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NEW MILFORD.

A

MEMORIAL DISCOURSE.

1876.

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NEW MILFORD.



Memorial Discourse,

DELIVERED IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

NEW MILFORD, CONN.,

Sunday, July 9, 1876.

—BY—

JAMES B. BONAR, PASTOR.

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PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

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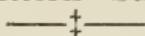
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HISTORY

Town and Church of New Milford, Conn.

MEMORIAL SERMON.



“One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.”—Ps. 145: 4.

The past is full of interest and instruction, so that all concede the value of history. Its importance is manifest from the fact that about two-thirds of God's Holy Word is historical.

The history of any and every part of the earth is interesting; but our own Country and State, the town in which we reside, the Church to which we belong, and the family whose name we bear, are to us of the greatest interest. To-day, therefore, we turn our attention to the history of this Church, Society and town.

The sources of information on these subjects, though bulky, are meagre and imperfect. We have

1. Minutes of the Proprietor's Meetings from 1706 to 1801.
2. Records of Town Meetings from 1713.
3. Minutes of the meetings of the First Ecclesiastical Society, from December, 1753.
4. Ecclesiastical Society's Treasurer's books from 1802.
5. Church Records from December 27th, 1727. These are not complete; the book kept by Mr. Rood is missing.
6. MSS. Notes of Rev. W. H. Moore.
7. Records of Baptist and Methodist Churches.
8. Memoir of Mrs. Mary A. Boardman, by Rev. Dr. Schroeder.
9. And the memory of persons still living.

In 1703, Col. Robert Treat and others representing 111 persons, all of Milford, obtained a patent to a certain tract of land in New Haven County, formerly called Weantiogue. This tract contained 84 square miles, embracing what is now known as the towns of New Milford, and Bridgewater, with parts of Brookfield and New Preston. It cost the Proprietors about 8 mills an acre. The first settler, though not a Proprietor, was John Noble, who came here from Massachusetts, in 1707. The Indians were then and long afterwards numerous, but seem always to have been on friendly terms with the settlers. The Proprietors held their meetings at Milford until 1715. The first Town Meeting seems to have been held in 1713.

The town was first represented in the Legislature in 1725. The first record of freemen was made in 1744. The town belonged to New Haven Colony until the incorporation of Litchfield County, in 1751. The first bridge over the Housatonic, between the sea and its source, was built here in 1737. The first school in the town was opened in 1721, and was taught 4 months in the year, the town paying half the expense.

In 1707 two persons came into New Milford.

In 1712 there were here 12 families or between 60 and 70 persons. A census, taken in 1756, reports 1137 in the town; another taken in 1774, reported 2776, while in 1800, after parts of the town had been ceded to Brookfield and Washington, the population was 3198. The census of 1870, gives the population of the present New Milford, as 3586, while Bridgewater, formerly a part of this town, has 877 inhabitants.

New Milford has always been loyal to the cause of freedom. In 1779 the town voted 4 bushels of wheat a month to every man who volunteered for six months, and three bushels a month to the militia men who marched when ordered; but, if they failed to report within eight days after marching orders, they forfeited this premium. The town also supported the families of men while absent in the Continental army. In 1778 the Articles of Confederacy proposed by Congress, styled "The United States of North America," were adopted in town meeting, except part of the 5th article, which respects the mode of choosing Delegates to Congress. It was "Voted that the Freemen will always hold the prerogative and sole power of choosing our Delegates in Congress by vote." Subsequently, "said Articles of Confederacy were adopted in full by the meeting without a dissenting voice." In 1783 it was voted, and a Committee was appointed to enforce the resolution, that all refugees, or "skedaddlers," as they would now be termed, as well as all who had voluntarily gone over to the enemy during the war, should be prohibited from returning and settling in the town. The Adjutant-General of Connecticut, reports the names of 222 men from the town of New Milford as having served in the armies of the United States during the Civil War of 1861-65. This does not include the 37 who deserted nor the *one* who was *dishonorably* discharged.

The town, as such, has always upheld the cause of morality and good order. In 1737 certain persons were fined "for bringing into the town and entertaining unwholesome inhabitants." So early as 1729 it was voted in town meeting that "James Hine have oversight of the female sex during exercises" in Church. And so late as 1821 a certain person was fined \$1.67 for "breach of the Sabbath," but this fine was remitted.

The way in which they cared for the poor and guarded the interests of the town, appears from the vote of 1771— "That a black bonnet, a red woman's cloak, and a worsted gown be kept for the daughter of Hannah Beeman; if she die under age, the town to have them."

