

1639

THE
PRIME ANCIENT SOCIETY
OF
FAIRFIELD, CONN.

1889

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Congregational Church, Fairfield, Conn.

Church erected 1849. Chapel erected 1857. Parlors erected 1885.

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Prime Ancient Society,^c

OF

FAIRFIELD, CONN.

AN HISTORICAL PAPER

BY

REV. FRANK S. CHILD, PASTOR.

WITH

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PRESENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF
THE CHURCH.

BRIDGEPORT :

THE STANDARD ASSOCIATION, PRINTERS.

1890.

1405504

A PORTION OF THIS PAPER WAS READ BY THE AUTHOR ON THANKSGIVING DAY, NOV. 28, 1889, WHEN THIS CHURCH AND HER DAUGHTER CHURCHES CELEBRATED THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF PUBLIC WORSHIP IN FAIRFIELD. PARTS OF THIS PAPER WERE ALSO READ BEFORE THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY AT A MEETING HELD IN BRIDGEPORT, FRIDAY EVENING, DEC. 13, 1889.

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

OF

FAIRFIELD, CONN.

WHEN the pilgrim fathers voyaged to New England they were taking large part in that movement which signified the civil and religious enfranchisement of the race. The various communities that centred the life of these pilgrim workmen became distinctive fields of operation. They each contributed to the common solution of those problems which vexed and disturbed christendom. What has been the contribution of this First Church of Christ in Fairfield to the solution of these problems? The narrative of church life and church work stretching through two hundred and fifty years will give us answer.

The little company that threaded its way through the wilderness to Unquowa was pushed into such course by the prevailing impulse. Great are the crimes committed in the name of religion. But God compels the very forces of evil to shape themselves into agents of His Providence. So that mistakes, animosities, troubles, warfares, which revert to scruples of conscience, antipathies and genuflections, garbing of preachers, adornment of churches, ecclesiastical politics, religious feelings are all turned to good service in the nurture of a free church and the construction of a free government.

Roger Ludlow was a man that embodied the spirit of his times. He was natural leader of men. Dorchester, in Massachusetts, was his first home on our continent. Having served four years as assistant governor of Massachusetts, (1630-1634), he came to Connecticut in 1635 to investigate the necessities of this colony. He, with seven other men, was commissioned by the Massachusetts Court to govern the colony. A war with the Pequot Indians led him through this section of the

country. Charmed with the beauty and fertility of the land Ludlow proposed to plant a colony. Having obtained permission from the Court he returned to this section in the summer of 1639 and purchased a large tract of land. But he did not follow the letter of his instructions from the Court, for he prolonged his journey so that he failed to reach Hartford in time for the session of that body. He was reprimanded for his tardiness and his procedure in settling the Unquowa land was investigated. When Court adjourned Ludlow returned to Unquowa and continued his work of settlement and organization. The little company of men that were associated with him in founding Fairfield were men of sterling character and strong convictions. Like their comrades in other colonies these men put first emphasis upon religion. Their numbers were small but their faith, courage, devotion, sincerity were large. It was strictly in accordance with their interpretation of the Scriptures that they chose one and another of the company to perform the offices of stated public worship, and this Zion takes its rise as contemporary with the colony itself. The various settlements of early New England had a common model. The laws of Connecticut insisted upon the religious basis of the distinct settlements. A colony must support a preacher from its inception. When a community proved itself able to sustain a spiritual teacher it was permitted to proceed in its task of organization. Ministers, however, were not always to be obtained. Some colonies did not have an ordained minister during the first year or the first years of their life. Fairfield is illustration. There was stated public worship. Pure Congregationalism was illustrated in the selection by the people of one from among them to conduct the services. The incipient church was obliged to wait until the year 1644 ere an ordained minister was installed as pastor. During these first years Roger Ludlow was weariless in the discharge of his duties. Home affairs were managed with discretion and judgment. The town was speedily stamped with its characteristic intelligence, dignity, independence. When the first pastor came to Fairfield in October, 1644, he found a community already formed according to the orthodox model—energetic, serious, well-

poised, substantial. The Rev. John Jones was accompanied to Fairfield by some fifteen families from Concord, his former home. These people were dissatisfied with the management of affairs in Concord. Fairfield promised them larger comfort, lighter taxes, pleasanter country. Such an accession was important. Fresh impulse was given to this colony and affairs both civic and religious took favorable shape. At this period the religious state of the community was notable and exemplary. The rough experiences of pioneer life—the discipline of toil, danger, warfare, necessity, sorrow—developed the noblest type of christian heroism. The Fairfield parish was getting itself into good condition to take its part in the formative work of church and State.

Mr. Jones, a graduate of Jesus College, Oxford, was a man of culture and piety. He responded to the demands of circumstances and entered thoroughly into the labors that concerned parish prosperity. We are not to think of the minister as simply church servant. He was community servant. When it came to the administration of affairs the colony did not divide into sacred and secular. The church was co-terminous with the town, and it was the fact that for various purposes the civil and the ecclesiastical organizations were synonymous. “It would hardly be too strong to say,” writes Johnston, “that the establishment of the town and of the church was co-incident: the universal agreement in religion made town government and church government but two sides of the same medal.” It was the town that called the minister. It was the town that was taxed for the minister’s support. It was the town that defined the limits of the minister’s duties. And just as the magistrate in his office was to work for the peace, profit, progress of the town so the minister in his office was to work toward these same ends. These people feared and condemned the ecclesiastical domination that distinguished the mother country. At the same time they fashioned their colonies in accordance with the spirit of such rule. The form was varied but the essential features were retained. This fact explains the course of New England persecution. Quakers, Baptists, witches were hard pressed by the very men who sought escape from Home-

country persecutions. It was characteristic of the age. The larger, nobler interpretation of Christianity was yet to be given.

The division of magisterial and ministerial tasks in the parish strikes the reader as curious. While Mr. Jones was expected to watch affairs that concerned the public weal and preach sermons upon these themes, the magistrate performed the marriage ceremony. The dead were buried without religious services. This fruitful opportunity for the enforcement of truth and the mitigation of grief was denied the pastor. Such strange form did our forefathers' protest against papacy, prelacy, liturgy take. But the minister's official character, authority, instruction were emphasized. He was esteemed the exemplary embodiment of grace, dignity, wisdom, religion. His leadership in public affairs was unquestioned. The twenty years that Mr. Jones served the people of Fairfield were formative years for church and state. Associated for a time with that forceful thinker and energetic workman, Roger Ludlow, the mind of Mr. Jones would necessarily receive fresh impulse to faithful workmanship. It was when these two men were pondering and discussing the needs of the country that Ludlow "first unfolded the Constitution of Connecticut—the mother of all American Constitutions." We make rightful claim to some large share in this potent product of Fairfield air and soil and landscape. Fairfield thought and spirit are constituents of this model. While Ludlow was factor in the determination of our church character—the church itself through its ministrations to his spiritual and intellectual nature bears its share of creditable responsibility in the political policy of the colony and country.

It was during the pastorate of Mr. Jones that the Cambridge platform was adopted by the General Court and by this church as well as the other churches throughout Connecticut. This church order and discipline represented the counsel and action of New England's associated ministers.

Mr. Jones conducted worship on Lord's Day, morning and afternoon, with brief recess between the services, and gave a mid-week lecture.

Here is a picture which is outlined for us by contemporary

annals. It is Lord's Day. The streets of Fairfield are quiet. Never a vehicle disturbs the peace. Sabbath hush pervades the air. At nine o'clock in the morning the drum summons the people to public worship. The meeting-house is a plain low structure, built of boards and logs, standing upon the green. The seats are rough, uncushioned. The windows are small and infrequent. The pulpit is built, box fashion, at the end of the house. At beat of drum the people assemble. The men carry their guns. Each family walks watchfully, a compact little company of folks. The pastor holds his notes and his psalm book in his hand. As the people enter the building they separate, the men go to one side of the meeting-house, the women go to the other. The children are put under the care of the tithing-man. The pastor takes his place in the pulpit. The deacons, seated on a platform in front of him, face the congregation. The leader of psalmody takes his front bench. The meeting-house is filled. There are present the Ludlows, the Burrs, the Morehouses, the Jennings, the Merwins, the Scotts, the Bulkleys, the Bennetts, the Thorps, the Barlows, the Sturgeses, the Perrys, the Golds, the Murreys, the Ogdens, the Middlebrooks, the Osbornes, the Staples, the Bankses, the Sherwoods, the Thompsons, the Pells, the Lockwoods, the Lyons, the Hubbells, the Sanfords, the Hillses, the Palmers, the Hulls, the Wards, the Rowlands, the Bradleys, the Gilberts, the Cables, the Beachams, the Hides, the Odells, the Greens, the Jacksons, and others.

Mr. Jones begins the service with a long prayer. The leader of psalmody or one of the deacons names the psalm, and lines it out for the people. The pitch-pipe gives the pitch. The psalm leader performs his task and the people join him in singing. Then follows a sermon at least one hour in length. A short prayer and the benediction—this is the order of the first service. The Bible is not read as a part of worship. It is never read unless the teacher expounds the selected portion of Scripture. There is no musical instrument in the room. Hymns are not used. And the tithing-man keeps the children quiet and the people awake. A brief intermission at noon gave the people opportunity to take some food and drink and change their position, and go to the Sabbath day

house. This was a small rough building near the church which contained an immense fireplace and a generous fire. Here the people warmed themselves and replenished their foot-stoves. The afternoon service differed from the morning service in the introduction of a second psalm after the short prayer. At close of service the people walked home and devoted their hours to the reading of the Bible and religious conversation in the family. The Sabbath, which began on Saturday at sun set, ended at the same hour on Sunday. But the evening was a sort of reflection of the rest day, so that people did not venture to break its repose by the common activities of secular life.

Election sermons were also a part of the minister's functions. The investigation of moral delinquencies and spiritual defections was largely his work. The witchcraft delusion was a matter of special concern to the minister. While magistrates had the enforcement of law the minister was expected to be vigilant, observant, energetic in respect to the innumerable details of town affairs. He had a sort of censorship in respect to matters of public import. His influences were manifold and far reaching. While he was not clothed with the authority of an English parish clergyman his real power was probably larger and more important.

The town records give us suggestive pictures of the times.

Dec. 27, 1661. The town voted that the schoolmaster have ten pounds towards his wages out of the Town rates, and it is ordered that the fifteen Pounds that remain out of his wages shall be paid by the masters and parents of such children as need teaching from six years old.

Feb. 15, 1664. Town meeting. The Town ordered there shall be two Town meetings in the year. The 15th of February and the 15th of August in each year. And if any of those days fall on the Sabbath, the day following. If the Townsmen see cause in the interest of the town between the the two standing Town meetings, It is ordered that the meeting shall be binding to the inhabitants provided it is published on a Lecture day or by a writing on the meeting-house door.

Feb. 16, 1664. It is ordered that any one who kills a wolf in the town, if he expects to be paid for it he shall bring the wolf's head to the treasurer, who is to keep an account thereof.

Aug. 22, 1666. The Townsmen order that who ever kills a bear in the bounds of the Town at any time, between this and the next Town meeting shall be paid out of the Town Treasury 50 shillings a piece for each old and for cubs 20 shillings each.

Mr. Jones departed this life in 1664. The Rev. Samuel Wakeman "by a free vote" of the townsmen (the usual method of procedure,) was chosen pastor in 1665. This was the year when watches were first worn by gentlemen of New England. But it was a century ere they were common among the people. The hour-glass long continued to hold its conspicuous place upon the pulpit. The church was well-conditioned for work. The impress of Roger Ludlow and Mr. Jones was stamped upon the parish. The heroic spirit characteristic of the first quarter of a century made itself manifest. The sturdy, rugged christian character of the early settlers reproduced itself in their children. Fairfield made healthful advancement. The church increased in membership. The spiritual state of the people promised good harvest. The young were tenderly nurtured in Christian homes. Both Mr. Jones and Mr. Wakeman had served an apprenticeship as teachers ere they were ordained to the ministry. Their interest in the young and their knowledge of the children proved helpful to them in the discharge of parish duties. So that we are not surprised when we observe that the rising generation reveals rare moral strength and spiritual stamina. The school and the church were closely related. For a period which we cannot measure the same building had been used in worship and teaching. The date of the first meeting-house is unknown. The year 1640 is named as the approximate date. We may be sure, however, that men whose first thought was religion would speedily rear some kind of worthy edifice in which to worship God. The second structure was erected in the year 1675. When Mr. Wakeman entered upon his parish work in 1662, he found himself in a position of commanding importance. The few churches that were founded near this year 1640 ex-

erted wide influence. Their counsels were determinative of the religious policy of Connecticut. In 1668 the pastor of Fairfield church was appointed by the Legislature one of five men to meet at Saybrook and advise concerning a common platform of faith and practice. Report of this meeting was made to the General Court in May, 1669. On various occasions the prominence of this parish was recognized by the appointment of its pastor or some of its notable residents to share the guiding of Colonial thought and the conduct of Colonial affairs. When John Robinson and the several companies of Puritan settlers sought the quiet and freedom of this New England the motive was religious. The heroism of these people was striking and memorable. Charles I. was a great mischief-maker. Uniformity of worship, anti-Calvinistic theology, insistence upon episcopacy, intolerance of non-conformity, persecution of dissenters, these things mark his course. The "Book of Sports" which taught the people to make Sunday a day of pastime and frolic, was distributed to the clergy with the command to read it from the pulpit. Conscience was outraged in various ways. Attempt was made to force the English Prayer book upon Scotland. As James I. had said concerning Laud so might it have been said concerning Charles and the home-folks of England, "He knows not the stomach of that people." New England was the richer for such course in the mother country. But the time came when the Colonies began to prosper, and good reports of New England possibilities were returned to England. Men visited the new land as an interesting adventure. The demoralized state of England affected the life of the Colonies. Religion itself was influenced by such contact and ferment.

In 1662 the half-way covenant had been introduced. It read that a baptized man of moral life and orthodox belief might hold such membership in the church that he could have his children baptized and share all church privileges with the exception of the Lord's Supper. This gave opportunity for the entrance of worldliness and formality into the church and speedily spread abroad its demoralizing influences. The church which was founded with such purity of faith, heroism of spirit, and piety of life, soon manifested corrupt

tendencies. Now Mr. Wakeman was a man of singular directness of speech and fearless, energetic in his course of action. He was chosen to deliver the election sermon in Hartford. The famous discourse was published. Mr. Wakeman was bold to warn the people. For as was quaintly observed at the time, he was "exceeding tremendously suspicious that it will come" to tragical end. "The Reverend and Pious author" writes the editor of the ancient book, "Having the sense of what he spake upon his own heart may will also to affect the heart of others." The sermon gives a somber picture. It is aimed against "Christian defections and rampant Colonial sins." "New England's name hath been much set by" he remarks: "much more than now New England's credit and repute is brought many pegs lower than sometimes." This sermon is entitled "Sound Repentance the Right Way to Escape Deserved Ruin, or a Solid and Awakening Discourse." It covers forty-four printed pages, and has fifty-two divisions and subdivisions. It made memorable impression. Its plain speech, doctrinal meat, scathing rebuke and sound exhortation were received with great favor. And it gives to us a noteworthy forth-setting of Colonial needs, manners, purposes, conditions. The troublous times were already manifest in church dissensions. Mr. Wakeman was appointed by the General Court in 1669, to accompany several ministerial brethren to Windsor and advise concerning a serious misunderstanding in that parish. In fact ecclesiastical matters in the Colony were in such a state of unrest and demoralization that two fast days were appointed for this year. The importance of the parish and the eminence of its pastor are well evidenced by the various public labors assigned to Mr. Wakeman. Now it is civic affairs; now it is ecclesiastical affairs which claim attention. One day it is the spiritual concerns of the Colony; another day it is the temporal. In 1675 Mr. Wakeman and Mr. Elliott, of New London, report to the council "in respect to their investigation of those evils amongst us which have stirred up the Lord's anger against us, that they being discovered may by repentance and reformation, be thrown out of our camp and heart."

Meanwhile the parish seems to have appreciated the emi-

nence of their pastor. They were liberal in their support of Mr. Wakeman. But in the year 1668 some of the people preferred a change in the method of ministerial support. One hundred pounds, with swamps and parsonage lands was the salary. At a town meeting in April, 1670, it was voted to give the swamps and parsonage lands, and to raise the main part of the salary by voluntary contribution. Mr. Wakeman did not think this a wise method. He appealed to the General Court. They righted the matter. He received a gift of two hundred acres of land. In 1671 a fresh grant of land was made to the minister. In 1672 it was voted that an annual expenditure of ten pounds be made for stubbing and ditching the parsonage lands. In 1673 Mr. Wakeman received a grant of two hundred acres. This land grant business occasioned some trouble in the parish but a commission consisting of Captain John Allyn, of Hartford; James Bishop, of New Haven; Major Robert Treat, of New Milford, and Major Gold, of Fairfield, adjusted the matter so that all people concerned coincided in the settlement. The parish became strong and aggressive during the pastorate of Mr. Wakeman. The tasks of the minister were numerous and exacting. In 1670 it was proposed that Mr. Wakeman should have an assistant. And the Rev. Eliphalet Jones, the son of Fairfield's first minister was selected as the associate pastor. A salary of forty pounds was offered him. But Mr. Jones declined the call, so that Mr. Wakeman continued his work unaided to the end. Meanwhile the parish multiplied its inhabitants, enlarged its bounds, increased its wealth and attained position of importance.

