

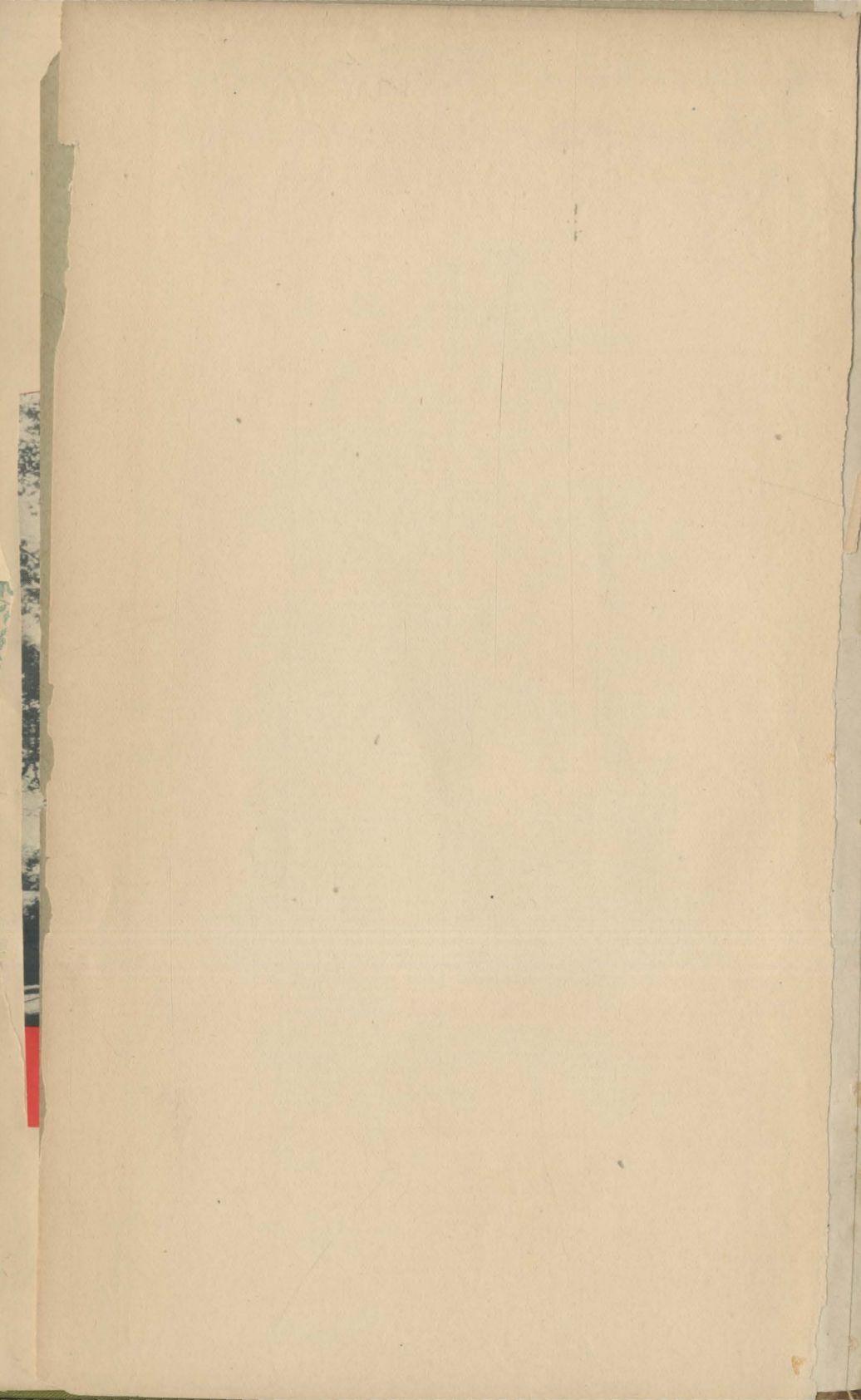
**Recognized as one of the most outstanding examples of 19th Century church architecture, the Congregational Church of Old Lyme, Connecticut, is a copy of the original building which was erected in 1816 and destroyed by fire early in this century.**

Two Hundredth Anniversary  
OF THE  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

OLD LYME, - CONN.

