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THE HISTORY

OF THE

FIRST CHURCH OF BRIDGEPORT,

FROM 1695 TO 1853.

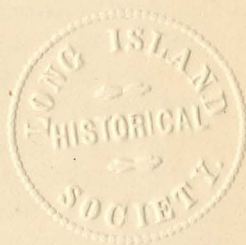
WITH

SKETCHES OF ITS MINISTERS.

BY

CHARLES RAY PALMER,

AT PRESENT PASTOR.



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1876.

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THE HISTORY
OF THE
FIRST CHURCH OF BRIDGEMAN
SHERMON
FROM 1603 TO 1853

17091



SERMON.

REMEMBER the days of old, consider the years of many generations : ask thy father, and he will shew thee ; thy elders, and they will tell thee.—
DEUT. 32 : 7.

THE earliest settlement by white men with which we of the First Church in Bridgeport can claim to be historically connected, was known as Pequonnock, and may be said to have centred not far from where North and Park avenues now intersect. Just when this settlement originated is a matter of uncertainty. The lands upon which it was located were acquired of the Paugussett Indians in 1639, in common with those covered by Fairfield and Stratford. The line dividing those towns passed through the locality we have mentioned. At an unknown date, probably not far either way from the middle of the century, certainly previous to 1670, several families made their homes in this locality, on both sides of the line. In 1678 they had become so many as to feel able to establish among them a school, upon which forty-seven children were in attendance. They petitioned the General Court that, in consideration of the expense of this school, they might be released from taxation for the benefit of that in Fairfield—too remote adequately to answer their needs. Evidently they continued to increase and to prosper ; for twelve years later, May 2d, 1690, forty-six dwellers “in the vicinity of Pequonnock” signed and presented to the General Court a document setting forth their need of

church privileges, as well as of a school, and petitioning to be released from any liabilities to assessment by Fairfield or Stratford, with a view to their maintaining pulpit and school of their own. Their request, although favored by the ministers of the towns interested, was opposed by the representatives of Fairfield, and the court did not grant it. In May of the year following, the petition was renewed, and leave was granted to the petitioners to maintain an orthodox minister, provided that they continued to pay their rates in Fairfield. This was far from satisfactory, and further petitioning followed. In October, 1691, the applicants were released from their obligations to pay rates in Fairfield, but full ecclesiastical privileges were still withheld. Finally, in May, 1694, no opposition being made, the long-sought liberty to embody as a separate parish was obtained. The prescribed limits of the jurisdiction were the Pequonnock River on the east, the Sound on the south, the course of Ash Creek on the west, and the line of the present town of Easton on the north. The General Court ordered that the new parish be known as Fairfield Village, but the inhabitants preferred the name of Stratfield, and this was legalized in 1701. Religious services had been held in the settlement for some time previous to the institution of the parish. In 1693 a house of worship was commenced on what is still known as Meeting-House Hill, on Park avenue, a few rods south of North avenue. This edifice was completed in 1695, and first occupied June 13th of that year. On that day the church was formally organized, and that is the initial date of its history.

The first minister was Rev. Charles Chauncey, a son of Rev. Israel Chauncey, of Stratford, and grandson of President Chauncey, of Harvard College. Mr. Chauncey was born at Stratford, September 3d, 1668. He was graduated at Harvard in 1686. He married in Pequonnock, June 29th, 1692, Sarah, daughter of Col. John Burr, and granddaughter of Mr. John Burr, one of the original settlers of

Pequonnock. On the corner of Col. Burr's farm, in what has since been known as Cooke's Lane, a house was built for this young couple, and here, in 1693, Mr. Chauncey took up his abode, and commenced his ministerial labors, being at that date nearly twenty-five years old. At the organization of the church he was ordained pastor, which he continued to be until his death, December 31st, 1714. His home was twice desolated; a third wife survived him. His second wife was a sister of Gov. Roger Wolcott; his widow was born Elizabeth Sherwood. Mr. Chauncey was a member of the Synod at Saybrook, and one of the founders of the Fairfield Consociation. Under his ministry both the church and the settlement steadily increased in numbers, and he was held in high esteem at home and abroad. His salary was at first £60 per annum, payable in produce at market rates; afterwards it was increased to £80. He had, independently of this support, property in Stratford and in England, and left an estate valued at £743.