Pequonnock thinking the parish too large for one shepherd and desiring to settle a minister in the east part of the town petitioned the General Court in May, 1690, concerning their needs. The following year they made fresh petition. Fairfield was reluctant to have the parish divided. Conservative when such measures were proposed the town discouraged the the movement toward division. But the people of Pequonnock persisted. The Court therefore decided that "they might procure and settle an orthodox minister among them if they found themselves able to do so, provided they paid their just proportion of the ecclesiastical tax towards the mainte-

nance of the ministry in Fairfield until they could obtain freedom from the Town of Fairfield in the General Court."

Oct. 3, 1691. "A General Court held in Hartford, upon the petition of the people of Pequonnoek, that they may have liberty from this Court, whilst they maintain an orthodox ministry in Pequonnoek, to be released from the payment to the ministry in Fairfield, The Court grants the petition therein, provided that the people of Pequonnoek make payment of all just dues for Town Charges to the said Town of Fairfield as formerly, and pay their just dues to the ministry of Fairfield to this."

Mr. Charles Chauncey was invited to minister to the Pequonnoek people.

Dec. 16, 1692. "The Town grants unto Mr. Charles Chauncey three acres of land, if there be so much when sufficient highways are left there, and if there be not so much then he shall have what there is: It is to lie on the north side of Mr. Chauncey's home-lot, and if he die in the ministry at Pequonnoek it is to be the property of his heirs, but if otherwise, it is to return to the Town of Fairfield."

April 13, 1713. "The town grants unto the Rev. Charles Chauncey six acres of land, for a pasture, within the limits of the parish."

The first church in Stratfield was organized in 1695. Mr. Wakeman died in 1691, "Which bereavement is for a lamentation," says the town record concerning the sad event. A man of culture, piety, wisdom, energy, patriotism, he labored with weariless devotion to the parish and Colony interests through the eventful years of his long pastorate.

That a fit successor might speedily be inducted into the office and continue his profitable labor was the prayer and purpose of the people. The Rev. Joseph Webb was invited to the pastorate in May. He began his ministry on the 13th of October. Baptism and the Half-way Covenant immediately supplied the community with a theme for earnest discussion. Two years later the parish passed through another agitation of the witchcraft question.

It is not strange that the feeling was strong in respect to the wiles of so-called witches. The Home-country shows a

tragic record. It is asserted on good authority that previous to the year 1692 thirty thousand people were executed on the charge of witchcraft in England, seventy-five thousand in France, and one hundred thousand in Germany. New England experiences the same delusion. But the better sentiment of this parish prevailed in 1692, so that the trials here at this time did not end in death. In the third year of Mr. Webb's pastorate, (1695), liberty to perform the marriage ceremony is granted the clergy. Although the clergy did not conduct any religious service on the burial of the dead it was permitted them to hold memorial services on the Sabbath. For the descendants of Major Gold have the small, compact, cursive manuscript of two discourses that "were occasioned by the death of Major Nathan Gold." We quote from the title of the discourses, "One of the Pious and Worthy Magistrates of Connecticut Colony, who deceased at his own house in Fairfield the 4th of March, 1693-4." The text is 2nd Kings iii., 14. The first sermon, preached in the morning, elaborates what is termed the first doctrine, namely, "That pious men of public use and place must die as well as others." The second sermon, preached after the noon intermission, elaborates what is termed the second doctrine, namely, "That pious and holy men especially those in public capacity are the fathers, the glory, the strength of a people among whom they live." In 1699 liberties were granted to the village of Fairfield, by the General Court, "to make choice annually of two or three persons, who shall have power to order meetings of the Society; to order their minister's rates and what concerns may be needful about their meeting-house." This seems to have been the germ of what is now termed the Society's committee.

The Seventeenth century closes as Mr. Webb joins with nine other ministers of Connecticut in founding Yale College. Fragments of a journal kept by Mr. Webb at this time give significant views of Fairfield life. Three slight shocks of earthquake are recorded, and such attention is paid to the narration of natural phenomena that we suppose Mr. Webb to have been a keen observer and a careful reader in science.

The churches of the Colony had been organized on a basis of independency. The clergy and the laity that emigrated

from England to this place were many of them members of the Church of England. But when it came to the question of ecclesiastical organization independency was the unanimous choice. Bald independency, however, did not suit them. The Presbyterianism of the Home-country and the Puritanism of the established church contributed to the new organization. The government finally approved "a form of Congregationalism mid-way between the Cambridge platform and Presbyterianism." "Consociations, or permanent councils composed of ministers and delegates were created within each of the districts into which the Colony was divided." This was the work assigned to Fairfield and the sister churches when the Eighteenth century dawned. It is difficult for us to realize the intensity of feeling that was manifested during the discussion of these ecclesiastical questions. Our forefathers made religion the chief order of the day. The current problems had religious or ecclesiastical significance. Church and state were intimately related. Various meetings, or convocations were held for the free consideration of these matters. Fairfield clergy and laity took active part in the shaping of the ecclesiastical law. In 1709, the year following the forth-putting of the Saybrook Platform, five Consociations were formed in Connecticut. The Rev. Joseph Webb, Deacon John Thompson, and Samuel Cobbet, Esq., were the delegates from Fairfield church to the Stratfield meeting of March 9, 1709, when the Fairfield Consociation was organized. Township and church or parish were co-terminous at the first. Congregationalism was the state church. As parishes prospered they were divided. Taxes for the support of the parish church were levied after the method common to civil taxation. From the first code of Connecticut, in 1650, to the adoption of the new Constitution in 1818, the state supported the church. Consociation was a compromise. It was a movement in the direction of separation between church and state. Whereas, formerly, churches were continually making appeal to Court or Legislature for the settlement of difficult questions, it was now ordered that such matters should come before Consociation. Fairfield was strenuous in its advocacy and support of the new system. As we shall see a generation later, the then

pastor of this church contributed various papers to the ecclesiastical discussion.

Meanwhile certain changes were hastening to a conclusion in the Fairfield parish. In 1708 Bankside petitioned the Court that a new parish be made on the west of Fairfield. The mother parish did not favor the petition. Neither did the ministers of the Colony. In 1710 a second petition was presented to the Court. The case was argued before the Assembly. In May, 1711, the petition was granted. There were two hundred and seventy persons in the new parish. They gave their first pastor the generous salary of seventy pounds sterling.

In 1713 the town granted "unto the first gospel minister that shall settle in Maximus or the West Parish in Fairfield, six acres of land in some convenient place within the parish of the town's common for a home-lot."

March 25, 1714. "The town Grants unto the first orthodox minister that shall settle in the West Parish of Fairfield, ten acres of land, which was lately purchased of the natives, on Clapboard Hill."

Such a secession lessened the pastoral labors of Mr. Webb, for he was obliged to drive eight miles to call upon some of his Bankside parishioners. Nevertheless the old pastor and the mother church were loth to part with these brethren. But scarcely had they adjusted themselves to this diminution of numbers when Greenfield presented a petition of like character to the "Honorable General Assembly." Some seventy-five families join in this prayer for a new parish. "Not only ourselves are frequently obliged to be absent from divine worship," says the petitioners, "but our poor children are under a kind of necessity of perishing for lack of vision." "The distance of the way, especially in bad weather, utterly incapacitates many persons, old and young, to go to the house of God." This first appeal did not receive affirmative reply. A second appeal was successful. The new parish was formed in 1725. Again, the mother church graciously submitted to the inevitable and gave a share of its life and substance to the daughter church. This same year the Rev. Henry Canor, the first Episcopal missionary in the town began his ministry in Fairfield.

Mr. Webb had been called to another church during the early part of his pastorate. But he was true to his charge and elected to remain with this people. Their generosity toward him was a noble tribute of their affection and loyalty. Grants of land and various gifts contributed to his comfortable maintenance. Although three daughter churches had taken with them large and important constituency the mother church continued prosperous and liberal.

We are told the method of conducting psalmody, while Mr. Webb was pastor, by a motion that was passed at church meeting, May 29, 1729: "Voted that the worshipful Mr. John Gold should set and read the psalm, and in case he be absent or indisposed, that his brother, Mr. Samuel Gold, should do it."

In 1732 Fairfield voted to sell the church and school lands and divide the proceeds of such sale among the three parishes, the mother parish to have one-half the proceeds, the other half to be divided between Green's Farms and Greenfield Hill. This same year the church invited the Rev. Noah Hobart to assist Mr. Webb in the performance of parish tasks. On the 19th of September Mr. Webb "fell on sleep." A strong personality, devout, conservative, studious—he served his people and his Colony with unswerving and large minded fidelity. Some of his sermons preserved by our people witness to his marked intellectual force and spiritual character.

Mr. Hobart, a graduate of Harvard College, was called the month after Mr. Webb's decease, and installed by the Consociation—the first pastor installed in Fairfield by Consociation—on February 7, 1733. The parish had been well shepherded, and the formative work of the church was done. Nearly a century had elapsed since the settlement of the town. The community had a certain enviable aspect of antiquity as compared with other settlements. And Fairfield society was distinguished for its intelligence, culture, wealth, merit. The work which came to this new pastor was compacted into smaller territory, but there was a healthy growth of population and the leading position of Fairfield among sister communities added to the responsibilities and eminence of the pastoral office. This was the period of controversy. The

principles of Puritanism had lost their grip upon many of the people. The complicated relations of church and state needed disentanglement and explanation. It was soon after Mr. Hobart began his ministry in Fairfield that Jonathan Edwards preached those powerful sermons in Northampton which issued in the Great Awakening. Theological and ecclesiastical controversy was in the atmosphere. Edwards' discourses were masterful presentations of the theological questions which agitated the people. Mr. Hobart was an acute, vigorous, logical controversialist. It was strong doctrine which he preached to his people. And he was not less forcible when he used the pen. The libraries contain several books and pamphlets which he gave to the literature of the day. In 1748 Mr. Hobart published a book entitled "A Serious Address to the Members of the Episcopal Separation in New England, Occasioned by Mr. Wetmore's Vindication." The author discusses the question: (1) Whether New Englanders ought to conform to the prelatic church. (2) Whether it be prudent for Congregationalists to go over to that communion. (3) Whether it be lawful. It is vigorous and satisfactory argument which Mr. Hobart publishes. And yet it did not altogether accomplish its purpose for Mr. Hobart writes another small book in continuation of the subject in the year 1751. It is entitled, "A Second Address." The Episcopal Separation in New England was gaining adherents. These people had in mind the mistakes of their arbitrary and intolerant ancestors. These separatists recalled the fact that Congregationalism was originally a protest against certain objectionable features of English church method and spirit. Liturgical worship did not have any necessary connection with Episcopal government. The Reformed and Calvinistic churches of Europe used liturgies. Knox himself prepared a liturgy for Scotland and Presbyterianism. Neither did Episcopacy have any necessary connection with Monarchy, although James I. had it as a favorite saying, "No bishop, no king." The Episcopal Separation of Connecticut sought to persuade their brethren of the state Congregational church that a return to the Episcopal church was the happy cure for the evil tendencies of the day. The literature of the discussion is voluminous.

Mr. Hobart combats the proposition. Meanwhile the principles of Congregationalism were submitted to fresh assault and examination. And Mr. Hobart writes as a champion of Consociated Congregationalism—a modified form of Presbyterianism. In 1759 he publishes a pamphlet relating to the constitution and authority of Ecclesiastical Councils. The book evokes criticism and opposition, so that in 1761 he publishes a second address upon the subject, which is called a “Vindication” of the Principles. After the Great Awakening, Congregationalism gradually waned in popularity. Governor Thomas Fitch printed anonymously, in 1765, an “Explanation” which virtually demolished the primitive Consociationism. But Mr. Hobart distrusted and disapproved such method. He therefore publishes in 1765 a small book called “An Attempt to Illustrate and Confirm the Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Consociated churches in the Colony of Connecticut.” Great evils prevailed through the land. But Mr. Hobart contends that the way to meet such evils “is not that of destroying our Constitution by explaining it in a sense contrary to the very design, and the most strong and determined expression of it; but that of defending it by Scripture and Reason, and of acting in conformity to it with steadiness and yet with Prudence, Gentleness and Meekness.” So the theological and ecclesiastical conflict waged. The church in Fairfield was thoroughly indoctrinated in the faith and polity of the fathers. It became the stronghold of orthodoxy. And as Fairfield was the county seat and the village was attractive to neighbor people, a large constituency was leavened by the ministry of Mr. Hobart and the spirit of the church. The meeting-house was too small to accommodate the people. It had not been kept in thorough repair. The community felt that it was inadequate to their needs. Some attempts were made to improve the old structure. But the impulse to build gathered strength so that in 1745 the third church edifice was reared. This was sixty feet long, forty-four feet broad, twenty-six feet high, with spire of one hundred and twenty feet. When Mr. Hobart was called into the better country he had served a pastorate of forty years in Fairfield. He had officiated at one thousand and ninety-three funerals; and nine hundred and thirteen bap-

tisms are recorded during his ministry. Robust, energetic, industrious, efficient to the last week of his life he preached to his people twice on the Sabbath that preceded his death. The impression which he made upon this church and upon the whole Colony was strong, abiding, fruitful. His forceful Christian manhood was wrought into the very form and substance of community life.

"He possessed high intellectual and moral distinction," says President Dwight, his contemporary. "He had a mind of great acuteness and discernment: was a laborious student: was extensively learned, especially in History and Theology—adorned the doctrine which he professed by an exemplary life; and was holden in high veneration for his wisdom and virtue. Among the American writers of the last century, not one has, I believe, handled the subject of Presbyterian ordination with more ability or success."

When the Rev. Andrew Eliot came to Fairfield in the early summer of 1774, he entered cordially into the work as it had been shaped by his predecessors. But the times were changeful and it became apparent to Mr. Eliot that life was taking another phase. The heroic age of the church was that first period of sixty years when our forefathers were passing through the discipline of privation, persecution, massacre. The controversial age in our church-life is noted through the pastorates of Mr. Webb and Mr. Hobart. The years of tested patriotism stretch through the pastorate of Mr. Eliot.

The signs of storm were already detected in the east. Mr. Eliot was a Boston man, and a graduate of Harvard College. The Boston tea party communicated its impulse to the Fairfield pastor. He flamed with loyalty to the Colonies. And as Mr. Eliot was a man of force, magnetism, ability, the people responded heartily to his patriotic messages. Religion itself was deeply involved in the struggle that impended. For did the mother-country succeed in the chastisement of the daughter-country, it was probable that various changes would result in the civil and ecclesiastical administration of affairs. When the Declaration of Independence was made, July 4, 1776, the church and congregation were thoroughly alive to the importance of the occasion. The religious sentiment

seemed to make natural expression of itself through devotion to country. With characteristic zeal and thoroughness the parish contributed supplies and soldiers, to the cause of liberty. At this time Fairfield stood seventh in taxable wealth. While in respect to dignity, intelligence, social worth, and community prestige, Fairfield was reckoned among the first. It was doubtless in view of these facts that the British razed the village to the ground in 1779.

The town records suggest the ferment and activity of the times. A coast guard was voted October 31, 1776: "Voted that there be a guard of twenty-six men to guard the town nightly and every night to be set in manner following, viz:

Four to patrol from Saugatuck River to Cable's Mill, and four to patrol from said Mill to Sasco River, and four from Sasco River to Mill River, and four from the Mill River to the Pine Creek, and six to patrol from Pine Creek to the Ash House Creek, so called, and in the Town Streets, and four at Stratfield.

Voted, That each of the guard have three shillings a night for their service.

Voted, The guard be taken out of the Prime Society, Green's Farms, Greenfield, and Stratfield.

Feb. 2, 1778. Town Meeting. Voted, That there be a guard of forty-two men enlisted to guard on the sea coasts at Stratfield, McKenzie's point, Frost's point, and Compo: That six men mount guard at each of the above mentioned places every night at sunset and continue there until sunrise next morning. That each man have six shillings a night when in service. The Selectmen to enlist men for said guard and give them directions respecting their service.

Voted, That the Town desire that the alarm-post for the Militia to repair to in case of alarm be the places of parade in the first Society, and in Stratfield, and at Joseph Wake-man's in Green's Farms.