1693.

1893.





Lyme, Conn.

Nov 28. 94.

Miss Emma Zedberg:

I take pleasure in  
sending by this mail, as requested  
yrs. favor of 27<sup>th</sup>, copy of dis-  
course on 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of organiza-  
tion of church.

Very Truly Yrs.

Arthur Shirley



*N.*  
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON THE

TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

THE ORGANIZATION

OF THE

OLD LYME

2334  
Congregational Church,

1693—1893.

BY THE PASTOR

REV. ARTHUR SHIRLEY.

LONG ISLAND  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY.

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LYME, CONN.:  
GEORGE A. SMITH, STEAM PRINT.  
1893.

*N.*





## DISCOURSE.

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THE people of the United States are celebrating this year the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus. The deepest significance and the highest value of that discovery are revealed by such events as that of which we celebrate to-day the 200th anniversary. Midway between the lonely landing of the three caravels of pale-faces among the hosts of bronzed natives and the present prevalence of Christian civilization over the continent, is the era of English colonization; when the wigwam began to retreat before the school house, and psalm singing to supplant the war whoop. The earlier half of the 400 years since the landing of Columbus is a period of tentative explorations and plundering adventures, which made little deep or permanent impression upon the Western continent. But the second half of these 400 years has witnessed such a renovation of this so-called New World as has never been equalled in the history of mankind. There is a natural and proper satisfaction in being connected with an institution which took root in this virgin soil in the day of origins, and in reviewing the beginning and progress of its life and influence. When one tries to imagine what this town would have become, had it lacked the unfailing proclamation of the blessed gospel; what our nation would have become, had the church bells been silent these 200 years; he gains a fresh and broader idea of what our Saviour meant when he said to his disciples—"Ye are the salt of the earth." And, as he traces out the unfolding and spreading of the kingdom of God, he may well be inspired to a more earnest and whole-hearted devotion to that which is of highest present interest, and of eternal importance.

The history of this Old Lyme Congregational Church has already been given in outline. Rev. Wm. B. Cary, who was about to be installed as pastor of this church, delivered July 9, 1876 a "Memorial Discourse" which embodies the main facts in a very satisfactory form; it contains what is known concerning the three



successive meeting-houses on the brow of Meeting-House Hill, and the essential items concerning this edifice from its dedication in 1817 to the date of the discourse; it has also judicious sketches of the pastors who have entered the church triumphant;\* and it gives interesting facts and figures concerning the numbers and the customs of the members of the church.† That discourse has been printed in a neat pamphlet, which has been widely distributed through the town, and has also been bound into a "History of New London County." The labor represented by that discourse does not need to be performed again; I would exhort those of you who possess copies of it to preserve them with care, as they will have a permanent and increasing value.

The task which it has seemed wise for me to undertake for the present occasion has been to endeavor to elucidate some points that have been left in obscurity, to open up some features of the inner life of the church in their relation to contemporaneous history, and to set forth a few supplementary facts in regard to the present situation.

I. The first question which I found myself asking—and which I will now attempt to answer—is, What was the relation of the first settlers to the Indians? Did the Rev. Moses Noyes and the flock that gathered about him in 1666 find themselves in the midst of fierce and treacherous and bloodthirsty tribes? Did they walk through the solemn old forests in constant fear of the tomahawk, and harvest their corn with a gun in one hand, and dream each night of being burnt alive in their homes by lurking foes? Or did they dwell in peace with their neighbors? Did they even do missionary work where it is often most difficult to do it, right at home, and gather some of the red Indians into the fold? Have there ever been Indians in the membership of this church? Happily we are able to give confident answers to these questions through the narrative of John Mason—the Miles Standish of Connecticut—and the testimony of other contemporaneous witnesses.

The dominant tribe of this region was the Pequots,‡ who are

\*For fuller sketches of the ministers see MSS. prepared by Mrs. Brainard; also, especially in case of Rev. Stephen Johnson, the elegant volumes of "Family-Histories and Genealogies" prepared by Mr. and Mrs. Salisbury.

