

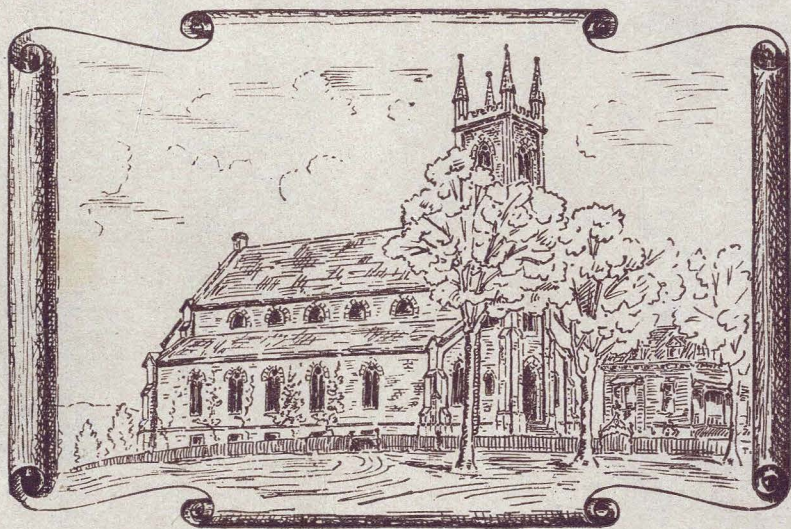


ONSECRATION · †

of · the · Fourth · Church · Edifice ··

TRINITY · PARISH ·

NEWTOWN · CONN ··



and · Celebration · of · the · One -
Hundred - and - Fiftieth · Anniversary ·
of · its · Foundation ··

with · MEMORIAL ·
SERMON ··

Compliments of
CONSECRATION

OF THE *Gour. Morris Watkins*

FOURTH CHURCH EDIFICE,

Trinity Parish, Newtown, Conn.,

AND

CELEBRATION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION,

WITH

MEMORIAL SERMON

BY

REV. D. P. SANFORD, D.D.,

RECTOR OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, THOMPSONVILLE, CONN.,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

REV. JOHN BEACH, A.M..

MISS. OF THE VEN. SOC. P. G.

FROM 1732 TO 1782.

PRINTED BY REQUEST.



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1882.

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CONSECRATION

OF THE

FOURTH CHURCH EDIFICE, TRINITY PARISH.

THE Vestry of Trinity Parish having obtained for publication the Memorial Sermon delivered at their request in the Parish Church by the Rev. David P. Sanford, D.D., on the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the foundation of the Parish, it has been deemed desirable to publish with it, and so, permanently record, certain other facts of interest, some of which have already appeared in the local paper, pertaining to this Anniversary, when, the present Church Edifice, recently freed from debt, with its complete decorations, and bearing on its walls memorials to distinguished worthies of days gone by, was duly consecrated and set apart for the worship of Almighty God.

In 1863, the third Church Edifice of the Parish, which was built of wood, having passed the Seventy-seventh Anniversary of its erection, the subject of raising funds for the building of a more comfortable and commodious church began to be discussed, and the following spring several informal meetings were held and a subscription started, but it soon fell through.

In the autumn of this year, by the death of an old parishioner, the sum of \$3,000 was left, by will, "for the erection of a new church." This led to the renewal, in the spring of 1865, of the subscription for that purpose. The foundation was laid and the basement erected the following summer.

In December, 1868, the exterior was completed, with the exception of the tower. A year later the church was finished, and a new bell, weighing 2,577 pounds was raised to its place, bearing the inscription

"I to the church the living call,
And to the grave do summon all."

The last service in the old church, which was consecrated by Bishop Seabury, September 19, 1793, was held on the 30th of January, 1870, when the venerable and beloved Rector, the Rev. Newton E. Marble, D.D., delivered an appropriate discourse, taking for his text, 1 St. John ii. 18, "It is the last time."

The occasion was one of special interest, and every part of the old Parish, extending over sixty-three square miles, was well represented in the large congregation assembled for "the last time" in the old church, round which clustered so many memories of the past.

The opening of the present new stone Church for Divine Worship, by the Rt. Rev. John Williams, D.D., took place on the 3d of February, 1870; the consecration having been necessarily postponed in consequence of a debt incurred in building. Twenty-two clergymen were present. The Rev. E. Edwards Beardsley, D.D., Rector of St. Thomas' Church, New Haven, preached an admirable sermon on the occasion, which was afterward published, throwing much light on the early history of the Parish.

With the beginning of the year 1872, a plan was resorted to for the reduction of the church debt by subscription, which raised \$12,625.

After a lapse of ten years, a final subscription paper was started, dated November 19th, 1881, by which the whole indebtedness of the Parish was extinguished, and the way paved for the consecration of the church. It was conditioned on raising the \$9,000 needed, and its actual payment before February 1st of the present year. The amount secured was \$9,844.51. Thus making the cost of the church, including the tablets, handsome iron fence, walks, grading, and other work about the church grounds upwards of sixty thousand dollars.

The Consecration took place June 8th, 1882. Nature and

a careful planning of every detail beforehand combined to make it a success in every particular.

More than a thousand people gathered from this and neighboring Dioceses to celebrate this day of special interest in the history of the church in Connecticut.

Fifty-two clergymen were present. The clergy robed at the Rectory, some distance from the church, and the imposing body, marching two and two, led by the Bishop and the Rector, entered the church and began the impressive service that was to separate it henceforth from all unhallowed, ordinary, and common uses, and dedicate it to the worship and service of Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The following were the appointments of the services:

The request to consecrate was read by the Rector.

