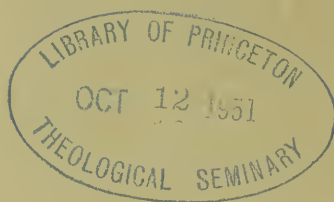


Manchester, Conn.

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The  
One Hundredth Anniversary  
of the  
Organization  
of the  
First Church of Christ

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1779.

THE

1879.

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

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OF THE

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

IN

MANCHESTER, CONN.

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Historical Addresses

BY REV. S. W. ROBBINS AND DEA. R. R. DIMOCK.

SKETCHES OF MINISTERS FROM THE PARISH,

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF

OTHER CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS, CHURCH EDIFICES, AND  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS; ALSO THE NAMES OF THE  
ORIGINAL PETITIONERS FOR THE

ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY OF ORFORD, 1772.

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HARTFORD, CONN.:

THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD CO. PRINT.

1880.



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PSALM C., 2-5.

2 Serve the Lord with gladness : come before his presence with singing.

3 Know ye that the Lord he *is* God; *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise : be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.

5 For the Lord *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.



## I.

# INTRODUCTORY.

THE first week in December, 1879, will be memorable in the annals of the First Church of Christ in Manchester as including the dedication of its new house of worship, the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the organization of the church, and the occupation of the new edifice for the first time for public worship on the Sabbath. The weather was delightful, with an average temperature of 50 degrees, and all things favored the assembling of large numbers from this and other places to participate in the exercises.

At a meeting of the church held June 1, 1879, it was voted to observe the one hundredth anniversary on the 29th of July, the date of its organization. For this purpose a committee was chosen consisting of the following persons, viz.: Rev. S. W. Robbins, Dea. R. R. Dimock, Dea. Francis Bidwell, Aaron Cook, George Bunce, E. A. Bliss, Ralph Cone, Chauncey B. Knox, Charles D. Parsons, James R. Pitkin, Dr. Oliver B. Taylor, Calvin L. Tracy, and Daniel Wadsworth.

As a matter of convenience, it was afterwards decided to defer the public observance of the centennial anniversary till the new church edifice should be completed. Accordingly, at a later time, the dedication was appointed to take place on Wednesday afternoon, December 3d, and the centennial anniversary on Thursday morning and afternoon, December 4th.

### ORDER OF EXERCISES AT THE DEDICATION.

1. Anthem: "Praise ye the mighty God"—by the choir under the direction of Mr. James Hutchison, Miss Mary W. Cone presiding at the organ.

2. Selections from Psalms cxxii and cxxxii read and prayer offered by Rev. N. J. Squires, pastor of the 2d Congregational Church.

3. Hymn 991, read by Rev. S. Leader, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North Manchester, sung by the choir, the congregation joining :

Oh, bow Thine ear, Eternal One,  
On Thee our heart adoring calls ;  
To Thee the followers of Thy Son  
Have raised and now devote these walls.

Here let Thy holy days be kept ;  
And be this place to worship given,  
Like that bright spot where Jacob slept,  
The house of God, the gate of heaven.

Here may Thine honor dwell ; and here,  
As incense, let Thy children's prayer,  
From contrite hearts and lips sincere,  
Rise on the still and holy air.

Here be Thy praise devoutly sung ;  
Here let Thy truth beam forth to save,  
As when of old Thy Spirit hung,  
On wings of light, o'er Jordan's wave.

And when the lips, that with Thy name  
Are vocal now, to dust shall turn,  
On others may devotion's flame  
Be kindled here, and purely burn.

4. Sermon : by Rev. Nathaniel J. Burton, D. D., pastor of Park Church, Hartford, from 1st Timothy, iii : 15—"The church of the living God"—a glowing presentation with the preacher's peculiar power of the truth, The church is God's.

5. Dedicatory prayer : by Rev. S. W. Robbins, Pastor.

6. Anthem : "Holy Father, hear my cry"—with Doxology : "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

7. Benediction : by Rev. Dr. Burton.



## ORDER OF EXERCISES AT THE ANNIVERSARY,

THURSDAY, DEC. 4th, 10.30 A. M.

1. Anthem : " Praise the Lord."
2. Selections from Psalms cii and ciii read and prayer offered by Rev. H. D. Robinson, pastor of M. E. Church, South Manchester.

3. Hymn 1,151 :

" Glorious things of Thee are spoken.  
Zion, city of our God."

4. Historical Address : by Rev. S. W. Robbins.

5. Hymn 383 :

" Upon the gospel's sacred page  
The gathered beams of ages shine."

6. Historical Address : by Dea. R. R. Dimock.

7. Hymn 1,292 :

" O God, beneath Thy guiding hand  
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea."

## RECESS—COLLATION.

At 12.30 P. M. a collation was served at the Town Hall, at which Rev. Dr. Burton invoked the divine blessing and about five hundred persons partook of the entertainment provided. The arrangements were under the direction of Mr. C. B. Knox and Mrs. J. N. Bissell, with a large corps of assistants, mostly the young people of the church and congregation.

## 2 P. M.—PUBLIC EXERCISES RESUMED.

1. Hymn 229 : " I love Thy kingdom, Lord."
2. Prayer : by Rev. S. B. Forbes, a former pastor.
3. A paper read by Rev. S. W. Robbins, giving brief sketches of ministers of the gospel who have gone from the parish ; followed by Rev. S. B. Forbes with an address full of feeling and pleasant reminiscences of his work here.
4. A paper read by Dr. O. B. Taylor, giving the names of

the deacons of the church, the date of their election, decease, or retirement from office, so far as can be ascertained, with various explanatory remarks ; followed by an address by Bro. E. A. Bliss. Communications were read from Rev. Frederick T. Perkins, a former pastor, Rev. E. W. Cook, Miss Esther Cook, Prof. Chester S. Lyman, Rev. Rodolphus Landfear, Rev. Charles Griswold, Rev. Frederick Alvord, Rev. Ralph Perry, and Mr. George F. Bissell.

5. Hymn 763 :

“Ye servants of the Lord,  
Each in His service wait.”

6. The former members of the church now engaged in the Master's work in other churches were represented by Dea. C. D. Talcott, Dea. James B. Williams, Mr. James Campbell, and Dea. Horace Pitkin of Philadelphia. The addresses of these brethren, with that of Bro. E. A. Bliss, touched all hearts by their grateful reference to the influence of this church in their personal history, and their tribute of honor and love to the men and women faithful and true who here served their generation in the years gone by.

7. Addresses were made by the pastors of the neighboring churches historically related to this—Rev. Austin Gardner, pastor of the church in Buckingham, Rev. S. Leader, Rev. H. D. Robinson, and Rev. N. J. Squires.

8. Brief remarks were made by the pastor, expressing thanks to God and to those present for this joyful occasion, requesting the prayers of all for the continued prosperity and usefulness of this church in the years to come and in behalf of all as individuals and as churches, imploring God's faithful care and the riches of His grace in whatever service He may yet appoint.

A motion was then made by Bro. C. L. Tracy, seconded by Bro. E. A. Bliss, that this meeting (including this church and the several churches which have participated in these exercises) be adjourned till the next centennial anniversary, to be observed in the year 1979.

All in favor of this motion were requested to signify their

assent by rising. As the large congregation rose, the unanimous vote was declared, the choir led in singing the Doxology—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow"—after which the benediction was pronounced by Rev. N. J. Squires.

About five hundred persons were present at the Dedicatory services, and a still larger number attended the Anniversary exercises on the following day, including friends and former members of the church from a distance and a large representation of the pastors and members of the churches in the vicinity. The deep and prevailing interest of the occasion made it evident that the one want was that of more time, especially for the social reunion of the friends of the church from various places, for renewing friendships, recalling past scenes, the memories of honored ones who now rest from their labors, and the good influences of the old days which have cheered life's after way.

With gratitude to Him whose favor has been so signally revealed in the history of this church, we fill out the last page in the record of the century. May the entry which we proceed to make as we turn the first leaf of the new volume be worthy to be continued till the last page is filled and the record of *another* century is closed.

## II.

# HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

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## THE CHURCH AND ITS PASTORS.

BY REV. S. W. ROBBINS, PASTOR.

We are assembled by the divine favor to recall the past, to rejoice in the present, to take hope and courage for the future, and for all His mercies to render devout thanks to our covenant-keeping God. Standing as we do on this height of the century, we erect our Eben-ezer, writing against the years which are closing behind us, The riches of His goodness ; and over the gateway that opens still before us, The faithfulness of His promise.

The century which we review to-day falls short of the middle point in that marvelous retrospect which takes in the formation of the early churches in the valley of the Connecticut. When this church was organized on the 29th of July, 1779, there were 183 churches of the Congregational order within the present limits of the Commonwealth. Of these, 22 were already rejoicing in the history of a hundred years, and 14 were far advanced in the first half of their second century. This church, therefore, in its beginning was not a frontier church. The perils of the wilderness and the savage foe had not to be encountered. The days when the drum-beat called the worshipers to the house of God and armed men guarded without, belong to an earlier period in the history of New England. Here, in the eastern section of what was then and until 1783 the town of Hartford, East Hartford Society, was a quiet rural region, into which the settlers came slowly on account of its distance on one side from the points

of settlement on the river and on the other from the towns already settled on the east. Those were days when rapid growth as well as rapid transit, in the modern sense, was unknown anywhere. This is why this church to-day is in a neighborhood of churches with few exceptions older than itself. These churches, blest as they were with able and godly ministers, gave to this a cheering welcome at the first. Their prayers, sympathies, and wise counsels were its support in times of weakness and trial, its encouragement to fidelity in its strength and prosperity. The record of this fellowship awakens love and gratitude to-day and gives brightness to the review as we glance backward along the years.

Of these churches with their ministers we may name here Hartford 1st, Rev. Nathan Strong, D. D., pastor, 1774-1816; Hartford 2d, vacant in 1779 but subsequently under the pastoral care of Rev. Abel Flint, D. D., 1788-1825; Glastonbury 1st, John Eells, 1759-1791; Glastonbury 2d (Buckingham), James Eells, 1769-1805; Bolton, George Colton, 1763-1812; East Windsor, Thomas Potwine, 1754-1802; Vernon (North B.), Ebenezer Kellogg, 1762-1817; South Windsor (E. W. 2d), Joseph Perry, 1755-1783; East Hartford, Eliphalet Williams, 1748-1803; Enfield, Nehemiah Prudden, 1782-1815.

For a considerable time after the earliest settlement, which took place about 1740, the inhabitants of this locality were dependent for their religious privileges on the neighboring churches, chiefly those in East Hartford and Bolton. Distance was less considered then than now. Men and women knew how to go on foot as well as to ride on horseback, and horses were accustomed to more than a single rider, especially on Sundays. The church afar off did not signify Sabbath-breaking and irreligion on the part of the people. In addition to the benefits derived by special effort from the public services of the less distant churches, the ministers of those churches favored the people with occasional services here. Christian homes were open for social worship. Parental instruction, using faithfully the bible and the catechism, impressing divine truth by example as well as precept, was a

strong power in those days, supplementing and enforcing the teaching of the pulpit. Where the latter was to a great extent wanting, the home power was still exercised, applying the truth to the conscience and the life, especially of the young, and causing the authority of God not to lose hold of the moral sense of the people.

At length the time came with the increase of the number of inhabitants when, by the consent of the parish of East Hartford public preaching services were held during part of the year, including the winter months, a percentage of the tax received for the support of the gospel in the East Hartford Society being allowed the people here for maintaining public worship. In May, 1772, seven years before the organization of the church, the Ecclesiastical Society was established by the General Court, and named the Ecclesiastical Society of Orford. This name, formed from the last syllables of Windsor and Hartford, had been applied to this locality from an early day, and continued to designate it till it became a town and took its present name in 1823.

On the 29th of July, 1779, eighteen persons who had prayerfully considered the duty before them and the responsibility they were about to assume, having provided a fitting form of words to express their religious faith and their relations to one another, assembled for the public acknowledgment of the covenant and formal incorporation "in Evangelical Church State." The church thus formed was then the fifth in the town of Hartford, later the second in East Hartford, and later still the First Church of Christ in Manchester.

The following is the

#### ORIGINAL COVENANT.

We whose names are underwritten, members of different churches, desirous to embody and incorporate ourselves in evangelical church state, being now assembled in the holy presence of God, after humble acknowledgment of our sin and unworthiness to be owned for the Lord's covenant people and our own inability to keep covenant with God without



divine help, and being sensible that it is an awful thing to transact with the great God ; do, in humble dependence on his gracious assistance and acceptance through Christ, each one of us for ourselves and jointly as a Church of, the living God, and one with another in manner following, that is—We do give up ourselves to that God whose name alone is Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the only true and living God, and to the Lord Jesus Christ as our only Saviour, Prophet, Priest, and King of our souls, and only Mediator of the covenant of Grace, promising by the help of his Spirit to cleave unto God as our chief good, and to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and a Gospel obedience as becometh his covenant people for ever. We do also give up our offspring unto God in Jesus Christ, avouching the Lord to be our God, and the God of our children, and ourselves with our children to be his people ; humbly adoring the divine grace that we and our offspring with us may be looked upon to be the Lord's. We do also give up ourselves to one another in the Lord, and according to the will of God, freely covenanting and binding ourselves to walk together as a right ordered Congregation and Church of Christ in all the ways of his worship according to the holy rules of the word of God (the sure and infallible rule of faith and practice), promising in brotherly love to watch over one another's souls, faithfully discharging all covenant duties to one another in Church Communion, and to submit ourselves unto the discipline and government of Christ in his Church, and duly to attend all the Ordinances which Christ has instituted in his Church according to the order of the Gospel.

This covenant was read by Rev. James Eells, and assented to by the individuals here named :

#### ORIGINAL MEMBERS.

Richard Keeney,	Benjamin Mann,
Thomas Trill,	Joseph Sweatland,
Silas Spencer,	Elijah Peck,
Joseph Symonds,	Stephen Cone,
Solomon Gillman,	Seth Talcott,

Daniel Sweatland,  
Joseph Benton,  
Jabez Dart,  
David Damon,

Elias Skinner,  
Josiah Olcott, Jr.,  
Esther Bidwell,  
Sarah Sweatland.

Of the persons above mentioned a few are recognized as ancestors of individuals now living and active among us. Of most of them, however, little is at present known. The exercises on the occasion took place in the old meeting-house as it was called in later years—a small one-story building formerly used as a dwelling-house, and situated under the oak trees about eight rods east of the present church edifice. This meeting-house was used for occasional worship and for regular worship during part of the year for a considerable time previous to the formation of the church. At that time the Ecclesiastical Society had been engaged for several years in plans and efforts for locating and building another house of worship, a more particular account of which will be given in another paper.