† For statistics of ministers, members and benevolences of the church; also for ministers who were natives of Lyme, see MSS. of Rev. Wm. H. Moore.

‡ See DeForest's History of the Indians of Connecticut, pp. 58-62.

thought to have been an offshoot of the Mohawks of the Hudson; they were found to be the ruling power from the Connecticut River to the Narragansetts, the leading tribe in Rhode Island. These Pequots were among the boldest and fiercest tribes ever encountered, and were led by a powerful and crafty sachem named Sassacus. The earliest English settlers made an unfortunate beginning in their first intercourse with these Pequots. When the Dutch from New Amsterdam (N. Y.) sailed up the Connecticut River and built their little fort of "Good Hope" at Dutch Point in Hartford, they purchased their land of the Pequots.

But when the Englishmen from Massachusetts, following hard upon the heels of the Dutchmen, made a new bargain for the same territory, they negotiated with the original River Indians and ignored the Pequots.\* For a little time it looked as though there would be war between the Dutch and the Pequots on one side and the English with the River Indians on the other. But the Dutch, after making some threats and demonstrations, succumbed peacefully both at Hartford and at Saybrook. Not so, however, with their irritated allies, the savage Pequots; who assailed the English settlers with all the traditional horrors of Indian warfare. Saybrook Point was protected by a fort and by a palisade of twelve-foot-high tree trunks across the neck; and during the winter of 1636-7 the Pequots kept it practically under siege. White men who strayed away were suddenly pounced upon by lurking foes and put to death with fiendish tortures. Boats upon the River or the Sound were under espionage, and their occupants were liable to feel the whizzing arrow, or—if they landed, the deadly tomahawk. The Massachusetts authorities had some negotiations with the Pequots, and undertook to enforce certain demands by sending an army of 90 men under Captain Endicott, who landed on Block Island, and afterward near the spot where New London now stands. But they did more damage to the wigwams and the corn crops than to the warriors, and then sailed back to Massachusetts, leaving the Pequots in the condition of a nest of hornets that have been not seriously injured but tremendously stirred up. It became so hot for the colonists on the Connecticut that the only way to save themselves from gradual

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\* DeForest, p. 76.



destruction was judged to be a direct assault upon the very nest of the hornets. Accordingly they got together at Saybrook Fort a little army of 90 men to finish the work which had been so bunglingly begun by the army of the same size from Massachusetts. They were aided by a little band of Mohegans under Uncas, who is thought to have been of royal Pequot blood, but who had been banished from his native tribe and became a firm and valuable ally of the English and a great personal friend of Capt. Mason. The little army sailed to the country of the Narragansetts, that they might attack the two strong forts of the Pequots from the rear at an unexpected moment. Encamping at night near Porter's Rocks—two miles from Mystic Head, in Stonington—they made an assault at daybreak upon the strongest of the two palisaded camps. Capt. Mason forcing one of the tortuous entrances and Capt. Underhill the other. The Indians were taken completely by surprise, but resisted bravely and effectively until their bark-covered wigwams were set on fire; then most of them, men, women and children perished miserably in the black smoke and the rolling flames, while only about half a dozen of those who escaped from the palisade fought their way through the besiegers and lived to tell the tale. This was the death blow to the Pequots. The occupants of the second fort were followed up at a later time and the tribe was practically exterminated. This was in 1637. Connecticut then laid claim to this shore by right of conquest;\* and Uncas, who had become the ruling power among the Indians, made no objection to the claim. A small tribe of Indians, known as the "Western Nehantics," seem to have hunted and fished and planted their patches of corn and beans from the Connecticut to the Thames; and it was this comparatively feeble and peaceable tribe with which the founders of this town were brought into most intimate contact. The only recorded event resembling a fight with these Nehantics occurred during the overland march of Capt. Mason from the Pequot fort back to Saybrook. † "On their march they came upon a village belonging to the Western Nehantics, the inhabitants of which fled at their approach and took refuge in a swamp. The English pushed in after them, drove them out on the opposite side, and chased them

\* DeForest, pp. 381-2, and cf. p. 161. See also Bancroft's History of the U. S., Vol. II. p. 98.