Prayer, by the RT. REV. JOHN WILLIAMS, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of the Diocese.

Sentence of Consecration, by the REV. FRANCIS T. RUSSELL, Rector of St. Margaret's School for Girls, Waterbury, Conn.

Morning Prayer, by the REV. W. N. ACKLEY, Rector of St. Mark's Parish, Warren, R. I.

First Lesson, by the REV. S. O. SEYMOUR, Rector of Michael's Parish, Litchfield, Conn.

Second Lesson, by the REV. E. L. WHITCOME, Rector of St. Paul's Parish, Brookfield, Conn.

Creed and Prayer, by the REV. BYRON J. HALL, Rector of St. James' Parish, Danbury, Conn.

The Commandments, by the REV. EDWIN HARWOOD, D.D., Rector of Trinity Parish, New Haven, Conn.

The Epistle, by the REV. SYLVESTER CLARK, Rector of Trinity Parish, Bridgeport, Conn.

The Gospel, by the REV. S. STEBBINS STOCKING, of Jamaica, L. I.

The Sermon was preached by the Bishop of the Diocese, from Joshua xxiv. 7 and 14. In the celebration of the holy communion the Bishop was assisted in the distribution of the elements by DRS. LORENZO T. BENNETT, of Guilford, and EDWIN HARWOOD of New Haven, the REV. SYLVESTER CLARK, of Bridgeport, and the Rector.

The Closing Prayer and Benediction, by the Bishop.

The following is an extract from the Bishop's sermon :

"This beautiful church, now consecrated forever to the glory of the holy and undivided Trinity, bears on its walls memorials of the dead that carry us back to three different periods of the history, not of this place only, but of our Church in this western world.

"The tablet which commemorates the first honored rector of this ancient parish tells of labors and trials, nay, of sufferings and dangers, of the early period of struggle and contest when the Church was winning its way, inch by inch, in the face of manifold forms of opposition; when before holy orders could be obtained the dangers of three thousand miles of ocean travel—so different then from what it is to-day—had to be incurred; when the baptized members of the Church went unconfirmed because there was no bishop here to lay on hands; when all work was maimed and crippled from within and scorned and baffled from without.

"The next in order of time carries us back to the period immediately following the Revolution, when the Church was 'scattered and peeled,' and it scarcely seemed as if it would survive the shock of the separation from the mother Church.

"The third, bearing as it does the name of a deacon ordained by the first bishop of this diocese and in the United States, a name well remembered, and one whom many of us have seen, brings down the line of succession to our own day and time. And these three rectorships, it is well to remember in these uneasy and changeful times, embrace the years of almost a century.

"The fourth commemorates that long and faithful pastorate which is in all your memories to-day and will forever be united with this church, the erection of which it witnessed.

"Much as I might wish to dwell on these memorials with their stirring stories and dear associations, I cannot but remember that their story was well and fully told when this church was first opened for holy services. I bethink myself also that they will be brought to you in another service than the present, and so I leave them, with this brief mention, to my brother, whose duty it will be to tell you the story of the past as it mingles itself with the present and culminates in the service of this day. But I ask you not to forget that these memorials of past labors in this parish, connected with the crowning effort which well deserves to take its place with them, and which has made it possi-

ble to do and say what has been done and said here to-day, bring us to just that point of connection which enables us to pass from the narrower to the wider field, from the human memory to the divine purpose, from man to God."

Trinity Church now has a fine interior, and the Parish has cause to congratulate itself on having secured the services of a decorator and designer for this work who is at once an artist and a churchman.

The interiors of other churches may be more costly than this, but few can rival it in its ability to wear well, that is, to please the eye as the general harmonies of design and color come to be more carefully noticed. The idea of the artist has been to give a quiet, subdued, and churchlike effect to his work, avoiding all strong and bright colors and harsh contrasts. The general tones are greenish, which are easy to the eye. The details of all ornament are conventional, but in all cases have been given a touch of originality and are not mere copies of mediæval decorations, although in the same spirit and boldness. As has been said, the prevailing tones of the church are greenish, brownish green on the side walls, with brownish red and soft dark green for decorations. The general treatment is very simple, the same greens, reds, blues, and other colors being used all the way through. All the woodwork within the church has been painted a sort of light chocolate color. The ceiling of the nave has a groundwork of greenish buff, spangled with radiating devices, in which are placed symbols of the Trinity, sacred monograms, etc., in a soft green, interspersed with small, starlike devices, of red. The ceiling of the side aisles is in the same colors, with different devices, the principal ornament being the monogram I H S and a large star. A frieze of green divides the ceiling of the nave from the clear story designed after oak. The spandrels or spaces dividing the nave from the side aisle are spangled with *fleur-de-lis* in red, the arches themselves being painted with rich greens, blue and red. The side walls are a brownish green, with a band running through them, at the spring of the window arches, of plain green, with a red ornament at the edge. This and other points within reach of the floor have been left in such a condition that at any future time additions may be made without painting out or destroying what has been done.

The chancel has received the greatest amount of work, making it, as it should be, the chief point of attraction. Entering the chancel, over the arch, is a broad band of dead gold, upon which are the words, "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life." The chancel ceiling is a soft, greenish gray, ornamented with an entirely new and original treatment. The design is the passion-flower and vine, covering the entire ceiling in green, purple, white, and gold. The side wall is divided from the ceiling at the spring of the arch by bands of greenish blue and white, underneath which runs a band of decoration formed of the monogram I H S in red. From this band to within four or five feet of the floor, the walls are entirely covered with the diaper in green, the design being the crown of thorns, blazing sun, etc., typical of the humiliation of the Son of Righteousness, with vertical bands of red and green, the ornament being formed of *fleur-de-lis*, symbol of purity. From this decoration to the floor is a heavy dado of a deep red with a band of decoration, which runs entirely around the chancel. It is formed of the grapevine, in green and gold, with bands of blue, white, and gold on either side. This band of decoration is very elaborate and is interlaced and woven together in an almost indescribable manner.

