of short duration, for he was stricken down by the fatal hand of death the same year, and died Sept. 16, 1778, after a ministry of less than six months.

Rev. Richard Rosewell Eliot was ordained pastor of this church, June 21, 1780. He died Oct. 21, 1818, aged sixty-six, after a ministry of thirty-eight years.

As all these Christian ministers have now gone to their long home, it is proper to add that all were of irreproachable moral and religious character, and most of them were men of distinguished mental ability and pastoral gifts.

Rev. Convers Francis, D. D., was ordained pastor of the First Church and parish in Watertown, June 23, 1819. After twenty-three years pastorate, he resigned June 21, 1842, in order to accept the important professorship of Pulpit Eloquence and Pastoral Care, in the Divinity School of Harvard University. His farewell discourse was preached Aug. 21, 1842.

Rev. John Weiss, Jr., was ordained Oct. 25, 1843. He re-

signed Oct. 3, 1845, but resumed his pastorate, on invitation of the parish, in 1846, and continued in the work of the ministry here, until his resignation in Nov. 1847.

Rev. Hasbrouck Davis was ordained March 28, 1849. He resigned May 11, 1853.

Rev. George Bradford was ordained Nov. 6, 1856. He died Feb. 17, 1859, after a brief but useful ministry.

Rev. Arthur B. Fuller, formerly pastor of the New North Church, Boston, became pastor of the First Parish, Watertown, March 1, 1860. Following the precedents of former pastors in the parish, and by his own express desire, there was no formal installation-service by a council from abroad, but he preached discourses, defining the mutual duties of pastor and people, on the first Sunday in March, at which time his letter of acceptance of their call, was read to the parish and congregation.

There have, of course, been several houses of worship for the First Parish in this town. The first meeting-house of the parish was probably built soon after the settlement of the town, as in the earliest town records, in 1635, a vote of £80 is ordered for the charge of the *new* meeting-house, plainly implying that there had been another, and older one, previous to that date. It was probably a very humble affair, and fit only for a few years occupation in the infant state of the settlement. We are satisfied that the first two meeting-houses were built upon a rising knoll of ground belonging to the old Coolidge estate, on the main road, near Mr. George Frazar's house. The oldest parsonage house is now the residence of Joshua Coolidge, Jr.

The principal part of the earlier settlers of Watertown, lived in the part of the town near Mt. Auburn, early called Sweet Auburn, nearly all of which was originally comprised in the territory of Watertown. The second meeting-house, probably the first of any pretension, was erected at a very early date, and was doubtless quite humble in its architectural character. As early as 1654, a new meeting-house was ordered by the town, but owing to a fierce contention about its site, it was not built and occupied until Nov. 1656. It stood near, or upon the old site, in the vicinity of the ancient burial ground. After an exciting controversy about location, another meeting-house was built for the parish, and subsequently accepted February 4, 1696. It had probably been occupied before that time, as a town-meeting was held "in the new meeting-house," Dec. 20, 1695. It stood at the crossing of Lexington and Belmont streets, at a place called frequently the "Four Corners." The building of this church led to a parish division and the formation of a society, over which Mr. Angier was pastor, and which subsequently became the first society in Waltham. But it is not to our present purpose to follow the history of any other parish than our own. The parish records



remaining with our church and society, and the minister employed by the town (Mr. Gibbs), as colleague with Rev. Mr. Bailey, continuing to minister to this parish, and being ordained over it, are facts decisive as to the question whether this, or the Waltham parish, is the original society in Watertown.

Jan. 14, 1723, it was voted to build a church on Meeting-House hill, then called School-House hill, and a church was accordingly erected there. In 1754, after renewed controversies, a church was erected, on land given for the purpose, on Mt. Auburn St., near the new burying ground in this town, but before its entire completion, May, 1754, it was burned to the ground by some incendiary. Another church was built on the same spot, and completed Feb., 1755.

Sept. 7, 1836. A church, on the spot where our present one stands, was completed and dedicated. On the day of dedication, the bell for the church, was broken in the raising. The edifice itself was destroyed by fire, July 21, 1841. The fire broke out, not in the church, but in a barn in the rear of the Spring Hotel, and in less than an hour the church was in ashes, making the second church belonging to this parish thus lost; one entirely new, and the second only a few years old. The Orthodox church, during the present year (1861), makes the third thus destroyed in town. Our present church was dedicated Aug. 3, 1842.

In the foregoing historical sketch, I have consulted Rev. Dr. Francis' Historical Sketch, published 1830, Bond's History of Watertown, Mr. De F. Safford's lecture, and the parish records. Many points are involved in obscurity, and the authorities do not always coincide respecting dates, in which cases I have sought to decide according to the weight of evidence and latest research.