† DeForest, 137.



among the low hills a considerable distance. But, finding that the Indians dispersed all over the country, they gave up the pursuit, and, drawing together again, continued their march." If this took place, as DeForest represents it, on the same day with the fight at the Pequot fort, and Mason reached the mouth of the Connecticut and was saluted with discharges of cannon from the Saybrook fort, "towards the evening," we may with some confidence, locate it in Lyme. It was indicative of the unwarlike habits of the Nehantics. When, then, some thirty years later, Lyme was getting settled, the whites found hardly a trace of the fierce Pequots; the Nehantics were indisposed to fight;\* and Uncas, the only powerful sachem in the vicinity, was a firm and constant friend of the whites. We are not, therefore, surprised to find that, as a matter of fact, the intercourse of the first settlers with the Indians in Lyme was wholly of a peaceful nature, relating to fox-skins and wampum rather than to tomahawks and bullets. There is not a tradition in the town of any serious trouble with the Indians at any time, nor even of a block-house or a stockade. Very probably some slight precautions were taken at first; the minister's house may have been constructed, as tradition affirms, with the little windows so high as to make it painfully inconvenient for Indians to inspect domestic operations, and with the doors well studded with spikes; a sentinel may have been posted during service in the log-hut meeting-house on the hill: and the sight of a redskin coming across the clearing may have quickened the pulse-beat of the women. But the Rev. Moses Noyes soon found that his handsome cane was a sufficient protection as he tramped from his farm on the Street over the hill to his farm at Swan's Point; and the women learned to exchange their beads or pine-tree shillings for Indian baskets with as much equanimity as some women who are living here to-day have felt in trading with the present-day descendants of the old Nehantics.

It appears from the Colonial Records "that, in 1672, the Nehantics had no land of their own, and were then furnished with 300 acres by Lyme, on condition of bringing in a wolf's head annually."—The memory and location of this reservation are still preserved in the name of "Indian Woods." Evidently the whites had the mastery from the beginning. And this does not

\*Cf. also, DeForest, p. 111.

seem so strange, when we remember that, in 1675 there were some 55,000 whites in New England to perhaps 30,000 Indians. Even the terrible King Philip's War, which broke out in that year and which desolated so many settlements, brought no disturbance to this peaceful shore.\*

The Nehantics were not content, as no Indians ever have been, to remain on their reservation, but roamed widely about and rendered varied service to the whites.

That missionary work was done among them is demonstrated by the fact that the names of two Indians stand upon our church roll, both received in 1741, a woman named Hannah Jeffrey, and a man bearing the single name of Nehemiah; while the Rev. Geo. Griswold received into the church in East Lyme 13 Niantic Indians.† The pastor of this church at that time was the Rev. Jonathan Parsons, whom Dr. G. L. Walker speaks of as "one of the most useful and able of Connecticut's ministers in the era of the Great Awakening."‡ Through the kindness of a liberal friend of this church, an excellent and authentic portrait of Mr. Parsons adorns our Conference Room. Mr. Parsons was quite carried away with Whitefield, whose methods he heartily approved, and in whose labors he zealously co-operated. A Presbyterian Church, which was organized under the influence of Whitefield's preaching at Newburyport, called Mr. Parsons away from Lyme; and under the pulpit of that church the two preachers were buried. How highly Mr. Parsons esteemed the great evangelist, and how impatiently he bore the numerous criticisms of his methods, may be clearly seen from a Thursday lecture, preached in Boston, Sept. 16, 1742—a copy of which has been handed to me, printed in the same year in which it was preached, "at The Bible and Dove in Fish St." The text is "But wisdom is justified of her children;" and the aim is to hold up the opponents of Whitefield as destitute of true wisdom and unworthy of the countenance of Christian people. But Mr. Parsons, while he was intensely zealous for Whitefield, remembered also the Indians, and joined Mr. Griswold of East Lyme in efforts to secure consideration for them from the General Court, as well as in personal labors for their spiritual good. These labors, however,

\* Cf. Bancroft's United States, Vol. I, p. 402. † "New London County," p. 562.