The richest decoration, nevertheless, is at the back or east wall of the chancel. The space above the spring of the chancel arch on this east wall is spangled with a diaper of curious stars. At the spring of the arch is a large panel of dead gold, painted upon which is the word, "Alleluiah" on either side. At the top and bottom of this panel are broad bands of decoration in white, blue, and gold, blue being the groundwork. This is carried over the top of the window arch, upon it appearing in white mediæval letters, "Strength and Beauty are in His Sanctuary." From this work to the bottom of the window the wall is covered with dead gold, decorated with a soft blue and red, strong and bold in design, with an aureola in the centre, the background of which is deep blue. Upon this, on the left or gospel side, is painted in white and gold the monogram "Alpha and Omega," and on the epistle or right side, in the same colors, the monogram I H S. The window-jamb is painted in a rich blue green, the bead, or moulding,

running around the entire window being covered with dead gold. The space underneath the window, above the altar, is divided into three panels by bands of buff, brown, and gold. The extreme panels have a large Greek cross in brown and gold, at the junction of the arms of which is a golden crown, symbolizing the crown gained by faith. Upon the centre panel is painted a large, flaming scroll, upon which appear the words, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," and in the extreme centre is a quatrefoil device in which is placed, in a curious and original manner, a Latin cross and the letters I H S in gold.

The organ pipes are covered with gold, upon which is painted a mass of decoration in blue and green, representing the reed, symbol of music, the case being stained in a mahogany tone.

The Sunday-school room in the basement has been decorated in the same quiet manner as the nave of the church, though the colors are lighter. The ceiling is laid out in squares, in which appear the conventional forms of the rose.

The four tablets to the memory of Revs. John Beach and Philo Perry, and Drs. Burhans and Marble are very elaborate in design and detail. Each one has been made after a different design, conforming each to the character of the time in which the clergyman lived. They are the fitting consummation of all the work of the artist who has designed the whole, and, though occupying but a comparatively small space, are the most artistic and valuable decoration in the church. It is rarely that so costly tablets are placed in a church four at once, and it is interesting to notice the means that have been taken to have them of different appearance.

In Rev. John Beach's tablet, most of the decoration is in the stone. The brasswork is simply a polished plate with the inscription, and but slight ornament. The letters of Rev. John Beach's tablet are in black enamel, in keeping with his times, but the others are in black, red, and blue. In the tablet of Rev. Dr. Burhans the artist has put the design partly in the stone, partly in the brass. The prevailing colors in the brass are black and red enamel, with a very little blue at the corners.

In the case of Rev. Dr. Marble the design is very little in the stone and mostly in the brass. The colors are a different shade of red and blue, with black letters, the blue being much more prominent than in the others. In Rev. Mr. Perry's tablet the design is altogether in the brass, the predominant colors red and black, with a very little blue, the dark marble background being without decoration.

The following is a list of the Rectors of the Parish :

The REV. JOHN BEACH, A.M., appointed Missionary 1732, died March 19, 1782.

The REV. PHILO PERRY, chosen Rector January 9, 1787, died October 26, 1798.

The REV. DANIEL BURHANS, D.D., chosen Rector October 1, 1799, resigned November 1, 1830.

The REV. SAMUEL C. STRATTON, chosen Rector October 1, 1831, resigned October 1, 1839.

The REV. S. STEBBINS STOCKING, chosen Rector April 11, 1841, resigned September 24, 1848.

The REV. HORACE HILLS, chosen Rector January 7, 1849, resigned November, 11, 1849.

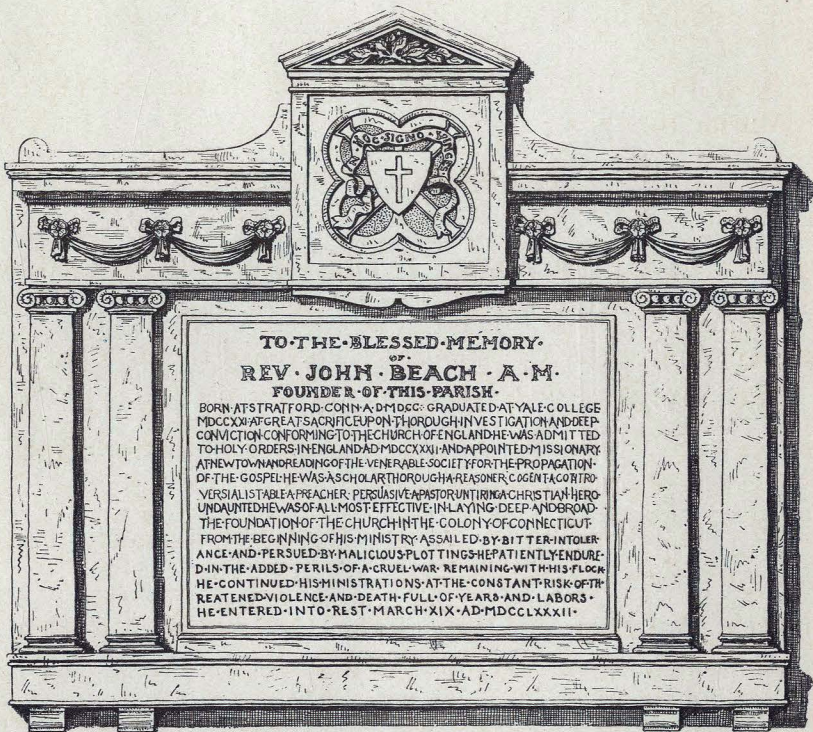
The REV. WILLIAM M. CARMICHAEL, D.D., chosen Rector November 6, 1850, resigned November 6, 1852.