The first deacon was David Sherman, a large farmer, one of the first settlers. His home was on the summit of Toilsome Hill. He was born in Stratford in 1665, and lived to the advanced age of eighty-eight years. He was a man of good abilities, gifted in prayer, and generally much esteemed. In the absence of the minister he took the lead of religious services acceptably.

Besides these officers, the original members of the church were eight brethren—namely, Richard Hubbell, Isaac Wheeler, James Bennett, Samuel Beardsley, Samuel Gregory, Matthew Sherman, Richard Hubbell, Jr., and John Odell, Jr. On the 10th July following, the wife of Deacon Sherman, the wives of the above-mentioned eight—excepting Matthew Sherman, who was unmarried—and seven other females, were received by letter. Seventy-three others were added before the close of Mr. Chauncey's ministry, and undoubtedly, besides these members in full communion, the other heads

of families in the settlement were most or all of them associated with the church, under "the half-way covenant," conformably to the practice of the churches of the colony generally, at that time—a practice continued in this church until within the present century.

In that early era of the church, the worshippers were assembled by beat of drum, carried arms, and set a sentinel during service, the Indian neighbors then occupying Golden Hill not being fully trusted. Yet, in general, the life of the Stratfield families was undisturbed by serious alarms, and while very laborious, was even and happy. Connecticut, with her 17,000 to 20,000 people, had resumed her chartered rights, after their temporary suspension, and was the freest and happiest of the colonies. The arduous toils of conquering the wilderness had developed a hardy race, and still sufficiently exercised them. Industry was an indispensable condition of living, but it was enough rewarded to make contentment universal. There was venison from the hills, fish from the rivers, sugar from the trees. Flocks were raised for their wool, and herds for the market which they found abroad. Agriculture, education, and religion were the great interests of society. Private and public expenditures were frugal in the extreme. Poverty, want, luxury, pride, were alike unknown. Dress was of the simplest materials, and a pillion was the grandest equipage. After so simple a manner lived and died these early fathers and mothers.

On the 21st June, 1715, nearly six months after Mr. Chauncey's death, a call was extended to Rev. Samuel Cooke, then of New Haven, and in July following this gentleman commenced a pastorate which continued thirty-two years. He was born in Guilford, November 22d, 1687, and graduated at Yale in 1705. He married November 30th, 1708, Miss Anne Trowbridge, of New Haven. He married a second time, a daughter of Deacon Sherman. Mr. Cooke lived in a house nearly oppo-

site to that his predecessor had occupied, in the lane long known by his name. He was a man whose personal dignity was long remembered in the parish, and was held in the highest respect—somewhat in fear. He was accustomed to wear a ministerial dress, as to which he was particularly careful. This comprised a heavy curled wig, black coat and small clothes, shoes with silver buckles, and over all a black gown or cloak. He acceptably fulfilled his ministry here until his death, December 2d, 1747. Quite early in his pastorate it became apparent that the congregation had outgrown the church edifice, and in 1717 a new edifice was erected, at the corner north-west the crossing of Park and North avenues, where the church continued to worship upward of ninety years. This was a somewhat spacious house, with a steeple and a bell, with galleries, and a few pews—doubtless in all respects an advance upon the humbler building it succeeded. Here doubtless the church life developed in a general conformity with the prevailing type of the age. The early part of the eighteenth century is said to have witnessed a general declension from spiritual religion, and the prevalence of formalism and lax morality. The great revivals from 1740, onward, were a powerful reaction from this state of things, and the beginning of better days.

Mr. Cooke's death left a vacancy not filled until nearly two years had passed. The next pastor was a young man, afterwards of considerable note in another line of life. Mr. Lyman Hall was born in Wallingford, April 12th, 1724, and graduated at Yale in 1747. He studied theology with an uncle in Cheshire, and was ordained here on the 27th September, 1749. His pastorate was short. It ended, not altogether happily, June 18th, 1751; and after it he turned his attention to medicine, became a physician, removed to Georgia, and early in 1775 took a seat in the Continental Congress as a representative of the patriotic people of that colony. He was one of the

signers of the Declaration of Independence, and afterward the first Governor of the State of Georgia. He died October 19th, 1790, leaving a widow, but no children.