‡ Anniv. of First Ch., Hartford, p. 80.



like those of Mr. Fitch, first pastor of the church in Norwich, seem to have born little satisfactory or permanent fruit; and, with but a feeble hold upon the glorious hope of the Gospel, the Indians of Connecticut have disappeared from the land of their fathers. One little company of the Mohegan followers of Uncas still own a reservation in Montville; and this Mohegan church is regularly reported in the Connecticut Minutes; the last report gives one male and ten female members; and the vanishing-point of the church and of the tribe seems not far distant.

II. Another question that has been often asked, but never yet satisfactorily answered is this; Why did the minister and his people, coming to Lyme in 1666, wait until 1693 before organizing a church? Some 27 years appear to have thus elapsed before their minister was duly ordained, and the sacraments duly administered. Here, for almost an entire generation, they were waiting in the wilderness. What was the hindrance? I shall lay before you certain facts and then carry you with me, I hope, to the natural inference.

In the spring of 1660 a plan, which had been for some time under consideration, was carried into execution;\* a company, which embraced the principal part of the church and the congregation at Saybrook, including the pastor, Rev. James Fitch, the famous military leader, now "Major" Mason, and other important personages, left Saybrook, and going to a tract of land nine miles square, deeded to them by Uncas at the headwaters of the Pequot river, founded the town and the church of Norwich. Bear in mind in how weak and discouraged a state this must have left the Saybrook church.

Then the church is still further depleted by the departure of members of the flock to the settlement known at first as East Saybrook, just across the river. These members might naturally be expected to stand by the old church, paying their taxes toward its support and crossing the river to attend its services.

But in May, 1667\* the Court of Election at Hartford orders that the plantation on the east side of the river, over against Saybrook, be for the future named Lyme. They have broken away from the old *name*. A Harvard graduate has come to preach

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\* "Hollister's History of Conn.," Vol. I, p. 200. Also, "History of Norwich," pp. 53 ff.

† Col. Records.



among them, and he is naturally desirous of being ordained as soon as may be, so as to have a standing in the ministry and a right to administer the sacraments. The next year, accordingly, their petition for the privilege of organizing a distinct church comes before the General Court. Let it not be forgotten that, although the church was not organized until 1693, the Town Records show that a vote in favor of such an organization was passed Feb. 13, 1676. Upon this request the General Court took action Oct. 1678, as follows: "Upon the motion of the deputies of Lyme, in behalf of Mr. Noyce and other Christian people, that this Court would grant them their liberty and countenance to gather into church society—This court, having considered the same, are willing to countenance them in their regular proceedings therein, and doe grant them their approbation and encouragement in so good a work, provided they doe take the approbation of neighbor churches therein, and attend the lawes of this colony." Here, then, the minister is ready; the people are ready; the General Court is disposed to encourage them in so good a work; the only thing lacking is "the approbation of neighbor churches therein."

Is not the inference obvious, that the neighbor church at Saybrook felt too weak to stand alone, and desired the inhabitants of what had once been East Saybrook to continue their help in the support of the Saybrook church? This inference is strengthened when we read in the Colonial Records that the petition of the inhabitants of the northern part of Lyme to be set off as a distinct society, in 1724, was granted on the condition "that the inhabitants of the North society should pay their proportion in common with the old or Western society in Lyme towards the maintenance of the Rev. Mr. Noyes during his natural life, and until they have an orthodox minister among themselves."

In all probability, then, the enfeebled Saybrook church was the standing obstruction. Very likely, too, some of the people here clung with affection to the mother-church and preferred to cross the river rather than climb the hill, for the Sabbath service. The first Matthew Griswold presented to the Saybrook church a silver communion-cup, marked with his initials, which is still in existence.\* Now the Rev. Moses Noyes believed in what is sometimes

\* See the Salisbury "Family Histories and Genealogies," Vol. II, p. 20.

called the strong form of church government; he assisted, and his brother James from Stonington presided, at the Synod which issued the Saybrook Platform in 1708—a Platform which advocated a semi-Presbyterian method of procedure. He would therefore have no inclination to proceed to the organization of a church, in independence of neighbor churches or of the General Court. So he waits some 27 years, directing the labors of the negro slaves upon his farms and performing such ministerial labors as the situation allows, until the obstacle is removed, and on some unknown day in 1693 the church is organized and the pastor ordained, and the full tide of church-life begins to flow.