CHURCH COVENANT,
AND
FORM OF ADMISSION TO THE CHURCH.

ADOPTED Dec. 23, 1856.

In the presence of God and this church, you confess your belief in the only living and true God, and your desire to live according to his will.

You believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain the records of God's revelations to mankind, and afford the only perfect rule of faith and practice.

You affirm your faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the promised Messiah, and the Saviour of the world, and you desire to manifest your love and gratitude toward him, by becoming his faithful disciple.

You profess a true and earnest repentance of your sins, and you promise that you will endeavor henceforth to observe all God's holy ordinances, and to yield obedience to every truth of His, which has been, or shall be made known to you as your duty, the Lord assisting you by his spirit and grace.

We, then, the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this place, receive you into fellowship with us, to watch over you in the Lord, as becometh our sacred relation to you, and this we do with our prayers to the God of all grace, that you, and that we, may be faithful to our religious engagements. Amen.

LIST OF CHURCH MEMBERS,

(ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED.)

MALES.

Ivers J. Austin.	Daniel Learned.
Arad Bailey,	Daniel F. Learned.
Charles J. Barry.	Elisha Livermore.
Charles Bemis.	Samuel Richardson,
Tyler Bigelow.	Thomas Livermore.
Morton W. Brown.	Sumner Sargent.
George Frazar.	Asa Stone.
Hiram Hosmer.	Nathaniel R. Whitney.



FEMALES.

Mrs. Elizabeth T. Austin.	Miss Hannah Livermore.
" Harriet E. Attwill.	" Eliza Livermore.
" Joan Bailey.	Mrs. Sarah Livermore.
" Frances Barnard.	" Hannah Livermore.
Miss Sarah A. Barnard.	Miss Maria Livermore.
Mrs. Sarah Barrett.	Mrs. Sarah May.
Miss Sarah W. Barrett.	" Mary Jane Meacham.
Mrs. Anne V. Bemis.	" Jane Anne Meacham.
" Mary Bird.	" Mary Richardson.
" Mary Brigham.	" Roxey Robinson.
Miss Susan Brigham.	" Sarah Robbins.
Mrs. Susannah Bright.	Miss Lois Robbins.
" Mary Broad.	Mrs. Lucy Rogers.
" Ann Brown.	Miss Caroline A. Rogers.
" Rachel Carlton.	Mrs. Roxanna Russell.
Miss Sarah G. Clarke.	Miss Elizabeth Sanger.
Mrs. L. F. Chenery.	" Martha Sanger.
" Sally Chenery.	Mrs. Mary A. Sargent.
Miss Sarah Cook.	Miss Lydia Sprague.
Mrs. Ruth Dana.	Mrs. Mary A. Sherman.
" Lydia B. Farmer.	Miss Sarah Stearns.
" Caroline C. Harrington.	Mrs. Abigail S. Stone.
" Lydia Harrington.	" Mary Stone.
" Jane Holden.	Miss Nancy Swift.
" Emily Horn.	Mrs. Lucy Thaxter.
" Margaret V. Kendall.	" Lucy Titcomb.
" Eleanor Learned.	Miss Abby B. Vose.
" Lucy Learned.	Mrs. Rebecca Whiting.
Miss Lucy A. Learned.	Miss Addie Whiting.
" Helen A. Learned.	Mrs. Sally Whitney.
" Mary Elizabeth Learned.	" Ruth Whitney.
Mrs. Sarah S. Lincoln.	" Martha G. Whitney.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

FOR 1861.

SUPERINTENDENT.

W. H. INGRAHAM.

LIBRARIANS.

D. F. LEARNED,

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

TEACHERS.

M A L E S.

IVERS J. AUSTIN.
 GEORGE FRAZAR.
 J. B. GOODRICH.

AMOS HOLBROOK, Jr.
 W. H. INGRAHAM.
 A. LINCOLN.

F E M A L E S .

Mrs. I. J. AUSTIN.	Miss M. E. LEARNED.
Miss LUCY D. BAILEY.	" MARIA LIVERMORE.
Mrs. GEORGE BRADFORD.	" C. SANGER.
Miss M. BRIGHT.	Mrs. M. A. SARGENT.
" S. BROWN.	Miss LYDIA SPRAGUE.
Mrs. B. DANA.	" M. WHITNEY.
" A. B. FULLER.	

No. of Scholars,	108.
" " Teachers,	20.
" " Vols. in Library,	860.

PARISH ORGANIZATION

FOR 1860, TILL ANNUAL MEETING IN 1861.

PARISH COMMITTEE.