#### REV. BENAJAH PHELPS.

The first pastor of the church was Rev. Benajah Phelps, who was invited to settle in the work of the ministry in March, 1780. He soon after accepted the invitation, but his formal settlement did not take place till the following year, 1781. To our great regret we have no record either of his installation or his pastoral work. The call which was extended to him and his letter of acceptance are preserved. Besides these we have only the minutes of the council convened to act with reference to his dismissal, which took place June 19, 1793, closing a ministry of thirteen years. This council, the first in the history of the church of which the records are preserved, was composed of the following churches represented by their pastors and delegates :

Hebron 2d church,

Rev. Elijah Lathrop, Moderator,  
Dea. Jabez Ellis.

North Bolton (Vernon),

Rev. Ebenezer Kellogg,  
Dea. Elisha Ladd.

Coventry (South),	Rev. Joseph Huntington, D.D., Benajah Strong, Esq.
Glastonbury 2d (Buck'am),	Rev. James Eells, Dea. Elisha Hollister,
Lebanon 2d (Columbia),	Rev. Thomas Brockway, Dea. Wadsworth Brewster.
East Windsor 2d (So. Windsor),	Rev. David McClure, William Wolcott, Esq.
Marlborough,	Rev. David Huntington, Dea. David Skinner.
Enfield,	Rev. Nehemiah Prudden, Mr. Joseph Kingsbury.
Hartford 2d,	Rev. Abel Flint, Mr. John Babcock.

Mr. Phelps was born in Hebron, Conn., March 30, 1737. He was the third of four children of Nathaniel Phelps, Jr., and his wife Mary (Curtis) Phelps. He was four years younger than Dr. Benjamin Trumbull, a native of the same town, author of the History of Connecticut, and pastor for sixty years of the church in North Haven; five years younger than Oliver Noble, also a native of Hebron, and for some time pastor of the church in Coventry. He was graduated at Yale College in 1761. Four years afterwards he went as a missionary to the province of Nova Scotia, and entered upon the work of the ministry at Cornwallis in 1765. Here he continued, happy and successful in his gospel work, till 1778. At that time, amid the increasing excitement attending the war of the Revolution, Mr. Phelps began to suffer on account of his patriotic sentiments. He was put to the alternative of leaving the province or taking an oath to take up arms and fight against his native country. Absolutely refusing the latter course, he was treated by the officers of the British government with the greatest insults, and threatened to be carried to England to suffer death as a rebel. He found means to escape with about three hundred pounds value in effects, leaving about five hundred pounds to be for-

feited to the king, and came to Boston, leaving his family in Nova Scotia. Having obtained a permit to go back for his family, he was taken by a British man-of-war, and after some time was with a number of others put on board a boat about fourteen miles from land, in very rough weather, and left to the mercy of the seas, but arrived at Machias, and never returned to Nova Scotia. In 1780 his family came to him at Boston, and it took nearly all his available means to pay the cost of their removal to this State.

In the reduced circumstances which thus attended the beginning of his ministry in this place, Mr. Phelps presented a memorial to the General Assembly, setting forth his trials and losses, together with the inability of the people of his new parish, pressed by the burden of public expense as well as that of building a new meeting-house, to furnish the assistance he needed, and praying that honorable body to take his pitiable case into consideration and grant such relief as they should see cause as a charitable compensation for his losses. The memorial was favorably received, and a grant was made of one hundred and fifty pounds.

When and where Mr. Phelps was ordained, and by what means he was supported in the early stages of his missionary work, are questions concerning which we have no definite information. David McClure, about ten years younger than he, and subsequently pastor of the church in South Windsor, was ordained in 1772 to go on a mission to the Delaware Indians, to be sustained by the society in Scotland for the propagation of the gospel. We have a strong conviction that Dr. Eleazer Wheelock, pastor of the church at Lebanon Crank, who had not yet removed to New Hampshire, noted for his service in educating young men for the ministry, at the same time furnishing them employment as teachers in the Indian Charity School of which he was the head, had an important relation to Mr. Phelps's early labors as a Christian minister; also that either the society above named, or the London Society which sustained Jonathan Edwards at Stockbridge, had an equally important relation to his missionary work. His home was not removed from this place on the

termination of his pastoral relation. Here he passed his last days and died February 10, 1817, at the age of seventy-nine—fifty-six years from the date of his graduation, thirty-seven years from the beginning and twenty-four years from the close of his ministry with this church. He was married to Miss Phebe Denison of New Haven. To them were born seven children, of whom five—one son and four daughters—lived to adult years. He was buried in the East Cemetery, where rest the remains of his wife, who died March, 1816. Here also were buried three children, Sally, an unmarried daughter, who died October 15, 1875, aged 91; Eunice, who became the wife of James Foster, and who died May 29, 1850, aged 74; and Ralph R. Phelps, the youngest of the family, born during his father's pastorate here, who passed a long life in this his native town, devoted to the legal profession and to agricultural pursuits, concerned for the various interests of the church, the community, and the commonwealth, and who died February 26, 1874, aged 87.

#### REV. SALMON KING.

The second pastor of the church, Rev. Salmon King, son of Gideon and Charity (Tucker) King, was born in Vernon—then a part of Bolton—October 4, 1771. He was graduated at Yale College in 1796; made a public profession of religion in 1797; was licensed to preach April 11, 1798; was ordained and settled here November 5, 1800, and was dismissed October 25, 1808. He was subsequently pastor of the Congregational church in Greensboro, Vt., July 11, 1810—January 26, 1814. Removing from Vermont, he began labor in Warren, Bradford Co., Penn., where he gathered a church with which his ministry was continued for twenty-five years, until his death, April 15, 1839, at the age of 68.

At the ordination of Mr. King, Rev. Charles Backus of Somers, was Moderator of the Council, and Rev. Jonathan Miller of Bristol (Burlington), Scribe. The public exercises took place after the following order: Introductory Prayer, Rev. Mr. Miller; Sermon, Rev. Mr. Backus; Consecrating Prayer, Rev. George Colton; Charge to Pastor, Rev. Eben-

ezer Kellogg; Right Hand of Fellowship, Rev. David McClure; Concluding Prayer, Rev. Jeremiah Hallock. The minutes of the Council close with the record that "Agreeable to the foregoing arrangements, on the 5th day of November, 1800, Mr. Salmon King was ordained over the Church of Christ in Orford in the presence of a large, respectable, and attentive assembly."

Mr. King was thrice married. His first wife was Mary Isham of Marlborough, to whom he was united February 18, 1801, and who died January 1, 1807. A publication containing two sermons of Mr. King, one preached the Sabbath after his ordination, the other the Sabbath after his dismissal, has an "Appendix, containing Memoirs of Mrs. King, late consort of the Rev. Salmon King; written by another hand," which represents her as a person of amiable disposition, good natural and acquired accomplishments, and eminently qualified for the station in which Providence placed her; a woman of thoughtful mind, deep spiritual experience, and earnest Christian life. Her grave is in the East Cemetery, a few feet from the entrance, where all who choose may read her epitaph.

The second wife of Mr. King was Mary Ames of Wethersfield, who died September 15, 1821. His third wife was Mrs. Eunice Talmadge of Albany, N. Y., who survived him six years. He had seven children, two sons and five daughters, all of whom lived to mature years and were members of the visible church of Christ. A son and daughter in Pennsylvania, and a daughter in Bristol, Conn., still survive.

At the time of Mr. King's removal to Pennsylvania the northern part of the State was sparsely settled, and the pastor shared with his people the inconvenience of a home in the wilderness. There were no roads, and wheel-vehicles were curiosities. On alternate Sabbaths the pastor rode ten miles on horseback, the way being indicated by marked trees, to preach in another town. From the two towns a church of eight members was gathered, and services were held first in a log school-house, then in a frame school-house, until finally a church was erected in which he continued to minister until called to a better country. An address by a pastor



in Warren, containing reminiscences of the early history of that church and from which we gather these facts, speaks of Mr. King as a plain, primitive man, somewhat eccentric. His talents, piety, and worth placed him on an eminence. He was remarkable in particular for his prompt performance of duty. No weather kept him from the place of meeting. He would sometimes remark, after a stormy Sabbath, "We had a good meeting." "Who were there?" "The Lord and Mr. King." Even when enfeebled by his last sickness he desired to be carried to the church, that he might once more stand up in his place and speak in the name of Christ. His labors continued thus to the end of life were rewarded with a good measure of success. His tombstone bears these lines, which were found among his papers :

" In yonder sacred house I spent my breath,  
Now silent mouldering here I lie in death ;  
These silent lips shall wake and yet declare  
A dread amen to truths they published there."

Calling back your thoughts from the forests of Pennsylvania to Orford, from the grave of Mr. King to the beginning of his ministry, let us observe that at that time the church had been seven years without a settled pastor. The ministerial service it had received had been miscellaneous and irregular. There were as yet but twenty-eight members, a gain of only ten in the twenty-one years since its organization. Of the original number three still appear on the roll, Silas Spencer, Joseph Benton, Elias Skinner. Among others, at this time we find the names of Dea. Ebenezer Bryant, Dea. Joseph Lyman, and Doct. George Griswold, taking an active part in the affairs of the church.

#### REV. ELISHA B. COOK.

After the dismissal of Mr. King there was again an interval of over five years during which the church was without a pastor, and for not a little of that time without preaching or public service, when with great unanimity a call was extended to Mr. Elisha B. Cook to become the pastor. He accepted the invitation, and was ordained March 3, 1814. On this

occasion Rev. T. M. Cooley, D.D., of Granville, Mass., preached from Heb. xiii: 17, "They watch for souls as they that must give account." Other parts in the service were—consecrating prayer, Rev. Nehemiah Prudden, Enfield; charge, Rev. Abel Flint, Hartford; right hand of fellowship, Rev. Andrew Yates, East Hartford; concluding prayer, Rev. Thomas Robbins, East Windsor. It is recorded that "A numerous audience conducting with great decorum evinced their approbation of the performances by a solemn and respectful attention. The pleasing union of this church and society, with their earnest exertion for the enjoyment of gospel institutions, affords an encouraging prospect to the pastor and people, and may animate the hopes of the friends of Zion."

The settlement of Mr. Cook marks a turning point in the history of the church, introducing an era of prosperity and progress unknown before. Thirty-four years had passed—years of slow growth, and at times amid many discouragements. The intervals between the pastorates thus far amounted to thirteen years, during which there was no shepherd to watch over the flock; while in the sixty years which have since elapsed the vacancies include less than five years. The work of the church was begun three years after the Declaration of Independence, amid the struggles and distractions of the war of the Revolution. The years immediately following were characterized by no special revival influences in the land. The state of religion in the churches was low. Great burdens were upon the people. Important problems were before the country in the organization of the national government and the adjustment of its finances. The tendency to unbelief was strong, wide-spread, and progressive, fostered by the demoralizing influences of the war at home and the inroads of infidelity from abroad.

While the churches were affected by the state of things without, they suffered also in many cases from occasions of evil within themselves. In seeking an insight into the spiritual condition of this church at the time under review, it should be observed that at its formation the half-way covenant,

so called, was adopted, in accordance with which the privilege of baptism for themselves and their children was granted to those who desired it—a relation of membership being allowed without requiring a profession of regeneration and participation in the ordinance of the Lord's supper. This practice, which widely prevailed in New England in the early part of the eighteenth century, began to be discountenanced and set aside before the powerful influence of the great awakening which, beginning about 1740, affected to a remarkable degree the spirit and practice of the churches during the last half of the century. In this church the change did not take place till 1800. In that year, Sept. 24th and 25th, an important meeting was held, at which Dr. Nathan Strong presided, for the purpose of taking action with reference to the conditions of membership, and also of concurring with the action of the Ecclesiastical Society, which had already extended a call to Mr King. The action taken at this meeting was prefaced with the following preamble and question :

“This church, being one of the Consociated churches of the State of Connecticut, and being convened by special call to prepare the way for the settlement of the Gospel ministry, having by solemn prayer invoked the presence and blessing of God, took into consideration the following question : Whether it be fit and agreeable to the laws of Christ to separate the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.” The record continues : “Having referred back to the original agreement on which the church was founded, seriously considered the subject as they hope with reference to the will of Christ and their own duty as Christians ; also, considering the present state of this church and society, passed the following votes :

*Voted*, That it is the opinion of this Church that no persons in future shall be admitted as members into this Church to receive baptism for themselves or their children without giving satisfactory evidence of their personal qualification as Christians and of their determination to attend on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.” By the other votes the church concedes to a number of covenanted members the privilege

still of having their children baptized, but at the same time earnestly requests them to consider their solemn covenant, and anxiously entreats them to honor God in the celebration of all His ordinances. It is also declared that when such covenanted members shall desire to come to the Communion the church will not require their public repetition of the covenant, but that their desire be made known to the pastor, or in his absence to the deacons, who shall publish it to the church ; and if within a specified time no objection to their moral or Christian character be made, such persons shall be considered as having a right to the Communion, and shall also have a right to vote in church meetings and all other privileges equal to any other member. This action was taken, doubtless, in accordance with the expressed wish of the pastor-elect, and seems to have been made a condition of his accepting the invitation to settle in the pastoral office. It indicates a strong desire on the part of the church to remove existing hindrances to its saving work and to secure for the future a deeper spiritual life. In view of the circumstances, therefore, it is not surprising that serious obstacles to the spiritual work of the church were encountered, and that these, at times, were connected especially with the enforcement of discipline in the endeavor to reclaim erring members. On one occasion the pastor made the following statement of his feelings in reference to this matter : “ I would here place on record the great goodness of God in being with this church thus far in her difficulties, and the harmony and zeal of the brethren in general. In these dark and dismal days we stand in need of Thine assistance, O Lord. It is in vain that we try to reform each other unless Thou sanctify our endeavors. We lament our wanderings from Thee ; we ask for forgiveness, and pray that Thou wouldst pardon us and enable us to attend to our difficulties without prejudice in the fear of God. Wilt Thou give these offenders repentance ; take Thy church into Thy special care and build it up in the faith and purity of the gospel ; pour out Thy Spirit upon us, and may this church and people be brought to repentance and saved from impending ruin, and prepared for

Thy glorious kingdom above. But not our will but Thine be done."

The church was not in harmonious condition at the time of Mr. King's removal, and in the years immediately following its prospects grew more disheartening. Dr. Thomas Robbins, speaking eighteen years afterwards of Mr. Cook's settlement, says: "The people had been destitute of the regular ministration of gospel ordinances for five years. For a considerable part of this time the pulpit was not supplied; various divisions and unhappy alienations existed; the society had become very much reduced; the church was small; to the faithful friends of Zion the prospect was dark, painful, and gloomy. Little expectation was entertained that he, or any other person, could soon be settled here in the work of the ministry." "At this discouraging period," Dr. R. continues, "a few knew that there was help on high, and resolved not to despair. When the meeting-house had been closed for a considerable time and there was no public worship on the Sabbath, two persons *agreed together* that they would go to the house of prayer on each returning Lord's day, and if no others joined them unite in the worship of the living God and Saviour. The little band was soon increased to a good number, presenting their united and persevering supplications to a prayer-hearing God that He would remember them in their low estate, for His mercy endureth for ever. The grain of mustard seed was planted; from the high residence of redeeming glory the Angel 'of the Covenant beheld the attempt; the seed was watered by the tear of his love; it sprouted towards heaven and soon became a wide-spreading tree bearing the fruits of a Saviour's mercy."