An historical survey of the development of ideas in the interior life of the church would have great interest for many of us; but the limits of time lead me to sum up this portion of our review under the head of Four Great Principles for which this church stands:

(1). The first is an educated ministry. Not that a University education is an essential qualification for the ministerial office. We remember that the Apostles were spoken of as ignorant and unlearned men; we know that many of the most useful laborers in the Lord's vineyard to-day have never breathed the college atmosphere. It may even be in some cases that fervor varies inversely as culture. But this church has held from the beginning that those who were to be instructors in Biblical truth, and leaders in Christian thought, would be best fitted for their high office by the most thorough education possible. This position has been questioned at times by a small minority of church-members; perhaps most vigorously in 1739 by one Wm. Borden, who was a thorn in the side of Rev. Jonathan Parsons. He declared,—and, when summoned before the church meeting, justified the declaration, “That those ministers who take money by a tax laid upon the people for preaching the Gospel and expect to get their living thereby, are unjust men, or do wickedly therein; and they are the blind guides spoken of by the prophet, under the character of greedy dogs that never have enough, such as seek for their gain from their quarter, &c.; and those churches and Christian societies wickedly contradict the will of Jesus Christ in choosing out young men of a College education, rather than some of the aged and experienced brethren from among themselves, to execute the



ministerial office among them." But the church refused to follow the lead of Wm. Borden. They have preferred to tax themselves for the support of their pastor, that he might give himself wholly to the work of the ministry—rather than that he should support himself by manual labor during the week, and daub with untempered mortar on the Sabbath day. And they have persisted in preferring College graduates for the pastorate. Of the eleven pastors in these 200 years only one has lacked a collegiate education. The first pastor was obliged to graduate from Harvard, as Yale was not yet in existence. But during his pastorate he assisted in remedying this defect, and in launching Yale College upon its illustrious career. One other pastor, Rev. Lathrop Rockwell, chose to be graduated from Dartmouth College in 1789—for some unknown reason; but the remaining eight pastors have been graduates of Yale.

(2). A second principle for which this church stands is a Regenerate church-membership. It would discover, in those who seek its communion, not only correct outward deportment, but genuine inward faith—a humble acceptance of God as a Father, Christ as a Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as a Sanctifier. It is not a club for ethical culture, but a Christian Church—looking out upon the world through the Master's eyes and aiming to bring all men into obedience to the Master's will. Along this line also there has been discussion and conflict. Nearly all the churches of New England were agitated for a long period by varying views as to the Half-way Covenant. The motive of this movement, which had begun before the settlement of this town, was, in a word, to open the way for the holding of civic office, and for the baptism of children, and sometimes for the partaking of the communion, to those whose lack of church-membership had shut them out from these privileges. The effect was to weigh down the church-life and deaden its spirituality by a mass of semi-members, who came in many cases to outnumber the full members, and to give the church a worldly, unspiritual character. The final outcome—largely through the preaching of Edwards, and the Great Awakening of 1740—partly also through the extension of the right of suffrage, was the lopping off of this unscriptural and unsatisfactory fungus.

The discussions of this matter are often elaborate and fine-



drawn, and expressed in so technical terms as to puzzle the very elect. This church adopted a so-called "Appendix to the Belief" which was a form of Half-way Covenant, July 23, 1787. But this appears to have been a dying groan of the perishing policy; for five years later the Confession and Covenant are repeated, but the "Appendix" no more appears.

This "Appendix" reads at follows:

"And you do moreover believe that in your Baptism, which is the seal of the Gospel Covenant, you are laid under solemn Covenant engagements to be the Lord's, and you do appear before God and this people this day publickly to own and renew your covenant engagements to be His forever; and accordingly you do now, in the presence of God and His people, solemnly avouch the living God,—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be your Father, Savior and Sanctifier, and take Him to be your portion forever: and on these terms you desire admission to the privileges of Baptism and the watch of the church; and as you thus do, you also engage to seek diligently in the ways of Divine appointments: to get the difficulties removed out of your mind which hinder your offering yourself to communion in the holy and solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper:—thus you promise, believe and engage. I do then declare you admitted to the privileges desired, according to your desire."