The first sermon was preached here by Col. John Reid, who had studied for the ministry in his youth. Mr. Daniel Boardman, a preacher of the Gospel, came here in 1712. The next year it was voted that the inhabitants should pay all the expense that had been incurred in obtaining a minister, also to lay out a pastor's lot, to dig and stone up a well for Mr. Daniel Boardman, if he became a settled minister in New Milford. Meanwhile, the town allowed 5s. 6d. a week for the minister's board. In 1715 the town agreed to petition the General Court to "attain liberty for the settlement of the worship and ordinances of God among us." This was the subject that then came up at every meeting of the inhabitants. It was not until 1716 that they made arrangements for laying out a burying ground of two acres; but for four years before that they had been contriving and planning for the religious instruction of themselves and families. The poverty of the people appears in the resolution adopted as to Mr. Boardman's salary, one third of which was to be paid in grain, two-thirds in labor, linen, or pork; the established price of wheat was then 4s. a bushel, rye, 2s. 8d. corn 2s. and oats 1s.; part of the agreement being that Mr. Boardman should sell the grain which he had to spare at the same prices to the inhabitants. In accordance with a vote of the town, Mr. Boardman was ordained November 21st, 1716.

So far as the records show, there was then entire unanimity of religious belief and opinion among the people. The Ecclesiastical Society and the Town were practically one and the same. Everything regarding the building and fi-

nances of the Society was determined in Town Meeting. The first division occurred in 1731-2, when 20 persons withdrew to form a Quaker Society. They built a house in 1742 and have continued their worship from that time until the present, though at this date there is but one family of them residing in the town.

In 1743 the inhabitants of "Newbury" were set off for a separate religious Society, and in the division of the Parsonage lands in 1755, £98 3s. 6½d., was given to this Society, £13 14s. 6½d. to Newbury, and £5 12s. 7½d. to New Preston. Newbury was the ancient name of Brookfield, and was formed into a town in 1788, from parts of New Milford, Danbury, and Newtown. The Church at Brookfield was therefore organized, not in 1757, as heretofore reported, but in 1743-4. The inhabitants of the "Neck," as Bridgewater, was originally called, early made representations to this Society of the inconvenience of attending worship here during Winter months. Part of their tax was remitted on condition that they provided preaching for themselves during the Winter; and for a number of years Mr. Taylor and Mr. Griswold spent one Sabbath in each of the three Winter months at the Neck. The Church at Bridgewater was organized in 1809. Bridgewater was set off as a town in 1856.

There must have been Episcopalians in town earlier, but the first allusion to them occurs in the record of a town Meeting in 1744, just previous to the death of Mr. Boardman: "Voted, That those of us who are of the Church of England shall be free from paying any charge for a minister for one year, if circumstances remain as they now are; but, if in the providence of God our Reverend Pastor should be taken away, then the said Church men to be under the same regulation as the rest." The Rev. James Beach, of Newtown, visited New Milford occasionally between 1740 and 1745, and a lay reader read service for some time. The first Episcopal clergyman who resided here was Rev. Solomon Palmer, who came in 1754. This Society continued feeble for many years; but under the 20 years pastorate of the Rev. Charles G. Aclý, just closed, it has grown strong and healthy. It has now 132 families and 265 communicants.

The Separatists, or Strict Congregationalists as they were called, built a meeting house, in what is now the old cem-

etery, in 1761. They disbanded in 1812, uniting some with this Society and some with the Episcopalians.

Between 1780 and 1785 the followers of Jemima Wilkenson, who is described as a remarkably comely woman, with dark hair and sparkling black eyes, built a house in what is now the old cemetery, on the hill on the road towards New Preston. They soon sold this building to the Episcopalians and moved to Genesee, New York, where Jemima resided.

The Baptists formed a small Church and erected a house of worship in the lower end of the town called the Neck (Bridgewater) in 1788-90, "but never had a pastor, and soon moved elsewhere."

The Baptist Church at Northville was organized February 9th, 1814, with 7 males and 16 female members, most of whom had previously been connected with a Baptist Church in Roxbury. Its present membership is 46. The Baptist Church at Gaylordsville was formed about 1830 and has always been small. Its present membership is 33. Somewhere about 1830 a Union Church was built at Meryall, which was used chiefly, but not wholly, by the Baptists. No Society was ever formed, and no service has been held in the house for 20 years.

The Rev. Elijah Hebard, from Stratford circuit, seems to have been the first Methodist Episcopal minister who visited New Milford. In 1815 he preached at John Warner's in Pleasant Valley. Others followed, and in 1825 a Society was formed in Gaylordsville; that Society still exists and has now 66 members. In 1826 the Methodists erected a Church at Northville; and in 1828-9 they erected another on the Plains at a cost of \$3,000. It is to be regretted that these organizations at Northville and on the Plains are both extinct and have been so for twenty-five years. The Methodist Church in the Village was erected in 1849 and dedicated by Bishop Janes in May, 1850—the Rev. Wm. M'Allister, then being the Preacher in charge. Its present membership is 130.