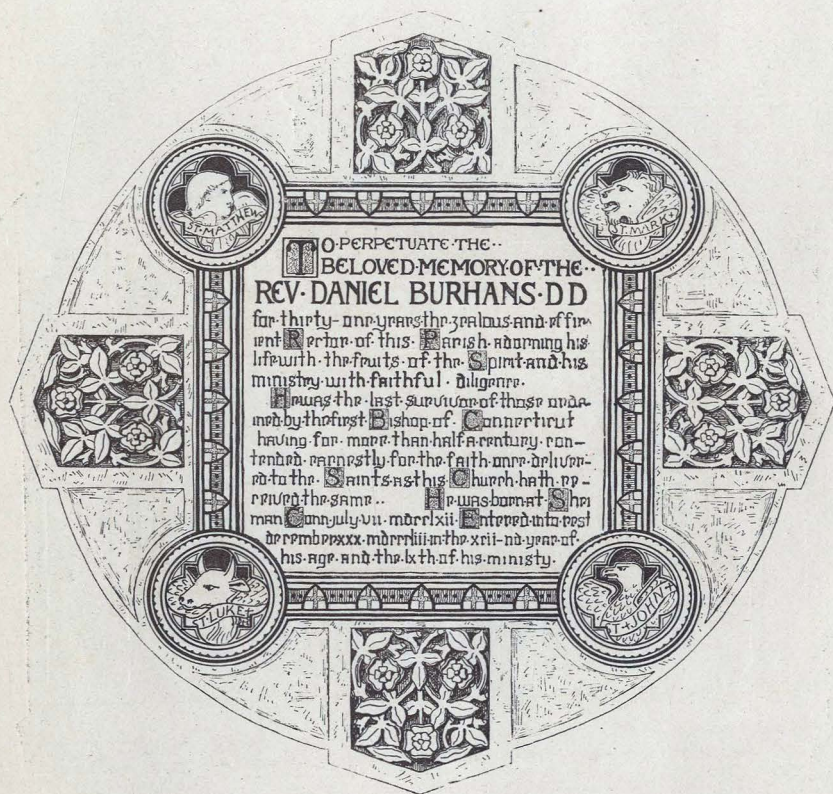
The REV. BENJAMIN W. STONE, D.D., chosen Rector November 29, 1852, resigned November 17, 1856.

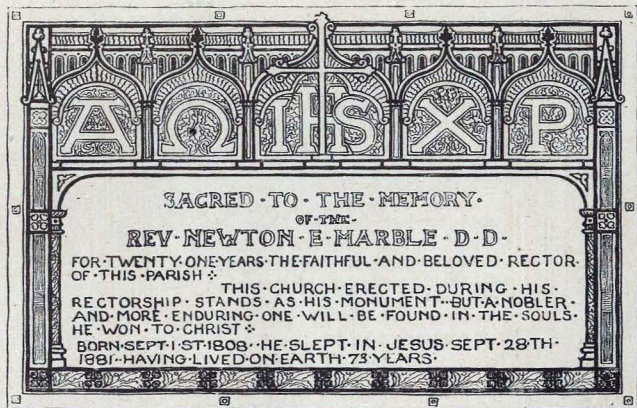
The REV. NEWTON E. MARBLE, D.D., chosen Rector April 1, 1857, resigned September 1, 1878.

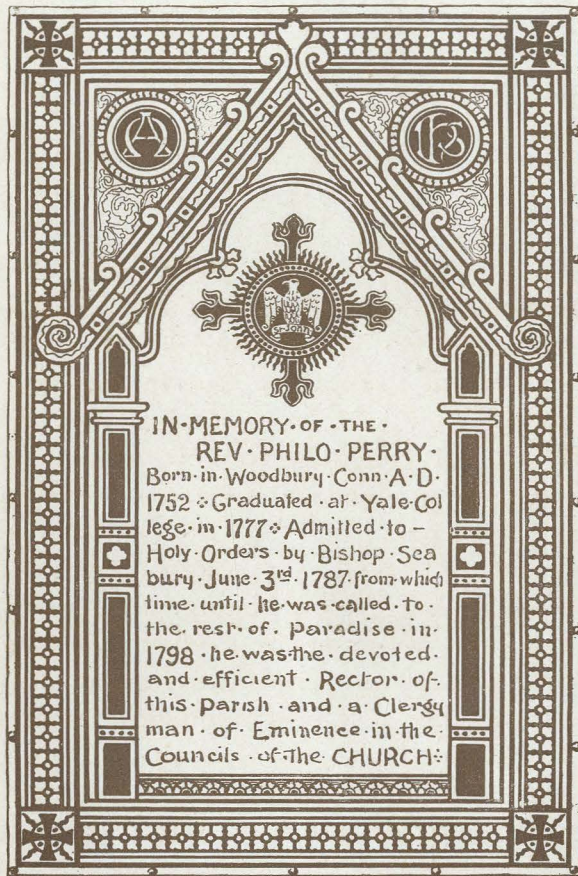
The REV. THOMAS W. HASKINS, chosen Rector September 30, 1878, resigned October 1, 1880.