May 17, 1779. Town Meeting. Voted, That the Selectmen prefer a memorial to the General Assembly requesting that the Guards at Green's Farms, under Lieut. Joseph Bennett, may be established on the same footing as those under Capt. Eliphalet Thorp.

Voted, That the Selectmen enlist such a number of men as

they shall think fit to serve as Guard for the safety of the Town. That twenty mount guard every night as long as the selectmen shall judge it necessary. That each man who serves on said guard shall receive out of Town Treasury, for each night he serves, as a reward for his services, five Continental dollars.

July 1, 1779. Town Meeting. Voted, That the Selectmen of this Town be requested to order ten men in addition to the former guards, to mount guard each night at such place as they shall direct, and each man shall receive five dollars for his service.

Voted, That Thaddeus Burr, Jonathan Sturges, Samuel Squire, be appointed a committee to represent the state of this Town to the Governor and Council of Safety, and request his Excellency, and said Council, to order some vessel or vessels of force to Guard our sea coast against the designs of the enemy during the summer season."

The burning of the town is a familiar narrative. From the spire of the Episcopal church one of Fairfield's boys saw the approaching enemy. Destruction was the fell purpose of the ruthless invaders. Two days were given to the work of ruin. The church was burned on July 8th. Among the two hundred and eighteen buildings consumed was the parsonage located where stands the present residence of Mr. Harral. There Mrs. Hobart, the widow of the former pastor resided, and there Mr. Eliot spent stormy Sabbaths and dark nights, his own residence being on Holland Hill, the house formerly owned by Ebenezer Silliman, brother of Gen. Gold Selleck Silliman. One valuable book was rescued from the minister's house. We have it with us to-day,—the Church records dating back to the year 1694. In this book is written Mr. Eliot's brief, graphic, memorable account of this event.

July 7th. A part of the British army, consisting of Britons, Germans, and American refugees, under the command of Major-General Tryon, and Brigadier-General Garth, landed in this town from a fleet commanded by Sir George Collier.

In the evening and night of the same day, a great part of the buildings in the town plot were consumed by said troops.

July 8th. In the morning, the meeting-house, together with the Church of England building, the Court house, prison, and almost all the principal buildings in the Society were laid in ashes.

Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burnt up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

Alleluia!

The Lord God Omnipotent, reigneth. Amen.

It is difficult for us to paint the grief, the indignation, the courage of the Fairfield people. The times were so troublous, feverish, eventful that the sufferers could not brood upon their disasters. There was work for them to do. Deacon Silliman, who had been appointed General for the local troops, was captured by the British and suffered a year's imprisonment, yet the people did not diminish their zeal and intrepidity. The spirit of our ancestors was quenchless, irrepressible. On July 20th, of this year, a town meeting was held, when it was voted that George Burr, Thaddeus Burr, Abraham Andrews, and Samuel Odell, be a committee to wait upon Colonel Jonathan Dimon and desire him to appoint fifty men to keep guard in the Prime Society, and twenty-five men at Green's Farms, and fifteen men at Stratfield. Also, to request him to appoint such men as are friendly to the United States of America.

A committee of nine persons was appointed "to put about a subscription to raise a sum to capture Gen: William Tryon, who commanded the troops when they burnt this Town on the 7th and 8th of July of this instant July."

Voted, "A committee of Andrew Rowland, Thad: Burr and Jonathan Sturges, Esqrs., to draw up a narrative of the proceedings of Gen: William Tryon in the destruction of this

Town, and, also, point out his treatment of the inhabitants that tarried in the Town, and the instances in which he violated his own Proclamation, and cause the same to be entered on the Town Records."

Scarcely was Fairfield desolated by fire ere the people returned to their tasks—shared their substance and strength after the same liberal fashion with the struggling Colonies—and gladly sent private soldiers, captains, generals, into the field of action.

Three days after the burning of the meeting-house the "church and society met, and with the pastor carried on religious services as usual at the house of Deacon Bulkley."

On the following Lord's Day the church met at the house of Deodate Silliman and held public worship.

Worship was conducted next Lord's Day at the house of Peter Perry.

On August the first the Lord's Supper was celebrated at the house of Justin Hobart.

On September twelfth, worship was conducted at the house of Elizabeth Morehouse.

After this time the public exercises of religion were held in the house of Justin Hobart, except that once a month they were carried on in Jennings' Woods.

One year later public religious services were continued in the new Court House.

On Aug. 31, 1779, a Town meeting was held when it was "Voted, That the Town will build a Town House; the Town House to be forty feet long, and thirty feet wide; to be ten feet between joints.

Voted, That the Town House be erected on the same spot of ground where the new school-house lately stood near the late Court House.

Voted, To raise a tax of one shilling on the pound on all the Polls and Ratable estate of the inhabitants of this Town, to pay the expenses of building the Town House, and other necessary charges."

The state of feeling that continued in the parish during several years is indicated by the proceedings of a Town meeting held April 10, 1783.

“The inhabitants, principally called for the purpose of considering what measure should be taken with respect to those persons who, during the war between Great Britain and America, have gone to and joined the enemy and put themselves under their protection. The question was put whether this meeting was willing that any of those persons who have gone over and joined the enemy shall be permitted to return and reside in this town. Passed in the negative. Voted, That a committee be appointed to remove all such persons from the town, who have joined the enemy, and put themselves under their protection during the war between Great Britain and America.”

It was six years ere the new meeting-house was builded. On March 26, 1786, the congregation met for the first time in the unfinished edifice. “The solemnities of the morning,” says the record, “were opened with a short prayer and reading 2d Timothy vi. Those of the afternoon, with a short prayer and reading Revelation xxi. The sermon preached by the pastor on this joyful occasion was from Genesis xxviii. 17, last clause: “This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.”

The destruction of property by the British and the generous gifts of the people for the support of the American army resulted in the straitened circumstances of Mr. Eliot's parishioners. When Mr. Eliot was called to the pastorate the Society voted him the parsonage lot called Applegate's, and one hundred and twenty pounds as annual salary. It was also voted to give Mr. Eliot the sum of “three hundred pounds, lawful money, for his settlement in the work of the ministry among us, to be paid to him in three equal yearly payments.” Receipts for such money are recorded in the book of the Society. Various gratuities are also receipted. It was voted November 30, 1778, “That the Society will do something as a Gratuity toward making good Mr. Eliot's salary for the present year.” The sum of thirty pounds was paid Mr. Eliot in accordance with this vote. But there appears to have been a period of two years when Mr. Eliot did not receive any salary,—1780–1782,—“I have been with you in your prosperity; I will stay with you in your adver

sity," said Mr. Eliot. He gave a receipt for one pound to the treasurer, this being his salary in full for this period. Meanwhile the drum was beaten to call the people to worship, while "the avails of iron and nails from the old meeting-house" were given toward a bell. In 1782 the General Assembly was petitioned for the grant of a thousand pounds or more from the certificated estates of the town of Fairfield for the building of the meeting-house. Mr. Eliot's salary of one hundred and twenty pounds is continued, and the future seems bright and hopeful. Meanwhile the parish had now sufficiently recovered from the disaster of war and conflagration so that the finances were put upon good footing; and the church prospered.

Aug. 18, 1783. The parish voted that Jonathan Sturges and Thaddeus Burr, be a committee "to view a place on Mill Plain, proposed by such persons as were professors of the Church of England, and to build a house for public worship, and see if it will be detrimental to the public or any private person."

On December 24th, of the same year, this committee was instructed to "stake out on the southeast corner of the place of parade on the Mill Plain Green for the professors of the Episcopal church in this town to build a house of public worship upon."

It was during the pastorate of Mr. Eliot that the meeting-house pews were first rented. The rentals were added to the general support of the Society. It was an innovation of these days, also, that boxes or bags were passed through the congregation and a weekly collection taken.

Although the congregation worshiped in the new meeting-house after 1786, it was several years ere the building was finished. There was considerable discussion in respect to the fashion of pews. The gallery of the meeting-house did not altogether suit some people. Painting, plastering, glazing, continued for years. In 1792 there was a new bell. It seems that there were mischievous youth who rang the bell at unseasonable hours. It was voted that the "Society's Committee be authorized to prosecute all persons ringing the meeting-house bell without license."

This formative time in the history of the Republic was a period of religious transition. The Revolution made our people familiar with the infidelity of France. The doctrines of atheism were seduously scattered as seed through the country. It was a French notion that democracy and irreligion were necessary allies. The French infidel clubs of the age prophesied that in less than two generations Christianity would become a thing of the past in America. It is a fact that the preaching during the last quarter of the eighteenth century was martial and political in its character. The ministers were earnest and faithful advocates of liberty, independence, democracy. This doubtless had its effect upon religious activity. Circumstances combined to hamper, for a season, the growth of spiritual Christianity in America. But religion did not relax its firm hold upon the people. And the Fairfield parish retained its characteristic loyalty to the Faith. It was doubtless owing to the fact that this community was thoroughly indoctrinated by the first pastors and thoroughly shepherded and instructed by Mr. Eliot through this eventful period that Fairfield preserved its orthodox, conservative, substantial Christian character. When Mr. Eliot departed this life in 1805, the parish was one of the most attractive and influential in the State. A cultivated scholar, an urbane gentleman, a discreet friend, a forcible preacher, a brave, tireless, pious workman in Christ, he served this parish with unswerving fidelity through the critical period of Revolution and National organization. We cannot compute the worth of his services.

The Rev. Heman Humphrey was ordained and installed pastor of this church April 16, 1807. The Nineteenth Century was already revealing those theological tendencies which express themselves in variety of denominational forms. Congregationalism was still the state church of Connecticut. But non-conformists were permitted to pay their taxes for the support of the church which they elected, so that the discouragement to dissent was not as strong as during former years. But it was felt by many people in our established church that state support hampered Congregational prosperity. Mr. Humphrey was a man of rare spiritual gifts.

His ministry was especially devoted to the spiritual interests of the church. He prepared our Confession of Faith and our Church Covenant. The Half-way covenant relation was still respected by the church. But it was felt that a better way should be devised. Therefore, it was voted in May, 1807, "that as there is good reason to believe that many when they avowed the covenant had no idea of thereby becoming members of the church, it is not expedient to compel them to come up to the Lord's table." Six months was given such people to decide as to their course. If they confessed Christ by partaking of the Lord's Supper, they were reckoned as members of the church. If they refused the rite it was considered that they voluntarily withdrew themselves from all connection with the church. This new interpretation of church membership resulted in the shortening of the roll, the whole number of church members being seventy-four. But it was speedily observed that there were compensations which off-set diminished numbers. During Mr. Humphrey's pastorate of ten years eighty-nine persons were received into the church on confession of their faith. Elijah Bibbins and Roger M. Sherman were elected deacons. Various measures that concerned the spiritual prosperity of this Zion were originated during this decade. The watch care of the church over its members was emphasized. The old time laxness was condemned. The subject of temperance was agitated. Evangelistic preaching was endorsed and the cardinal doctrines of the gospels were given fresh setting. Mr. Humphrey showed himself to be a man of intense convictions. His methods were new to the parish, but they met with the hearty coöperation of his people.

Mr. Humphrey was a man of varied expedients. He sought to harvest men according to any method that suggested itself to his fertile mind. His book entitled, "Pastoral Sketches," gives interesting illustrations. We are told how he yearned for the conversion of a farmer parishioner. But the man avoided him. One day the pastor called and found the farmer cradling grain. The farmer fled from the field leaving his implement in the place of work. Mr. Humphrey, a farmer's son, took the cradle in hand, finished the job, and returned to

his home. When the farmer saw his task finished for him he was quickened into curiosity and admiration. He went to church next Sabbath. He became interested in religion. Ere long, as Mr. Humphrey expressed it, he "had cradled him into the church."

His zeal was quenchless and his ministry was an aggressive period in the history of the church. Meanwhile the currency of the country had depreciated. The salary which was given him proved inadequate to his support. A gratuity was voted him for one year. But his expenses outstripped his income. The fact troubled him. He made full and explicit explanation to the Society. He was a man whose abilities commanded a large salary. He felt it a duty to his family to provide for them the home and educational advantages that matched his position. He was therefore constrained by circumstances to seek a dissolution of the pastoral relation. Mr. Humphrey was the first pastor to make such request to the Fairfield Society. It pained both pastor and people. But Consociation being convened saw fit to dissolve the relation. Mr. Humphrey carried with him the love, esteem, and confidence of a united and loyal people. His eminent services through later years to the cause of religion and education as author, pastor, College president, are gratefully treasured by the people of this nation.

The Rev. Nathaniel Hewit, a graduate of Yale College, was his successor. And Fairfield needed a man of strength, determination, power. She had been accustomed to the services of eminent ministers. The congregation contained many college graduates and professional men. Statesmen, judges, lawyers, often made important part of the worshipers in the venerable sanctuary. Then the year was approaching when church and state were to be separate, and it required a well balanced mind and an energetic spirit to meet such emergency and shape the church life into fresh form of prosperity. Mr. Hewit was installed January 14, 1818. The previous year the "toleration party" had carried the state election. The sects were put on an equality in respect to taxation. In June, 1818, a state Convention was called for the purpose of framing a Constitution. The result was freedom of worship to all. No

person was henceforth to be compelled to join or support any religious body. A Congregational state church existed no longer. Mr. Hewit was nobly equipped as to body, mind and spirit. The people rallied to his support with unanimity and enthusiasm. He was the man to evoke such lively spirit. The Prime Ancient society did not lose any of its prestige or its authority when church and state were separated.

This was the period when the Sunday-School was organized. The children had not been neglected through the past generations. Saturday afternoon was often used as time for the catechising of the parish children by the pastor. Home instruction prepared them for this exercise, and we are persuaded that this meeting of pastor with the lambs of the flock was not without many pleasant and profitable features. But the Bible school was taking new form and Mr. Hewit was swift to see the advantages of the organization. Our first Sunday-School had Mr. Whittlesey for superintendent. A secretary kept the roll of members and recorded the transactions of the school. The pupils were divided into classes. Bible verses were recited to the teachers. There was catechism drill. The popular hymns of the age were repeated, not sung. And there was prayer at the beginning or the ending of the session. A part of the time the school was held in the morning at nine o'clock. A part of the time the school was held in the afternoon at the conclusion of the second service. A few years after the organization of the school the Sunday-School library was founded.

Not yet had the people enjoyed the luxury of carpets or cushions, while foot-stoves still continued to be indispensable to the comfort of worshipers.

The people that worshiped in the Congregational meeting-house were still taxed according to the former system, but this taxation was self-imposed, and that system was continued down to the year 1875. But the Congregationalism of our church was still passing through changes. First there had been the doing away with the Half-way covenant. Then there was the separation of church and state. Then on September 5, 1819, the church appointed for the first time, a Standing Committee on discipline. Although Fairfield church was always stren-

uous advocate of Consociationism, and had interpreted church polity in terms that approximated to the Puritan and Presbyterian form, yet church business had always been transacted in open meeting with equal privilege of discussion and investigation to all. This Standing Committee on discipline simply made report of their investigations. The church in full session then acted upon such report. This was a movement to transact business somewhat after the manner that the session of the Presbyterian church pursues. In 1823 the powers of this Standing Committee were enlarged. The examination of candidates who applied for admission to the church had been left to the pastor. It was now voted that the Standing Committee be joined with the pastor in this work. These changes proved so agreeable to the church that the largest confidence was finally reposed in this committee, so that it became an active watchful body of men, holding stated meetings, studying church interests, initiating church movements, managing church affairs. In fact the church was often called the Presbyterian church of Fairfield. For a period of many years various letters addressed to the church, and now preserved in the records, refer to this Presbyterian church. At this date there were one hundred and sixty-eight members of the church. Mr. Hewit speedily impressed his personality upon the congregation and community. Observant of the needs of his people, he labored indefatigably to the end that religion become a vital experience. It was voted in 1819 that "it is the duty of each male head of a family, being a member of the church, to observe family worship." The Standing Committee were requested to inquire into the matter. The church was zealous of good works. On December 30, 1822, it was voted that liberty be granted to any who may wish to erect a building on the society lot for the benefit of the church and society for conference and lectures. The old mid-week lecture was a part of the minister's task. It began to assume a less formal character and a part of the hour was given to the lay element of the church. Mr. Hewit drew to the church people who did not affiliate with Congregationalism. It had been voted in 1790 that "no person, unless he belong to the Rev. Andrew Eliot's meeting, shall have liberty to bid for any pew in the

meeting-house." But in 1823 it was voted "that any one, in future of any denomination, shall have the privilege to hire a pew in the meeting house." Such a vote was harmonious with the true spirit of Congregationalism. For liberty, affiliation, charity, union, are the symbolic words of this branch of Zion. Mr. Hewit's leadership was wise, vigorous, magnetic, imperial. The church was leavened by his personality. But his scope was not confined to church life. It was an era of reform. The approaching half century was to witness two great reform movements. Mr. Hewit was prime mover in the agitation of Temperance. Lyman Beecher, temperance preacher, and Nathaniel Hewit, temperance orator, are the great personal factors in the early history of this reform. Religion signified life in its entirety to these men. The devastations of intemperance were significantly recorded in the annals of church life. With a passion of eloquence that defies word painting, Mr. Hewit sought to awaken community and state and nation to the awful havoc and curse of drunkenness. Such task was a spontaneous expression of his sympathetic and affluent nature. Such task was part of his religion. The church was notably strengthened during his pastorate. But any numerical result is most inadequate measurement of his labors. The fresh impartation of earnest, faithful, Christian life was a contribution of his ministry. Breadth of vision, majesty of Christian ideal, exaltation of life's manifold activities and loyal participation in the solution of civil, social, educational, moral problems—these were also the contribution of Mr. Hewit's ministry. It did not occasion surprise that the American Temperance Society sought the aid of Mr. Hewit in the presentation and management of their important work. For ten years he had efficiently served Fairfield church and the Christian public of Connecticut. When he moved to Boston in the winter of 1827 our people gave him to this temperance mission with painful reluctance. And yet there was a kind of noble pride and magnanimous satisfaction on the part of this church, because they realized that through him they were taking memorable part in the enlightenment and enfranchisement of enslaved people.