To Mr. Hall succeeded another interval of two years and more, and then a man whose remembrance is altogether identified with his ministry here. Rev. Robert Ross was the son of Irish parents, but a native of this country. He was born in 1726. He was graduated at Princeton in 1751. He was ordained pastor of the Stratfield Church, November 28th, 1753, and labored as such for more than forty-two years. He lived on the old stage road, a little west of Church Lane, in a house very recently taken down. He was, beyond doubt, a remarkable man. In person he was fully six feet high and well proportioned. His presence was imposing, and his ruffled shirt, wig, and cocked hat seemed peculiarly in keeping with it. His usual dress was a black suit, with knee-breeches, and white-topped boots. He was distinguished for his classical attainments, and was esteemed a sound theologian; but he most strongly impressed himself upon the community through the warmth of his patriotism, and the decisiveness of his political convictions. From his Irish extraction he had no such ties to the mother country as withheld many of the colonists from the aspiration for independence, and he was an early and vigorous advocate of the rights of the colonies. He became a man of influence on the patriotic side, and proportionally obnoxious to the royalists. Sermons and prayers revealed how absorbed he was in the coming struggle. At the outbreak of the war he preached on the text, "For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart," in a way long remembered. A company of soldiers, raised to join the invasion of Canada, in the fall of 1775, mustered in his door-yard, and was commended to God in a fervent prayer by him, before setting out. He was a steadfast promoter of education, and published some school-books. He was

warm in all his sympathies, and enjoyed society. He was three times married. By his first wife he had a son and daughter. The son, while a lad, was drowned in his father's well. The daughter married, and of her there are descendants living. Another son, of the third marriage, survived his father a few days only. Mr. Ross resigned his charge April 30th, 1796. He died August 29th, 1799, of a fever, and within twenty-four hours Mrs. Ross died of the same disease. They were buried together.

The long period covered by the pastorates of Messrs. Cooke, Hall, and Ross saw many changes in the community of Stratfield. It had a substantial growth, and as it grew its character was modified. No longer were its inhabitants farmers and stock-growers only. The well-known colonial policy of Great Britain did not encourage colonists to follow the sea. But before the middle of the century, in spite of all discouragements, the coasting trade was no inconsiderable interest, and a race of mariners had begun to be. Mechanics and tradesmen, and even attorneys-at-law also, found the means of living in Stratfield, and thus the simple uniformity of the earlier period passed away. Political events, too, brought about changes. The French and Indian wars never introduced a foeman within the borders of Connecticut, but her sons did yeoman service in the struggles of sister colonies. The revolution, as is well known, laid heavy burdens upon the Connecticut coast, and the long train of evils which accompanied and followed it went far toward ruining every interest of society. The last ten or twenty years of Mr. Ross's ministry were, for many reasons, times of trial. The diseases, the vices, the sufferings, the sorrows, the losses, the universal insolvency, the impoverishment, which came with or were entailed by the war, made darker days than were ever seen before or since. Good morals were forsaken, and godliness decayed to a painful extent. The difficulties, the depressions, the straits of the church, at this time, must have tasked even so ardent and zealous a man

as Mr. Ross. As the process of recuperation slowly went on, another change in the community began to appear, which had important results. The little collection of houses and stores which had acquired the name of Newfield, to the eastward, and in the vicinity of the present intersection of State and Main streets, began to increase in importance, and this was the nucleus of the future town of Bridgeport, in which the individuality of Stratfield was eventually lost.

A single incident of the church life during Mr. Ross's ministry, although often described, was too remarkable and too tragic to be passed over here. On the 28th July, 1771, the congregation assembled for worship at the usual morning hour. A storm was gathering, but the service proceeded. The storm proved to be one of appalling severity. The church grew dark, until the form of the minister was hardly visible, as he stood in the exercise of prayer. Suddenly a dazzling flash of lightning filled the house, made more terrific by the crash of thunder which followed instantaneously. The voice of the minister broke the awful stillness which ensued, with the question, "*Are we all here?*" It was found that two of the best men of the community, David Sherman and Captain John Burr, who had come to church in the fulness of vigorous life, had been struck dead, and several others had been injured. The impression made by this painful occurrence was profound and lasting.