(3). The third great principle for which this church stands is that the church should be a leader of the community in morality and philanthropy; that it should hold up before the community, in doctrine and life, a high standard of Christian character. The church is always in danger of being submerged in the world, both through defects in its own membership and through insidious influences that operate from without. But this church has always held that whatever in its life is inconsistent with the purest morality and the truest philanthropy is in the nature of an unhealthy excrescence, to be cured by the surgeon's knife, or, if possible, by a more gentle healing process. As our Church Records now stand—beginning with the ministry of Mr. Parsons, the earlier records being lost—they start out with a long list of confessions; the sins most numerous confessed are intemperance, unchastity, and various forms of evil speaking; it was felt then—it is felt now—that those who are guilty of such sins are sick patients in

the hospital, and not representative soldiers in the army. The church is ready to take some risk to its reputation, and to labor patiently and lovingly for the reclamation of wanderers; but the only standard by which it can measure genuine Christian character is the lofty standard set by the teachings and the life of the Master Himself.

(4). And, finally, this church has come to stand squarely by the Two Foci of the Congregational Ellipse—the Two Principles of Local Independence and Fraternal Fellowship; each church independent of all human authority, and directly responsible to the living Christ, the great Head of the Church; and all Christian churches under obligation to dwell together in mutual charity and helpfulness. This church has apparently never had much occasion to discuss the question of fraternal fellowship; it has always been wont to consult sister churches in time of need and to give or receive counsel and aid as occasion demanded. But it is a somewhat long and tortuous road by which this church has come to a firm and solid position in the matter of Local Independence. Its first pastor, as already noted, was a delegate to Saybrook, and his brother was moderator of the body which adopted the Saybrook Platform of 1708. This Platform brought each church under the control of the Consociation of churches. A church was not at liberty to select its council, and look upon the result of the council as *advice*, to be followed or not according to its own judgment; but it must accept the Consociation as a kind of standing Council, and accept its conclusions as binding decrees. The attitude of this church toward the Saybrook Platform has wavered and varied. As early as Dec. 17, 1744—under Mr. Parsons—it was expressly voted “That this church suppose they are not, and that they never were, settled upon or agreeable to, the articles or church Discipline drawn up at Saybrook, A. D. 1708; and that this church do dislike and renounce said Platform or Articles of Church Discipline as a rule for the discipline of this church. ’Twas also voted at said meeting “that it is the present opinion of this church, that each particular church, with its own proper officers—duly qualified according to Gospel order—has full power and authority from Jesus Christ, the Great Head of the Church, for the exercising of Church discipline and enjoying all the ordinances of the Gospel within itself,” &c.



But on the 6th March, 1813, under Rev. Lathrop Rockwell, it was voted "That this church adopt the 'Confession of Faith' and 'Articles of Church Discipline,' formed at Saybrook in the year 1708 as the rule for the administration of church discipline."

So for a century the practice of the church wavered and varied. Sometimes the summons of the Consociation to a Council was rejected, while the invitation of an individual church was accepted. But on the 24th Sept., 1872, the Middlesex Conference was organized, and the Consociation has since fallen into disuse. And this church recognizes no responsibility to Consociation, Presbytery or Bishop, but only to the Great Head of the Church, while walking in loving fellowship with all sister churches.

It remains only to add a brief statement as an appendix to Mr. Cary's account of the four meeting-houses, in order to bring the record down to date.

As already stated, the present edifice was completed and dedicated in 1817. The corner-stone was laid in June, 1816, with the following order of service:

ORDER OF THE CEREMONY TO BE USED AT THE  
LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE OF THE MEETING-HOUSE  
OF THE FIRST SOCIETY OF LYME,  
JUNE, A. D. 1816.