The REV. GOUVERNEUR MORRIS WILKINS, present Rector, chosen Easter, 1881.









SERMON.

“I HAVE CHOSEN YOU, AND ORDAINED YOU, THAT YOU SHOULD GO AND BRING FORTH FRUIT, AND THAT YOUR FRUIT SHOULD REMAIN.”—St. John, chap. xv., verse 16.

IN the providence of God there are, in every age and country, men raised up who stand out distinct from their fellows, not in natural gifts alone, but in the successful use of those gifts in the work of Christ—typical men, whose bright path points the way of usefulness to those who come after them—men who live on in deeds and graces springing anew in others through the ages.

It is good for us, as well as a pious duty, to keep fresh their memory, not by graving upon lasting stone and metal only, but upon living immortal minds, reproducing before each passing generation a picture of each of these great and good.

Among those who were instrumental in laying the foundations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Connecticut, there were two who stood out markedly above and distinct from all others—Rev. Dr. Johnson and Rev. John Beach. They were typical men. Johnson was the type of that class of clergymen who master the great questions of theology and philosophy which agitate their times—who have the heaven-bestowed gift of shaping the minds of those who shall be the immediate teachers of the people. They are in the noblest sense educators. They are men whose felt executive ability and wide comprehension of their times is a divine designation to leadership.

Beach, on the other hand, was a typical pioneer pastor ;

one of that class so absolutely and immediately necessary to the work of bringing men into the Lord's kingdom of grace, and to fitting them for his kingdom of glory; one whose native powers would enable him to win distinction in almost any calling, but who, at the call of God, without demur throws himself with undivided heart into the pious pastoral work, and who feels thankful in all his life that the Lord had given him to share in his own toils and trials; a man with an intuitive knowledge of human nature, and the love of God in his heart, so that he both understands and sympathizes with his fellow-men; whose unswerving purpose is to learn and teach the truth as it is in Jesus, at whatever peril—to defend it at any cost; a man with the largest measure of that most uncommon gift, common-sense, and the grace of God to apply it in all the details of his life and ministry. Such a man was John Beach, the first pastor of this cure, the most successful, probably, in personally winning men to our fold in Connecticut, of all that noble band of missionaries who labored during fifty years before the close of the American Revolution.

Like Samuel and Timothy, he began his religious life from the beginning. The son of religious parents, he was carefully trained from infancy in the way he should go. Tradition relates that from his youth he had his habit of being alone for reading and prayer, while others were pursuing their diversions. He was eager in searching the Scriptures and in seeking such knowledge as is needful for their correct interpretation. His thirst for biblical knowledge was irrepressible. With zeal he learned the will of God, with unfeigned faith he embraced it, with a devoted heart he lived it.

As he grew up he gave such promise, that under the advice of the Rev. Dr. Cutler, who had been for ten years their pastor, and was just entering upon the rectorship of Yale College, his parents determined to bestow upon him a liberal education. He graduated at the age of twenty-one. He laid a solid foundation for his future work, especially in a knowledge of the Hebrew language, for proficiency in which he was noted among his brethren.

While Mr. Beach was in Yale College, that remarkable movement began there which caused intense excitement

throughout the colony, and gave to our Church in Connecticut an impulse and character which it has never lost. The movement resulted in the conformity of the Rector, Dr. Cutler, and Revs. Johnson and Brown, to the Church of England. They were three of the most distinguished men in the colony for clearness of intellect, attainments in science and theology, and for the moral and Christian virtues.

Men needed to be made of stern stuff to surrender thus their earthly prospects, brave the dangers of the sea and of disease, part from their families for a long period, with the certainty, if spared to return, of laboring for the rest of their days in the midst of an embittered and hostile people. The sincerity and devotion of such men were manifest. Their well-tried characters, coupled with their acknowledged talents and scholarship, were a tower of strength to the cause they espoused.

Mr. Johnson, on his return from England, in holy orders, settled as missionary at Stratford of the venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Stratford was then the only Episcopal parish in the colony of Connecticut. Here he became familiarly acquainted with Mr. Beach, who had taken his degree of A.B., and was preparing himself for the Congregational ministry. This acquaintance was destined to work in Mr. Beach's life a great, but not an immediate, change.

The stir and discussion attendant upon the conformity of Mr. Johnson and his friends occurring while he was at Yale College, of course his attention was strongly attracted to the subjects connected with the distinctive polity and doctrines of the church—and the more so as Cutler had been his pastor and friend. He was thus made somewhat doubtful in regard to the system in which he had been trained. He thus states his frame of mind when, at twenty-four years of age, he was admitted to the Congregational ministry: "Having studied the controversy with the best helps I could get, though I had some doubts about the lawfulness of Presbyterian ordination, yet my doubts about the lawfulness of clerical conformity in the Church of England were stronger."

The quarterly visits here of Mr. Johnson, from Stratford,

to minister to those who were inclined to the Church of England were making considerable impression, and it became a matter of solicitude with the Independents to settle an able and popular pastor at Newtown.

Mr. Beach, now at the age of twenty-four, was looked upon as a young man of unusual promise, and was settled by the Congregational society without a dissenting voice. It would seem that his kindly feeling toward the Church of England commended him to some, who, under more favorable circumstances, would have conformed, but who were willing to unite in settling him with Presbyterian ordination. The result was for a time answerable to their expectations. All united under the new minister except five families of decided Church people. These continued to meet in a private house for worship, and were ministered to occasionally by Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Beach was successful in his ministry. Carefully avoiding controversial topics, which were then rife in all New England, he preached the simple gospel of Christ, and, living as he preached, was respected and beloved.