Did time permit, it would be fitting to speak at length of some representative laymen of this period, who well deserved commemoration. Such were Stephen Burroughs, William Wordin (Senior), and Abijah Sterling. Captain Burroughs died in 1818, aged 88 years. He was an ardent patriot during the Revolution, and raised a company called the "Householders," of those exempt from militia service, which he commanded. He was a Justice of the Peace, and often a representative to the General Assembly. He was a man of scientific attainments also, especially

in mathematics. He is said to have been the inventor of Federal money. Captain Wordin was another active patriot, and commander of the "Householders"—a tall spare, indefatigable man, who lived to a great age, and was a leading man in the parish. Captain Abijah Sterling, another patriot, is described as one of nature's noblemen, universally honored and trusted. He was captain in the Militia and a Justice of the Peace. He was the umpire in all disputes, a general pacificator; a man of great sagacity, acuteness, and of strong moral sense. He died in 1802.

Mr. Ross's successor in the pulpit was the Rev. Samuel Blatchford. He was born in Devonport, Devonshire, England, in the year 1767. His father's family sympathized with the American cause during our Revolution, and he was often employed to convey means of relief to American prisoners of war in the Mill prison. His interest in these objects of his friends' bounty led him to an early purpose himself to come to this country. He was sent to a boarding-school at Willington, in Somersetshire, and thence to Homerton College, near London. After completing his studies, he was employed as assistant minister, and afterwards ordained pastor, at Kingsbridge, near Dartmouth. His ordination was in November, 1789. He married in March, 1788, Alicia, daughter of Thomas Windeatt, Esq., of Bridgetown Totwas,—a lady admirably fitted for her station, and spared to him to the end of his life. In 1791 Mr. Blatchford removed to Topsham, near Exeter, and thence in 1795 he emigrated to America, according to his long-cherished purpose. He arrived in New York August 1st. He preached first in Bedford, N. Y.; then for a year at Greenfield Hill, succeeding there President Dwight. In February, 1797, he was invited to preach in the Stratfield church for six months, with a view of settlement. He accepted, and was installed November 22d of the same year. His salary being inadequate, he eked it out by teaching an academy

for boys. He lived in the house now numbered 644 Main street. His academy was just below, on land now owned by Thomas Calef. He labored here until March 20th, 1804, when he resigned to accept a call to Lansingburgh, where he continued until his death, March 17th, 1828. He was made D.D. by Williams College in 1808. He had seventeen children, of whom ten survived him. While here he had not developed his best powers. Unfamiliar with American life, scantily supported, burdened with work and care in his double duties, he could hardly do justice to himself. He was an able, and afterwards a quite prominent man. As a preacher he was instructive in matter, unaffected and impressive in manner. He was well read in theology, and decided in his convictions. He was a man of generous sympathies, and interested in all enterprises of beneficence, especially in the education of young men. He was social in his disposition, and noted for his hospitality. His labors here were of great service to the church, and only too soon terminated. As has been intimated, the church had been much run down, and he gave it a needed impulse. A revival in 1800 added a number to the membership, and in 1803 a movement to build a new church edifice was successfully inaugurated.

But in the providence of God, the great restorer, one might say the second founder, of the church, was his successor, the Rev. Elijah Waterman. Mr. Waterman was born in Bozrah, Conn., November 28th, 1769. He was graduated at Yale in 1791, with creditable rank. He betook himself to teaching, intending ultimately to study law, but changed his purpose, and in 1792 became a student with Dr. Dwight at Greenfield Hill, and afterwards with Dr. Jonathan Edwards at New Haven. In April, 1794, he went to Windham to preach as a candidate, and in October following was ordained pastor there, and continued ten years. He married November 18th, 1795, Miss Lucy, daughter of Shu-