During the five years that Mr. Hunter shepherded the flock—

1828-1834—there was healthful growth and normal activity. The distinctive labors of the pastor were somewhat narrowed by circumstances. Public business was transacted by the town without the interference of church or society. The schools which had been managed by the parish or the society, were separated from church control. The conventional tasks of the ministry fifty years ago had assumed the form in which we recognize them to-day. It was during this pastorate that several benevolent societies were chosen as beneficiaries of the church. It was voted that collections be made for the American Tract Society, American Home Missionary Society, Education Society, Sabbath-School Union, American Board, Seaman's Friend Society, and Bible Society. A change was also made in the ninth article of the Confession of Faith.

Mr. Hunter was described by Judge Sherman as a man of excellent ability and large attainments. Plain, blunt, straightforward speech was a prominent characteristic. He loved children and was loved by them. His many happy ministries to this portion of his flock is one of the pleasant remembrances of his pastorate. When Mr. Hunter resigned his charge the church and society urged him to continue his labors in Fairfield. But he was constrained to depart. He served a church in Springfield, Mass., for two years, and was installed pastor of the North Church of Bridgeport in 1839.

The Rev. Lyman Atwater succeeded Mr. Hunter. The church was now diminished in numbers for the fourth time by the withdrawal of an important part of our people for the purpose of forming the Southport church. The rapid development of that part of the town necessitated such a distribution of forces if Congregationalism was to retain its hold upon the community. This experience of separation incident to the life of our church has always evoked the sorrow of the mother: yet it has been a sorrow tempered by discreet submission, just pride, and undeviating affection. The mother rejoices in the noble record that the children have made. She gives them her benediction.

The Rev. Lyman Atwater was installed pastor of this church July 28, 1835. The circumstances under which Mr. Atwater preached many of his first sermons must have been somewhat

depressing, for we find a vote recorded that "Messrs. Roger M. Sherman, O. W. Jones, Henry A. Sturges and J. D. Zimmerman, be a committee for devising some plan for warming the meeting-house with less smoke and more comfort than has lately been experienced."

It is related that one of our people who attended divine service those days gave the community a fresh interpretation of a familiar quotation from Scripture. The soot from the stove-pipes had a way of filtering through the rusted joints and diffusing itself through the atmosphere. Sitting directly underneath the pipe this gentleman caught good measure of this subtle and pervasive soot filtration. Tradition says that as he tried to wipe the elusive substance from off his head and face and clothes, he quaintly remarked that he knew now what it was to sit under the droppings of the sanctuary.

When Mr. Atwater became pastor the salary was fixed at \$700. This was raised to \$800 five years later. The sexton received \$35 per year. And the music cost \$100. In 1845 Judge Roger M. Sherman died. A noble and devout Christian spirit as well as an eminent and distinguished statesman—he gave the people fresh evidence of his zeal for religion and his loyalty to the church by his munificent bequest to the society of parsonage, farm, and bank stock. We treasure his memory to-day and pay homage to his many virtues. And a company of faithful men and women share with him the grateful remembrances of our people. For many true hearts have given us substantial testimony of their affectionate allegiance to this church of Christ. When we sit together at the Lord's table the wine is poured from the tankards given by Mr. Sturges Lewis and Captain Thomas Hill. The cups which have been used through these centuries speak to us of Rev. Samuel Wakeman, 1692; Joseph Wakeman, 1723; Mrs. Eunice Wyncoop, (daughter of Judge Peter Burr), 1777; Mr. Jonathan Sturges and Captain John Silliman, 1754. The font which has been used in the baptism of some fifteen hundred people, was the gift of Dr. Lothrop in honor of Ellen Hobart Lothrop, 1780. Various bequests of land and money have also been made to the society.

It appears that the parish, as it prospered under Mr. At-

water's faithful ministry, felt the need of a new house of worship. Black Rock people had withdrawn from the parish in 1848. That community proposed to build a meeting-house and support a minister. It seemed imperative for the conserving of religious interests in that place. The mother-church bade the fifth daughter a God-speed in her mission of evangelization. And then it was that the native vigor and stalwart character of the Prime Ancient Society made fresh assertion of itself. This very year subscription papers were passed and eight thousand dollars were subscribed for the building of a meeting-house. A committee consisting of Jonathan Sturges, William S. Smith, John Gould Morehouse, Rufus Knapp, Charles Bennett, John Gould, Samuel Nichols, Judson Sturges, Lyman H. Atwater, George A. Phelps, was appointed to "remove present house of worship, to collect the subscriptions, and to build the new house on the old historic site." One of our people gives graphic description of the old house. "Lofty pulpit on the north end, square pews by the wall, with broad outer seats and high perpendicular backs, above which the heads of the younger children could not be seen unless they stood on the seat—double tier of windows, providing light and ventilation—a meeting-house, in fact, that was well covered and strong, but out of harmony with the modern tastes and needs." The new building, we worship in it to-day, was completed without debt.

Mr. Atwater was active, efficient, helpful, in the varied public labors that stretch through his pastorate. He was earnest in the agitation of temperance. He was cordial in his coöperation with the educators of the town. He was responsive to every enterprise that promised good fruitage to the community. He was sometimes called the pope of the parish, but one who writes concerning him tells us that his "rule was not one of authority but of convincing argument and a pure personal character." His influences diffused themselves through the commonwealth. The railroad was putting these shore and interior towns into close connection with each other and with New York. Life was assuming a suggestive expansiveness. There was the quickening of trade, the transporting of business interests to trade centers, the agitation of

abolitionism, the thorough discussion of local affairs like moving the Court House to Bridgeport. Mr. Atwater was abreast of the times. When there was share for him to take in these matters he fearlessly and successfully took his rightful part, and the church, loyal to such eminent leadership, did not fail to impress itself upon the thought, spirit, labor of the times. The fact is that Mr. Atwater revealed such intellectual force and broad manhood that Princeton College turned to him as fittest candidate for the chair of Mental and Moral Philosophy in that institution. He was elected to that position in 1854. This signified the painful repetition of those experiences which had marked the dissolution of the pastorates which belonged to this century's history, and yet this church had as a mitigating circumstance this fact of contributing such a rare and gifted man to the exalted office of instructor in a famous school of learning. We enjoy as legacy, to-day, the indestructible influences of these renowned and magnificent Christian workmen who have served this memorable parish through the ages.

Dr. Willis Lord, pastor of a Presbyterian church in Cincinnati, was an eloquent and beloved man. But his health had failed him so that he felt obliged to leave his large and important parish. Fairfield was accustomed to the services of such men. It occurred to our people that this field might prove agreeable to Dr. Lord. He was called to the pastorate in 1854. His ministry among this people was compressed into short period. For scarcely had he made himself acquainted with the needs and opportunities of the parish ere he recovered robust health, and therefore felt constrained to resume a larger work in the City of Brooklyn. Yet such brief service made its abiding impression.

Meanwhile the parish itself had been subjected to notable changes. Bridgeport was now the county seat. New York was absorbing our business men. Fairfield began to manifest the characteristics of the present time.

When the Rev. Alexander McLean, a graduate of Hamilton College and Union Seminary, was installed January 27, 1857, the parish was rich in precious traditions, happy memories, conservative tendencies, refined associations. There was an actual church membership of one hundred and fifty.

During the nine years of Mr. McLean's pastorate there were thirty-seven marriages, forty-seven baptisms, eighty-four funerals. Mr. McLean was invited to other fields during these nine years. He came to Fairfield like Dr. Humphrey, Dr. Hewit, Dr. Hunter and Dr. Atwater, fresh from the school of the Prophets. As he still works in full vigor and power as Secretary of the American Bible Society, it is not necessary to indicate his virtues and achievements. It was during his ministry that the Chapel was built. He was dismissed from this pastorate in 1866, that he might become pastor of a flourishing Presbyterian church in Buffalo.

The Rev. E. E. Rankin, D.D., succeeded Mr. McLean. Statistics of the parish and many interesting and valuable facts are preserved for us through the industry and research of this accurate and methodical scholar. His clear and beautiful penmanship suggests to us the precision, the carefulness, the fidelity of the man. He served God and this Zion with loyalty and affection. He baptized eighty people, officiated at forty-one weddings, and committed to the tomb one hundred and forty parishioners.

In 1878 the iron fence was placed about the church lawn. In 1872 Hope Chapel was built by the people of this parish and community. It still continues its service among the people in that part of the parish. Its Sunday-School numbers one hundred members. By the help of the mother-church a preacher—generally a student from Yale Divinity School—is supplied so that public worship is conducted every Sabbath through the year. Mr. Oliver B. Jennings was made deacon during this pastorate. In 1875 the church was decorated, stained-glass windows put in and the doors from the pews removed. The chapel was also decorated at the same time. The Memorial Library was founded in 1870. Dr. Rankin coöperated with the founders in the work. And when the centennial of the burning of Fairfield was commemorated in 1879, the historical discourse was delivered by Dr. Rankin. He was a man who incorporated the traditional spirit of private service and public activity peculiar to this parish. He resigned this charge in 1879, and departed this life July , 1889.

The Rev. George S. Burroughs, a graduate of Princeton

College, was installed March 9, 1880, and dismissed January 29, 1884. During his pastorate there were forty deaths among his people. He baptized nineteen persons, and officiated at eleven marriages. In 1880 Mr. Samuel Morehouse was chosen deacon. The church was well organized for work. It was while Mr. Burroughs was pastor that the reading of the creed on the administration of the Lord's Supper was omitted. The proceedings of the Church Committee, now for the first time, were put on record and preserved for future reference. There was a quickening of spiritual life, and the out-look was full of promise. But a large field gave Mr. Burroughs urgent call. The ample opportunity for systematic and effective labor among the masses in the city induced him to resign this charge. Mr. Burroughs removed to New Britain in 1884.

The Rev. John E. Bushnell, a graduate of Yale, was installed pastor July 30, 1884. His service repeated the term of his predecessor. In 1885 Mr. John B. Morehouse was made deacon. In 1885 the church parlors were constructed—testimony to the zeal and toil of Christian women. May, 1889, the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was organized. Mr. Bushnell baptized twenty-two persons and officiated at eleven marriages during his pastorate.

Mr. Bushnell resigned his pastorate in Fairfield in order to accept a call to the Presbyterian church of Rye. The pastoral relation was severed May 31, 1888. The present pastor began his ministry in Fairfield on November 15th, of the same year. The installation services occurred on December 12th.

Two hundred and fifty years is a long and significant period in American history. Fourteen pastors have made their contributions to the annals of this parish. These servants of Christ have officiated at 5,500 baptisms, 818 marriages, and about 3,858 funerals, according to the records. We have the names of twenty deacons who have held office in these generations. Five sanctuaries have been builded, a chapel in which to hold the sessions of the Sunday-School and the meetings for prayer and conference, and church parlors for the social gatherings of the people. The funds for the building of Hope Chapel were largely contributed by the members of this parish,

and this society has always held the title to that property. For seventy years the Sunday-School has flourished under the following successive Superintendents: Prof. Whittlesey, Mr. John Buckley, Deacon Bibbins, Deacon Bennett, Deacon Nichols, Deacon Samuel Morehouse, Mr. Morris Lyon, Deacon J. Madison Morehouse, (who served a term of twenty-five years), and W. H. Donaldson, M. D. Accessions to the church have come chiefly from the ranks of Sunday-School scholars. A lively spirit of beneficence has marked the history of this school. Its charities have been numerous and fruitful.

This church has always abounded in good works among the people. Among the various organizations that have shared the distribution of gifts the Ladies' Charitable Society has the pre-eminence. Its life stretches through three generations. Godly women founded it and conducted it with a zeal and industry that efficiently served the sick, the infirm, the helpless, the aged of the parish. The names associated with these beneficent ministries are very precious to our people.

The contributions which this church and society have made to the American Board, the Home Missionary Society, the Sunday-School Union, and the various benevolent associations of the country are many thousands of dollars. A generous coöperation with the aggressive work of the church universal has featured the course of this Zion.

The career of the church has been characterized by a dignified conservatism. Changes as they have been introduced were the result of wise and thorough deliberation. It has been the aim of this body to conform itself to the necessities of the times. When once such necessities were understood the people were equal to the occasion and adapted themselves to the circumstances. The history of our church music illustrates this mode of procedure. When the ancient psalmody had exhausted its usefulness the hymn book was introduced. As the man with the tuning fork needed the immediate support of a small number of singers it was voted that any who wish to aid him in the conduct of the music might sit with him in the front part of the meeting-house. This was the nucleus of a choir. The next change signified the use of musical instruments. Then came the new collections of sacred

music. New England passed through a musical revival. The choir was now located in the gallery. A salary of \$50 was paid the chorister. Time passes and the new pipe organ is introduced with the building of this present structure in 1849-50. And the same course has been pursued when other changes were suggested. The form of church service has been gradually modified and elaborated until it has taken the present order; an order, however, which is the outgrowth of the severe simplicity which marks the original form of two hundred and fifty years ago.

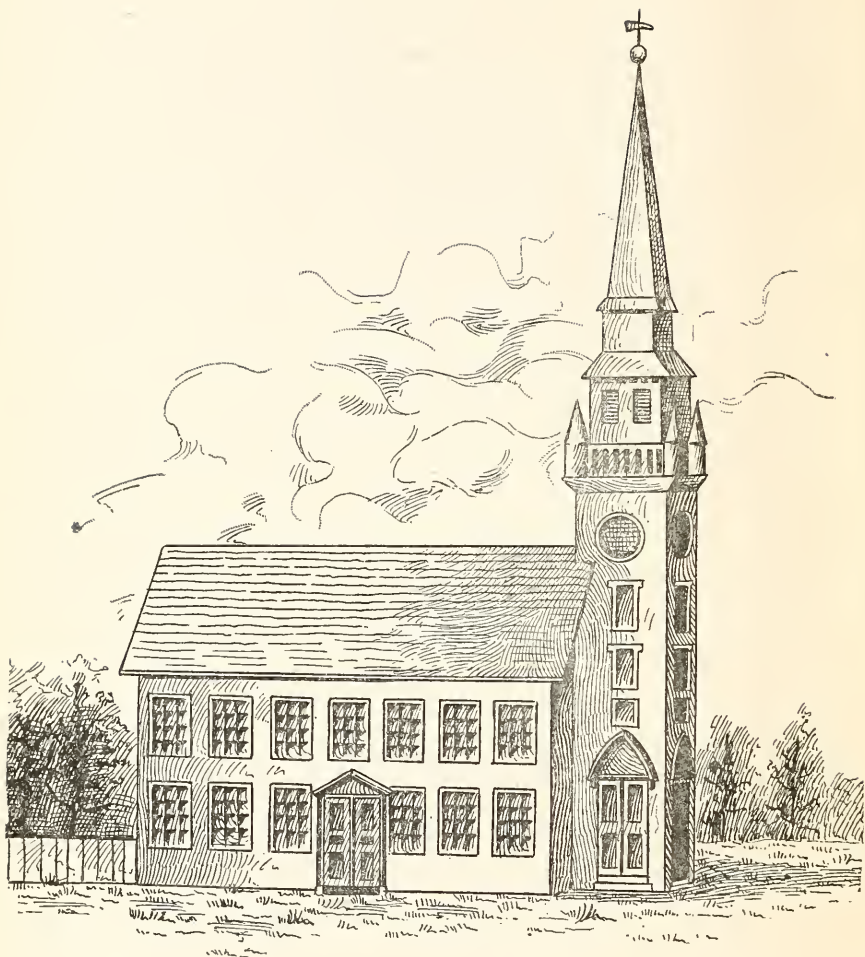
In respect to polity this church has favored the Puritan model. And its stalwart defence of such method has quickened many of our sister churches into fresh support of the system. The weakness and isolation of bald independency have always been well measured by this body. At the same time there has never existed any purpose to press Consociationism to the extreme of the Presbyterian polity. Moderation has been the object of pastor and people, and this church has striven industriously to preserve the benefits of independency, and at the same time enjoy the advantages of the consociated council.

