

## JOURNAL OF THE REV. JOSEPH BAXTER.

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We are happy to be able, through the courtesy of Mr. John Langdon Sibley, the learned librarian of Harvard College, to present to the readers of the Register, *verbatim, literatim et punctatim*, the very valuable Journal kept by the Rev. Joseph Baxter while missionary to the Indians at Arrowsic island, Maine, in the early part of the 18th century.

The Journal, which is written in Mr. Baxter's own hand, has upon the title-page the following memoranda:

"Medfield, 16th Jan., 1826. This MS. was sent to me by Rev. Thomas Mason, of Northfield, Mass., a lineal descendant of Rev. Joseph Baxter. Reference is perhaps made to this book at the beginning of Medfield Church Records.

D. C. SANDERS."

This diary sheds new light upon an interesting period in the Colonial history of Maine, and shows that the attempts to evangelize the Eastern Indians were more earnest and effectual than is generally supposed.

The Rev. Joseph Baxter<sup>1</sup> was the son of Lt. John Baxter,<sup>2</sup> of Braintree, Mass., and was born in that town in 1676. His grandfather, Gregory Baxter, possibly a relative of the celebrated author of the "Saints' Rest," settled in Braintree in 1632. Joseph<sup>3</sup> was graduated at Harvard College in 1693, and ordained at Medfield (Allen erroneously says Medford) April 21, 1697. *Ante*, xx. 57. He kept an exact record of the baptisms, admissions to the church, &c. during his ministry, the last entry in which is, "The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered Nov. 2, 1729. Total 197 times."

He was a man of promise, and when Gov. Samuel Shute visited Arrowsic for the purpose of forming a treaty with the Indians in the summer of 1717, he selected Mr. Baxter as a person well qualified to disseminate the gospel among the aborigines of the East, and to win them to the English, as well as to the celestial, crown.

Inspired by the great example of Eliot and Mayhew, he most heartily dedicated himself to the self-denying task of publishing the gospel among the Indians, and though he had not the scholarship or wit of his opponent Sebastian Rale, he nevertheless engaged in his work with all his heart, and continued laboring faithfully until the hostile attitude of the Indians broke up the mission.

It will be seen by the journal that he began at once to learn the Abnaki language, and that he labored as he had opportunity to instruct the savages in the principles of the gospel, and to fulfil every duty of his holy mission.

In a letter addressed to him, as also in another to Gov. Shute, the Jesuit, who was truly a fine Latin scholar, speaks contemptuously of Mr. Baxter's want of skill in Latin composition; but the Governor most sensibly tells the Frenchman that the main qualification of a missionary to the barbarous Indians was "not to be an exact scholar as to the Latin tongue, but to bring them from darkness to the light of the