bael Abbe, of Windham. She died greatly lamented in 1822. He married a second time, October, 1823, Mrs. Lucy Talcott, of Springfield, who survived him. There were seven children of the first marriage, one of the second. Mr. Waterman's ministry at Windham was terminated in 1804. On the 1st of January, 1806, he was installed pastor of the church in Stratfield, and continued until his death. He built and lived in the house on Golden Hill street, where Mr. Hanford Lyon now lives. In person he was of medium stature, very well built, and had the appearance of great physical strength; he was altogether a man of fine presence. His countenance was amiable and intelligent, his movements quick and natural; he was active in his habits. Of a high spirit, showing a keen sense of favors and injuries, he was liable to sudden outbreaks of temper, yet placable. As a pastor he was laborious and faithful, as a preacher he was acceptable and most highly esteemed. His style was perspicuous, he was a vigorous thinker, and his manner was animated and effective. He was a moderate Calvinist, and in the controversies prevailing in his time leaned decidedly to the New School side. But being a man of strong common sense, and having a good deal of conciliatory tact, he kept his hold of men of both ways of thinking in his church, and averted any divisions of feeling between them.

Early in his ministry commenced a new era in the history of the Church. In 1807 the new church edifice was completed, built by subscription on the site at present occupied. At first it was occupied two Sabbaths out of three, but after a short interval exclusively. This was a natural result of the change the community was undergoing. The borough of Bridgeport was incorporated in 1800, with two hundred and fifty inhabitants, and by a rapid growth it gradually absorbed the life of the more ancient settlement. In 1821 the town of Bridgeport was erected, and the parish of Stratfield practically ceased to exist. The church soon felt the effects of Mr. Waterman's

invigorating administration. August 6th, 1806, a confession of faith, a covenant, and standing rules were adopted, and from this time the half-way covenant was abandoned. In 1814 a Sunday-school was organized by Mr. Platt Beardsley, the first in town. It enlisted the pastor's sympathies, and ultimately was taken under the care of the church, a supervisory committee being appointed. In April, 1821, the church purchased the land where the chapel stands for a "conference room and academy." A building was erected to answer both purposes. It was of one story, 23 by 36 feet, and was occupied as a conference room July 5th, 1821. Its title of academy came about in this wise: Mr. Waterman, like his predecessor, was much interested in the education of young men. He more or less definitely projected a theological school. He did instruct and lead into the ministry quite a number. But the great feature of Mr. Waterman's ministry is yet to be mentioned. When he was installed the church consisted of forty-seven members all told. There was a healthful growth from the first, so that by midsummer, 1815, upwards of a hundred had been added, mostly on profession. Then came a powerful revival, of which the fruitage was additions to the number of eighty-four. Four other years of quiet growth followed, and then another powerful revival season came, in 1820 and 1821, after which seventy-seven were added. The whole number added during Mr. Waterman's ministry was about three hundred and sixty. In 1825, while on a visit to Springfield, he was taken ill of typhus fever, and died there October 11th. The church sent a committee to bring hither his remains for interment, and thus ended a useful life and a most successful ministry.

In the settlement of a successor some difference of views seems to have arisen, which, while it had no immediate results, ripened into something quite positive a few years later. Prominent before the people as candidates were a son of Mr. Waterman and the Rev. Franklin Y

Vail. There seems to have been less of positive interest in Mr. Vail, than of opposition, united on him, to the choice of Mr. Waterman. Mr. Vail was chosen, but had a short pastorate. He was born in Easthampton, L. I., in 1797, entered Yale, but did not graduate; studied theology in New York. He was ordained here October 4th, 1826. Neither his health nor his tastes fitted him for a pastorate so well as for what became his life-work afterwards—the raising of funds for beneficent enterprises. He was for many years the General Agent of the American Tract Society, and was greatly valued by them in this capacity. He afterwards was the principal agent in founding and endowing Lane Theological Seminary at Cincinnati, Ohio, and an institution for female education in that vicinity. He died in Cincinnati June 23d, 1868, aged seventy-one years. His brief ministry here ended July 8th, 1828. It was chiefly notable for a revival season in the winter of 1827–28, after which thirty were added to the church.