It is interesting thus to note that God had already set a light here by these special efforts of his praying disciples which at once cheered the heart of the young minister on his coming among them. He in turn gave comfort and strength to them. His words were with power; new interest was awakened in divine worship, alienations and prejudices were obliterated. The impressions produced by the earnestness and devotion of the preacher led to large and important



accessions to the society, and they proceeded at once to invite Mr. Cook to settle with them, with a liberal provision for his support—a step which would have been regarded impossible a short time before. When the day of ordination came it was said that “many could hardly believe their senses when they contemplated the change effected by the good providence of God in a few months.”

The hopes entertained at the beginning of Mr. Cook’s ministry were abundantly realized. A work of grace soon after began which was characterized as “great, powerful, and rapid, such as has been but seldom witnessed. It overspread the society ; no class of people were passed by ; an uninterested beholder could scarcely be found. In a few months many were rejoicing in hope. As the fruits of this work about one hundred members were added to the church.” Again, in 1821, the society was a sharer in the great work of grace in this vicinity and throughout the State, from which about fifty were added to the church. Besides these special visitations of the Spirit, God was with His people by His saving power from year to year. Though not every year was one of increase there were added in all, during Mr. Cook’s ministry, one hundred and ninety-nine.

In the midst of his prosperity and usefulness his career was terminated by sudden and unexpected death. He was drowned in a deep place in the small stream, about eighty rods above the bridge, in the rear of this church. In the haying season he had been in the field assisting his neighbor and friend, R. R. Phelps, Esq. Mr. Phelps was driving home with the load, and Mr. Cook, taking a different direction, was crossing the stream on a log where he had crossed repeatedly the same day. He had passed over, as is supposed, and in attempting to ascend the bank, two or three feet perpendicular, took hold of a post which, being unsupported, fell with him into the water. A small contusion on his right temple indicated that he either struck the log or was struck by the post in falling. Life was extinct when he was taken up, though it is stated that he could not have been in the water more than two or three minutes. Particulars of the sad



event were published and widely circulated at the time. A very deep impression was made upon this and the communities round about. His people were overwhelmed with sorrow at their great bereavement. His funeral solemnities were attended by a large assembly, including many of his brethren in the ministry and people from the neighboring towns. Dr. Thomas Robbins preached the sermon, which was a loving tribute to the excellent qualities of the departed servant of God, a message of sympathy and consolation to the bereaved—his widow and children, his parents and brethren, his stricken and sorrowing people. A minute appears in the obituary record of the church in the handwriting of the friend to whom his last earthly service was rendered, from which, in connection with the peculiar circumstances of his decease, we read: "In activity, zeal, and faithfulness, as well as in the success of his ministry, he has been very rarely surpassed. As a Christian he was ardent and zealous; as a man he was amiable, and as a neighbor he was kind and obliging in an unusual degree, and to this last trait of character he owed his death—he fell while in the act of assisting his friend."

Mr. Cook was born in Otis, Mass., April 28, 1787; was graduated at Yale College in 1811; studied theology with Rev. Dr. Yates; was licensed to preach by the Association of Berkshire; became the pastor of this church at the age of twenty-seven; and on the 11th of July, 1823, in the full strength of his young manhood, rested from his labors, after a ministry of nine years, aged thirty-six. He was a careful student as well as an earnest Christian and devoted pastor. A small volume was published by him, entitled, "Testimony of God on some important doctrines of Revelation, to which is annexed a Bible Creed," which showed his extensive and accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, and his strong love for the truths which they teach. The work, which was chiefly a compilation and arrangement of texts bearing on the important doctrines of Revelation, at the request of leading ministers of the State, Dr. Chapin, Dr. Hawes, Dr. Moses Cook Welch, and others, was revised and enlarged in a second edition,

which was his last literary work, having been completed the day preceding his death.

Traditions of Mr. Cook represent him as a man of very genial, cheerful spirit; of small stature but of intense physical activity, capable, it was said, of visiting the entire parish in half a day—a statement in which ministers of the present time will see as much of hyperbole as may be needful for their special comfort; of exceedingly quick and tenacious memory, so that he could write a sermon and, after once reading, preach it verbatim without manuscript; of a remarkably unsectarian spirit at a time when this virtue was rarer than now. “In proof of this,” says his son now living, “I remember standing on the timbers of the Methodist church just about to be erected only a few rods from his own, and that he held my hand within his while offering a fervent prayer for the success of the enterprise.”

Mr. Cook was married, March 3, 1815, to Esther Hills Woodbridge of this parish, who died December 25, 1816. His second wife was Harriet Sweatland of Hartford, who subsequently became the wife of Moses Talcott of Marlborough. Two children are now living, Harriet Esther Cook and Rev. Elisha Woodbridge Cook, who was born July 28, 1816; was graduated at Yale College, 1837; at Yale Theological Seminary, 1845; was ordained pastor of the Congregational church in Haddam, Conn., November 18, 1846, and has labored since in various places in the ministry of the Congregational church.

#### REV. ENOCH BURT.

Rev. Enoch Burt, the fourth pastor, was installed July 1, 1824. He was born in South Wilbraham, Mass., October 26, 1779. A part of his early life was spent in Springfield and Hartford. In the latter city he made a profession of religion, and became a member of the Center church. He was graduated at the College of New Jersey in 1805, and studied theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. At a meeting of the Association of the Eastern District of Fairfield County, convened at Stratford, May 31, 1808, an application was made

by Dr. Nathan Perkins and Rev. Calvin Chapin, from the Committee of Missions of the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, requesting the Association in behalf of said Trustees (should they see fit) to ordain Mr. Enoch Burt, a licentiate from the County of Hampshire, Mass., to the work of the gospel ministry, to be employed as a missionary to New Connecticut. The ordination took place on the following day, June 1, 1808, Rev. Dr. Perkins preaching the sermon, and Rev. David Ely making the consecrating prayer. After one year in missionary service, Mr. Burt became pastor of the Presbyterian church in Lamington, N. J., where he remained about nine years. Removing with his family to North Carolina, he had charge of two churches for a time, one in Bath, the other in Washington, supplying them alternately. Returning to New England, he was pastor, for about four years, of the Congregational church in Tolland, Mass. While visiting friends in Manchester in the summer of 1823, he preached, by invitation, for Mr. Cook, on the Sabbath preceding the decease of that lamented pastor. By request of the committee he supplied the pulpit also the following Sabbath. Thus by a singular coincidence of the ordinary and extraordinary in the providence of God, the attention of the people was called to Mr. Burt as Mr. Cook's successor. He was engaged as a supply the following winter, and on the first Sabbath of July, one year from the day of his first preaching, he occupied the pulpit as pastor of the church.

At his installation the sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Thomas Robbins, from I. Cor. i. : 18—"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us that are saved it is the power of God." The installing prayer was offered by Dr. Nathan Perkins, the charge to the pastor was by Rev. Mr. Rowland of Simsbury, right hand of fellowship by Rev. Joy H. Fairchild of East Hartford. The sermon of Dr. Robbins, who was the trusted friend and counselor of the church in its varied fortunes, was published by request, and the sum of twenty dollars was appropriated to meet the cost of printing. There is a preliminary note which states that

“The most of the following sermon was delivered at Windsor at the ordination of Messrs. Leonard Bacon and Erastus Maltby as Evangelists, Sept. 24, 1824.” Of these ministers, one became pastor of the First Church in New Haven in 1825; the other of the Trinity Congregational Church, Taunton, Mass., in 1826. Both retain at this date the same pastoral relation, though not held to the discharge of full pastoral duty. Thus we note the fact not known to all students of history, but interesting to some, that Dr. Bacon’s ordination sermon was first preached in Manchester. There is also in this publication “An appendix containing the Minutes of the General Consociation, holden at Guilford, Nov. 14, 1741, by order of the General Assembly, supposed to have been lost.” This Consociation had been called to consult and give expression to its views concerning the disorders that had arisen in connection with the great revival movement of the time. A subsequent act of the General Assembly was strongly censured on account of the unhappy effects of its execution, and the severity with which it bore on certain zealous and useful ministers in the State. Dr. Trumbull in his history censures not only the law but also the proceedings of the Consociation, on which he supposed the legislative act to be founded, though he had not seen the Minutes of the Consociation, and it was supposed they were not to be found. Dr. Robbins having secured a copy of these Minutes published them with the sermon above mentioned, saying in his preface, “With a moderate allowance for the changes in the state of society in a period of more than eighty years, and the different usages of the times, I see nothing in them to be disapproved. And they afford an additional proof that the churches of the State have ever enjoyed the signal mercies of God and been favored with a faithful and evangelical ministry.” His objection seems to have been not so much to the spirit of the act of the Legislature as to the extent to which it was carried and the severity of its penalty. We in our time would see the trouble not in the Resolves of the Council at Guilford, but rather in the Church and State policy of the time, which made the General Assembly the regulator of ecclesiastical affairs.

Recalling our thoughts from the former century, into which the "Appendix" has led us, let us note that the church, which consisted of sixty-seven members at the time of Mr. Cook's ordination, numbered one hundred and ninety-eight when Mr. Burt took charge of it. Thirty-six were added during his ministry, which was comparatively brief—three and a half years. He assumed the pastorate at a critical time. The membership of the church had been largely increased. The people had been called to part with a pastor greatly beloved at a time when his zeal and ability were needed for strengthening and upbuilding even more than before for awakening and ingathering. The charge of the new pastor is seen to have involved peculiar difficulty, as we reflect that a large increase of numbers does not always imply a proportional increase of strength—that many who come into the church only add to the care and anxiety of the faithful minister. There is nothing to indicate the spiritual condition of the church at this time except that it was voted in February, 1826, on account of the languishing state of vital religion, to observe a day of fasting and prayer. The termination of the pastoral relation of Mr. Burt occurred in February, 1828. We have no account of his dismissal, and no record except the concurrent votes of the church and society with reference to the call of the council to consider and act upon the subject.

He was never afterwards settled in the ministry. Before commencing his professional studies he had learned the trade of a watchmaker and employed himself in mechanical operations, for which he had a natural taste, together with considerable inventive genius. His attention in later life was thus turned to secular affairs. He was the author of various mechanical inventions which it is understood brought him some pecuniary returns, and which would have been more valuable had he been in circumstances to bring them into more extensive and permanent use. He continued to reside in this place, enjoying the respect of his former parishioners, until his death, which occurred November 11, 1856. Mr. Burt was married in 1807 to Martha Hamilton of Princeton, N. J., who died



December 13, 1809, leaving one daughter, the only child of Mr. Burt, and who now resides in Hartford. He was afterwards married to Phebe Jagger of South Hampton, Mass., who died August 9, 1856.

#### REV. B. F. NORTHROP.

After an interval of one year the church and society united in extending a call to Mr. Bennett F. Northrop, who as fifth pastor was ordained February 4, 1829. He was born at Brookfield, Conn., October 16, 1801; was graduated at Yale College in 1824; studied theology at the Theological Seminary, Auburn, N. Y., and preached one year in Tolland, Mass., before his settlement here. He was dismissed October 29, 1850. After a year of rest and two years in the service of the Am. S. S. Union, he was installed pastor of the First Church in Griswold July 1, 1853. This position he held till July 3, 1870—seventeen years. He died at Griswold, of softening of the brain, March 4, 1875. The discourse at his funeral, by Rev. H. P. Arms, D. D., of Norwich, was published.

In January, 1840, after the church edifice had received important repairs, Mr. Northrop preached a dedicatory discourse from Is. lxiii, 7—"I will make mention of the loving-kindnesses of the Lord," etc., setting forth—1st, God's loving-kindness in the history of the church hitherto; 2d, How the continuance of His loving-kindness may be secured; 3d, Considerations which should lead His people to secure His favor. In this discourse Mr. Northrop refers to the ministry of his predecessor as the period which was signalized by the erection of the present house of worship, and remarks in language not inapposite to our circumstances at the present time, "In moving the people to build and in giving them a mind to the work, the great goodness of the Lord is to be essentially noted as imparting a fresh impulse to the prosperity of the church, and constituting a cheering spot on the page of her history. For a disposition to build a commodious and comfortable house of worship, with the ability and energy to carry it through, is not to be reckoned among the



least of God's loving-kindnesses." In further reference to the tokens of divine favor during his own ministry, he says: "In 1831 the Lord was pleased to pour out his spirit and bless the church with an extensive revival of religion. It commenced in the bible class, of which the pastor then had charge, and ultimately spread through the society and town, continuing nearly or quite through the year. One hundred and thirty-eight were added to the church as the fruit of this revival." There were subsequently other seasons of special interest, the most important of which occurred in 1843, when the power of the Holy Spirit was manifested in an unusual degree. Seventy persons were added to the church on profession of their faith. The fruits of this revival long remained. Not only did this church receive new spiritual force which it has continued to feel ever since, but churches in other places—Glastonbury, North Manchester, Talcottville, Hartford, Chicago, Philadelphia, and some on the far western prairies—have been strengthened by the faith and works of individuals who in that year of refreshing stood before this altar of God to confess their faith and say, "We are on the Lord's side."

At Mr. Northrop's settlement the church consisted of two hundred and eight members. The whole number received during his ministry was about four hundred and fourteen. The list of members reached the highest number in 1847, three years before his dismissal. It was then three hundred and twenty-four, and at the close of his ministry was about three hundred.

In Nov., 1831, after the arduous and protracted labors connected with the revival at that time, Mr. Northrop was constrained to ask his people either to release him from pastoral duty for a year, or to unite with him in calling a council for his dismissal. After serious consideration of the subject, and the observance of a day of fasting and prayer, the church voted to unite with the pastor in calling a council. It does not appear, however, that the proposed council was convened. The needed rest was doubtless taken, and the pastor continued in his place. Thus a pastorate which might have termi-

nated in two years became, by the blessing of God, the longest that has been known in the history of the church. In 1850, his health again suffering from the strain of long-continued pastoral duty, Mr. Northrop resigned his charge, hoping, by a season of rest and a change in his field of labor, to extend the period of his active usefulness in the ministry. In this he was not disappointed, as his subsequent years of successful service abundantly proved. He was a man strong in his love of spiritual things, and earnestly devoted to his calling; firm without self-assertion, of good natural powers strengthened by thorough culture, combining a clear perception of scriptural truth with facility in its presentation. He was consistent in life, faithful in service, beloved by the people of both parishes which he served, never losing his interest and affection for this church, to which he gave the strength of his early manhood, and bearing with him to the grave the love of many here who could never forget their devoted pastor and friend.

Mr. Northrop was married May 7, 1827, to Martha Stillman of Wethersfield, who died Sept. 17, 1844. Of eight children born to them, three are still living. He was married June 24, 1845, to Mary W. Bull of Hartford, who still resides at Griswold.