The doctrinal position of this church has been consistently orthodox. The changes which it has made in its simple creed have been few. Its ministers have been men whose soundness of faith was never questioned. The distinctness and the candour and the fervour with which they have enunciated the truth has given a tone and impulse to the life of the community that cannot be computed to-day. The whole counsel of God has been declared by these men with such learning, eloquence, and unction, that we find no record of heresy, contest or schism.

Loyalty to the Great Head of the Church is traced through this quarter of a millennium. It is rare testimony to the character of a parish as well as the character of its ministers when it is recorded that peace, harmony, prosperity, have been continuous. "One in Christ." Whatever differences of opinion or antagonisms of method or variations of spirit may have manifested themselves—wise, charitable and satisfactory adjustment has been the issue. Significant tribute to the loyalty of this church is the company of Christian missionaries and

ministers born or bred in the parish. Two sons of the first pastor became preachers of the gospel, John and Eliphalet. A son of Mr. Webb, the third pastor, and Jabez Wakeman, grandson of the second pastor, became ministers. One son of Andrew Eliot, the fifth pastor, two sons of Dr. Humphrey, the sixth pastor, one son of Dr. Hewit, the seventh pastor, one son of Dr. Atwater, the ninth pastor, and one son of Dr. Rankin, the eleventh pastor, have served in the ministry. Aaron Burr, President of Princeton College; John Read, Richard Woodhull, Jonathan Rowland, Oliver Dimond, Isaac Ely, Edward Allen, Benjamin Parsons, and E. P. Rogers, belong, also, to this noble company of Christian preachers. Twenty servants represent the parish as preachers of the gospel. But the loyal spirit of this Zion has communicated its holy impulse to many noble men and saintly women, who have served the Master in the varied spheres of activity. Christian lawyers, scholars, judges, teachers, physicians, merchants, authors, statesmen, generals, magistrates, congressmen, governors, gentlemen—a host eminent, honorable, magnificent—they have interpreted to the nation truth, manhood, Christianity, as first taught them in the Fairfield parish. Who can define such a church's manifold relations to the life of individual, community, state, nation. Christian influences and impulses begotten, cherished, determined, by the church operating through thousands upon thousands of personalities, so that art, science, theology, reform, literature, statecraft, pay tribute to this Zion!

Thanks be unto God, whose Spirit has brooded this people. Such Christian achievement is triumphant testimony to the realness of our Holy Faith. Let us translate this history message into vigorous terms of incentive and inspiration. The past presses us into fresh enterprise, renewed consecration, weariless devotion.



Congregational Church, Fairfield, Conn.

Built 1747. Burned by the British 1779.

RECORD OF GIFTS TO THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY.

[Copied by Miss Hannah Hobart.]

Numerous grants of land have been made by the town to the pastors for their support, and to the church for the building of meeting houses. These gifts are recorded in the Town Clerk's office, and a copy of such record is held by the Society.

Gifts to the church and society, by will, are as follows:

THE GIFT OF REV. MR. SAMUELL WAKEMAN.

March 8, 1692. I give to the Church Treasury of Fairfield three pounds in money, to be paid to Capt. John Burr within one year after my death; by him to be laid out upon a silver bowl for the Church's use; dated 8th March, 1692.

Witnesses, Signed, SAMUELL WAKEMAN.

NATHAN GOLD, SENR.,

NATHAN GOLD, JUNR.

THE GIFT OF MR. JOSEPH WAKEMAN, SENR., OF FAIRFIELD, SON OF REV. SAMUELL WAKEMAN.

Dec. 3, 1726. ITEM. I will and bequeath to the Church of Christ in Fairfield whereof the Rev. Mr. Webb is Pastor; the sum of three pounds to purchase a silver tumbler for the Church's use.

Dated Dec. 3, 1726. Signed, JOSEPH WAKEMAN.

Witnesses,

NATHANIEL BURR,

STEPHEN WAKEMAN,

SAMUEL COOK.

Probate Court, Jan. 4, 1727.

THE GIFT OF MR. ANTHONY NONGUIER, OF FAIRFIELD.

Oct. 7, 1740. ITEM. To the Rev. Mr. Noah Hobart, the present minister in the Prime Society, in said Fairfield, and

to his successors in the ministry there of the same persuasion: Towards him and their support forever I will bequeath and demise the use and profits of two hundred pounds money, the said principal sum of two hundred to be paid to the committee of said Society for the use aforesaid after my wife's decease, 7th Oct., 1740.

Signed, ANTHONY NONGUIER, [SEAL.]

Witnesses,

STEPHEN JENNINGS,

JOSEPH JENNINGS,

SAMUEL COOKE.

Probate, Nov. 6, 1740.

THE GIFT OF MR. STURGES LEWIS, OF FAIRFIELD.

Aug. 13, A. D. 1753. ITEM. I give and bequeath to the Church of Christ in the first Society in Fairfield of whom the Rev. Mr. Noah Hobart is Pastor, a silver tankard of thirty-three ounces wt., to be procured by my executor; I constitute and appoint my Hon: Father Lothrop Lewis my executor.

Dated Aug. 13, 1753.

Witnesses, Signed, STURGES LEWIS, [SEAL.]

THADEUS BURR,

LYMAN HALL,

GIDEON WELLS.

Probate, Sept. 11, 1753.

THE GIFT OF MR. THADDEUS BURR.

Mar. 20, A. D. 1755. ITEM. I give to the Church of Christ in Fairfield, of which the Rev. Mr. Noah Hobart is now pastor, the sum of ten pounds, New York money, to be used and improved for the maintenance and support of the Gospel ministry in said Church forever.

Dated 20th March, 1755.

Signed. THADDEUS BURR, [SEAL.]

Witnesses,

STEPHEN JENNINGS,

JOHNATHAN LEWIS,

THOMAS HILL, JUNR.

Probate, April 7, 1755.

THE GIFT OF MISS SARAH SLOSS.

Sept. 7, A. D. 1756. ITEM. I give to the first Religious Society in Fairfield, the sum of twenty pounds, lawful money, to be laid out in Books, at the discretion of the Rev. Mr. Noah Hobart, the present minister of said Society for the use and benefit of the minister of said Society for the time being, and that the Books may be carefully preserved; my will is that they be under the care and inspection of the minister and Deacons of the Church in said Society, and the Justices of the Peace, who shall be in full communion with said Church, and liable to such orders and regulations as they or the major part of them shall from time to time agree upon.

Dated Sept. 7, 1756.

Signed, SARAH SLOSS, [SEAL.]

Witnesses,

MOSES DICKINSON,

SAMUELL SHERWOOD, JUNR.,

ASA SPALDING.

Probate, Nov. 9, 1756.

THE GIFT OF CAPT. JOHN SILLIMAN.

Jan. 28, 1752. ITEM. I give and bequeath unto the Presbyterian Church of Christ in the first Society in Fairfield, the sum of one hundred pounds money. Old Tenor, or Equivalent to the present value thereof in other money, to be paid by my executors to the Deacons of said Church, and by them to be deposited into the stock of said Church, and the use and interest thereof to be and inure to the benefit of said Church forever.

Also, I give unto the Church aforesaid, my largest silver cup, to be received by said Church after my wife's decease.

Dated 28th Jan., 1752.

Signed, JOHN SILLIMAN, [SEAL.]

Witnesses,

JOHN OSBORN,

THOMAS FITCH, JUNR.,

JOHN COOKE.

Probate, Dec. 5, 1752.

THE GIFT OF COL. JAMES SMEDLEY.

Sept. 15, A. D, 1756. ITEM. I give and bequeath unto the Ecclesiastical Society in the first or Prime Society in Fairfield, as established by law; the sum of twenty pounds, lawful money, to be improved for the support of the ministry of said Society.

Dated Sept. 15, 1766.

Signed, JAMES SMEDLEY, [SEAL.]

Witnesses,

STEPHEN JENNINGS,
SETH STURGES,
JOHNATHAN STURGES.

Probate, Nov. 19, 1771.

THE GIFT OF MISS REBECCA DOWNS.

1799. ITEM. I give and bequeath to the first Presbyterian Society in the Town of Fairfield, whereof the Rev. Andrew Eliot is minister; to be and remain for the use and benefit of said Society forever, and the same to be and lye as a fund for said Society forever; and the annual interest or avails thereof so to be used to defray the annual expense for the support of the Gospel Ministry in said Society.

And my will is that in case my friend Jesse Wheeler shall be minded to purchase the premises of said Society, to be his own after the death of my friend Bethuel Ogden, that then, and in that case said Society may have the liberty to sell and convey the same by their deed unto him the said Jesse Wheeler, and to his heirs and assigns forever. Provided he pays or secure to be paid to the satisfaction of said Society so much thereof and in consideration thereof as he and said Society shall agree; and, provided always said Society keep said money the premises may sell for in Bank; and as, and for a fund for the purposes aforesaid.

A. D. 1799.

Signed, REBECCA DOWNS, [SEAL.]

Witnesses,

THOMAS WHEELER,
ELDAD GOULD,
DAVID ALLEN.

Probate, June 3, 1799.

Book, 1798-1801, p. 346, 347.

DEED OF MISS DOWNS' GIFT.

SALE OF MISS DOWNS' GIFT. Whereas, We the subscribers were by the inhabitants of the first Presbyterian Society in Fairfield, legally assembled on the 12th of March, 1821, appointed a committee to sell and convey unto Jesse Wheeler, of Fairfield, in Fairfield, a certain tract of land and buildings thereon, in said Fairfield, given and devised unto said Society in the last will and testament of Rebecca Downs, late of said Fairfield dec: deposited and Recorded in the Probate Office for the district of Fairfield may more fully appear—Therefore, now,

Know ye, that we the said committee, for the consideration of seven hundred dollars, received to our full satisfaction of Jesse Wheeler of said Fairfield, the person authorized to purchase the premises as mentioned in said will, do by virtue of power derived from our said appointment remise, release and forever quit claim unto the said Wheeler, his heirs and assigns forever: all right and title of the said Society to the aforesaid mentioned premises; consisting of three separate pieces of land, the whole quantity being about twenty-four acres, one rood, and seven rods of ground, with all the buildings thereon standing.

“One piece is bounded northerly by river, easterly by Jonathan Wilsons' land, southerly by highway, and westerly in part by said Wheeler's land and in part by Bethuel Ogden's dec: land with the dwelling house and barn thereon standing.

“One other piece is bounded northerly and easterly by highway, southerly by Abel Jennings in part, and in part by Grissel Jennings, and in part by said Jesse Wheeler's land, and westerly by said Jesse Wheeler's;

“And the other piece is bounded northerly by highway, easterly by Ebenezer Knap's wife's land in part, and in part by highway, southerly by the estate of Bethuel Ogden dec: and westerly by Jonathan Wilson's.

To have and to hold the above quit claimed premises unto the said Jesse Wheeler, his heirs and assigns for his and their own proper use, benefit, and behoof, without any the least claim or demand by the said Society on the premises.

In testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this 31st day of March, 1821.

ELEN OSBORN, [SEAL.]

JOHN HULL, [SEAL.]

JESUP WAKEMAN, [SEAL.]

Witnesses,

SETH PERRY, [SEAL.]

ELIPHALET LYON, JUNR.,

SAMUELL ROWLAND.

Received to Record March 31, 1821.

Recorded by Samuell Rowland, Regr.

Book 37; page 489.

THE GIFT OF HON. ROGER M. SHERMAN, AND MRS. ELIZABETH SHERMAN,
WIDOW OF HON. ROGER M. SHERMAN.—THE WILL OF MRS. SHERMAN.

July 3, 1848. ITEM. I give and bequeath all my books except law books to the First Ecclesiastical Society in Fairfield, for the use of the minister's Library, and never to be sold or exchanged. The names of these books are

Edinburgh Encyclopedia.

Webster's large Dictionary, in two volumes.

Beza's Greek Testament.

Scott's family Bible, in five volumes, quarto.

Cruden's Concordance.

The works of Robert Hall, in two volumes.

The sermons of Dwight, Chalmers, Saurin, Burcier, Davis, and all other sermons and treatises on Theology.

Also Hume's History of England, and the continuation of said History in twelve volumes, lettered on the back Hume's England.

The Life and Writings of John Jay.

“ Crabb's Synonimes.

“ Says' Political Economy.

“ Bostackk's Physiology.

“ Good's Book of Nature.

“ Olmsted's Philosophy. In two volumes.

“ Murray's Grammar, octave.

“ Spanish and French Dictionary, and

“ Spanish Grammar.

The One Greek Lexicon.

“ Alexander’s Roman Antiquities.

“ Barber’s Historical collections for Connecticut.

“ Massachusetts and New York, and

“ Duffie’s Nature displayed): to the First Ecclesiastical Society in Fairfield. The said books to be always kept in said Library.

ITEM. I give and devise my homestead, bounded southeasterly on the main street in Fairfield on land of Mrs. Knap, and on land formerly belonging to William Dimon, now deceased, southwesterly on highway and on land formerly belonging to said Dimon, and on land of Abraham Gould Jennings, northwesterly on highway and land of said Jennings, northeasterly on land of William S. Smith, together with the dwelling house and all other buildings on said homestead, except the Yellow Barn, so called; and I also give the double windows and Russian lights, the Venetian blinds, all the fire grates and stoves set or used; the large metallic clock, and all the carpets and matings and rugs on the floors in the lower rooms and in use at my decease. The stair carpets and rods thereto belonging, and the carpet on the upper front entry; and no other carpets or matting, and all the oil cloths which may be on the floors and in use at the time of my decease, To the first Ecclesiastical Society in said Fairfield in trust for the personal use, habitation and occupation of the minister of said Society while statedly ministering therein shall have right freely to inhabit occupy and enjoy the said homestead and property without making any allowance or compensation therefor directly or indirectly, and shall have full right while so ministering in said Society to enter upon and use the premises without license or molestation.

The said homestead contains about eight acres.

I also give and bequeath to said Society Fifty shares of stock in the Bridgeport Bank, in trust, to apply the dividends thereon and the income thereof to the keeping of the buildings and fences on the said homestead in good order and repair, and whenever said dividends or income shall be more than is necessary for that purpose the overplus may be appropriated to purchasing carpets for the front rooms of the dwelling

house should new carpets be necessary or expedient; and whatever of said income or dividends shall be more than is wanted for either of the said purposes shall be safely kept or invested on good security to be used and applied for those purposes, and for no other, whenever the same may be necessary or expedient.

The said Fifty shares may be sold and invested in other stocks or securities if the condition of said Bridgeport Bank shall become insecure or doubtful.

The barn nearest the main street must not be sold or removed from said homestead.

The other barn may be removed or sold at the discretion of said Society, and the net proceeds shall in such case be appropriated in the same manner as the dividends and profits of said Bridgeport Bank are directed to be applied.

I constitute and appoint Dea: Charles Bennett; and Dea: Samuel A. Nichols, both of Fairfield; and Nehemiah Alvord, of Southport, in said Fairfield, executors of this my last will and testament.

The portraits of my late husband and myself, made by Mr. Nathaniel Jocelyn shall not be sold but remain in the house where they now are, and are not included in any gift heretofore made.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal at Bridgeport on the 3d day of July, A. D. 1848.

ELIZABETH SHERMAN, [SEAL.]

Witnesses,

HANFORD LYON,

IRA SHERMAN,

GEORGE BURROUGHS.

In Judge Sherman's inventory the homestead is appraised at \$8,000.

DISTRIBUTION.

To the First Ecclesiastical Society of Fairfield the house and homestead where said Elizabeth Sherman last lived and died, bounded northerly by the homestead of William S. Smith, southeasterly by the highway, southwesterly by the homestead of James Dimon in part, and in part by highway, and

in part by the homestead of A. G. Jennings, northwesterly by the homestead of A. G. Jennings in part and part by highway.
Fairfield, August 21, 1849.

ALBERT OSBORN,
DAVID WAKELEY,
Distributors under oath.

Among the numerous charities of Judge Roger M. Sherman was a gift of five thousand dollars, the interest of which was to go toward the support of the insane of the parish.

FAIRFIELD "CHARITABLE SOCIETY."