In the settlement of a successor to Mr. Vail, there became apparent how decided a difference of theological sentiment had been growing up within the church, upon the issue then uppermost in the theological world. Mr. John Blatchford, to whom the minds of the society became directed in the autumn of 1828, was understood to be decidedly a new-school man, and the more conservative section of the church were indisposed to unite in calling him. In January, 1829, the church proved to be nearly equally divided upon the question, and the call, issued by a majority of four only, Mr. Blatchford declined. It proved impossible to harmonize the conflicting elements, after this disturbance, and, at length, December 28th, 1829, a division of the church was resolved upon. January 24th, 1830, three deacons, thirty-six other male members, and seventy-eight female members were dismissed at their own request, to form the Second Church, the old church giving them one half the church property and funds, and

also contributing two thousand dollars toward the erection of a church edifice. One week later, January 31st, those abiding in the old church (170 in number) renewed the call to Mr. Blatchford, and he promptly accepted it. He was a son of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Blatchford, born May 24th, 1796, during his father's residence at Greenfield Hill. He was graduated at Union College in 1820, and studied theology in Princeton Theological Seminary. He was ordained over the Presbyterian Church at Pittstown, N. Y., in August, 1823, and in April, 1825, he was installed over the Presbyterian Church in Stillwater. February 10th, 1830, he was installed here, and continued until July 26th, 1836, when he was dismissed at his own request, the health of his wife obliging him to change his residence. He removed to the West, resided successively at Jacksonville and Chicago, Ill., and at Wheeling, Va. From 1841 to 1844 he was connected with Marion College, the latter part of the period as President. Thence he removed to West Ely, Mo., and thence, in 1847, to Quincy, Ill., where he died in April, 1855. He received the degree of D.D. from Marion College in 1841. He was a man of a bright, ready mind, a genial spirit, of frank and pleasing manners. His general appearance was attractive, and he was almost anywhere an acceptable minister. His style was effusive rather than constructive; he did not much enter into discussion in the pulpit. But he spoke in a sympathetic and winning way, and with a good deal of unction. He was a particularly effective preacher in revival seasons. As a pastor he entered warmly into Christian work, and was interested in charitable and missionary operations. He showed great tact in enlisting laymen in church work. A very interesting revival occurred in 1831, which added eighty-six to the church-membership. The church parted with him with great regret; testifying strongly to his faithful, acceptable, and successful performance of his ministerial duties.

There succeeded to him a man of a very different type.

The Rev. Dr. John Woodbridge was born in Southamp-
ton, Mass., December 2d, 1784, and graduated at Williams
College in 1804. He studied theology at Goshen, Ct.,
with Rev. Asahel Hooker, and was licensed to preach in
June, 1807. He was ordained June 20th, 1810, over the
church in Hadley, Mass., where he had a long and honor-
able ministry. He was installed here June 14th, 1837,
and continued some seventeen months. In April, 1839, he
was installed over the North Church in New Hartford,
where he remained until January, 1842. He eventually
returned to Hadley—his first charge. He remained there
until 1862, when he went to Chicago to reside. He died
September 26th, 1869, in Waukegan, Ill., at the age of
eighty-five years. Dr. Woodbridge was a man of a vigor-
ous mind and a strong will, stanch in his conviction that
the theological views which he had received were the
very substance of the Gospel, and therefore persistent
in affirming and defending them to a degree somewhat
unfashionable now. He was of the Old School party, and
was perhaps conscientiously the more strenuous in en-
forcing his opinions that he was aware of their unpopu-
larity here. The contrast of his sentiments and of his some-
what hard and arbitrary manner with those of his pre-
decessor probably operated unfavorably for him. His
brief pastorate here seems to have been not altogether
satisfactory to himself, and his resignation was acquiesced
in. He was dismissed November 20th, 1838.

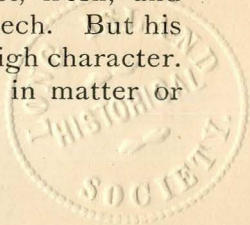
He was succeeded by Rev. John H. Hunter. Mr.
Hunter was born in New York City, in March, 1807. He
was graduated at Union College in 1825, and studied
theology at Princeton Seminary. He was ordained over
the church in Fairfield, in December, 1828, and continued
until 1834. He was installed over the North Church in
West Springfield, August 24th, 1835, and dismissed
thence February 16th, 1837. He was installed here
February 27th, 1839, and continued until November 13th,
1845. He then, or soon after, went West to look after