But the churchly tendencies which had been a cogent reason for his settlement began to produce their legitimate fruit in himself. He was of that honest make-up that his practice followed closely upon his belief—truth with him was for use—not for mere speculation and discussion.

He was noticed to use frequently in his public ministrations the Lord's Prayer, to read whole chapters from the Bible, and to employ sentences in his prayers which the Church people said were taken from the Prayer Book. He began to find that he could not teach without mitigating explanations the doctrines laid down in the Westminster Catechism and Saybrook Platform, the then accepted standards of the Puritan establishment in Connecticut. After eight years of acceptable service, he felt compelled by his convictions to give up his position in a communion with whose doctrines and usages he was no longer in accord, and he became a communicant in the Church at Stratford on Easter day, 1732.

On his avowal of his conformity a storm broke upon him from his former brethren, which ceased not entirely during the remaining half century of his life—a bitterness of assault

which bore witness to the greatness of the man by the felt greatness of his loss.

He was attacked in scurrilous and abusive pamphlets, to which he temperately and calmly replied.

So soon as arrangements could be made, he left his family and embarked for England to receive such a commission to minister as could alone satisfy his conscience. He carried with him from his Church of England brethren the amplest testimonials to his learning, worth, and reputation.

A petition was also sent from Chestnut Ridge, now Redding Ridge, by the Churchmen there, that Mr. Beach might be appointed to serve as Missionary of the venerable Society in this region, and that they might share in the benefit of his ministrations. These requests were granted, and in September, 1732, he returned in holy orders, and with a commission as Missionary at Newtown and Redding.

Now, at the age of thirty-two, he began his true work in life. All that went before he had profited by as a providential training and fitting for his true mission while he yet knew it not.

By eight years' experience, he was skilled as a pastor—by faithful and loving study from his youth, he was learned in the Holy Scriptures—by them, in their sense as witnessed by the historical church, he had tried and corrected the theology received from his immediate ancestors—to satisfy the demands of his own conscience he had studied and weighed well the claims of the Church of England to be the living representative of the Church founded in Britain by apostolic men within apostolic times. With him religious truth received on adequate evidence became part of his life, to be yielded only with life—all this combined with natural abilities of a high order, by God's grace, made him a power for good—he was like them to whom our Lord said, "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

He had need of all his resources of nature, education, and grace, for the outlook at the beginning of his new career was anything but cheering. The efforts of his late brethren had been but too successful in embittering the minds of many toward

him. He had been denounced as a hypocrite, heretic, and bigot—the institutions of the church to which he had conformed as rags of popery, and the Prayer Book as merely the Romish mass-book translated.

When he returned to the community where he had labored, he found that by the mass his labors of love seemed forgotten. He found the people cold and reserved, and some hostile to such a degree that they would not shake hands with him in common civility. Even a tribe of heathen Indians, to whom by direction of the venerable Society he tried to be useful, were stirred to hostility by false reports. But he met all this with godly patience, and quietly set himself to such work as Providence left open to him.

His appointed cure was Newtown and Redding, but this was not the limit of his labors for many years. Beginning from the southern lines of these towns, there was no northern or eastern or western limit, but the limit of his time and strength.

At Redding, he found a small band of Church people who had been ministered to occasionally by Mr. Caner, of Fairfield, and for whom it is claimed that they were the first religious body organized in that town. At any rate, one hundred and fifty years ago John Beach found the Church seated in quiet determination on the summit of Redding Ridge, and there through storm and sunshine it lives unto this day.

There Mr. Beach ministered on each alternate Sunday to the Church people gathered from far and near, some from a distance of ten or fifteen miles. Those who lived too remote to come and return home on the Lord's day, came on Saturday, bringing their needful supplies, and were given house-room by their brethern near the church. At Newtown, also, we learn that churchmen gathered for worship, in those first years, from New Milford and other remote places. Ministering to such earnest people must have been one of the chief alleviations in the hard lot of the lone missionary.

A church was built at Redding in the first year of his ministry. At Newtown he began his work with the five families of Church people to whom Mr. Johnson had ministered while Mr. Beach was yet a Congregationalist. Having no

church, Mr. Beach opened his own house for public worship, and ministered to the faithful few who resorted to him.

He was diligent in this day of small things. Three years later he reports to the venerable Society: "I have constantly preached one Sunday at Newtown and the other at Redding, and after I have preached at Redding in the daytime, I preach at Newtown in the evening."

Besides his work at these places, he preached and administered the sacraments at Ridgefield, Danbury, and Waterbury, and founded the church from which afterward sprung the parishes of Woodbury and Roxbury. Wherever there were Church people scattered, between here and the Massachusetts line, and even beyond, he sought them out and ministered to their spiritual needs. There seems to have been scattered here and there over all the colony children of the Church, or those weary of the prevailing system, and the presence of the faithful missionary encouraged these to avow themselves, and to gather round him.

His field was a very different country then and now. Much the larger portion was still covered with forest, the roads mere bridle-paths or cart tracks; streams were oftener crossed by fords than by bridges. In one instance, at least, the missionary was near losing his life in crossing an unbridged river.

The winter then also brought its peculiar toils and perils. Its snows fell to depths greater than this generation has seen, covering fences out of sight, rendering the roads impassable to horsemen, compelling the missionary sometimes to make his journey of eight miles to Redding on snow-shoes. I have heard in my boyhood aged people in Redding say that he reached his appointment in this manner when near fourscore years of age. Such an example shamed the most easy-going of his people into regular attendance at the house of God. "He was a pastor untiring."