ARAD BAILEY, H. P. PAGE,
WM. H. INGRAHAM.

CLERK AND TREASURER.

ISAAC ROBBINS.

C O N S T I T U T I O N

OF THE

WATERTOWN SOCIAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION,

AS ADOPTED OCT. 9th, 1860.

ART. 1. *Name.* The name of this Society shall be "THE WATERTOWN SOCIAL AND BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION."

ART. 2. *Objects.* Our objects shall be the relief of the destitute, the support of religious institutions, and mutual acquaintance and friendship.

ART. 3. *Officers.* The board of officers shall consist of twenty directors (ten ladies, and ten gentlemen), one of whom shall act as secretary, and one as treasurer; and they shall be chosen at the annual meeting of the association.

ART. 4. *Duties.* It shall be the duty of the officers to preside at the meetings of the association, in rotation, and also to arrange work, devise plans, and, in general, to act for the welfare of the Society. Upon them also, shall devolve the duty of

visiting any families connected with the Watertown Unitarian society, not members of the association, and inviting them to become members.

The secretary and treasurer shall present, at each meeting, a report of the proceedings and receipts at the previous meeting.

ART. 5. *Order.* While one of our objects is social intercourse, yet as nothing can be accomplished without order, it shall be the duty of both officers and members to preserve quiet and attention during the transaction of business, which shall uniformly be conducted in an orderly and regular manner.

ART. 6. *Membership.* This association shall consist of both gentlemen and ladies, who shall become members by the payment, each of the sum of twenty-five cents annually.

ART. 7. *Meetings.* The annual meeting of this association shall be held on the third Wednesday in November, and other meetings on the third Wednesday of each month, at such place as the association may determine, and a meeting may be called at any time by a notice given from the pulpit.

ART. 8. *Amendments.* This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any meeting, provided notice of the intended amendment has been given at the previous meeting.

BY-LAWS.

ART. 2. This association shall meet the third Wednesday of each month, at the vestry, or at private houses, as shall be most agreeable to the party entertaining the association.

ART. 2. Each member shall pay a monthly tax of five cents, (or, if preferable, may pay the entire sum for the year in advance,) said tax to be collected by the treasurer.

ART. 3. The supper shall not exceed tea, bread and butter, good cake and cheese.

ART. 4. The association shall convene at three o'clock P. M., and be closed at tea, with singing or prayer. Tea at half-past six.

OFFICERS.

Treasurer. MISS MARIA LIVERMORE.

Secretary. MISS ETTA LINCOLN.

FEMALE SOCIETY FOR RELIEF OF THE SICK.

In 1816, the ladies of Watertown, witnessing around them much distress arising from poverty, aggravated by sickness, pro-



posed to unite under the name of the Watertown Female Society for the relief of the indigent sick. Subscribers having been obtained, they met for the first time, at the house of Mr. E. W. Dana, Dec. 17, 1816, for the choice of officers.

In 1817, it being the wish of the ladies that the object of this society be extended, it was voted to expunge the word "indigent," and that the society be known by the name of "The Watertown Female society for the relief of the sick." A desire was also expressed that any individual in town, who had occasion for any articles belonging to the society, should call upon the treasurer, with an order from the president, without hesitation.

This useful society, under the judicious direction of a lady who was one of the original members, continues at the present time, its benevolent labors.

A BRIEF STATEMENT.

OF THE UNITARIAN BELIEF.

UNITARIANS have often been accused of having no creed, and the accusation as often denied. Our denomination are satisfied with nothing less than the *Bible*, which is always our ultimate appeal, in matters of religious faith and practice. We do object to imposing any man-devised formularies of faith, any bodies of divinity (often *bodies* without a soul); any *abstracts* of doctrine, upon a church, and making these abstracts a test of fellowship and Christian character. In respect to human creeds, Unitarians have always contended that if they contained *more* than the Scriptures, they contained too much; if *less*, they were insufficient; and if *precisely as much*, that they were needless.

But while we have thus rejected the imposition of any arbitrary test framed by *men*, be they never so pious and learned, we have at all suitable times been willing to utter most freely our sentiments, and to give a reason for the hope which is in us, making, however, no such declaration binding upon the conscience of others.

The following brief statement of the Unitarian belief, written by an esteemed clergyman of our denomination, has already been widely circulated among us. I have myself distributed many copies of it, both in the Western frontier settlements, and in New England. At once definite and truthful, it has put to rest many a calumny against our views,—calumnies often ignorantly uttered,—and has been received with acceptance by pious men of every denomination. I have often thought that some such statement was needed, and have seen no

other which so fully met the existing want as this. Its brevity secures attention, while its clearness and force carry with it conviction. We ask of any, into whose hands it may come, carefully to peruse it, compare it with the sacred volume, and to receive its statements only if found in conformity with Scripture; but to read it without prejudice, and with a feeling that truth, come from whom it may, is *equally* valuable to each intelligent and immortal being.