#### REV. FREDERICK T. PERKINS.

Having spoken of those who rest from their labors, we now speak more briefly of the living. Rev. Frederick T. Perkins, sixth pastor, was installed June 11, 1851. Dr. Bennett Tyler was Moderator of the Council, and the order of public exercises as follows: Sermon, Rev. Isaac P. Langworthy, Chelsea, Mass.; Installing Prayer, Rev. Joel Hawes, D.D., Hartford; Charge to Pastor, Rev. B. F. Northrop; Right Hand of Fellowship, Rev. Geo. E. Hill, North Manchester; Address to the people, Rev. Walter Clarke, D.D., Hartford.

Mr. Perkins was born in Sanbornton, N. H., Aug. 16, 1811; was graduated at Yale College 1839, studied theology at Yale Theological Seminary, was pastor at East Cambridge, Mass., Jan. 11, 1843, to May 26, 1851. After a successful

ministry of a little more than five years in Manchester, during which twenty-nine members were added to the church by letter and sixty-nine by profession, he was dismissed Oct. 14, 1856. Since that time he has been in active service in various places: Williamsburg, Mass., Galesburg, Ill., Hartford and Naugatuck, Conn., and is at present acting pastor of the church at Tilton, N. H. In the first year of Mr. Perkins' ministry occurred a work of grace very fruitful in its results, beginning in December and continuing through the winter. "The Spirit of God," it is stated, "moved with great power upon the hearts of the young people. About one hundred and fifty were hopefully converted, many of whom united with this church, while others were received into the churches of neighboring towns. Subsequently, another season of deep interest was enjoyed, when the Spirit descended upon the children gently but with quickening power, leading many to the knowledge of a Saviour's love, the blessedness of seeking first the kingdom of God."

#### REV. S. B. FORBES.

Rev. Samuel B. Forbes, the seventh pastor, was ordained Oct. 20, 1857, and dismissed April, 1859.

At his ordination the sermon was preached by Rev. Mark Hopkins, D.D.; the Ordaining Prayer was made by Rev. G. A. Calhoun, D.D.; the Charge to the Pastor was given by Rev. J. C. Webster of Hopkinton, Mass.; the Right Hand of Fellowship by Rev. Hiram Day; the Charge to the People by Rev. Walter Clarke, D.D. Mr. Forbes was born in Westborough, Mass., Aug. 1, 1826; was graduated at Williams College in 1855, and completed his theological studies at the Theological Institute, East Windsor, in 1857. He entered upon his work here with the strong affection and confidence of the people, and with great promise of usefulness. Failing health, however, compelled him early to relinquish his pastoral work and to devote himself to secular pursuits. He has since resided in Winsted, useful in the church while active in business life.

## REV. L. M. DORMAN.

Rev. Lester M. Dorman, eighth pastor, was ordained June 6, 1860, and dismissed May 10, 1870. At his ordination Rev. Joel Hawes, D.D. of Hartford, was Moderator of the Council, and the order of public service as follows: Scripture lesson and prayer by Rev. George N. Webber of Hartford; Sermon by Rev. Horatio W. Brown, then a member of the Faculty of Yale College; Ordaining Prayer by Rev. C. W. Clapp of Rockville; Charge to Pastor and people, in one address, by Rev. Dr. Hawes; Right Hand of Fellowship by Rev. E. P. Parker.

Mr. Dorman was born at Hamden, Conn., Nov. 5, 1829; was graduated at Yale College 1854; studied theology at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. For several months previous to his settlement the church had been supplied by Rev. Warren G. Jones, whose labors met with favor both from the Lord and the people, sixty members having been added by profession and nine by letter in 1859. During Mr. Dorman's ministry of ten years, eighty-two persons were received into the church—the largest increase having been in connection with a season of spiritual refreshing in 1865. This period is noted, also, as including the memorable war years—years of struggle and victory for the preservation of the National Union. In those dark times when all hearts were tried, no heart was more loyal in feeling, or more earnest in utterance for the principles on which the nation's life depended than that of the pastor of this church.

In 1870 a difference of opinion having arisen with respect to the advisability of changing the place of public worship, Mr. Dorman was led to resign his charge and ask for a council for his dismissal. After ministering for about nine months to a congregation worshiping in Cheneys' Hall, he entered the communion of the Protestant Episcopal Church. He has since resided in New York, devoting himself in part to literary work, and in part to the work of the ministry in connection with the Church of the Ascension.

After an interval of one year the present pastor was installed June 8, 1871. Rev. B. F. Northrop was Moderator of

the Council. The sermon was preached by Rev. Nathaniel J. Burton, D.D., of Hartford. Other parts in the service as follows: Installing prayer, Rev. Geo. A. Oviatt, Talcottville; Charge to Pastor, Rev. Amos S. Chescbrough, Vernon; Right Hand of Fellowship, Rev. Theodore J. Holmes, East Hartford; Charge to People, Rev. B. F. Northrop, Griswold.

The exact membership of the church at that time it has been difficult to ascertain. It is given in the minutes of the State Conference as two hundred and thirty-five, but this includes not less than fifty absent members, whose residence in some cases it was impossible to trace. Eighty members have been added since 1870, and the number whose residence is now known is a little less than two hundred. While there has been no powerful and extensive revival work among us during the last eight years, there have been two occasions—one in 1872, the other in 1877—when special influences of the Spirit have been graciously manifested, when some have been brought to the new life of faith, when Christians have been refreshed and strengthened, “walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.”

Of ourselves and our works, brethren, it does not become us now to speak. God has set us here where what we do, be it little or much, will not escape the scrutiny of other times. In the measure of the centuries we are cutting our notch, which we hope will be visible a hundred years hence, and that those who study our record will find some evidence of the existence of a church in 1879 which was not unmindful of the faith and works of the fathers, nor unconcerned for the spiritual welfare of the generations to come. Early in the present year the subject of repairing extensively the former house of worship was seriously considered, as a matter to be deferred no longer. The result was the determination to build anew. For this enterprise, so successfully completed, we make grateful mention of the divine goodness, the sympathy and aid of friends and former members of the church in this and other towns, while the zeal and self-sacrifice of those who have here borne the burden, giving heart and time and money to the work, we leave for others to commend.



## SETTLED PASTORS.

Pausing here for a glance over the field which we have surveyed, it is seen from the review that the practice of the church has been to have *settled* pastors. The vacancies which have occurred have been incidental and temporary, and though sometimes protracted, never with the purpose relinquished of restoring the settled ministry. The church has been, however, twenty years without a settled pastor. Of these, sixteen belong to the first half of the century, and four to the second half. Making these deductions, the average term of pastoral service is, for the first fifty years, eight and one-half years, and for the second fifty years, nine and one-fifth years ; while in the eighty years during which the pastoral office has been filled there have been *nine* pastors, with an average term of a little less than nine years. While it has been easy to name those who have labored thus in the word and doctrine, it is not so easy to measure the influence of individual workers ; sometimes the faithful few whose light has shone in dark times, and whose lives, by the fruit they bore, have been felt long after their work was done. It is well for us to reflect that the blessings which enrich us to-day may be largely due to the fidelity of those whose patience and faith have no adequate record but in God's book of remembrance.

## SERVICE OF SONG.

The service of song has ever been regarded as a most important department of worship, if not coördinate with the preaching of the Word. In the old sanctuaries the choir-gallery facing the congregation on three sides indicated not only the provision made for the service, but also the numbers engaged in it. This church has been favored in the course of its history by the presence of individuals and of families gifted in heart and voice, whose zeal for the praises of Zion has inspired enthusiasm in others and given character and efficiency to this branch of divine service. For a long period of time, during which the choir was famed for its excellence in the region round about, many prominent members of it



were connected with the several branches of one family. The Woodbridge blood, flowing in successive generations and taking different family names, carried with it the gift and love of song, of which the religious services here for three-quarters of a century have had the benefit.

In this connection reference may be made to Mr. Jarvis Crandall, an esteemed teacher of music, though not a resident of the place; to Mr. Samuel Chandler, to Dea. Horace Pitkin, and Dea. Normand Spencer, leaders of the choir successively for many years—men with music in their souls, and with it a living faith, in whose singing the spirit and the understanding were worthily blended; not to speak of some now among us whose contribution to the worship of God in past days is not forgotten by those who still “enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise.”

#### ARTICLES OF FAITH.

The religious faith of those who acknowledged the covenant when the church was formed was substantially that held by the New England churches of that day. It has been maintained without essential change ever since. The first formal Confession of Faith, aside from what was implied in the original covenant, was adopted, October 9, 1800. At the same time a form of covenant was adopted, brief but admirable both in spirit and expression. This confession Mr. Northrop alludes to in his dedicatory sermon in 1840, as the *present* Confession of Faith. It was subsequently revised during his ministry, the revision consisting mainly in the division of the topics into separate articles, and a brief addition to the covenant.

At a meeting of the church held December 31, 1852, the present form of Confession and Covenant was adopted, the Confession having been drawn up, it is stated, by Dr. Bennett Tyler, and the Covenant by Dr. Payson. It is a matter for thankfulness that the church has been united through all its history in the acceptance of the great truths of the gospel as generally held by our Connecticut churches. Its ministers have been educated at various theological schools—Prince-

ton, New Haven, East Windsor, Auburn, and New York,—yet in their ministrations they have found the people united as far as could be reasonably expected in accepting their teachings. Whatever occasion of division in other matters may have arisen, in this has prevailed the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Mr. R. R. Phelps was never suspected of laxity in his doctrinal opinions; yet when, with his old school pastor, he visited the people from time to time to aid in clearing up difficult points of doctrine, such as election and total depravity, it is understood that his explanations were satisfactory to hitherto doubtful minds. May this church continue to favor and to demand the preaching of the truths of God's word, observing that what are called the distinctive doctrines of Calvinism are not for that reason to be regarded as the most important doctrines of Calvinism; that doctrinal preaching, as some have assumed, is not simply the preaching of decrees and election, but rather the great truths of a personal God, his perfect law, man's guilt as a transgressor, the provision of life in Jesus Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify, the duty of coming to God by faith, and of daily living by faith—doctrines which are the only ground of hope and the only basis of Christian character, and which make the preaching of such men as Moody and Spurgeon, as they did that of Edwards and Wesley preëminently *doctrinal* preaching.

#### DISCIPLINE.

This church, especially in its earlier history, was not inattentive to the subject of discipline. Its rules received due consideration. Indeed, one would judge from the records that when no other business was on hand in church meeting, a motion for a committee to revise the standing rules was usually in order. The obligation to look after delinquent members was recognized. It would occasion some surprise for an erring brother to-day to receive notice that on a given Sabbath he would be publicly admonished before the congregation. Several instances of such admonition are recorded, which seem to have been submitted to with becoming defer-

ence, though not always with the effect to reclaim the offender. By vote of the church, the practice of public admonition was discontinued in 1834. The tendency of later times, it must be confessed, is to the neglect of discipline in the church, and the disregard of covenant obligations. Is there not a like tendency in the family and in the State? What occasion have we to dread the peril impending on all sides from this cause unless with the larger personal liberty there is felt a stronger personal obligation to maintain good behavior!

#### REVIVALS.

With the spirit and work of revivals this church has been ever in sympathy, and owes to this fact much of its progress and usefulness in the past. The great awakening which attended the labors of Edwards and Whitefield about the middle of the eighteenth century, and in which not a few ministers of Connecticut, of great faith and earnestness, had a prominent part, left an influence with the churches which did not die in the period of coldness and unbelief which subsequently prevailed. Through earnest preaching, believing prayer, and faithful Christian effort there had been an experience of power from God which did not permit His people to forget their high privilege, even in times of greatest declension. The gracious illumination which came to New England and extended widely west and south at the close of the century shed its light upon Zion here, and Mr. King, in his farewell sermon eight years later, spoke of that time of refreshing, and of more than forty members added to the church in 1800. Besides the powerful work of God which took place in 1814, at the beginning of Mr. Cook's ministry, bringing to the things which here remained and were ready to die, the vigor of a new life, this church in common with many others shared largely in those visitations of divine grace which, at times, have widely prevailed, as in 1821, 1831, 1843, and 1858; while from time to time the blessing has come, the Spirit of God has been manifested in saving power according to His people's need and their purpose to claim His promise. Dr. Asahel Nettleton, who preached with great effect in many

places in Connecticut and Massachusetts from 1812 to 1821, was well known here. His name was long held in grateful remembrance by many who had witnessed the power of God in his ministrations, winning souls to Christ and adding to the church such as should be saved.

#### REFORM.

With the great reform movements which belong to our time the churches of our faith have been intimately allied. Without the favor and coöperation of the churches slavery, so far as we can see, would not have been abolished ; the temperance reform would never have reached its present stage of progress. Individuals in their zeal may be effective in a degree. But the church of God, in its steady and constant devotion to the cause of true reform responding to the divine injunction, "Be not weary in well doing," gives the only hope of certain and permanent success. It is gratifying to note the readiness with which the churches of this State entered into the early temperance movement, beginning the reform with themselves, as indeed there was need, then by example and precept appealing to others, and thus extending and carrying forward the work. The influence of Mr. Cook was a strong force in the early stages of this reform. He began his ministry at the time when deacons and other friends visiting the parsonage on Sabbath-noon were refreshed from generous decanters ; when for the pastor to take his morning dram and give the children the sugar at the bottom was not an unusual thing ; when the entertainment of ministerial gatherings was not complete without the provision of strong drink, with the inevitable liability to the embarrassment arising, in some cases, from over-indulgence. It is related that on one occasion at a ministers' meeting in Hartford, Mr. Cook, with some others, became so impressed with the evil tendency of the drinking practice that then and there they came together and pledged themselves to each other to abandon entirely the use of ardent spirits. This was, doubtless, the first decided movement on the side of total abstinence in Hartford and vicinity. The interest of this church in this

cause is seen from the record of a meeting held Sept. 26, 1833, at which it was voted: That hereafter no person shall be admitted to the communion of this church, either upon confession or by letter, who does not recognize the principle of total abstinence from spirituous liquors, and practice accordingly. The same requirement has a place in the last revision of the standing rules. Let us hope that its faithful observance will be fruitful of good for a century to come. It is understood that the first wedding in this town at which wine was discarded in the entertainment of guests took place at the house of a member of this church now living and now present.