THE ladies of Fairfield, including Black Rock, on the first Thursday of June, 1815, met at the residence of Mrs. David Hull to organize a society to be called "The Fairfield Charitable Society," the object of which as mentioned in Rule 1st, "Shall be, to afford to the poor, relief in any way that their situation may require." Then follow eleven rules and regulations, ending with the 12th, "If any of the managers absent themselves unnecessarily more than one hour after the time appointed for meeting, they must pay to the treasurer six cents." A few items in regard to the industry of the ladies of that period may not be out of place here.

NAMES OF SUBSCRIBERS.

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Mary S. Dimon, | Cynthia Knapp, |
| Elizabeth Sherman, | Grizzel Benson, |
| Priscilla Ely, | A. Jarvis, |
| Susannah Hull, | Sophia Humphrey, |
| Elizabeth Hull, | Sally Rowland, |
| Elizabeth Burr, | Mahetable Burr, |
| Susan Eliot, | Ellen Wakely, |
| Mary Hobart, | Abigail E. Sturges, |
| Esther Judson, | Eleanor Carson, |
| Anna Beers, | Catharine Gould, |
| Elizabeth Miller, | Catharine Wakeman, |
| Deborah Sturges, | Sarah Hubbell, |
| Eunice Woodhull, | Anna Brewster, |
| Sarah Osborn, | Sarah Brewster, |
| Ellen Lewis, | Sally Trubee, |
| Abigail Nichols, | Wilsana Nichols, |
| Sally Wetmore, | Hannah Nichols, |
| Sarah Ann Burr, | Mary Joy, |
| Laura A Smith, | Mrs. Thomas Bartram, |

Mary Fowler,
Elizabeth Allen,
Charlotte Sturges,

Elizabeth Sturges,
Eunice Wakeman,
Sally Allen.

At the meeting at Mrs. Heman Humphrey's, the first Wednesday afternoon of July, 1815, twenty-nine garments were made. At Mrs. Fowler's, the first Wednesday in August, eighteen garments were made. At Mrs. Ebenezer Dimon's, the first Wednesday in September, two bedquilts were prepared for quilting. At Mrs. Gershom Burr's, the first Tuesday in October, two bedquilts were quilted. At Mrs. Samuel Rowland's, the first Wednesday in November, fourteen garments were made, and four pairs of stockings fitted. At Mrs. David Ely's, the first Wednesday in December, eight garments were made. At Mrs. Col. David Burr's, the first Wednesday in January, 1816, ten garments were made. At Mrs. Ellen Lewis', the first Wednesday in February, one bedquilt was quilted, three petticoats, and six garments for boys were made, and three pairs of stockings mended. At Mrs. David Hull's, the first Wednesday in March, a shawl was quilted, five caps, one pair of stockings, one vest, one frock, and one apron were made. At Mrs. Judge Sturges, the first Wednesday in April, made and mended fifteen garments. At Mrs. Sally Osborn's, the first Wednesday in May, seventeen garments were made. From hints, now and then, in the different Secretaries' reports the Society maintained the usual reputation of ladies' gatherings. In Miss Abby Dimon's report of one of the 1829 meetings is the following: "Met at Mrs. A. G. Jennings' in September, few members present; little work, much conversation."

The late Judge R. M. Sherman left by will the sum of \$100 for the use of the Society—which has been kept in the Southport Savings Bank—the interest being added to other moneys for the benefit of the few needy persons in this community. The Society has known no race, color, or sectarianism since its organization, and has many times caused the heart of the widow and fatherless to sing for joy. While not as large in numbers, or attended with the enthusiasm of former years, it still has an existence and the design and wish of its founders is carried out in many acts of true benevolence by their descendants.

“RECORD OF THE FEMALE PRAYER MEETING OF FAIRFIELD.”

THIS Society was formed at the house of Rev. Nathaniel Hewit, the first Saturday evening in March, 1821. Members present at that time :

Mrs. Sarah Allen,
Mrs. Elizabeth Burr,
Mrs. Sarah Hewit,
Miss Mary Hobart,
“ Hannah Hobart,
Mrs. Rebecca Hewit,
Mrs. Anna Jennings,
Mrs. Mary Joy,
Mrs. Cynthia Knapp.

Miss Eliza Knapp,
Mrs. Wilsana Nichols,
Miss Sally Patchin,
Mrs. Esther White,
Miss Lucinda Allen,
“ Lydia Chatterton,
“ Susan Eliot,
“ Sarah White.

“The regulations to be observed in said Society are as follows”:

ARTICLE 1st. No persons shall be admitted members of this Society unless they will pray in their turn.

2d. No remarks ever to be made with regard to the performance of any member while present, or after they return home.

3d. No persons shall be invited in occasionally, unless they will close the meeting with prayer.

4th. No reading but the Scriptures shall be admitted.

Any person who will subscribe to these Articles, shall be considered a member of this Society, and shall not be called upon to take a part in the meeting until they have attended four evenings.

The Society observed the last Saturday of March, 1824, as a day of fasting and prayer. Met at the house of Mrs. Esther White, morning, afternoon and evening. In the afternoon the children belonging were present with their parents and guardians.

The fourth day of April, 1828, being the public Fast, was observed as a season of special prayer by the Society. Assembled at eight o'clock in the morning, with their children, at the house of Rev. Nathaniel Hewit. At noon met again at the same place by themselves.

One day will be appointed annually, the first week in March, for a season of fasting and prayer.

Have met at Miss Sarah White's, excepting one year, to the present time, which is sixteen years—1840.

The members are called alphabetically to pray; the evening following will take their turn to read the Scriptures and hymns.

Those names that have a star affixed have died since they joined the Society.

Mrs. Elizabeth Allen,*

“ Sarah Allen,*

“ Ann Atwood,*

Miss Lucinda Allen,*

“ Maria Allen,*

Mrs. Elizabeth Burr,*

“ Eliza Burr,*

“ Abigail Belden,*

“ Polly Bennett,*

“ Ellen Bennett,*

Miss Sarah Bulkley,*

“ Lydia Chatterton,*

“ Susan Eliot,*

Mrs. Sarah Hewit,*

“ Rebecca Hewit,*

“ Susan Hull,*

Miss Mary Hobart,*

“ Hannah Hobart,*

“ Eliza Hull,*

“ Susan Hull,*

Mrs. Anne Jennings,*

“ Mary Joy,*

Miss Lois Jennings,*

“ Eliza Jennings,*

Mrs. Cynthia Knapp,*

Mrs. Harriet Hoyt,*

“ Mary Meeker,*

“ Wilsana Nichols,*

“ Rutha Nash,*

Miss Eliza Knapp,*

“ Mary Ann Knox,*

Mrs. Lucia Lee,*

“ Caroline Dodge,*

Miss Emily Mallory,*

“ Sarah Ann Mallory,*

“ M. A. Leavenworth,*

“ Sally Patchen,*

“ Lucy Smith,*

“ Mary Ann Squire,*

Miss Priscilla Sturges,*

Mrs. Esther White,*

Miss Sarah White,

Mrs. Martha Trubee,*

“ Elizabeth Trubee,*

Miss Eunice Turney,*

“ Janette Hayes,*

“ Catherine Smedley,*

“ Nancy Smedley,*

“ Dinah Maltbee.*

“ Catherine Hunter,*

Colored.

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Miss Susan Osborne,* | Mrs. Mary L. Skinner,* |
| “ Phebe Osborne,* | “ Abby Lewis,* |
| Mrs. Julia Ann Hunter, | “ Elizabeth Sturges,* |
| “ Mary Dimon,* | “ E. H. Osborne,* |
| “ Sarah Rowland,* | Miss Abby B. Nichols, |
| Miss Mary P. Joy, | “ Anna P. Nichols,* |
| “ Mary Mills,* | “ Jane A. Nichols, |
| “ Mary Ann Jennings, | “ Mary S. Skinner, |
| “ Abby Dimon,* | “ Eliza D. Skinner,* |
| Mrs. Susan Atwater,* | “ Harriet H. Burr, |
| “ Lydia Holbrooke,* | “ Eleanor B. Lyon, |
| Miss Esther G. Judson,* | “ Julia B. Nichols,* |
| Mrs. Euretta Denison,* | Mrs. Caroline Knapp.* |
| Miss A. T. Allen, | |

Mrs. Rebecca Hillhouse Hewit, by whose influence this Society was formed, removed from Fairfield to Andover, May 2, 1829, where she resided until Rev. Dr. Hewit received a call to settle over the new church (Second Congregational) in Bridgeport, Conn. She, with her children, returned to that place October 21, 1830. A few weeks after their arrival she was taken sick with what proved to be consumption. Her faith, patience, and resignation during her illness was an evidence of the Christian character she had sustained from an early period of her life. She became a subject of grace, and made her solemn engagement to be a follower of Christ at the age of fourteen. Mrs. Hewit departed this life January 4, 1831.

Mrs. Hewit was superintendent of this Society eight years, from 1821 to 1829.

Mrs. Mary Joy was appointed to succeed Mrs. Hewit, and held the office the same length of time, (eight years). Mrs. Susan Atwater, wife of Rev. Lyman H. Atwater, was Mrs. Joy's successor, and held the office until her removal to Princeton, New Jersey.

The meetings were continued every Saturday evening until 1860 or 1861—usually at the residence of Miss Sarah White.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LADY OF FOUR SCORE YEARS.

THE Sabbath-School was started, I think, in 1818, by Miss Eunice Seeley teaching one class in the winter. I was one of her scholars. There was no stove in the church. We sat there shivering in the cold. The next season Mrs. Hewit persuaded Miss Allen and Miss Eveline Dimond to take a class. I do not remember when the school was taught the year round. I think it was after Mr. Hewit's day. It was sometime before we had any library books. Passages of Scripture were given us to learn. It was some time after Dr. Atwater came before we had many books. Judge Roger M. Sherman would frequently come in and address the school. His heart was so full he would most invariably weep and draw tears from other's eyes.

It was at this time the Friday evening prayer meeting was organized, which met weekly around in the houses of members of the church. It was during Dr. Humphrey's pastorate typhus fever prevailed. Many died. Some families lost two and three. Physicians complained that there was great lack of linen for changes. Very many were poor. They had not recovered from the loss caused by the burning of the town. It was at this time the Charitable Society was organized, I think by Mrs. Humphrey and Mrs. Deacon Judson. Quite a large number of ladies met at the hotel. Mrs. Knapp entertained them. Fifty cents yearly entitled them to membership. Thirteen ladies who were willing to entertain and attend monthly, were set down as working members. All were to look after the poor and sick in their neighborhood.

Mrs. Judson's house was the depository of clothing, bedding, etc., for the sick. There were no wagons in those days. People came to church on horseback. I have counted three and four on a horse.

The darkest picture was intemperance. No one thought

intemperance a reproach to a minister, or church member, until Dr. Hewit came. On the first communion service at which he presided he took an oath that he never would take any alcoholic drink when he called on the people.

A revival followed the organization of a Temperance Society under Dr. Hewit. Early after his settlement Mrs. Hewit desired all the ladies in the parish to come to her house to have a day of fasting and prayer. She stated her wish to organize a prayer meeting; no one to join but such as were willing to take a part in alphabetical order. Names were set down who were willing to subscribe to her rule. Yearly they met at her home to fast and pray. After Dr. Hewit left there was no settled preacher for a while. Sereno Dwight preached a little while, and quite a number of old persons came into the church.

Mr. John Bulkley was superintendent of the Sunday-School. He mourned because so few of the teachers were professors. He called the teachers' meeting one evening, had prayers, and among the teachers and scholars thirty were added to the church. After Mr. Sereno Dwight, Mr. Andrews, from Danbury, preached. Many liked him. The evening meetings increased so that the Academy could not hold them. Some thought he was not orthodox. After Mr. Andrews Mr. Hunter came.

The first stove in the church was a large box-stove. For the first winter it was placed upon legs six feet from the floor. It was very uncomfortable and hot in the gallery and cold on the floor. The next winter it was lowered to a platform near the floor. The people would gather around it at noontime and fill their foot-stoves with the coals.

EXTRACTS FROM TOWN RECORDS AND HISTORICAL NOTES.

THE First Church of England, called Trinity Church, was organized in 1725.

At a Town Meeting July 27, 1738, it was voted to give the members of the Church of England to erect a House of Public worship on the highway near the Old Field Gate. Passed in the affirmative.

Voted, Whether the members for erecting the church shall extend the same thirty-eight feet northwesterly from Lient. Jonathan Sturges, and no further. Passed in the affirmative.

Voted, That Thomas Hill, Samuel Rowland, and Thad: Burr, shall be a committee for measuring out the place for erecting said church according to the aforesaid vote.

Rev. Henry Caner was the first clergyman. Rev. Joseph Lampson was the second clergyman. Rev. James Sayre was the third clergyman.

Rev. Philo Shelton ordained Deacon in 1775, and consecrated a priest in 1790, was the fourth clergyman.

Trinity Church removed to Southport in 18—, their edifice being erected this same year.

St. Paul's Church was organized on April 16, 1853. It has been served by the following Rectors ;

Rev. C. S. Leffingwell.

Rev. Levi B. Stimson.

Rev. Frederick S. Hyde.

Rev. Andrew Mackin.

Rev. James K. Lombard.

Rev. W. Strother Jones.

THE LAWS PASSED ABOUT TORIES.

Town Meeting April 10, 1783. The inhabitants being called principally for the purpose of considering what meas-

ures they would wish to have taken with respect to those persons who during the war between Great Britain and America, have gone to and joined the enemy and put themselves under their protection.

The question was put whether this meeting is willing that any of those persons who have gone to and joined the enemy, and put themselves under their protection as aforesaid, should be permitted to return and reside in this Town.

Passed in the negative.

Voted, That a committee be appointed to remove all such persons from this Town who are now in it, or who may hereafter come in to it, who have gone over and joined the enemy and put themselves under their protection during the war between Great Britain and the United States of America.

Also, voted, That David Allen, Daniel Osborn, Capt. Thomas Nash, Albert Sherwood, Daniel Lacey, Daniel Wilson, Capt. Joseph Bennett, Moses Sherwood, Nathan Seely, Ezra Seely, Hezekiah Hubbell, Esqr., Nehemiah Banks, Col. Jonathan Dimon, Dudley Baldwin, Esqr., Ebenezer Banks, Capt. Benjamin Dean, John Squier, 3d, Joseph Smith, Daniel Andrews, Junr., Capt. Ephraim Lyon, Zebulon Fanton, Nathaniel Seely, 3d, David Silliman, Nathan Wheeler, Junr., Samuel Wakeman, Esqr., Samuel Bennett, 3d, Robert Wilson and Peter Perry, be a committee for the purpose aforesaid.

March 18, 1781. Put to vote if the inhabitants of this Town are willing that the assessment of \$10 laid on those men who have sons gone over to the enemies of the United States shall be abated.

Passed in the negative.

THE COURTS IN FAIRFIELD.

Court of Elections in Hartford, 14th Jan., 1640. The first Court held in Fairfield was by an order from the Court of Elections in Hartford, 14th Jan: 1640, Mr. William Hopkins, of Stratford, was appointed Commissioner to join with Mr. Ludlow in all Executions in their Particular Court or otherwise, and was sworn for that purpose.

Court of Elections in Hartford 13th April, 1643. Ordered that one or two Magistrates shall be sent to Fairfield to join

with Mr. Ludlow in the execution of Justice twice this year, viz. The last Thursday in April, and the last in September. Captain Mason and Mr. Wells are appointed for the last of April.

A Special Court called by the Gov: at Hartford 29th Oct: 1653. Mr. Ludlow, Mr. Wells, Mr. Westwood and Mr. Hull are desired to keep a Particular Court at Fairfield, before winter, to execute Justice as cause will require.

Oct. 9, 1662. At the General Assembly or Court of Election at Hartford, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Gould, Mr. Sherman, were appointed to keep a Court at Fairfield when they see cause for controversies. Stamford, Greenwich, Westchester, have liberty to improve the help of the Court at Fairfield to issue controversies that may arise among them.

THE FIRST PRISON.

Feb. 16, 1679. The Town hath granted a small piece of land upon the green to build a prison upon with a dwelling house thereon. Also a garden plot and a yard plot. To be for place and quantity as the present Townsmen shall lay who are so impowered to do.

April 4, 1768. This Prison was burned by Isaac Frazer, who was hung for the crime.

John Camp, keeper of the Jail that was burned in Fairfield in 1768 by Isaac Frazer, petitioned to the General Assembly for relief. The house in which he lived was burned, with the greatest part of his household furniture, and, also, wearing apparel were consumed and the memorialist reduced to the utmost poverty. The Hon: Assembly granted him the sum of thirty pounds, to be paid out of the Colony Treasury, and the Treasurer of the Colony is to pay the sum to the memorialist.

April 18, 1768. Voted, That the County of Fairfield have liberty to erect a Court House on the Meeting-House Green, a little northwesterly of the new School house.