ARTHUR B. FULLER.

DECLARATION OF FAITH.

"UNITARIANS BELIEVE THE BIBLE, I. E., THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, TO BE A RECORD OF THE REVELATIONS, DISPENSATIONS, PURPOSES AND WILL OF GOD TO MAN. THEY RECEIVE THIS PRECIOUS VOLUME AS THEIR ONLY GUIDE IN FAITH AND PRACTICE.

"UNITARIANS 'believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost.'

"They believe in God, the eternal and uncreated One, the Creator and upholder of all things—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—Israel's God—Jehovah, revealed by Jesus of Nazareth as not only such, but also as the God and FATHER of the whole human family—that in and of himself, he possesses all those attributes and perfections which render him worthy of the homage, love and obedience, which he requires of his children;—they believe in his power, wisdom, and goodness, in his providence, bounty and grace,—that HE only is entitled to supreme worship and veneration, the hour having come, when all true worshippers are required to 'worship the FATHER in spirit and in truth.'

"They believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah promised of Jehovah to the Jews—the Christ, 'THE SON of the LIVING GOD'—sanctified and sent into the world by his Father, because 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life'—that he is the only Saviour of sinners, the only Mediator between God and man 'the way, the truth, and the life,' worthy to be loved, honored, trusted and obeyed.—They believe that all their prayers should be offered to the Father, in the name of Christ—that they should possess his mind and spirit, imitate his example, and through him, look to God for pardon and eternal life.

"They believe in the HOLY GHOST, that power of God, that divine influence by which Christianity was established through miraculous aid, that spirit which was given to Christ without measure, and which is still shed abroad and imparted to all who sincerely repent of their sins, turn unto God, devote themselves to his service, and seek him in the way of his appointment.

"UNITARIANS believe in human depravity, not in innate and total depravity and the imputation of Adam's sin—but in the very great depravity of mankind, the deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart, the alienation of man from God through ignorance and sin.

"UNITARIANS believe in the Atonement or Reconciliation,—not that Christ died to appease the wrath, or satisfy the justice of God, to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God, to bring back the wandering and sinful children of men to paths of obedience and holiness, to a oneness of feeling, affection and purpose with their Father in Heaven, from whom their sins had separated them. They believe that the plan of redemption by Christ, originated in the love of the Father, 'that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' that the mission of Christ was intended to produce a change in man, by an assurance of God's love and willingness to forgive the returning penitent; 'that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,' that through the blood of Christ, all who are led by its influence upon their hearts to sincere repentance and the renunciation of sin, have forgiveness from the Heavenly Father. Unitarians look for acceptance, not for any merit in themselves, but from the free, unurchased grace or mercy of God, made known in the gospel, and sealed by the blood of Christ. But they consider a life of uprightness, integrity, charity, devotion and holiness, as the only satisfactory proof of a heart reconciled to God,—the only evidence that the atonement has been received.

"UNITARIANS believe in regeneration, conversion, change of heart; they believe that we are saved by grace, through faith, and that it is the gift of God—that faith must be an active operating principle—that all must repent of their sins—that true repentance consists, not only in remorse of conscience and sorrow of heart, but also in amendment of life—in ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well.

"UNITARIANS believe in experimental religion—not a momentary excitement—nor the experience of an hour or a day—they regard Jesus of Nazareth as its most perfect pattern—they see him in the world, but not of it, humbly walking in the path of duty—doing the work given him to do by his Father, tempted, scorned and buffeted by the world—they see him moving onward, trusting in his Father's care, and only anxious to do his will—laboring for the salvation of man—suffering for his sake, even to the cruel death of the cross, and at that hour praying to his Father to forgive his murderers.

"UNITARIANS believe in the resurrection of the dead—a judgment to come, and a life beyond the grave—that without holiness, no man can see the Lord—that for the good, there is happiness without end; for the evil, the impenitent, there is misery and woe beyond the grave.

"UNITARIANS believe in the supreme and all-absorbing importance of religion—that the soul's concern is the great concern—that compared with this, all other things are as nothing—that the interests of vital, practical religion are the great interests of their being—that the Almighty has made all necessary provision for their everlasting happiness, and that no anxiety is too deep, no care too heedful, no effort too earnest, and no prayer too importunate to obtain its blessing."

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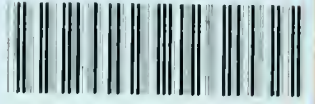


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