#### GENERAL BENEVOLENCE.

The first third of the century now in review had passed before the great missionary movements in this country had begun. The American Board was organized in 1810, during the interval between the ministry of Mr. King and that of Mr. Cook. The large number added to the church during Mr. Cook's ministry included members who have been spoken of as pillars of the church for half a century. Among them were those who gave the appeals of the missionary cause a hearty response, who made it a principle to give of their substance systematically and regularly as the Lord had prospered them. Thus the church came into immediate coöperation with the great benevolent societies as they were formed, one after another, to extend the power of divine truth in the world. Forty years ago, Mr. Northrop, reviewing God's loving-kindness to this people, said: "For many years the various causes of Christian benevolence have been winding themselves deeper and deeper into the affections of the church. And I think I may say with truth, without being guilty of vain boasting, as due to God who hath inclined the hearts of His people to devise liberal things, that there is no one of the leading objects of Christian enterprise, when properly presented before them, which has not received its due share of consideration and the call for assistance been cordially and liberally responded to." Grateful for all the indications in our later records of our sympathy with the



benevolent spirit of the past, we may unite in Mr. Northrop's expression of the earnest desire "that it may always be thus so long as suffering humanity exists, or a nation or a tribe remains ignorant of the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

#### THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

Of the Sunday-school the early records make no mention. It was organized in 1820 and has been maintained without interruption since that time. The following action is recorded, passed July 1, 1832 :

*Voted*, That this church will adopt the Sabbath-school as the school of the church and take the guardianship and oversight of the same.

*Voted*, That in view of the importance of Sabbath-school instruction to our children, we will do all in our power to sustain the Sabbath-school now taken under our care ; and also that we will exert ourselves to secure its benefits to all the children within our influence. This action was followed by the appointment of committees to visit in the different parts of the parish to awaken interest and gather scholars into the school. This appointment was renewed for several successive years. The following list of officers in the Sabbath-school at the time this action was taken is the first of which there is any record : Superintendent, Martin H. Keeney ; Secretary, Normand Spencer ; Treasurer, George Bunce ; Librarian, Frederick Woodbridge. In the years immediately succeeding, the superintendency was held by Samuel C. McKee, George Bunce, and Horace Pitkin. Since that time the church has continued to recognize its responsible relation to the Sabbath-school. It has participated in the growing interest in Sabbath-school work in our land during the last forty years, and rejoiced in the zeal and facilities for this work which have been so remarkably developed within the last ten years. It becomes us here to record our estimate of the Sabbath-school—its special provision for the young, its call to personal, individual study of the word of God, and to renew our devotion to it as a chief department of the church's power and usefulness ; not to the exclusion of family instruc-



tion, but as a vital agency through which the home power shall continue most effectively to work.

#### RELATION TO OTHER CHURCHES.

The relation of this church to other churches deserves special mention. There are feelings of gratitude and honor for those which are older, which gave to this the hand of sympathy and help in its early history. There is joy in the fellowship of those which have since entered into covenant with Christ and become new centers of spiritual life and power. Then the thought cheers us that in these several churches are true servants who have gone from the communion of this, bearing their light with them, earnest in their Master's work in the time and place which He has appointed.

On the 8th of January, 1851, the Second Church—the church in North Manchester—was organized, sixty-seven persons having received letters of dismission and recommendation from this church for that purpose. This occurred a few weeks after Mr. Northrop's dismission, and several months before the settlement of his successor—a time fitly chosen, whether by a favoring providence or by the consideration of the out-going members we know not, when there was no pastor of the mother church to be pained by the separation of so many beloved members of his flock. The Second Church, prospered of God in its important work, observed, in 1876, its quarter-centennial anniversary, in which this church joined in delightful reunion, mingling its own with the cordial greetings and congratulations of various neighboring churches. These two churches must ever be held together by their historic relationship, as well as by their common obligation to the kingdom of God here where the Head of the church has established their foundations.

Scarcely had our fathers fixed the bounds of their ecclesiastical habitation ere the pioneers of Methodism were on their track. The Methodist church is about twelve years younger than this. With some prejudices, doubtless, in the early time, when their methods were more unlike and their understanding of each other less clear, there has yet existed,

in later years, between these churches a relation of harmony, confidence, and coöperation in the Lord's work. This has been manifested in their occasional union in public services and the interchange of invitations, from time to time, to unite in the observance of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For many years the two houses of worship stood side by side on this pleasant elevation, thus affording facility for the exercise of the spirit of comity and coöperation; a convenience, likewise, for those hearers who are specially fond of variety, consulting their own preference if not always that of their minister in their place of worship—a class that might be called the pendulum class, save that they have not the pendulum's regularity in their vibrations.

In process of time the Methodist church also became two, the new organization taking its place beside the Congregational church already established in the north village, the two resuming relations similar to those which had existed between the parent churches in former years. About two years later the elder Methodist church removed its place of worship to its present site in the south village, leaving the old church at the center somewhat lonely in her solitariness, yet not deserted by her Lord and Head, and still feeling the pulse of life and sympathy in these several churches springing from their relations so intimate in the past, and their consecration to a mission so important and promising for the future. Thus there is much in the history of this quartet of churches to make strong the bond which unites them to-day—a bond which we trust will grow stronger with the lapse of time, making them rivals only in the purpose to excel in love to one another and in zeal for the Master's glory.

#### CONCLUSION.

In concluding this survey we feel how impossible it is to bring the life of a church for so long a time, with its manifold experience and service, fully under observation. With records imperfect, and for important periods entirely wanting, with the fact well understood that even the best records fail to represent the condition of a people, we are compelled

to judge the past in great measure by the present, and from our knowledge of life fill in the outline which at best we partially sketch. Gladly would we have given a more particular account of the early residents here, the manners and characteristics of the ministers of the church during the first half of the century, with incidents illustrative of the social and religious life of those days. But this neither our sources of information nor the limits prescribed by this occasion have allowed.

Our fathers of a century ago did not dwell in the world of to-day—they saw not the America of to-day, the England of to-day, the Germany of to-day, the Russia of to-day; they caught but glimpses of the mighty East which the drawn curtains reveal to us—India, China, Japan, exposing their hoary institutions and usages to the dissolving and quickening light of our Christian civilization, responding to the forces which are hastening the new era to all the nations. Yet, though we sometimes sing

“ We are living, we are dwelling  
In a grand and awful time,”

we forget not that our fathers lived in great days, witnesses not only but earnest actors in the progress of events which were directing all the future.

The history of this church coincides with the first century of our national existence. Formed three years after the great declaration, when the burden of conflict, hardship, and uncertainty was at its heaviest, it saw the issue of the struggle which brought upon the victorious but exhausted colonies the responsibility of organizing a nation, of possessing and developing a continent. Peace came in time for them to look on the storm which broke over Europe in the French Revolution and the wars of Napoleon. Subsequently came the second conflict with the mother country, and its successful issue; later, the war with Mexico, with the consequent enlargement of our territory; the sudden and rapid settlement of California, adding force to the “irrepressible conflict” between freedom and slavery, which, after fifty years of controversy,

precipitated the great civil war, upon which we look back to-day as observers on the shore look on the restless waves when the thunder of the storm is dying far off on the sea.

The work of this church, inaugurated at such a time, steadily prosecuted through the course of this unparalleled century, is witness to us of the faith of our fathers. We learn what they believed concerning the living forces of truth and righteousness as the strength and hope of the land—the Christian home, the Christian church, the word of God—the heaven ever working and ever producing life, without which the great actors on whom the world gazes, and the great events which fill the historic page will accomplish little enduring good.

In our loyal devotion to these living, spiritual forces, we honor those who have gone before us for the work they did in their day, and consecrate ourselves to its perpetuation. We have built and dedicated this house in which we are now assembled, praying that the glory of the Lord may fill it, that multitudes may be gathered here in devout worship as the years go by, and, filled with the Spirit of truth and grace, may be instruments of His saving power in our own time and in times to come. So may it be that if the hundredth year from this shall open on our world and its busy scenes, this church shall still remain with a grander record of deeds accomplished and blessings received. And in that commemoration which spans the two centuries in its retrospect, may it be ours to have place and part—if not by our presence with visible form and feature as to-day, if not as living spirits, looking from within the veil and joining in the communion, even as now we love to think of those who have gone before us, nevertheless, by the perpetuated influence of our faith working by love, according to God's wise order, by which every true life carries with it a power not bounded by time. In the experience of this faith-power, endowing all present service and sacrifice with eternal significance, be it ours to obtain the witness that we are righteous, God testifying of our gifts; and for each may the record be made, to be read in the clearer light of the future: "By it he being dead yet speaketh."

### III.

## HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

BY DEA. R. R. DIMOCK.

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Of the present appearance of the town of Manchester I have no need to speak. It lies spread out before us and around us like a beautiful panorama, with all its varied and beautiful natural scenery—its forests and hills, its valleys and streams. We look with satisfaction and delight upon its churches, its school-houses, its manufactories, its neat and comfortable homes, its smoothly-shaven lawns, its delightful drives, its green meadows, and cultivated fields. We rejoice in the thrift and prosperity that seems to abound within her borders.

But it has not always been so. Let us turn back the leaves of history and read the record of a hundred years ago, and we can better understand and appreciate the wonderful changes that have been wrought during the century. Go back still another hundred years and instead of these neat and comfortable homes we shall find the rude hut, covered with skins and barks, and that then these beautiful fields were a dark and gloomy wilderness—the haunts of savage beasts and savage men. The native Indian roamed through these forests, and the wild deer gamboled upon these hills.

Manchester can number but little over half a century of years since it assumed the dignity of a town ; as an ecclesiastical society it can number a little more than a century. Seven years after it became a society, this church was organized, and together they constituted the Fifth Congregational Church and Society in Hartford. The inhabitants, scattered

here and there over these hills and plains, were citizens of Hartford, enjoying their country residences and rural homes out here in the suburbs.

Two hundred and forty-four years ago, Rev. Thomas Hooker, with a little colony of one hundred persons, consisting of men, women, and children, bid adieu to their temporary homes in Newtown, Mass., and journeyed on foot, driving their cattle before them and carrying Mrs. Hooker, who was feeble, on a litter, one hundred miles through a trackless wilderness, with no guide but their compass, to their destined settlement on the banks of the Connecticut—at first naming the settlement Newtown, and afterwards Hartford.

The first purchase of lands was made of the Connecticut Indians, and extended six miles west of Connecticut river and three miles east of the river, and was bounded north by Windsor settlement and south by Wethersfield. The first division of these lands among the proprietors was made in 1639. The land west of the river was divided into two sections, each three miles wide east and west, and called the east and west divisions. The plantations east of the river were known as the "Three-mile Lots," and were supposed to extend east as far as the Hills-Town road in Manchester. The land lying east of the Three-mile Lots was known as the commons, and belonged to and formed a part of the hunting grounds of Joshua, sachem of the western Niantic Indians, who was the third son of Uncas, sachem of the Mohegan Indians. Somewhere about the year 1675 or '76, Joshua sold to Major Talcott of Hartford, for the use and behoof of the town of Hartford, a tract of this common land, extending from the aforesaid "Three-mile Lots" five miles still further east, the whole width of the town of Hartford from Windsor to Wethersfield, and bounded east by other lands claimed by Joshua, which now constitute the town of Bolton; but the conveyance was not made till after Joshua's death, which occurred in May, 1676. The Governor and Council, or General Court, nevertheless claimed and exercised authority over this land under and by virtue of the Charter of King Charles II., and in 1672 had passed an order extending the boundaries of



Hartford five miles further east, for the "encouragement of planters to plant there," which covered the same ground afterwards sold to Major Talcott by Joshua. In 1682, after Joshua's death, Capt. James Fitch of Norwich, and Mr. Thomas Buckingham of Saybrook, administrators on the estate of said Joshua, sachem, conveyed the same by deed to Mr. Seaborn Nichols, Serj. Caleb Stanley, and John Marsh, selectmen of the town of Hartford, and from that time onward till 1772 it was known as the "Five Miles."

This tract remained common and undivided land (with the exception of a few grants of the General Court to individuals for services rendered the Colony) till 1731,\* when the proprietors appointed a committee to lay out three miles and one hundred rods of said land on the east side next to Bolton, the whole width of the town of Hartford, from Windsor to Glassenbury† bounds, to be divided to the original proprietors or their heirs according to their rate as it stood recorded on the "Town Book," including necessary ways. The same year this committee laid out four strips or tiers of this land, each tier being two hundred and forty rods or three-fourths of a mile wide, running north and south parallel with Bolton town line from Windsor to Glassenbury. Each of these tiers was divided among the proprietors in proportion to their rates by parallel east and west lines, reserving a strip thirty rods wide for a highway between the 1st and 2d tiers on the east, also a forty

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\* In 1666 the General Court ordered that four men and horses be speedily sent to Springfield to accompany such as should be sent by Capt. Pinchon to Fort Albany or further as should be judged meet, to "atteine certeine understandinge concerninge y<sup>e</sup> motion of y<sup>e</sup> French." Corporal John Gilbert was one of the men sent, for which service the General Court in 1669 granted him 200 acres of land, whereof 20 acres might be meadow. In October, 1672, the Court appointed James Steele and Nathaniel Willett to lay out to Corp<sup>l</sup> John Gilbert his grant, and they in March, 1673, laid out to him 200 acres on the east side of the Great River, about two miles eastwardly from Mr. Crow's saw-mill, upon a brook called Hop Brook. This land came into the possession of Joseph and Thomas Gilbert, sons of Corporal John aforesaid, and in 1707, one hundred acres of it was deeded to Tho<sup>s</sup> Olcott, jr., by Joseph Gilbert as administrator of Tho<sup>s</sup> Gilbert's estate. (This land, or a portion of it, has remained in the Olcott family 172 years.)

† Old orthography.

rods highway between the 2d and 3d tiers, and a thirty rods highway between the 3d and 4th tiers ; the whole making three miles and one hundred rods. The balance of the unappropriated five mile tract lying between the "Three-mile Lots" on the west and the 4th tier of lots in the former division on the east, remained common and undivided till 1753, when it was distributed among the proprietors and their representatives by Mr. Samuel Wells, Nathaniel Olcott, and Josiah Olcott, a committee appointed to distribute said lands and to lay out suitable roads thereon.

At this date a considerable number of settlers had located upon the Five-Mile purchase, and they had preaching some portion of the time. Since 1748 they had been allowed their proportion of the minister's rate not exceeding three months in a year. Previous to 1748 they paid their minister's rate wholly to the Third Society of Hartford, now the First Society in East Hartford.

The early settlers of the colony suffered many privations and inconveniences, and were for a long time almost constantly annoyed by the depredations of Indians, requiring many of their able-bodied men of military age to keep them in check and guard the lives, property, and interests of the settlers. Consequently, during the first one hundred years after the settlement of Hartford, very little progress was made in literature or mechanical or agricultural improvements. During the second century after the settlement, and especially towards its close, the progress in these particulars was more rapid ; thinking minds had better facilities for communicating their thoughts to the world, the results of inventive genius became more common, many improvements were made in mechanics' tools and in agricultural implements, and the press and the steam-engine began to exert a tremendous power ; but at the date of the organization of this ecclesiastical society, viz., in 1772, very few of these advantages were enjoyed by the people. It has been reserved for us who are now living to receive the full benefits of these improvements, and to enjoy social, civil, and religious privileges equal to, if not greater than, any other people in the world. We can truly say, "Other men have

labored and we have entered into their labors." One hundred years ago there was no railroad with its locomotive and train of cars whizzing across these fields,—no Hartford bridge spanning the Great River,—no turnpike roads with their equipments of stage-coaches for the conveyance of travelers.—There were no telegraph arrangements by which a person could send a message to any part of the country and get an answer back in about the same time it would take to copy it;—no telephones by which a person could sit in his office or parlor, and converse with a friend or listen to the sweet tones of music produced in a distant city;—but there *was* a recent arrangement at that time, by which a gentlemen in Boston could send a letter to Philadelphia and get an answer back in three weeks, the year round, whereas before that it took six weeks in the winter season. The popular mode of travel was then on foot or horseback; with the exception of government officers and public men, the people traveled but little except to meeting and to mill. The meeting-house was a common center, where the scattered population could meet once a week and listen to the words of truth and exchange salutations. At a later day, taverns became popular places of resort, where the men would drop in of a week-day evening to learn the news and discuss the prominent topics of the day—for there wasn't a daily newspaper in all the colonies, and only one weekly newspaper in Connecticut. Sabbath observance was very strict, and in those days people were compelled by law to go to meeting, with a severe penalty for its non-observance, so on a Sunday morning the people of all ages and both sexes might be seen issuing from their several homes, some in the traveled ways, some cross-lots, some on foot, some on horseback, all tending towards the meeting-house. The head of the family would mount his horse and ride round to the horse block which every genteel family was supposed to have, from which his good wife would take her seat on the pillion behind him, and thus they would jog along on their winding way, through forests, over plains, and often across bridgeless streams, to attend divine service.

The Puritan fathers had left their native land and sought

a country where they might enjoy freedom to worship God, freedom of conscience, where they might have a church without a bishop and a State without a king, and the early settlers of Hartford partook of the same spirit, and kept a strict watch over the morals of the people. The General Court assumed jurisdiction in all matters, social, civil, moral, and religious, and made and enforced such laws as in their wisdom they deemed necessary to restrain men from vice and cause them to properly observe the Sabbath, and avoid all prodigality in living and superfluity in dress. The following extracts from the Colony Records serve as examples :

In 1721 it was enacted, "That whatsoever person shall not duly attend the public worship of God on the Lord's day in some congregation by law allowed, unless hindered by sickness or otherwise necessarily detained, and be thereof convicted, shall incur the penalty of five shillings money for every such offense"; and it was further enacted that whatsoever person should go from his or her place of abode on the Lord's day, unless to or from the public worship of God attended or to be attended upon by such person in some place by law allowed for that end, or unless it be on some other work necessary then to be done, and be thereof convicted, shall incur the penalty of five shillings money for every such offense.

In 1709 it was "enacted that if any single persons being boarders or sojourners, or any young persons whatsoever, under the government of parents or masters within this Colony shall convene or meet together in company on the street or elsewhere, on the evening after the Sabbath or any public day of fast or any lecture day, and be thereof duly convicted, shall pay a fine of five shillings, or be set in the stocks two hours for every offence—provided this act should not be taken or construed to hinder the meeting of such single and young persons upon any religious occasion." At an earlier date the court prescribed laws for dress, and affixed a penalty of ten shillings if any person should make, wear, or buy any apparel exceeding the quality and condition of their persons and estates, or that was beyond the necessary end of apparel for covering or comeliness; and the reason given in the

preamble was that wearing gold and silver lace, or gold or silver buttons, silk ribbons, or other superfluous trimmings was unbecoming a wilderness condition and the profession of the gospel, whereby the rising generation was in danger of being corrupted. Thus rigidly did our fathers provide for the moral and religious welfare of the people, the maintenance of the ordinances of the gospel, and the proper observance of the Sabbath. The true worship of God with them apparently occupied the foreground.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETIES

Were formed as the population increased and necessity or convenience demanded. In 1636 the first or original society provided themselves with a meeting-house, in which the church, with the Rev. Mr. Hooker for a pastor, worshiped for many years. It was a quaint looking structure, square in form, one story high, with a steep, square roof in the form of a pyramid, and the whole very roughly finished. The first society was located north of the Little river. In due time a second society was formed, and a meeting-house built south of the Little river, or Rivulet, as it was called at that time, somewhere near the south park.

In 1694 the planters on the east side of the Great river petitioned the General Court to have the liberty of a minister, for reasons therein set forth. Upon which the General Court recommended to both societies west of the river to meet together and consider the proposal, and afterwards the Court passed the following order, as appears of record :

“Whereas, at a meeting of the town of Hartford Oct. 5, 1694, in compliance with the recommendation of the General Court May last, sundry of both Societies being met together and the rest being warned to meet, we have considered the motion of our neighbours on the east side, and that in reference to their desire of settling a ministry on the east side of the river, we doe declare we prize their good company and cannot without their help well and comfortably carry on or maintayne the ministry in the two Societies here, yet upon the earnestness of our neighbours to be distinct because of



the trouble and danger they complain they are exposed to by coming over to the public worship here, which difficulty they could not but foresee before they settled where they are, and therefore is of less wayte to us, and upon these considerations we cannot be free to parte with our good neighbours, yet if the Gen<sup>l</sup> Court see cause to overrule in this case, we must submit ; but we desire, if so it must be, that then those of the good people of the East side that desire to continue with us of the West side shall so doe, and that all the land on the East that belongs to any of the people of the West side shall pay to the ministry of the West side, and that all the land of the West side shall pay to the ministry of the West side, though it belong to the people of the East side. \* Also it is to be understood that the good people of the East side shall pay to the ministry of the West side till the people there have an orthodox minister amongst them ; and at all times when they shall have no such minister amongst them, they shall pay to the West side Ministry : Upon these foregoing conditions and articles the Court grants them liberty to procure and settle an Orthodox Minister on the East side the great river in Hartford."

Under this grant, the people east of the river procured a house and preaching. In 1701 the General Court granted them liberty to embody themselves in church estate, they obtaining consent of the neighboring churches.

In accordance therewith the people this side the river organized a church and constituted the third church and society in Hartford till 1783, when all that part of Hartford lying east of the river was set off and incorporated as the Town of East Hartford. The first and second meeting-houses were located near the junction of the country road with the north and south road laid out on the upland east of the Great river from Windsor to Glassenbury bounds about the year 1670, for the planters to get to their farms, which is now East Hartford street. The country road began at the ferry on this side the river nearly opposite State street, and ran across the meadow, nearly in the direction it runs now, till it intersected this north and south road near the Hockanum river,



and continued east about as it now runs from Sisson's corner to the end of the Three-mile lots near the place where Mr. Frank Spehner now lives. In the year 1711 the General Assembly granted the petition of the west division farmers to be set off and constituted a separate parish. This was the fourth ecclesiastical society in Hartford, and was bounded north by Windsor, south by Wethersfield, west by Farmington, and extended east to the east end of the "West Division Lots." (It will be remembered that the town extended six miles west of the river and three miles east.) This territory was first settled, and in the first division among the proprietors in 1639 the land west of the Great river comprised two sections—the east and west divisions, and the west division is now embraced in the bounds of West Hartford. The people east of the river for three-quarters of a century worshiped in the old meeting-house located at the lower end of East Hartford street, and there was no other church organization till after the Parish of Orford was constituted and a church organized here in 1779—seven years after the parish was set off.

I think the Rev. John Rood ministered to the people before and after the church east of the river was organized, about the year 1701, and about this time a house was built for the minister. The Rev. Samuel Woodbridge was pastor from 1711 to 1746, a period of thirty-five years. He was succeeded by the Rev. Eliphalet Williams, who labored with the people in word and doctrine from 1747 to 1795, a period of forty-eight years. The freemen met regularly every year in society meeting and voted the minister's salary, and attended to all the minutiae of conducting society affairs, as appears from the following votes taken from the society records. "At a meeting legally warned and held by the third society in Hartford, Oct. 6, 1772, 'Voted that David Hills and John Risley procure a boat to carry the people over the water at the Meeting House on the Sabbath.' 'Voted that the singing in public on the Sabbath in the afternoon be without reading line by line.'" It was the custom in those days to line off the hymns—a custom made necessary by reason of the

scarcity of books. "Voted that Selah Norton and James Olmstead be choristers to assist Capt. Pitkin in setting the tunes." In 1779, "Voted Rev. Williams £90, to be paid in money or grain as follows, viz. : wheat at 6/, rye 4/, Indian corn 3/, or beef and pork in like proportion, or in silver at 6/8 the ounce, or in gold, or in Continental bills; also £25 for firewood in like manner." The above prices for grain, etc., were called regulation prices, being established by law. The society of Orford passed similar votes from year to year in making provision for the minister's salary so long as the currency remained in its unsettled condition. The first vote passed by Orford society, at a society meeting warned and held Aug. 13, 1772, was to build a meeting-house for public worship in said Orford, by more than two-thirds of the lawful voters of said society. It was afterwards voted that said house should be fifty-four feet long and forty feet wide. The first house of worship on the Five Miles was fitted up about the year 1762, and stood near the cluster of ancient oaks a few rods east of the present structure, and about eighteen rods northeast from the meeting-house built soon after the society was incorporated.

The people in this part of the town had been allowed occasional preaching from 1748 to 1763; at first, three months in a year, and afterwards they had been allowed four months winter preaching; but in 1763, upon the memorial of forty-two persons, leave was granted the people of the Five Miles to have preaching seven months in a year and tax themselves for the support of the minister; and so long as they did this they were exempt from paying the minister's tax to the east or third society. In the memorial of these forty-two persons they set forth, as a reason that their prayer should be granted, the fact that they had provided a place for meeting; and the taxable property listed that year was £3,000 (about \$10,000).

In 1767 they petitioned the General Assembly to be incorporated a separate ecclesiastical society, but their petition was not granted; but they continued to file their petitions from year to year, and as often had leave to withdraw till 1772, when their petition was granted, and the Five Miles

was incorporated as a separate society by the name of the Parish of Orford, and was bounded north by Windsor bounds, east by Bolton town line, south by Glassenbury, and west by a line drawn across the Town of Hartford from Windsor to Glassenbury parallel with the west boundary line of the Town of Bolton, and five and one-half miles west of the same, which comprised all the territory embraced in the Town of Manchester, except Oakland district. The General Assembly appointed a committee to affix a site for a meeting-house; but the committee did not act, and application was made to the County Court for the appointment of a committee to affix a place; and a committee was appointed and affixed a place which was unsatisfactory; and application was made to the court for a second committee, which was refused. Whereupon, at the May session in 1773, Messrs. Timothy Cheney, Richard Pitkin, and Ward Woodbridge, agents for Orford society, presented a memorial to the General Assembly setting forth that "Their Honors in tender regard to the happiness and welfare of the memorialists were pleased to establish them an ecclesiastical society, and that they soon agreed, in due form, to build a meeting-house, and applied to the County Court for a committee to affix the place for that purpose; that said committee came out and affixed a place without notice to the east part of the society, and they fixed on a side-hill in a very inconvenient and very disgusting place, praying that the stake may be stuck further east, at or near the point where the four roads come together." After a long discussion upon this memorial in both Houses, a committee, consisting of Charles Webb and others, was appointed to view the premises, affix a place, and report. On the 2d day of June, 1773, this committee reported that they had fixed the stake at about the middle of a thirty-rod highway running north and south from Glassenbury to Windsor, about eighteen rods southwestward from the old meeting-house. The report was accepted, and in October of the same year the society voted to build on the site reported by the committee, and the next year, 1774, the Assembly reviewed the matter and instructed the society to build on the place affixed, and have the stake stuck

by said committee included within the sills of said house. The people began to make preparation for building, and in 1776 the frame was raised, and after some delay it was covered ; but on account of the breaking out of the War of the Revolution, which occupied the attention of the people to a great extent, and greatly disturbed the finances, it remained in an unfinished condition for a long time, having no pews and only rough slab or plank seats. Up to this time there had been no church organization in Orford society. According to the record the church was organized in 1779, during the darkest period of the Revolutionary War. It was about this time that New Haven and East Haven were plundered by the British, and Fairfield and Norwalk and Greens Farms were wantonly burned. It was a time distinguished for nothing decisive on the part of the Americans or British, but every thing pertaining to the final result of the war seemed to hang in doubt. It was a time of great financial embarrassment. Continental money had depreciated in value so that on the 29th day of July, 1779,—the date of the organization,—one silver dollar was worth sixteen dollars of Continental currency ; and in March following, one dollar in silver was worth forty of currency—so rapidly did the currency depreciate. These financial discouragements, combined with the general gloom and despondency of the people, caused the completion of the meeting-house to be delayed. But as the Rev. Mr. Northrop expresses it in his historical sermon preached in 1840, "It was finally finished after the approved models of ancient inconvenience and discomfort."

This meeting-house was occupied as a house of worship for nearly fifty years, till 1826, when the third church building was erected a few rods to the northeast of the former one, nearly on the ground where the present structure now stands, and the old one was torn down. After the third church building had been occupied about twelve years it was raised up, somewhat remodeled, and a basement room finished underneath to be used for town purposes, conference meetings, schools, etc. Previous to this the body of the church had been used to hold town meetings since the town was

incorporated, or rather since the church was built : and while it was undergoing the change, the Methodist meeting-house, which stood a short distance east of the Congregational house, was rented at eighteen dollars a year, and used for that purpose.

The meeting-house was the place for holding town meetings and electors' meetings in most of the towns in the Colony and State till far into the present century—a custom, we trust, that will henceforth be and remain among the things that were. This old house of worship that we have just now left and turned over to other than strictly pious uses is still dear to the people. For more than half a century it has been the Sabbath home of such as delight in the Lord's house, and for forty years since her exaltation she has stood like a watch-tower on the wall, her tall spire pointing the wayfarer towards heaven, and upon each returning Sabbath opening wide her doors, extending the invitation to all, and welcoming all to come and worship at her altars. There the gospel message has been proclaimed from the lips of God's living ministers, and the old, old story of the cross and of a Saviour's love, oft repeated, has fallen upon the ear of the anxious inquirer after truth and salvation. There many have yielded to the Spirit's invitation, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." Many have bowed before her altars and publicly and professedly consecrated themselves to God and His service, solemnly promising to observe the ordinances of the gospel and live sober and godly lives in this present world. Many who have worshiped God there in His earthly sanctuary have one after another bid adieu to earth, and, we trust, are now worshiping in the inner sanctuary on high. Many of the fathers and mothers and friends with whom we have there sat at the table of our common Lord, we hope to meet on the other shore, where we may enjoy a more perfect and blessed communion. Many who still remain can say with the Psalmist, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thine honor dwelleth, and who hope to be among the number of those whom the Lord shall count when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there." Yes, we love the old church



edifice still ; we love her sacred walls, scarred and discolored though they be through age and long service ; we love her for her associations and precious memories, and though somewhat humiliated, being brought down from her high position and bereft of her lofty spire, we desire to utter no word of reproach—we loved her in her exaltation, we love her in her humiliation ; we cherish her memory for what she has been, and have reserved for her a corner of our family lot, where she has been removed, and where we can resort as friends resort to the place where their loved ones are laid away, and look upon her as a monument of departed worth.

For nearly three-quarters of a century this was the only Congregational church and society in this section, and during that period the people from the north and the south, the east and the west, congregated here for worship ; and in common with most churches it has had its dark periods and its bright, its seasons of unfruitfulness and its seasons of abundant harvests ; so that on the whole it has been a prosperous and growing church, and its numbers increased, so that in process of time some of the brethren spake unto the other brethren and said, “ Behold now the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto the North Village, that lieth upon the Hockanum, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there where we may dwell.” So the people answered and said, “Go ye.” And they went and cut down trees, and provided wood, and brick, and stone, and built them a house at the North Village. And in the first month, on the third day of the month, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one, the scribes and elders gave letters to the brethren unto the council at the North Village, and on the eighth day of the same month three score and seven members of this ancient church united with twenty-five members from other churches, entered into covenant obligations with each other and were recognized by the council called for that purpose as a distinct Christian church ; and on the same day they dedicated their new house of worship to the service of Almighty God.

This branch which was then severed from the old parent



stem has been like a vine planted by the rivers of water, a growing and prosperous vine.

Although the members of the old church who remained parted with their Christian friends and co-laborers with great reluctance, yet it seemed best it should be so ; and it was and is no doubt a comforting thought, and a source of joy to the members of both churches, that though separated they are not alienated ; that it was the separation of friends and not of enemies ; that we still have common interests ; that our affection for each other as Christians is neither abated nor diminished, and that we still regard each other as members of the same family, the one occupying the old home, the other having removed to a new one.

We feel grateful to all our friends who have and do still manifest an interest in the welfare of the old Center Church. We thank them for their sympathy, their kind and encouraging words and deeds. And to those friends especially who have given us valuable pecuniary aid in the erection of our new church edifice we tender our hearty thanks ; we assure them their gifts are appreciated.

And finally we welcome all our friends present to-day who have come in to rejoice with us as we enter upon the second century of our church existence with a new, chaste, and beautiful house of worship.

#### IV.

### MINISTERS FROM THE PARISH.

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#### ALLEN OLCOTT.

He was brother to Josiah Olcott, Jr., who was one of the original members of this church. Both were sons of Josiah Olcott, who was a descendant in the fourth generation from Thomas Olcott, one of the original settlers of the town of Hartford. Allen Olcott was born October 5, 1746, and was contemporary with Benajah Phelps, the first pastor of the church. He was graduated at Yale College in 1768; was ordained pastor of the Congregational church in Farmington in or about the year 1788, successor to the Rev. Timothy Pitkin. He was married to Cynthia Hooker, a descendant of Rev. Thomas Hooker, first minister of Hartford, June 11, 1792. He died at East Hartford, June 11, 1811, aged 64. He was the father of Sidney Olcott, now one of the oldest residents of the town of Manchester.

#### RODOLPHUS LANDFEAR.

Rodolphus Landfear, son of David and Lucinda (Lord) Landfear, was born November 2, 1794; became a member of this church May 6, 1812; was graduated at Yale College in 1821; completed the course of theological study at Andover in 1824; was installed pastor of the church at Montville, Conn., August 26, 1829, having been ordained as an evangelist in Hartford the year preceding. He was dismissed at Montville May 30, 1832, and subsequently labored in various places as stated supply—Bozrahville, Westford, Andover in this State, in Boston and Worcester, Mass., in western New York as a home missionary. He was also for two years

engaged in Bible and Sunday-school work. After remitting the work of the ministry, he resided for several years in this his native town, and was for a time one of the deacons of this church. From this place he removed to Hartford, where he has since for many years resided. In a letter referring to his inability to be present at this anniversary on account of many infirmities, he says : "I retain a deep interest for my native town, and my tears flow now as I call to mind many scenes which I passed through there, and remember old associates and relatives of my generation, especially the church with which I first entered into covenant and took sweet counsel as we went to the house of God in company, nearly all of whom are now gone, I trust, to the church triumphant."

#### ANSON GLEASON.

Anson Gleason, son of Moses and Tryphena (Case) Gleason, was born May 2, 1797. At the age of twenty-three he became the subject of renewing grace while residing in Hartford, and united with the Center church, then under the pastoral care of Dr. Hawes, on the first Sabbath in June, 1819. Four years later he went as a missionary among the Choctaw Indians, then in Mississippi, traveling the entire distance on horseback in the winter of 1823. He continued his labors in the Indian country till the tribe was removed to the territory west of the Mississippi, about 1832. Returning at this time to Connecticut, he settled among the Mohegan Indians living between Norwich and New London. Here a church was formed in 1833. Mr. Gleason was ordained as the minister of this church April 1, 1835, and continued his useful labors in this field for a period of sixteen years. During this time he visited the Choctaws again in 1845-6, taking out a company of teachers, and remained about six months, preaching at the various missionary stations, and was permitted to enjoy a glorious revival of religion in connection with his labors there.

He was subsequently District Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M. in New Hampshire and Vermont for three years, when he again engaged in missionary service, this time among the

Seneca Indians in western New York, remaining with them ten years. He was afterwards engaged as city missionary in Rochester, N. Y. ; then in Utica, from which place he removed to enter upon similar service in the City of Brooklyn, where, in his eighty-third year, he still continues, hoping that his missionary work is not yet at an end.

Mr. Gleason's life has been truly distinguished, not only for its long continuance, but also for the ardor and energy which he has brought to the Lord's service in all the fields he has occupied. The prayer of his earnest heart still is : "O for revival showers in all the churches !" Many of the Lord's humble ones, whom the world knows not, will rejoice for ever for their knowledge of the Saviour's name and the riches of the Saviour's blessing, brought to them by this good and faithful servant, who waits a little longer for the Master's final "Well done !" Rev. James Anderson, in a recent discourse reviewing his own ministry of fifty years in Manchester, Vt., speaks thus of his early friend : "Rev. Anson Gleason, with unabated warmth and zeal at his advanced age still pursues his ministry at large, ready for every good word and work, especially in visiting the poor and sick, and comforting with his presence and prayers a great many departing saints, going down with them to the banks of the river while signalling to them on the other side that another pilgrim is passing over."

#### NELSON BISHOP.

Nelson Bishop, son of Samuel and Sarah (Chapman) Bishop, was born November 20, 1802 ; became a member of this church April 29, 1821 ; studied at Bangor Theological Seminary, 1823-1827 ; was ordained pastor of the Congregational church, Clinton, Maine, November 19, 1828 ; on account of failing health through overwork, was dismissed August 24, 1834. Having spent four years in study at Andover, he became pastor at Wethersfield, Vt., November 19, 1839. He was dismissed February 22, 1842, to become associate editor of the Vermont *Chronicle*, which place he held till January 1, 1866, when he became associate editor of the Boston *Recorder*, and served there till that paper was merged in the *Congrega-*

*tionalist*, in 1869. He was subsequently engaged in Bible distribution in Vermont, and acted as agent for the *Congregationalist*. He died, after a brief illness, of pneumonia, at East St. Johnsbury, Vt., January 10, 1871, aged 69 years and 11 months. He was buried at Windsor, Vt., the place of his residence.

#### RALPH PERRY.

Ralph Perry, son of Joseph and Lydia (Kellogg) Perry, was born December 20, 1811. He made a profession of religion and became a member of the Presbyterian church in Jacksonville, Ill., on the first Sabbath in April, 1832. He was graduated at Illinois College in 1838; studied theology at Yale Theological Seminary; was ordained pastor of the Congregational church at Agawam, Mass., January 3, 1844; was dismissed November 18, 1846, and was reinstalled December 28, 1847. He continued in this relation, enjoying a happy and useful ministry, until August 26, 1874, when he was laid aside by severe injuries received at the railroad crossing in Springfield. Being unable to resume the work of the ministry, he was dismissed September 27, 1875, after a pastorate of more than thirty years. In view of the present occasion, he writes expressing the hope that the God of glory may be so served by this people as to bless them largely in temporal and spiritual things. He further says: "As I have not resided much of the time in Manchester since my childhood, and as nearly all persons with whom I was acquainted have passed away, I am nearly a stranger in the place, but I am not without a strong interest in it as my native place, and as the place where the dust of my Christian parents is laid in hope of a glorious resurrection."

#### CHESTER S. LYMAN.

Chester S. Lyman, son of Chester and Mary (Smith) Lyman, and grandson of Dea. Joseph L., was born Jan. 13, 1814; became a member of this church Jan. 1, 1832, at the age of eighteen; was graduated at Yale College in 1837; studied theology at Yale Theological Seminary; was pastor of First Congregational Church, New Britain, Feb. 15, 1843, to April

25, 1845. He subsequently resided four years in the Sandwich Islands and California, engaged in explorations and scientific pursuits. Since 1850 he has resided in New Haven, and since 1859 has been a professor in Yale College.

He has been since 1859 President of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences ; since 1869, an honorary member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and contributor to various scientific journals. Since 1858 he has been a deacon of the First Church in New Haven, and has preached occasionally.

#### ALLEN B. HITCHCOCK.

Allen B. Hitchcock, son of David H. and Elizabeth M. Hitchcock, was born in Great Barrington, Mass., March 20, 1814. He became a member of this church by profession July 10, 1831, his parents having united by letter a few months previous. He was graduated at Illinois College in 1838 ; studied theology three years at Yale Theological Seminary ; was ordained as an evangelist in New Haven, July 6, 1841 ; preached in Davenport, Iowa, 1841 to 1844, when he removed to Moline, Ill., where he organized the Congregational church of which he had charge for eighteen years, resigning in 1862. During the remainder of his life he suffered from ill health and preached only occasionally. He died Dec. 15, 1873. A notice of his death, published at the time, referred to him as one of the oldest pioneers of Moline ; as a man of remarkably fine qualities and education ; as one of the best geologists of the State ; as an ardent Abolitionist in an early day when to be one was not pleasant ; as a worker in the temperance cause, and always standing on the right side of every reform. The present pastor of the church in Moline says, " Mr. Hitchcock did a good work in this region, and is held in grateful remembrance."

Both Mr. Hitchcock and Mr. Bishop enjoyed the favor of the church in their efforts to obtain an education, and received some material aid as the records show.

Horace Hitchcock an elder brother, and Elizabeth a sister of Allen B., were among the early missionaries of the Amer-



ican Board in the Sandwich Islands. H. R. Hitchcock, a son of the missionary, was a commissioner in charge of the Hawaiian Exhibit at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876.

#### ELISHA W. COOK.

Elisha W. Cook, son of Rev. Elisha B. and Esther Woodbridge Cook, was born July 28, 1816; became a member of this church Nov. 6, 1831; was graduated at Yale College in 1837; studied theology at the Yale Theological Seminary; was pastor of the Congregational church in Haddam, Nov. 18, 1846, to May, 1852; was engaged in missionary labor in New York city for two years; was pastor at Haydenville, Mass., June 14, 1854, to April 6, 1858; at Townsend, Mass., April 28, 1858, to Oct. 12, 1859; at Hopkinton, N. H., March 6, 1861, to Dec. 13, 1864.

He has since labored at different places in the West, a part of the time at Ripon, Wis., where he now resides.

#### FREDERICK ALVORD.

Frederick Alvord was born in Bolton, Dec. 5, 1828; became a member of this church in July, 1845; was graduated at Yale College in 1855; studied theology at the Theological Institute then at East Windsor. He was pastor of the Congregational church, Chicopee Falls, Mass., July 21, 1858, to Nov. 5, 1860, and subsequently resided for six years at Monson, Mass., supplying different churches, as his health allowed. He was settled Dec. 26, 1866, as pastor of the Congregational church, Darien, Conn., remaining till June 8, 1869. Since July 6, 1869, he has been pastor of the First Congregational Church in Nashua, N. H., with the blessing of God still attending his labors with this large and flourishing church.

#### JOHN B. GRISWOLD.

John B. Griswold, son of Daniel and Anna (Bunce) Griswold, was born Nov. 11, 1830; was graduated at Dartmouth College in 1860 and at Bangor Theological Seminary in 1863. After laboring with different churches for several years as a

supply, he was ordained as an evangelist at Talcottville, Conn., Jan. 28, 1872. He was soon after engaged as acting pastor of the Union Congregational Church, East Hampton, Conn. Here he remained two years and then became acting pastor of the Congregational church in Millington, Conn., where he is still engaged in active and successful service.

#### CHARLES GRISWOLD.

Charles Griswold, son of Edward and Laura (Hubbard) Griswold, was born Oct. 7, 1832; became a member of this church in July, 1843, at the age of eleven years. At twenty-one years of age he went west, and at twenty-five, having been greatly quickened in his spiritual life, he began studying and preaching, his previous opportunities for education having been such as his native town afforded. He was received as a preacher on trial into the Minnesota Annual Conference of the M. E. Church in Sept., 1860; was ordained deacon Sept. 21, 1862, and elder, Sept. 11, 1864; has since served six years as presiding elder; the remainder of the time as pastor of different churches. In May of the current year he gave up his pastoral work on account of ill health. He has received the degree of M. D., and since leaving the active ministry has been engaged in the practice of medicine at Anoka, Minn., the place of his last charge.

#### CHARLES N. LYMAN.

Charles N. Lyman, son of Diodate B. and Eliza (Vibbert) Lyman, was born in Hartford, May 14, 1835; became a member of this church May 2, 1852; was graduated at Yale College in 1859; studied theology at Yale Theological Seminary; was pastor of the Congregational church at Canton Center, Oct. 29, 1862, to Sept. 21, 1868, within which time he was chaplain one year in the United States army. Subsequently removing West he was pastor of the Congregational church, Dunlap, Ia., Dec. 16, 1868, to Jan. 1, 1871. He then removed to Onowa, Ia., where he is still doing efficient service as acting pastor of the Congregational church. He is a great-grandson of Dea. Joseph Lyman.

The list of laborers who have gone from this church to other fields may also include the following: Juliaette Slate, afterwards Mrs. Charles Stewart, a daughter of Dea. John Slate, was for several years a teacher in the Choctaw nation in the employment of the American Board, being among those, it is presumed, whom Mr. Gleason attended to that country in 1845.

Mary B. Knox, daughter of Chester J. Knox, and wife of Rev. Charles W. Kilbon, went with her husband in 1873 to South Africa, both being under appointment as missionaries of the American Board. Since that time they have been in active service, and are at present stationed at Amanzimtote in the Zulu Mission.

## OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH DURING ITS FIRST CENTURY.

NAMES.	Elected.	Vacated.	Died.	Age.	Term of office.
Silas Spencer,.....	1779,	By resignation,	Nov. 6, 1801,	96 yrs.,	6 yrs.
Solomon Gilman,.....	1779 or 1780,	" certificate,	.....	.....	.....
Joseph Lyman,.....	1783,	" death,	.....	76 yrs.,	37 yrs.
Enos Stebbins,.....	1785,	" removal,	1820,	.....	7 "
Robert McKee,.....	1792,	" death,	.....	.....	7 "
Ebenezer Bryant,.....	1798,	" " "	Mar. 29, 1797,	71 yrs.,	7 "
John Slate,.....	Sept. 11, 1812,	" " "	Jan. 6, 1839,	94 "	41 "
Daniel W. Griswold,.....	Nov. 3, 1814,	" resignation, June 4, 1825,	Sept. 23, 1827,	55	15
Daniel W. Griswold (re-elected),	Jan. 5, 1828,	" death,	.....	.....	.....
Alexander McLean,.....	June 4, 1825,	" " "	Dec. 27, 1844,	77 yrs.,	27 "
Henry S. Landfear,.....	Jan. 22, 1832,	" " "	Nov., 1843,	71 "	18 "
Horace Pitkin,.....	Jan. 22, 1832,	" " "	Jan. 7, 1850,	58 "	18 "
Lewis Bunce,.....	Dec. 18, 1843,	" change of residence,	April 24, 1864,	75	32 "
Martin H. Keeney,.....	Dec. 18, 1843,	" death,	July 3, 1879,	73 "	28 "
Dr. William Scott,.....	Feb. 1, 1850,	" joining 2d Cong. church,	Oct. 27, 185-,	42 "	7 "
Rev. Rhodolphus Landfear,.....	April 9, 1852,	" change of residence,	May 4, 1878,	72	1
Norman W. Spencer,.....	May 21, 1852,	" " "	.....	.....	.....
Walter Bunce,.....	about 1858,	" death,	.....	.....	.....
Calvin L. Tracy,.....	about 1858,	" resignation, April, 1869,	July 30, 1866,	54 yrs.,	11 yrs.
Rufus R. Dimock,.....	April 10, 1869,	" " "	Feb. 7, 1866,	58 "	8 "
Edmund A. Bliss,.....	April 10, 1869,	" resignation, Nov. 4, 1870,	.....	.....	.....
Walter McKee,.....	April 10, 1869,	" " "	.....	.....	.....
Joseph Comstock,.....	June, 1876,	" death,	.....	.....	.....
Francis Bidwell,.....	June, 1877,	.....	Mar. 16, 1877,	75 yrs.,	1 year.

## VI.

## NAMES OF MINISTERS

who supplied the Congregational church in Orford when it  
had no settled pastor, viz. :

## FROM 1793 TO 1800.

Rev. Allen Olcott,	Rev. Mr. Betley,
Rev. Mr. Boughman,	Rev. Benj. Boardman,
Rev. Mr. Daney,	Rev. John Smith,
Rev. Mr. Pines,	Rev. ——— Bassett.

## FROM 1808 TO 1814.

Rev. Wm. Lockwood,	Rev. Mr. Sheldon,
Rev. Mr. Sergeant,	Rev. Mr. Elliot,
Rev. Mr. Marsh,	Rev. Charles Backus,
Rev. Mr. Loomis,	Rev. ——— Everett.

## VII.

# MEETING-HOUSES, CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS, AND SCHOOLS.

BY DEA. R. R. DIMOCK.

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There have been at least fourteen meeting-houses of all denominations, including the present ones, within the limits of this town since the society of Orford was constituted, viz.: five Congregational, four Methodist Episcopal, two Baptist, one Episcopalian, and two Roman Catholic. Religious services have also been held in Cheney Brothers' Hall. We have already spoken of the Congregational houses of worship, with the exception of the one we occupy to-day for the first time since its formal dedication to the worship of God. This house has been erected the present year (1879) by the First Congregational Society at a cost of about \$8,000—Mr. John C. Mead of Hartford, being the architect and builder. It stands on the site of the old church edifice which was sold to the Town of Manchester, and moved a few rods to the west to be used for a public town hall. The First Congregational Church is now under the pastoral charge of Rev. Silas Wright Robbins, and the Second Church, at North Manchester, is under the pastoral charge of Rev. Norman J. Squires. The First Methodist meeting-house in Orford society was built in 1794, near the west cemetery in this town, and was one of the earliest built in the colony. Methodism was introduced into New York as early as 1766, and had spread to some extent through the middle and southern colonies before its introduction into New England. In the spring of 1789, Rev. Jesse Lee came to Connecticut under the auspices of



Bishop Asbury of New York, and on the 26th of September of the same year formed the first Methodist class in the State, at Stratford. The next year, in the spring of 1790, Mr. Thomas Spencer invited Rev. George Roberts, a Methodist clergyman, to preach at his house; and in August following a Methodist class was formed at the house of Mr. Spencer, consisting of himself, Mr. Richard Keeney, and four women—six in all. Such was the origin of the Methodist church in Manchester; and from this germ have grown the two flourishing churches with which this town is now blessed. Mr. Spencer's house stood a few rods east of the cemetery, and the meeting-house a few rods east of the house. The place where the house stood is still visible, and the ancient elm that stood near it is still there, though it no longer lives; its life juices are dried out and its limbs have perished, yet it still stands erect—dead! Some of the oldest inhabitants now living say that in the palmiest days of this church out-door religious services were sometimes held in the cool shade of this stately tree, when the weather was favorable and the congregation too large to be comfortably accommodated inside. In 1802 a parsonage was built near the meeting-house and the church fairly started in its career of usefulness. It made gradual progress, receiving occasional additions and enjoying occasional seasons of refreshing, as did also the Congregational church, till 1821, when the churches were greatly blessed by a general outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Many were inquiring what they should do to be saved. Solemn and crowded meetings were held in the churches on the Sabbath and at different places during the week. The old brick schoolhouse at Manchester Green became a central point of interest. The Rev. Eben. Blake and Rev. Daniel Dorchester—Methodist ministers—were active and zealous laborers and conducted meetings there in connection with others, and a great number were hopefully converted and professed their faith in Christ as a sufficient Saviour. As a result of this awakening many were added to the churches—some uniting with the Congregational and some with the Methodist—and the churches were enlarged

and strengthened. Another result of this revival was an awakened desire for a Methodist meeting-house more central than the old one, and the next year (1822) \$1,000 was pledged towards the building of one, and a new church edifice was commenced and built at the center, nearly on the ground where Mrs. Huntington now resides. The old meeting-house in the west part of the parish was afterwards abandoned—transformed into a barn, and was finally destroyed by fire. The new building was dedicated while in an unfinished state, and the Methodist people from all parts of the town (Manchester became a town in 1823) worshiped in it as one church till 1851, when the church divided; one part went north and built a meeting-house a little west of the Congregational house in North Manchester, which was dedicated Oct. 15, 1851, and which they still occupy as a distinct church organization. The other part of the church worshiped in the old meeting-house at the Center till 1854, when they removed to the new church edifice which they had built and dedicated at South Manchester, in which the church worships at the present time.

The old one at the Center was sold to Mr. Henry E. Rogers, taken down, carried away, and made into tenement houses. Rev. S. Leader is pastor of the North M. E. Church, and Rev. Henry D. Robinson of the South Manchester M. E. Church.

The first Baptist meeting-house stood on the triangular piece of land between the roads southeasterly from the house of Mr. Hart Porter, and answered the double purpose of schoolhouse and meeting-house. The second was built further to the east, opposite the town farm, and was occupied for a time; but the Baptists being unable to sustain preaching there it was finally sold and a portion of it, at least, was taken to Buckland and made into a dwelling-house. A small Episcopal church was built on the ground where my house now stands, occupied for a time, and removed to North Manchester where occasional religious services were kept up for some years, when it was converted into a tenement house which stands near the Second Congregational church. The

two Catholic churches have been built within the recollection of nearly all present. The one at the North, built about twenty years ago, has recently been repaired and enlarged to accommodate those who embrace the Catholic faith in the north part of the town. The large and beautiful church edifice in Cheneyville furnishes ample accommodation for those living in South Manchester. Both churches are under the pastoral charge of Rev. James F. Campbell. Episcopal services are now regularly conducted by Rev. Mr. Warner in the Center academy building, with a good attendance and a prospect of a church edifice at no distant day.

#### SCHOOLS.

Schools were established in Hartford and other towns in the colony at an early period. It seemed to be the settled policy of the early settlers to provide for the education of the masses. In 1689 a free school was established in Hartford, and in 1700 four grammar schools were established by authority of law, and located in the four county towns then existing. In 1690 the General Court ordered: "That all parents and masters should cause their children and servants as they are capable, to be taught to read distinctly the English tongue, and that the Grand-Jurymen in each towne doe once in the yeare at least visit each family they suspect to neglect this order, and satisfy themselves wither all children under age and servants in such suspect familyes can read well the English tongue or be in good proceedure to learn the same or not, and if they find any such children and servants not taught as their years are capable of they shall return the names of the parents or masters of the sayd children so untaught to the next County Court where the sayd parents or masters shall be fyned 20 shillings for each child or servant whose teaching is or shall be neglected according to this order, unless it shall appear to the satisfaction of the Court that the sayd neglect is not voluntary but necessitated by the incapacity of the parents or their neighbors to cause them to be taught as aforesayd or the incapacity of the said children or servants to learn." And in those days they also

fined the officers if they didn't do their duty. The Assembly of Divines' Catechism or the New England Primer was required to be taught, and the custom was kept up for nearly or quite two hundred years. To support the schools a tax of 40s. on the £1,000 was levied and collected with the town rates or State tax. In 1733 the General Assembly appropriated the avails of seven townships of land lying in the western part of the colony to the support of schools, the same to be divided among the towns that were then settled, and to remain a perpetual fund. Consequently the old towns settled previous to that date have a local fund separate from the general school fund and town deposit fund, but Manchester, being an outgrowth of Hartford, has no part of this local fund. The history of these lands is as follows :

After the death of King Charles II, and the accession of James II to the throne of England, Sir Edmund Andros having been appointed Governor-General of his Majesty's colonies in New England, etc., demanded and undertook to wrest from the colony of Connecticut not only the unappropriated lands held by the governor and company of Connecticut under the charter of King Charles II, but also the charter itself ; but he failed in both projects, for the General Court, anticipating his designs, in 1686 granted to the towns of Hartford and Windsor, by a patent signed by the governor and secretary, the land comprising fourteen townships, lying in the northwestern part of the colony, which secured to these towns a good and valid title. But after the danger of falling into the hands of Andros was passed, the colonial governor claimed the lands as if no grant had been made, and demanded from Hartford and Windsor a release, which was refused, and a long and angry controversy followed, which was finally adjusted by compromise. Hartford and Windsor took Torrington, Barkhamsted, Colebrook, Harwinton, Hartland, Winchester, and New Hartford, which were divided between the towns. The governor and company took Norfolk, Goshen, Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, Salisbury, and Sharon. These lands were disposed of and the avails,

by order of the General Assembly in 1733, were appropriated for schools.

The town deposit funds consist of the surplus funds distributed to the towns some years ago from the treasury of the general government, and are also appropriated to schools.

The general school fund is derived from the avails of a portion of the lands belonging to this State in the northern part of Ohio, called the "Connecticut Reserve." There were 3,666,000 acres of these lands, of which 500,000 acres were given to Norwalk, Danbury, and other towns which were burned or suffered losses by fire during the Revolutionary War.

The first school established within the present limits of Manchester was in the year 1745. (The schools then were under direction of the ecclesiastical societies.) The vote of the Third Society of Hartford, now the First Society of East Hartford, authorizing this school, was dated December 24, 1745, and reads as follows, viz.: "Voted that those persons living on the five miles of land in this Society have their ratable part of the school money improved among themselves by direction of the School Committee from time to time until the Society shall order otherwise." Mr. Josiah Olcott was the first committee appointed by the society, who lived where Mr. Sidney Olcott now lives, and the school was located near his residence.

In 1751 the society passed a vote authorizing the establishment of several schools on the Five Miles as follows, viz.: one to accommodate Lieutenant Olcott, Sergeant Olcott, the Simonds, and those living near them; one on "Jamb Stone Plain," one near Ezekiel Webster's, one in the Center between Sergeant Samuel Gaines and Alexander Keeney's, and one near Dr. Clark's. At this date the population of the whole town of Hartford was less than three thousand, and Hartford then included the present towns of West Hartford, East Hartford, and Manchester, and extended from Avon and Farmington on the west, to Bolton line on the east, a distance of nearly fifteen miles. The population of Farmington then was much greater than Hartford; and in

population and wealth Middletown was nearly double that of Hartford. Since that date the school districts in Orford and Manchester have increased from five to nine, and public schools from five to twenty. In 1784 there were seventeen tax-payers in Orford.

When Manchester became a town in 1823, its population was a little over fifteen hundred ; to-day probably six thousand and upwards. The population of the colony in 1779 was about two hundred thousand, and during the century has increased about threefold. The number of children between the age of four and sixteen in this town, according to the enumeration of January 1, 1880, is one thousand five hundred and eighty-seven.



## VIII.

## NAMES OF PERSONS

who signed the petition of 1772 for the new society which was formed under the name of "The Parish of Orford."

Josiah Olcott,  
Solomon Gilman,  
Timothy Cheney,  
Richard Keney,  
Joseph Sweetland,  
Richard Pitkin,  
Robert McKee,  
Malachi Corning,  
Benjamin Man,  
Daniel Sweetland,  
Israel Sweetland,  
Asa Woodruff,  
Martin Woodruff,  
John Keeney,  
Thomas Keeney,  
Joseph Keney, Jr.,  
Thomas Jasnall,  
Jeremiah Hurlbut,  
Timothy Wood,  
Daniel Hills,  
David Buckland,  
Henry Treat, Jr.,  
Thomas Slate,  
Joseph Case,  
Joseph Benton,  
Stephen Olmsted, Jr.,  
Alexander Keeney,  
William Buckland,  
Jabez Dart, Jr.,

Daniel Chandler,  
Alexander Stedman,  
Nathan Stedman,  
Benjamin Simonds,  
Joseph McKee,  
Joseph Simonds,  
Jonathan Mygatt,  
Benjamin Daman,  
Joseph Stedman,  
Jedediah Darling,  
John McKee,  
Samuel Simonds,  
Silas Cheney,  
David Keeney,  
Timothy Stedman,  
Benjamin Man, Jr.,  
David Daman,  
Elisha Buckland,  
David Case,  
Nathaniel Olcott,  
Benjamin Cheney,  
William Simonds,  
Benjamin Brown,  
Elisha Olcott,  
Samuel Olcott,  
Ebenezer Briant, Jr.,  
Timothy Briant,  
Theodore Keeney,  
Ephraim Webster,

Peter Buckland,	Matthew Cadwell,
Thomas Trill,	Josiah Loomis,
Stephen Bidwell,	Aaron Right,
Alexander Keney, Jr.,	James Vibert,
Elijah Peck,	John Cadwell,
Richard Keeney, Jr.,	Daniel Brewer.
Simon Keeney,	

Two names are omitted on this list, as they cannot be read on account of the paper being badly broken where it has been folded.









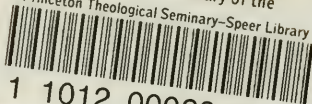


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