some lands which his father had acquired, and was not again settled in the ministry. He spent the rest of his days in a somewhat wandering life in the West and South-west, preaching, teaching, land-speculating, and miscellaneously employed. He died in Texas, February 22d, 1872. He was a brilliant, but eccentric man; a man of genius, but of that type of genius which is often erratic, and which, in its decadence, sometimes approaches the borderland adjacent to insanity. He was of medium stature, of good appearance, but had a way of carrying his chin low, and far forward, so as to give his shoulders the look of one who stooped. From this position of the head, he looked over his glasses with a penetrating eye, in a way to be very definitely recollected. He was not eminently a student; was fond of out-door life, of walking excursions, and especially of fishing. He spoke with a tone strongly nasal, from the presence of a polyp in his nostril. He had a grotesque humor about him, which sometimes appeared in his religious services, and always made him an agreeable companion. His style was singularly unstudied and pure. Without apparent effort, in speaking or in composition, he seemed to abound in matter. His thoughts were for the most part pertinent and often valuable, but there was a constant scintillation of sharp, or fanciful, or striking suggestions, which was a kind of by-play of his mind. This excited and fastened attention, while it somewhat detracted from the directness of discourse. Sometimes, in this sidewise fashion, he would hit or thrust rather hard. His theological opinions conformed to the prevailing orthodoxy, but he was not much given to expounding them. He aimed rather to give men impulses in the direction of the practical life, than to quicken their thinking, and he seemed less careful to hold up to men the highest moral ideas, than to set before them a reasonably high and yet manifestly practicable morality. The action upon his resignation was accompanied by consider-

able excitement. A financial difference between him and the society occasioned not a little heated feeling. But he left strong friends, and an impression of himself in the church life and traditions which only a man of very decided character could have created. The church grew under his ministry, especially in the year 1844, when some twenty-five were added at one time.

His successor was the Rev. Benjamin St. John Page. Mr. Page was born in Northford, July 18th, 1815. He was graduated at Western Reserve College in 1834, and studied theology at Yale. He was ordained by the Grand River Presbytery, at Painesville, O., February 10th, 1839. He was at that time supplying the church in Chester, O. In 1840 he came to New Haven and spent a year in study. He returned to his father's home, in Euclid, O., and for some years was unable to assume a permanent charge on account of invalid health, but served temporarily several churches acceptably. He came here from Euclid, O. He was installed February 10th, 1847, and continued until August 30th, 1853. After leaving here he was located as stated supply, in Durham three years, in North Haven six years, in Durham again two years. Subsequently he resided at Winsted, without charge, a year or more; then two years or less in Milwaukee, Wis., and then he became stated supply of a Presbyterian church in Warren, O., where he died November 9th, 1868.

He was a plain, somewhat angular and ungainly man in appearance, but by no means without abilities. He would not be thought remarkable for refinement of mind or manner, but was industrious and studious, and labored hard to meet the demands made upon him by his charge. Many of his sermons were unusually well written, close, vigorous, and well applied; full of earnest, fresh, and even powerful thinking, in well-chosen speech. But his average of performance was hardly of this high character. His preaching was not always acceptable in matter or



style, and sometimes went aside from what good taste requires, in pursuit of originality. He was very much indebted as a man and as a pastor to an eminently judicious and helpful wife, who was much esteemed in all relations, and whose influence over him was most happy. He had very little to do with the churches around, with the churches at large, or with enterprises of beneficence, but kept himself very much within his own field of labor. He was in many respects a very fairly capable man, but could not easily adapt himself to circumstances or to others' tastes, and hence failed somewhat in the delicate relations of a pastor. His soundness of character and general fidelity to his convictions were undoubted.

In the course of his pastorate, the present house of worship was erected. It originated in a general sentiment in the society that it was needful. It was built by subscription, and the paper bears date June 1st, 1848. The building committee were appointed July 8th. The old house was moved to the northward and occupied while the new one was building. It was occupied for the last time April 7th, 1850. It was purchased for the use of Christ Church, and in 1851 was accidentally destroyed by fire. The present edifice was dedicated on Thursday, April 11th, and on the Sabbath following opened for public worship. The subsequent history of the church may appropriately be left for a future occasion.