Such zeal was not long fruitless, though nearly a year elapsed before other than the five before-mentioned families were added to his flock in this place; a lost Prayer Book falling into the hands of a Congregational family attracted curiosity, to see what this mass-book, as it was nicknamed by the Puritans, contained. The curiosity was met by a free dis-

tribution of copies of it, and the book itself, as it always will be to candid minds, was the most effective answer to its traducers. The consequence in this case was the addition of eight families, raising the number of the little flock to seventy souls.

With increased numbers came the absolute need of a church, and the need was promptly met by a willing people. Within one week the materials were gathered, the frame up, and the roof-boards nailed on, and the following Lord's day, the churchmen worshipped under this roof, using the floor-timbers as seats. Ridicule from some of their better provided neighbors stimulated their zeal, and led some of kindlier feeling to join and aid them. Within two weeks their church was enclosed, furnished with benches and desk, and Trinity Church, Newtown, had a habitation, and not a name only, but a substantial existence. From that time its course has been onward. It has had its trials, but it has passed each trial with strength undiminished or increased.

In twelve years from the erection of the first church another of more than double its capacity was required and built. Such growth in such circumstances proves the missionary to have been of unusual powers, as well as of unflinching purpose.

Five years later still a like prosperity called for the erection of the second and larger edifice at Redding Ridge. At that place there was then a more numerous and able population than now, the majority of whom became attached to the Church. The building then erected remained till 1832 unaltered, except that, near the close of the last century, its bell-turret was replaced by a tall, gaunt steeple.

Well do I remember that venerable building. Like many another old church in Connecticut, it was, as to the exterior, an imitation in wood of St. Paul's, New York. It was an honest church. Its builders offered to the Lord the best lumber their woods afforded, and they did not by paint pass it off for stone. Its interior was noble and impressive in its simplicity. Its high arched roof was sustained by huge square pillars of white oak, on which the marks of those who "lifted the axe upon the thick trees" were to be seen. Through the

centre were ranged the benches, framed and pinned together with oak, and worn bright by generations of worshippers. Along the sides were ranged the square family pews, built of the fine white lumber of the tulip-tree—sheep-pens they were called, and each Lord's day they were full of sheep. Within the chancel-rail the three-decker arrangement of holy table, desk, and pulpit, and above all the sounding-board, all remaining as when John Beach ministered, come up in the mind's vision; and in that full and devout congregation at that date here and there lingered a gray-headed worshipper who had listened to his stirring speech and been signed with the cross by his saintly hand. In how short a time have we passed on into a new and strange world!

During about twenty years of his ministry he lived near that church, and within its shadow, in 1756, he laid the mortal remains of her who had shared the toils and trials of his early manhood and middle life. Soon after 1760 he appears to have resumed his residence at Newtown, which was thenceforth his home.

Though devoted to his work as a missionary pastor, the exigencies of the times compelled him to engage in controversy to repel the attacks upon himself and upon the Church of his choice.

The care with which he had investigated the claims of her polity, and the scriptural and primitive character of her doctrines and usages, admirably fitted him for this work. He knew every inch of the ground, for he had carefully surveyed it for the satisfaction of his own conscience. He knew the force and value of every objection, for they had dwelt in his own mind till expelled by truthful investigation. He was patient with assailants and opponents, and allowed for their prejudices, for he had once shared them.

As we read the pieces which remain of his controversial writings, we are surprised that amidst such a life of toil, i. such a widespread field of pastoral work, and with attention to the cultivation of the soil to eke out his moderate income, he could have found time for a scholarship wide and accurate as he displayed. In this respect the scholarly Johnson was his only superior among our Connecticut clergy of his time; and

in his clear and popular way of putting things, so as to arrest and convince common minds, he had among them no equal.

To store up rare learning till one becomes an encyclopædia, has been the achievement of many a man who has left the world neither wiser nor better than he found it; but Beach had that gift by which a truly great mind makes its hard-earned stores of learning the readily grasped possession of plain people.

His freedom from bitterness and vituperation, his fairness in stating his own and his adversaries' positions, when contrasted with the tone and temper often shown by his opponents, all told in favor of his cause. There is in our Saxon make-up a love of fairness and justice, which was won upon by his style and method, and which the bitterness of his opponents turned in his favor.

Nor was the purity of his personal character of small weight. When a pamphlet had been circulated in his parish traducing the Church and her ministers, it was remarked by a sage old man of the standing order: "Mr. Beach is too good a man to be thus deceived. The king and parliament also are churchmen, and can they all be so wicked? I doubt it. Let us examine the subject a little more." The result was that he and several others at that time came into the Church.

That was an age when pamphlets supplied, in a degree, the place now filled by the newspaper. In the scarcity of miscellaneous reading, and in the people's isolation from the great world, each of these little missives was read and re-read and carefully treasured up. The assailants of the Episcopal Church were diligent in circulating their pamphlets, and every few years there was a new issue of them. Several of these Mr. Beach answered, and his answers were diligently circulated and read. Copies of several of these were to be found in the old church homesteads of this diocese within the memory of persons still living. To these tracts is, in no small degree, owing the conservative and intelligent churchmanship which has distinguished our diocese from the beginning. And no individual of our colonial clergy wielded through this means so long-continued and so effective an influence as John Beach. "He was a controversialist—able!"