Agreed that the County of Fairfield have liberty to erect a prison and house for the Jail keeper on the westerly part of the meeting-house Green, northwesterly of the Pond, and

southeasterly of the County road, and liberty for a garden to be five rods distant from Mr. Thaddeus Burr's homelot.

Voted, That Mr. Hezekiah Fitch, Capt. Abraham Gold, Col. James Smedley, be a committee to remove all encroachments from off the Meeting-House Green by the time the County of Fairfield shall have occasion to erect a Prison and Jailer's house.

July 8, 1779. The Court House and Jail was burnt by the British General Tryon.

Aug. 30, 1779. The Town voted to build a Town house. This house to be forty feet long and thirty feet wide. That it be ten feet between joints. That the Town House be erected on the same spot of ground where the new School house lately stood near the late Court House.

Voted, That a rate of one shilling on the pound be raised on a tax of all Polls and ratable estate of the inhabitants of the Town to pay the expenses of building the Town House.

Oct. 18, 1779. Major Elijah Abel was appointed to represent this Town in the General Assembly at Hartford, with regard to building a Court House and Jail in said County.

May, 1784. Fairfield became half-shire Town in 1784, the General Assembly appointing Danbury as the other half-shire Town.

The Court removed to Bridgeport in 1853.

The first estate recorded as settled in Probate Court was that of Benjamin Turney in 1648.

DR. HEWIT AS A TEMPERANCE ORATOR.

The following appeared years ago in the New York *Evangelist*, from a writer of a series of sketches of distinguished advocates of total abstinence:

"Many years ago, one Sabbath evening, the writer went into the Brick Church (Rev. Dr. Springs') which was open for divine worship. We were ignorant of the occasion, whether it was an ordinary or a special service: and of the preacher whether he was the pastor or a stranger. After the usual introductory service, which we think were conducted by the pastor, a stran-

ger arose. We were not probably attracted by his appearance or manner at the beginning, nor did we at once see the drift of his discourse, but as he proceeded he kindled and unfolded his theme with a clear and masterly eloquence. The theme was an unusual one. We had never heard it handled in the pulpit before—it was the evils of Intemperance. The preacher had but one eye, but it flashed like the evening star in the deep heavens. He seemed to labor under a momentous mission which he had undertaken alone, putting his trust in God. Like Howard, he measured a great woe which oppressed humanity, and he had braced himself up to the great work of removing it. Never shall we forget that discourse; remarkable alike for the clearness of its statements, the boldness of its position, the force of its reasonings, the power of its imagery, the unction and spirit-stirring energy of its delivery. That was Nathaniel Hewit's first sermon in the City of New York on the subject of his great mission. Before we left our seat we were convinced and our resolution taken. We met him afterwards, when he went through the land assailing the evil under every form and degree with his resistless eloquence, and aided him in the formation of at least one successful Temperance Society. We have heard him on other occasions, and have watched the spread of the doctrines which he promulgated. We believe him to be the first great reformer in this field of labor; and if any man is entitled to be called the 'apostle of Temperance,' it is Nathaniel Hewit."

THE RESIDENCES OF THE MINISTERS.

The town gave to the Rev. John Jones for a homestead the lots now occupied by Mr. Henry Glover and Mr. Manuel.

The homestead occupied by the Rev. Samuel Wakeman stood upon the lot now owned by Deacon O. B. Jennings.

The lot northwest of the church, now the property of Mrs. Henry Mills, was granted to the Rev. Joseph Webb for a homestead. The house was burned by the British in 1779.

The Rev. Noah Hobart bought land from the Town for his residence. One and a-half acres he used for his homestead.

The remainder he divided into two building lots—one for the residence of his nephew, Mr. Justin Hobart; and the other for Capt. Jonathan Maltby. The buildings of Rev. Mr. Hobart were destroyed at the burning of the town in 1779.

The two latter houses are still standing. Capt. Maltby's house, the residence of Mr. Edmund Hobart and Mr. Justin Hobart's house, the residence of his granddaughter, Miss Hannah Hobart.

Two houses are now standing on the original lot of Rev. Mr. Hobart—one owned by O. B. Jennings, Esq., and the other owned by Dr. Garlick.

The family residence of Mr. Eliot, after the burning of the Town, in 1779, is now owned by Mrs. Henry S. Burr.

Mr. Eliot, before the burning of the Town, bought the residence of Mr. Ebenezer Silliman, brother of Gen. G. S. Silliman. The deed was given in 1782.

This place is at present owned by the widow of Mr. Henry Bibbins, the granddaughter of Mr. Eliot. He bought the place owned by his sister, Mrs. Dr. Hull, for his later residence in town.

The Rev. Heman Humphrey bought of the heirs of Rev. James Sayre the residence he occupied.

This place is now the residence of Mr. Gardiner Wetherbee.

Mrs. Rebecca Hewit bought in 1818 a residence from the heirs of Mr. Samuel Penfield.

This place is now the property of Mr. Manuel.

A house and lot was given in 1829 to the wife of Rev. John Hunter, by her father, Daniel Judson, of Stratford.

The place is now owned by Dr. Garlick, of Bridgeport.

Mr. George A. Talbot sold to Rev. Lyman H. Atwater his residence in 1836. This property is now owned by Mr. Manuel.

After 1849 Mr. Atwater occupied the present parsonage given by Judge Sherman to the Society.

FAIRFIELD PHYSICIANS.

James Laborie, M.D., first physician mentioned in the rec-

ords of Fairfield, married Nathaniel Burr's daughter Mary, a granddaughter of the first settler, John Burr. He died in 1731. He had a son, Dr. James Laborie, of Stratford, who died in 1741.

John Allen, M.D., son of Gideon Allen and Ann Burr, was the second physician. Dr. Allen married Abigail Jessup, daughter of Edward Jessup. His house was burned by the British, but rebuilt by him. The house is now owned by the Rev. George Mallory.

The third physician, Dr. Francis Fergue, M.D., was a Frenchman. He married the widow of James Dennie, Sarah (Thompson) Dennie. His residence is now owned by Mr. Gardiner Wetherbee, of New York. The old house has been removed for a modern one. He died February 26, 1783, aged 54 years.

David Hull, M.D., came here as physician about 1788. He married in Boston Susanna, the daughter of Rev. Andrew Eliot, D.D., and sister of Rev. Andrew Eliot, pastor of the church in Fairfield. His residence was the place opposite the present Congregational parsonage. It is now owned by Deacon O. B. Jennings. Dr. Hull died in 1834.

Dr. Jeremiah T. Denison came to Fairfield in 1833, with his family. He married for his second wife Miss Esther J. Goodsell.

PASTORS OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN FAIRFIELD, CONN.

Rev. John Jones, 1639 to 1664.

Rev. Samuel Wakeman, 1665 to 1692.

Rev. Joseph Webb, 1694 to 1732.

Rev. Noah Hobart, 1633 to 1773.

Rev. Andrew Eliot, 1774 to 1805.

Rev. Heman Humphrey, D.D., 1807 to 1817.

Rev. Nathaniel Hewit, D.D., 1818 to 1827.

Rev. John Hunter, 1828 to 1834.

Rev. Lyman H. Atwater, D.D., LL.D., 1835 to 1854.

Rev. Willis Lord, D.D., LL.D., 1854 to 1856.

Rev. Alexander McLean, D.D., 1857 to 1866.

Rev. Edward E. Rankin, D.D., 1866 to 1879.

Rev. G. S. Burroughs, Ph. D., D.D., 1880 to 1884.

Rev. J. E. Bushnell, 1884 to 1888.

Rev. Frank S. Child, 1888 ———.

DEACONS.—(EARLY RECORD NOT PRESERVED).

John Thompson, 16—.

Lothrop Lewis, chosen 1729.

Moses Dimon, chosen 1733.

David Rowland, chosen 1747.

Nathan Bulkly, chosen 1768.

Gold Selleck Silliman, exact date of election unknown.

David Judson, chosen 1787.

Daniel Osborn, chosen 1790.

Moses Jennings, chosen 1804.

Elijah Bibbins, chosen 1810.

Roger M. Sherman, chosen 1810.

William Morehouse, chosen 1823.

Charles Bennett, chosen 1833.

Samuel A. Nichols, chosen 1840.

J. Madison Morehouse, chosen 1854.

Henry S. Curtiss, chosen 1864.

Oliver B. Jennings, chosen 1871.

Joseph Lockwood, chosen 1871.

Samuel Morehouse, chosen 1880.

John B. Morehouse, chosen 1885.

Andrew Wakeman, chosen 1889.

REMINISCENCES OF
DR. ALEXANDER McLEAN.

1857—1866.

A period embracing a little over nine years seems to be a very inconsiderable portion of a history which includes two centuries and a half. It can have special importance only as it is linked in indissoluble bonds with that which preceded and succeeded it, and must therefore stand to the end of time as a part of the history of the First Ecclesiastical Society of Fairfield.

The period from 1857 to 1866 is not so remote that it requires the examination of time-worn documents to discover the things which then occurred, for they are still fresh in the memory of some, while others now belonging to this ancient church look back to these years as embracing the happy days of their childhood, and tell of them to the generation which has followed.

If I rightly understand what is expected of me in the urgent request to furnish something for this Historical Paper, my pleasing task is to give a brief sketch of the church during my pastorate, and of those who were then prominent in the management of its affairs.

Nature did not vouchsafe to me a very warm reception. With my friend, the pastor of my boyhood, Rev. R. Richard Kirk, of Oneida County, N. Y., I reached Fairfield Saturday evening, January 23, 1857. Deacon Bennett was at the depot to welcome us to his hospitable home. There were no indications of any unusual atmospheric disturbance, but the Sabbath proved to be an intensely cold day, so that after preaching in the morning Mr. Kirk was glad to take shelter in the

house of Mr. Henry T. Curtiss, and there spent the night and several succeeding days.

During the evening a most violent snow storm began, and continued the whole of the next day. By noon travel of every kind was suspended. Even the trains on the New Haven Railroad were stopped for several days.

Tuesday, the 26th, was bright and beautiful, but the roads continued impassable. Members of Consociation living out of the town of Fairfield could not reach the meeting, consequently only Mr. Sturges, of Greenfield Hill, Mr. Merwin, of Southport, and Mr. Jennings, of Black Rock, were present to take part in the services. I do not know whether the unprecedented snow storm is mentioned in the Minutes of Consociation, but it explains the reason why so few of the members were present. Mr. Kirk preached the sermon and gave the Charge to the pastor; Mr. Sturges offered the prayer of installation; Mr. Merwin gave the Charge to the people, and Mr. Jennings the right hand of fellowship.

I have to admit that my first visit among my people impressed me in a very singular manner and made me feel that the church had made a mistake in calling a mere stripling to minister to so many who had lived even beyond the four score years which are allotted to us here.

When I called on Mrs. Mills, (the mother of Mrs. Catherine Beers and Miss Mary Mills,) Mrs. Samuel Rowland, Mrs. Phelps, Mr. Thaddeus Burr, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Turney, Mr. and Mrs. David Trubee, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Trubee, and many others almost as old, I felt that I had been called to bury the remnants of a past generation. I had never before seen so many aged people in proportion to the population. Yet the grave was opened to receive both the young and the middle-aged many times before the summons came to any of these aged ones.

It was during the pastorates of my immediate predecessors, Dr. Atwater and Dr. Lord, that the church and village passed through what might be designated a transition period. The Court, and with it the Jail, had been removed to Bridgeport, and with them had disappeared the eminent jurists who had before made Fairfield their home. Judge and Mrs. Sher-

man, to whom the church in Fairfield owed so much, were sleeping in the final home appointed for all the living. The ancient church building, of which I had heard so much, with its superabundant windows and its stove raised upon a platform in the middle aisle, had disappeared and the present modern structure graced the Green.

The prayer meeting was held every Friday evening in the private residence of some one of the church members. The first one I attended was at the house of Deacon Nichols, and the second at the home of Rev. Frederick Downer, near the residence of the late Captain John Gould. As the parsonage was unoccupied, it was proposed to hold the meetings in the west parlor, which was large and commodious, and during the Summer of 1857 and the Spring of 1858 the Friday evening prayer meeting was held there.

Though urged repeatedly by Deacon Morehouse to visit the Sunday School, I declined because it was held in the galleries of the *new* church. The superintendent occupied the organ loft, while the boys and girls were seated in the side galleries. When they were at last brought down into the body of the church, I gladly accepted the invitation to address the school, and intimated to the children as an open secret, that they would soon have a nice Sunday School room. This suggestion speedily took definite shape, and before the Summer closed the full amount necessary to build the chapel had been subscribed, and plans for the new building accepted. But about the end of August the great panic of 1857 came. Ruin seemed to stare many in the face, as their investments appeared to be almost worthless. Under the circumstances, it was deemed expedient not to collect the subscriptions, and to delay the erection of the building till more favorable times.

The next year every dollar that had been subscribed was paid, and the present chapel erected. I had undertaken to relieve the building committee of all care respecting the desk and the ventilation. The desk was constructed according to my wishes, so that there should be no formidable barricade between the speaker and his audience. But I could not remember the other duty which I had assumed, nor could the committee. When the time came for the dedication, Dr.

Hewit preached the sermon, and before he concluded, we had reason to remember just what had been neglected. Instead of a well ventilated room, we found that it was as nearly air-tight as human ingenuity could make it. I am afraid that many have suffered from my officiousness and forgetfulness. Still, I always look upon the neat and attractive building, which since my time has been greatly improved, with peculiar satisfaction, and feel that if I did nothing else for the dear old church, I was at least instrumental in securing for the Society what it had never possessed during two hundred years, a convenient place for the social meetings of the church and for the Sunday School.

During my first winter in Fairfield there was only one house on the main street unoccupied, and this state of things continued till nearly the close of my pastorate. Fairfield was not then a mere place of Summer resort, but a place of permanent abodes, so that the church work went on without the interruption of a Winter hegira. Summer visitors were numerous, and the members of the congregation always welcomed them to seats in their pews, although they were never called upon to contribute in any manner towards the support of the church. But about the time my pastorate ended many of the families found that it was more convenient to pass the Winter in the city, and during the Winter months a walk down the main street became rather depressing, especially in the evening when darkness reigned almost unbroken by a ray of light. The contrast between the Summer and the Winter had become very marked in the village as well as in the church.

The officers of the church during this period were Deacon Charles Bennett, Deacon Samuel Nichols and Deacon Madison Morehouse. The standing committee consisted of the three deacons and Mr. Burr Lyon and Mr. Joseph Lockwood. After the death of Deacon Nichols, Mr. Henry T. Curtiss was elected a deacon, and for years served the church with unassuming fidelity.

"Old" Deacon Morehouse (the father of the present Deacon John B. Morehouse) had been relieved from duty on account of failing health. For years he had been afflicted with a very peculiar nervous affection of the heart, and was subject at

any time to severe spasms. When he called to welcome the young pastor at the parsonage, he was seized with one of these painful attacks, but in a little while was able to get into his wagon and return to his home. This was the beginning of an acquaintance which continued during the rest of his life.

I can never forget a visit made to him on a beautiful Summer morning after he was confined to his bed. He appeared so bright and happy that I said to him: "Deacon, you must have had an unusually comfortable night." His reply was: "I had, although till after midnight my sufferings were greater than I could endure. One spasm followed another in such quick succession, and the agony was so intense that great drops of perspiration stood upon my brow. But while I was suffering thus my thoughts turned to my Saviour and what He endured for me. *His sweat* was as it were *great drops of blood falling to the ground*. I forgot my own sufferings thinking of what He endured, and shouted aloud for joy." Truly, he had been with the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane, and his wrinkled, pain-worn face shone with a light which this world can never impart. His sufferings soon ended and he entered into the joy of his Lord.

Thaddeus Burr occupied a conspicuous place in the house of God. He could not sit in the pews and so occupied a chair in front of the pulpit. He always remained during the intermission, and passed the time in reading his Bible. He delighted to tell how many times he had read it through from Genesis to Revelation in the "Meeting House." Dr. Hewit made the address at his funeral, and commenced his remarks as follows; "Forty years ago, when I first came to Fairfield, Thaddeus Burr was then a young man in his prime. If there was a meeting in any part of this County, for the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, there you would find Thaddeus Burr in his little old wagon, and his horse almost as old as himself."

The deaconship and the standing committee have already been noticed. Deacon Nichols was the first of the number called to his eternal home. His prayers always impressed those who heard them with their sincerity and child-like simplicity. But he was not always a happy Christian. He was

well aware that he had a serious affection of the heart and that his call might be sudden. Frequently, when suffering from one of these attacks, he was filled with apprehension amounting almost to terror. Hence he concluded that his hope was only a delusion, for otherwise, according to the promise, he would have been delivered from the bondage of fear. Several times he called upon me to ask if there was no way in which he could demit his church-membership and retire from office. I tried to show him that he was writing bitter things against himself,—that the Lord had only promised us grace for the time of need. Learning that he had been confined to his bed for several days, I called to see him. Although his family did not regard him as alarmingly ill, yet I could not but feel that the end was near. Calmly he talked of his departure, and hoped that it was near at hand. I said: “Deacon, you are not afraid of death?” “Afraid of death? Oh, no. I long to go home and be with Christ and the loved ones who have gone before, and who are now with Him.” We knew it not, but he was even then almost through the valley of the shadow of death, but to him it was so bright he did not feel the gloom. In less than an hour from the time I left him, he had passed through the gate into the city. The Saviour had met His timid disciple and in His presence fear vanished, and peace and joy took its place.