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- I. The congregation and others to assemble at Mrs. Parson's Inn at 1 o'clock P. M. and a procession to be formed by the Marshal in the following order, viz :
- II.
  1. Young men to form in front by pairs.
  2. Young Ladies.
  3. Elderly Ladies.
  4. Elderly Men.
  5. Singers with Psalm-Books.
  6. Masons with the implements of their profession.
  7. Carpenters with do.
  8. Building Committee.
  9. Clergyman, and Deacons on each side.
- III. Procession to march up street to a proper distance, wheel and return back—and when the front of the same reaches the corner of the house to halt.
- IV. Procession then to open to the right and left, and the Marshal to pass through to the Clergyman, and escort him down to the corner—the procession closing in and following in order.
- V. A circle or crescent then to be formed around the corner—and the music to be posted on each side.

- VI. Middle stone then to be laid by the clergyman aided by the Masons.
- VII. Invocation by the clergyman.
- VIII. Hymn Sung.
- IX. Clergyman to read the inscription on the plate.
- X. Plate to be deposited by the Pastor in the cavity of the stone.
- XI. Upper stone to be laid on by masons, squared by Pastor.
- XII. Invocation.
- XIII. Hymn.
- XIV. Short address by the Pastor.
- XV. Hymn and Benediction.
- XVI. Procession to return and take a glass of *cold water*, to close the BALL.

INSCRIPTION ON THE PLATE.

OLD MEETING HOUSE  
 BURNT BY LIGHTNING,  
 JULY 3, A. D. 1815.  
 THIS CORNER STONE LAID  
 WITH RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES  
 BY THE  
 REV. LATHROP ROCKWELL,  
 PASTOR,  
 JUNE,                   A. D., 1816.  
       S. B.                ARCHITECT.  
       E. S.                MAS. MASON.

Names of the Committee on the reverse side of the plate.

From Oct. 1850 to April 1851 the church was undergoing repairs; and at the re-opening, the Pastor, Rev. D. S. Brainerd—whose benediction still rests upon the church and the town—preached from Isaiah LVI: 7. “Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.” At this time also a change was introduced in the musical part of the service. Not infrequently such a change is accompanied by a storm. In the First Church at Hartford,\* e. g., when it was proposed to give up the Bay Psalm Book, which had no musical notes, and to substitute singing by note for singing by ear or what not, great opposition was encountered; and many other congregations almost split on the question. “The innovation was denounced as an insult to the memory of the fathers, and as tending to Papacy. ‘If we once begin to sing by note, the next thing will be to pray by rule, and then comes Popery.’ The interposition of the General Court was in some instances necessary to quiet disturbances arising from the proposal to sing by rule.”

\*“ Anniversary of the First Church, Hartford,” p. 75.



But no such storm was raised in this church by the proposition to substitute, for the pitch pipe and the bass-viol of the fathers, a modern church organ. Says Mr. Chas. H. Griswold to Mr. Wm. Banning—"If you'll get an organ I'll play it for nothing." Mr. Banning accepted the challenge, and the thing was done. And as Mr. Brainerd joyfully records in the church book under date of Oct. 1851: "An organ was set up in the house of God, and on the Sabbath of the 26th of this month the congregation, for the first time, enjoyed the pleasure of its music."

In 1886 the time seemed to have come for a more thorough repairing and remodeling of the church edifice, and on the 12th Sept. of that year the Pastor, Rev. B. W. Bacon, preached a sermon summoning the people to the task. The response was so prompt and so generous that in just a year and a day from the delivery of the sermon, viz. Sept. 13, 1887, the church was reopened and rededicated with a very beautiful and impressive service. The changes which had been made awakened feelings of satisfaction and delight. Into the substantial architecture of the old church had been transfused a delicate new spirit, which had remodeled without disfigurement and adorned without discord. The so-called "nigger pews"—those triangular boxes in the remote corners of the gallery, which had been built for negro slaves, and had later been the favorite resort of the boys—these had disappeared from the one end of the church, while at the other end had been added this rich apse; the floor had been let down to a lower level, and everywhere the improving touches of a firm and skillful hand appeared. In all, the sum of \$5,504.38 had been expended in putting the church into the beautiful condition in which you see it to-day. To crown all, a new organ was presented to the church by Mrs. C. C. Griswold, and a new set of pulpit-furniture by Mr. C. H. Ludington.

We can wish for the future of this church no better fortune than that the lives of its members may be as beautiful in the sight of God as is this building in the sight of men.

LONG ISLAND  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY.