

those which it is the object of your Society to cherish, and the commemoration thereof is the call which has now brought us together. It is concerning this event that I am expected to speak. And as I know no reason why you should have honored me with the request to address you on this occasion, unless it was that you supposed me to have a respect for those first Fathers of New England, and some sympathy with their spirit, I may here state that in this you were not mistaken. For those men I have a sincere respect. With their spirit I have a sincere sympathy. I regard them as lights and helpers of our common race, and I honor them accordingly.

#### MEN OF NEW ENGLAND:—

It is written in that sacred and venerable Book which your fathers loved, and from which they drew their highest guidance and hope — in that Book which they valued beyond treasures of gold and silver — it is written in the Bible that “where there is no vision the people perish.” (Prov. xxix. 18) This saying was a proverb in Israel in times remote, and it stands true in all nations and in all times. There is a tendency in our humanity as a whole to gravitate to a dead level of uniformity, where mere tradition or conventionalism holds sway, and first truths and duties become lost to sight. This tendency intrudes into every domain of our being, mental, moral, and religious. It touches all the relations of society — affecting politics, ecclesiastical affairs, and the whole manner of life. It conducts to social inertia, the result whereof in a nation is national deterioration and decay. When the proper vigor of a people is thus impaired — when the divine lights of reason and faith are obscured