Mr. Burr Lyon, on the other hand, was a cheerful, happy Christian. I never remember to have seen him in a desponding mood. “The joy of the Lord was his strength.” He was never over-anxious about anything. Every cloud had for him a silver lining. He rested upon the promises, and reminded me always of Enoch. He walked with God, and so impressed all who came under his influence.

Deacon Bennett was the ruling spirit in the church, and he was a safe ruler. He was a man of sterling integrity,—strong in all his convictions. His natural endowments were great. Had they been developed by a liberal education, he would have gained an enviable position in any of the learned professions. An incident in his early life, familiar to some, is a good illustration of his character.

When Charles Bennett moved from Westport to Fairfield

as a young married man and commenced business, Judge Sherman called upon him, and, to encourage him in his trade, ordered a pair of boots. As he was leaving, he asked when they would be done? Young Bennett replied, "On Saturday." On the appointed day the Judge called and asked for his boots, and was told that they were not yet finished. This was a good opportunity for the Judge to give a lecture on veracity, and he improved it. No reply was returned by the young mechanic, and the Judge went home. In less than an hour afterwards there was a knock at his office door. But although the one without was invited to enter, the invitation was disregarded and the knock repeated. At last the Judge went to the door and found young Bennett with the newly finished boots in one hand and his old silver watch in the other. "Walk in, Mr. Bennett, walk in," was the cordial invitation. "No, sir, I came to leave your boots. I told you they would be done on Saturday. It wants six hours of sun down, and I leave it to you, sir, whether I have been guilty of falsehood, and whether I deserved in any degree your severe reproof. Good day, sir." After that Judge Sherman never wore a pair of boots that was not made in Charles Bennett's shop. They became warm personal friends, and the Judge manifested his high appreciation of his character by making him one of his executors.

Deacon Bennett did not belong to the progressive school. "Strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die," was always his reply to anything like innovation. The antiquity of any custom was to him its highest endorsement, and more especially if it had regard to the affairs of the First Ecclesiastical Society of Fairfield. The last Monday of December was the best day in the whole year for the annual meeting of the Society, because that was the day selected generations ago by the fathers. The tax which could, when necessary, be levied upon the members of the Society was the safeguard of the church. I think the tax has now been abandoned, but I am quite sure the change was never made while Deacon Bennett lived.

Dr. Atwater was his ideal pastor. For a time he tried to mould me into that dignified and imposing stature, but at last

he concluded, as he could not make the stripling fill the clothes of Dr. Atwater, it might possibly be the Lord's will that he should develop his own individuality, and became reconciled to having him as the Lord had made him.

Joseph Lockwood had great power in prayer and was for many years a pillar in the church. He was only a member of the standing committee during my pastorate, but afterwards was very properly made a deacon.

Deacon Madison Morehouse is still with you. May the Lord long spare him to the church. He was superintendent of the Sabbath School during my entire pastorate. Living five miles from Fairfield, there was never a Sabbath so stormy that he could not get to church, and never a Friday night so dark that he could not find his way across lots to the Friday evening prayer meeting, even when the mud was so deep in the Spring that he could not come on horseback.

But the church of Fairfield was not only blessed with true and tried men who adorned the doctrine they professed, but also with honorable women not a few. To meet them one by one was a trial to a bashful boy. But to encounter these stately dames with their dignified and refined bearing in one assembly was overpowering. The pastor alone had the high privilege of being present at the annual meeting of the "Charitable Society." Never can I forget my feelings as I entered the parlor of Mrs. Mills, where I had first to face them seated around the room in prim New England fashion. There was Mrs. Dr. Dennison, who well deserved the title sometimes given to her, "Queen Esther"; Mrs. Obadiah Jones, Miss Sally White, Miss Lucretia Sturges, Mrs. Mills, Mrs. Beers, Miss Mary Mills, Mrs. Beardsley, Mrs. Curtiss, and others too numerous to mention. It was with a shaking hand I took up the good Book, and of course read about Dorcas, and then with a trembling voice led these mothers in Israel in prayer. It was a yearly ordeal always dreaded. In giving out the notice for the last time, special emphasis was placed on the hour. Promptly to the time I was on hand, at the house of Mr. John Buckingham, for the meeting was to be held there with Mrs. Deborah Bennett. I was much pleased to find that only she and Mrs. Abbie Sturges were present. At the hour

appointed I opened the meeting, and took my departure. On leaving the house, the ladies, headed by Mrs. Catherine Beers, Mrs. Beardsley, Mrs. Curtiss and others, were coming up the walk, and I had the pleasure of telling them that the meeting had been duly opened at the hour announced from the pulpit.

But I must not forget the great trial through which the nation passed during this period. The cloud of civil war had been hanging over us for several years, and at last burst with desolating fury. It was a time to try men's souls. The great majority in the church and town were loyal. A few sympathized with the South. There were national Fast Days and Thanksgivings not a few. Now we were called together to humble ourselves before God because our army had been defeated, and now to thank Him for victories achieved, till at last the South surrendered and our armies returned to engage again in peaceful pursuits. Our church and town was not unrepresented in this struggle. One of Fairfield's sons left a lucrative business in California that he might join a regiment belonging to his native State. Good service he rendered his country. He was often assigned to the most hazardous duty, and was several times taken prisoner, but always escaped; and at last returned, when the war was ended, without a scar. I refer to Major John B. Morehouse.

I was only once accused of preaching a political sermon, and that was one Sunday evening when I took for my text, "There is no discharge in that war," illustrating my subject by the "Draft," which was soon to take place. But about that time my prayers were said to be always full of politics, because I never forgot to ask God to throw around those who had gone from among us His protecting arms, and to grant a speedy victory to our armies.

I have to record as my experience in Fairfield during a pastorate of nine years and a few months, that harmony always reigned. There was not a single case of discipline in all those years. There were no dissensions,—no family feuds. We lived in peace among ourselves and with those who were without. The children of the church grew up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and when they reached a suit-

able age, "avouched the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be their God." The bi-monthly sermon to the children was enjoyed, at least by the pastor himself, and by the colored people, who never failed to be largely represented in the galleries on these occasions, and the children were also interested and profited.

It is always with peculiar feelings that I look back to the church of my first love, where I was ordained to the ministry, where I first administered the sacraments of the Lord's Supper and baptism, where I received the first seals to my ministry. As the devout Hebrew could say of Jerusalem of old, so can I say with my whole heart of the First Church of Fairfield, "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning."

May peace and prosperity continue to attend it as the centuries roll away.

THE FIVE MEETING HOUSES OF THE PRIME ANCIENT SOCIETY.

(AN EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE PASTOR IN TOWN
HALL ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JUNE 1, 1890, TWO DAYS
AFTER THE BURNING OF THE FIFTH MEETING HOUSE.)

The first Meeting-House was erected probably in the year 1640. It was a small, rude building, made of logs and rough hewn timbers. The chinks and crevices were filled with clay. There were occasional openings to admit the light. The roof was a primitive piece of workmanship—thatched possibly with our long meadow grass. And the door was a sort of barricade. This building was located upon the ground that has been consecrated to holy purposes these two hundred and fifty years. It was used as sanctuary, school-house and town meeting place. It served the parish during thirty-five years. It was built when the colonists were hard pressed by circumstances, and pioneer life was a serious, stormful experience.

The second Meeting-House was built in the year 1675. The town was taxed and an edifice was erected that was deemed comfortable and convenient.

In 1679 Norwalk people came to Fairfield and modeled the roof of their new Meeting-House after the Fairfield structure. The dimensions and general features of our second structure are conveyed to us by this indirect testimony. The building was forty feet square. It was a frame structure. It was clap-boarded. A tower surmounted the centre of the roof. There was a high box pulpit, deacons' seats in front, and benches systematically arranged for the accommodation of worshippers. This house was builded amid the peril and disturbance of Indian warfare. The people labored like our Jewish exemplars on their new, sacred walls—with weapon of defence in one hand and instrument of toil in the other.

For seventy years the Fairfield parish used this second Meeting-House. But the town prospered and the population increased to such extent that some change was necessary. In 1709 the Ecclesiastical Society became incorporated, and the management of the church's financial affairs was entrusted to the Society. At length the time came to arise and build. The Ecclesiastical Society took the initiative.

The third Meeting-House was reared in the year 1745. At this time there waged a war of words between the State Church people and the Separatists. The third Meeting-House was sixty feet in length, forty-four feet in breadth, twenty-six feet in height—with a spire that pushed its way one hundred and twenty feet into the air. The interior was finished according to the prevailing fashion—a high pulpit, side galleries, numerous windows (two tiers of them) and rigid square pews. The tower and spire was on the northeast side of the house. There was a south entrance, a north entrance and an east entrance to the building. There were two steep ascents to the galleries—one in the tower, the other on the south interior of the house. This structure, says the Rev. Andrew Eliot, was a "large and elegant Meeting-House." To build it the people were taxed, according to the usual custom, two shillings and six pence on the pound the first year, the same assessment the second year, and four shillings and six pence the third year. A part of the old building was used in the new, and other portions of the former edifice were sold. The building committee numbered eight men: James Dennie, Nathaniel Burr, Thomas Hill, John Silliman, David Rowland, James Smedley, Samuel Osborn, Lothrop Lewis. The people worshiped in the third Meeting-House for thirty-four years.

On July 8, 1779, it was burned by the British. Mr. Sayre, the Episcopal clergyman resident in the town, entreated Gen. Tryon to spare the town or a few houses, or at least the two churches. This last request was granted. "But the rear guard," says Mr. Eliot, "consisting of banditti, the vilest that was ever let loose among men, set fire to everything which Gen. Tryon had left." "While the town was in flames," writes the first President Dwight, "a thunder storm overspread the heavens just as the night came on. The conflagration of near

two hundred dwelling houses illumined the earth, the skirts of the clouds, and the waves of the Sound, with an union of gloom and grandeur at once inexpressibly awful and magnificent. The sky speedily was hung with the deepest darkness wherever the clouds were not tinged by the melancholy lustre of the flames. At intervals the lightning blazed with a livid and terrible splendor. The thunder rolled above. Beneath, the roaring of the fires filled up the intervals with a deep, hollow sound, which seemed to be the protracted murmur of the thunder reverberated from one end of the heavens to the other." On July 30, twenty-two days after this ruthless, woe-ful destruction of property, Mr. Eliot, who meantime had been ill, delivered an address to this First Church and Society in Fairfield. This address has been preserved for us in the corner-stone of the fifth Meeting-House. The venerable and interesting document transports us to the calamitous experience of 1779. The address was delivered upon the Green before the ruins of the beloved sanctuary. Mr. Eliot pictures the lamentable condition of himself, his family, his parish. "Not a house for my shelter—two-thirds of my small personal estate plundered and consumed—a wife and three small children dependent on me for their maintenance. * * I feel myself in a state of uncertainty as to many of the necessities of life." And yet bravely continues Mr. Eliot: "I am ready to undergo any difficulties in the work of the ministry for your sakes." For the year that followed the burning of the church, public worship was conducted in private houses. Then for five years worship was conducted in the new Town Hall. Tradition transmits to posterity the story of the grievous trials and suffering that stretched through anxious and laborious years. It is a pathetic and unforgettable testimony to the quenchless zeal and noble self-sacrifice of the people. On Jan. 7, 1785, a vote to re-build was taken by the Society.

The fourth Meeting-House was modeled after the one that had been burned. Its dimensions and general arrangements were the same. The congregation met in the new edifice for the first time on March 26, 1786. The building had floor, walls, roof—that was all. It was a barren, furnitureless, unfinished Meeting-House. And it was seventeen years ere the

people were able to command the funds to complete the wood-work, plastering and glazing of the interior. During these first years people sat on stones or blocks of wood or whatever they might bring to the sanctuary for a seat. The rough, inclement weather made merry without regard to sacredness of place or sensitiveness of worshippers. But as the people recovered slowly from their losses they continued their labor upon the Meeting-House. Pulpit and pews and gallery stairs were placed in 1790. Col. David Burr was granted permission to paint the pulpit in 1799, if he paint it "of a light stone color, so-called." The interior was first painted in 1814—the exterior in 1828. It is a curious and suggestive fact that it was forty-two years ere this fourth Meeting-House was finished. The first funds came from the confiscated property of traitors. Then the town was taxed as a second source of payment. But this did not do the work. Subscription papers were circulated. And altogether it was a task that dragged through long years. That fact tells the story of the people's poverty, affliction, struggle.

The fifth Meeting-House was reared in 1849. "In proceeding to remove this venerable edifice,"—I quote from the address which was delivered by Dr. Atwater August 3, 1849, when the corner-stone of the Fifth Sanctuary was laid, an address that has been preserved in the corner-stone of that sanctuary—"In proceeding to remove this venerable edifice and replacing it by another, we are actuated by no spirit of pride or ostentation. We are actuated by a sense of duty." This Meeting-House was located a little south of the former one, close upon the site of the second structure. It was a frame building, Romanesque as to style of architecture. The length of it (including the projecting tower and pulpit recess) was ninety-five feet. Its breadth forty-seven feet. The height of tower and spire one hundred and thirty feet. The seating capacity of the audience room was five hundred and fifty. Wide galleries were built upon three sides of the house. A large vestibule extended across the front part of the structure. The three entrances into this vestibule faced the east. Three doors opened from the vestibule into the audience room, and three aisles extended through the room. The side aisles ad-

joined the walls of the building. The pulpit, galleries and pews were constructed of light wood, grained and varnished.

The fire which destroyed chapel, parlors, church, occurred on the night of May 29th and the morning of May 30th. It was a few minutes past eleven o'clock that flames issued from the south closet in the vestibule of the chapel. When first discovered the fire was eating its way through the ceiling of the closet and spreading through the attic and breaking out of the cupola. But the flames had made such progress that it was impossible to save the building. The furniture was hastily removed. Meantime the flames pushed their riotous way into the parlors, tarried while they wrought their fiery desolation and then leaped upon the roof of the sanctuary. It was one o'clock when the flames had swathed the church, making it a flame-compacted temple that shone amid encompassing gloom and darkness. The walls were fire studded—the roof was fire thatched—the tower was fire buttressed—fire columns held aloft a palpitant pillar of fire. The very heavens seemed pierced by this radiant, majestic shaft. Then came the play and interplay of flame upon flame and light upon light—a fretted network of vaulted fire. Then the delicate luminous spire bowed itself into the flaming structure—fire roof, fire floor, fire wall were absorbed by the central vortex of flame—fire arch that spanned the preacher's place reluctantly yielded its strength and fell prostrate into flames—and the vanishing pile gave its last light to those who watched and waited.

But memory was not consumed with the blazing sanctuary. And you travel back the years when as children, led by a father's hand and a mother's hand, you worshiped God in His temple. You name the pastor who faithfully taught you and guided you into the Kingdom. You think upon those solemn scenes when you first made vows of christian discipleship. You recall the day when service for your dead was pronounced within those walls. You company in spirit with a noble host of sainted men and women who once were revered and beloved worshippers in the vanished church home. Thank God, memory was not consumed with the blazing sanctuary.

And christian character was not consumed by the flames.

All the precious holy influences which were sourced in sanctuary song and prayer and speech have perpetuated themselves in manhood and womanhood. All the tender, happy associations of spiritual activity and fellowship have been enduringly incorporated in the very fibre of your souls. Gospel power, and mind culture, as they were channeled by the ministry of truth, they have also wrought through the years and are indestructibly builded into character.

And hope—christian hope—was not consumed. The lessons taught through hastening years have begotten a holy expectation that nothing shall dim or destroy. And such hope quickens our spirits into a fullness and glory of life that defies all stress of weather, all trial of calamity, all loss of material forms. Our hope is in God. And He who said to burdened Israel, "Let your hands be strong," inspires us to a lively hope that compasses not alone the appointed tasks of time but also the christian felicities of eternity.

Thus has the vanished sanctuary builded by the fathers shared the shaping of our destiny. "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Let your hands be strong." It is your precious, holy privilege to rear another sanctuary upon the hallowed and historic site—a sanctuary durable in substance, complete in its appointments, stately and beautiful in form, true ministrant to your children and the generations yet to come—a sanctuary-ministrant whose influences and benedictions shall also be wrought into sacred memory, Christ-like character and eternal hope.

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