But the controversies of those times were not limited to matters of church government or usages in worship. The system of Calvinism as enunciated in the Assembly's Catechism and the Saybrook Platform did not content many of the most thoughtful minds. With its doctrines of limited atonement and unconditional election and reprobation, it failed to meet the demands of our nature in so far as it remains as God made it—and failed to meet its wants in the fearful condition into which it is come by the fall. This system was a bed shorter than humanity in its cravings could stretch itself on—a covering too narrow to enwrap its misery and woe. On the other hand, Beach and his compeers taught an atonement wide as the race in its offers, and limited only by man's free and wilful rejection in its effects.

But many of Mr. Beach's publications on such topics were in the form of sermons, and belonged to the domain of the preacher as much as to that of the controversialist. These productions had their origin rather in the purpose of guarding the Church people from error, than in any love for polemics.

The extreme doctrines of the standing order led to the errors of Antinomianism on the one hand, and to Socinianism on the other. These ill tendencies were quickened to new vitality on the coming of the Rev. George Whitefield. He shot like a meteor through the colonies, throwing society into a ferment. He had thrown off the restraints of his ordination vows in England, and had there denounced, without stint, the authorities of the Church of England, to which he belonged. Here he went to such lengths of extravagance as to draw forth, finally, protests from a considerable portion of the divines of the Congregational order, whom in turn he denounced as heartily as he had the Bishops. Division and disorder were still further increased by the preachers who followed in his wake. Many of the Congregational churches were rent in sunder, and the whole people were excited and disturbed with strange teachings and resulting controversies.

Our Church people were in a degree affected by this state of things, and Mr. Beach and others of the clergy shaped their preaching in such wise as to guard their flocks. At the request of a convention of his brethren, Mr. Beach prepared a sermon

vindicating the fundamental principles of the Christian faith, as against several heretical and latitudinarian views which were becoming rife. This sermon was published and circulated as a tract, with the endorsement of his clerical brethren.

Quite a number of his other sermons survive to attest his qualities as a preacher. His style was clear and flowing, his words well chosen, his matter well arranged. He had evidently drunk at the fountains of English undefiled. His teaching was drawn from Holy Scripture, and was in accord with that of the best divines of our mother Church. He dwelt mainly on practical themes which have to do with conversion, a holy life, and salvation through Christ crucified. As we read we feel that he is in earnest, and in passages he rises to an impassioned eloquence. Moreover, tradition assures us that his delivery was in keeping with his matter, and, says Dr. Mansfield, his was "an unaffected and commanding eloquence."

The estimation in which he was held is attested by repeated proposals to him to remove to more desirable and less arduous fields in this and neighboring colonies. But, like Moses, "he loved his people." For their good he lived, and with them he would die. The history of the Church affords few more noble examples of life-long attachment between pastor and people.

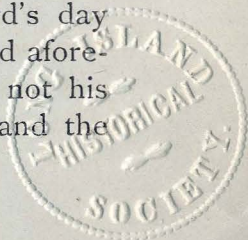
Such a life-work could not fail of abundant fruit. His ministry in the Church had now spanned the period between 1732 and the Revolutionary War, and he was a man of threescore and fifteen years. He was worn out with unremitting labors and the wearier endurance of an intolerance and hostility which never slept. He seems by some of his letters at this period to have stood, like Moses on Pisgah, looking back upon the course of his pilgrim-warfare, and wistfully forward to a rest in the heavenly Canaan. And, like Moses, he could justly feel a thankful satisfaction in the present and in the review of the past. Forty years before, he had begun a work here, to human view almost hopeless; his flock but five families, with no church, and walled round with prejudice. He was alone in all the northwestern quarter of Connecticut, and with but three fellow-laborers in the whole colony. Now he has within his own cure one-half of its whole population, and more than three

hundred communicants. All round him is a cordon of parishes; and one in every thirteen of the population of the colony is a child of that Church for which he has toiled. But though the aged toiler may desire to depart, his work is not yet done; he has run with *patience* his race, he must end it as a *Christian hero*.

The time has come when we can afford to deal fairly by the actors on both sides of the strife which severed these colonies from Great Britain, that they might in God's Providence become greater than Britain. In the veins of many, if not most of us, flows commingled the blood of loyalist and patriot, and we may proudly claim that the true men on both sides were loyal to principle and lovers of their country. He was not the less so who looked upon severance from Great Britain as the sure ruin of the colonies, and revolt as grievous sin, than he who was ready to die for principles of free government, which were not universally admitted as correct till established and settled as the rich outcome of that fiery trial.

Beach, like the most of his brethren, sought by peaceable means to secure concession to the demands of the colonies from the home government; but when war was precipitated his conscience compelled him to stand aloof from revolt against that government—a government to which he was bound at his ordination by a special oath, from which he knew no release but remission by the authority which imposed it.

With a heart undismayed, though the flesh was tremulous with age, he entered into the storm. He was no hireling to flee, but stayed with his flock, and his flock, won by his love and labor, stood by him. Other pastors fled, and still others closed their churches when the colonies declared their independence, because they dared not use the Liturgy which required them to pray for the rulers they believed to be in legitimate authority. Beach alone quailed not. Though the bitterness which had followed him so long was intensified by the internecine war, he went his way ministering the comforts and counsel which so many sorely needed. Each Lord's day he kneeled in the house of God, "and prayed as he did aforetime;" the threat of death once and again blanched not his cheek nor hushed his voice. The crack of the rifle and the



whirr of the bullet neither stirred nor stopped him as in the holy house he delivered his Master's message.

At length, when those years of strife were almost done, at fourscore years and two, the poor worn out body could no longer retain the heroic soul. In truth and fitness, as he passed from earth, might *he* use the words, too high for *most* mortal lips: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

J.