The Roman Catholics opened a place for worship in 1860-61, but had no resident priest until 1872. They have now a large congregation, composed almost exclusively of persons of foreign birth,

These are all the Religious Societies that have existed in the town. Out of a population of 3,586 there is to day

a Church membership, exclusive of the Roman Catholics of 807.

In 1871-2, this Church thoroughly canvassed the town, exclusive of New Preston Society, distributing Bibles and Tracts, and carefully reporting the Church attendance and preferences of the people by families. Of the 707 *families* reported, there were Congregational, 218; Episcopal, 156; Methodists, 88; Roman Catholics, 46; 2d Advent, (colored) 18; Baptists, 15; Jews, 3; Lutherans, 2; Friends, 2; Reformed Dutch, 1; and not attending any Church, 158.

With this general review of the Ecclesiastical history of the town, we turn now to consider more minutely the history of this, the oldest and always largest Church and Society—the oldest but one and the largest in the County.

There was no Ecclesiastical Society until after 1750. Until then, the town was the Society. It was the town that provided for the supply of the pulpit, for the installation of ministers, the erection and care of buildings, and all expenses connected with public worship. The Church held meetings for the election of Deacons, the discipline of members, and the spiritual interests of the people. But the town managed everything that now belongs to the Society. It was the town that invited Mr. Daniel Boardman to labor here, and that settled him as a pastor, making all the arrangements for his installation. The town did the same in the case of Mr. Taylor. So far as the records show, the Church took no separate action in calling its pastors until the invitation to Mr. Griswold, in 1790, when it formally voted, as has been the custom ever since, to concur in the Society's action. From 1713 to 1750 a large part of the business in Town Meeting was in regard to Ecclesiastical affairs.

The first Meeting House, "40 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 24 feet between "gists," with suitable proportions," was built in 1718-19, but not opened for worship until 1720, and then it was in a very unfinished condition. In 1720 it was voted to wall up the gists before Winter and fill in between the lathe and studs with timber and mortar. The floor was not laid until 1723. This building stood on the highway on Town Hill, a few rods North of the present residence of Mrs. J. P. Treadwell. The second house of worship, "64 feet long, 44 feet wide, and 27 feet posts," nearly twice the size of the first, was erected in

1754, the town applying to the General Assembly for power to sell the old Meeting House, and to tax non-resident land-holders for building the new one. This building stood on the Village Green, nearly opposite the present residence of Mr. Solomon E. Bostwick. The present edifice was erected in 1833, and though much larger than the former, for several years persons wishing slips have been unable to obtain them. It would be a good Centennial work to enlarge the building.

The Sabbath Day House was an institution that is unknown to the present generation. In 1745 the town voted "that any farmers, inhabitants, have leave to build a small house to repair to on Sabbath day on the common land, provided the public is not damnified thereby." This building was located "North of the Meeting House on the side of the hill." After the erection of the Church on the Green, the Sabbath Day House was built on the spot where now stands the house so long occupied by the Rev. Mr. Aclý. It is described to me by a lady still with us (Mrs. Eli Mygatt) who went through it more than 70 years ago, as a long, low building, with four large rooms, regarding which frightful stories were told of the ghosts that inhabited it. In this building, farmers, whose homes were distant, stored loads of wood, and barrels of cider, and here they warmed their bean soup, replenished their foot-stoves and regaled themselves in the hour between services. Until 1870 the services were held morning and afternoon; since 1870, the second service has been held in the evening.

The Chapel was built by individuals, with permission of the Society in 1838-9. The Meeting Houses were not heated until 1823-5, when two box stoves were put into the second Meeting House. In November, 1833, the Society voted to obtain "2 of Dr. Nott's stoves and one ton of anthracite coal for the Winter." Furnaces were put in in 1860, when the Church was improved at a cost of \$5,225, and land for sheds was bought. The organ was obtained in 1860, at a cost of \$1,200.

The Parsonage was bought in August, 1870, at a cost of \$6,000, paid for by subscription, and presented, with certain conditions attached, to the Society. Originally, the people were called to worship, as to all public meetings, by the beat of a drum, for which an appropriation was made in 1716. For many years after the first Church

building was occupied, the town annually appointed a person to beat the drum and voted him pay for his services. I have been unable to discover when the first bell was obtained. A Church clock which hung in the steeple of the second Meeting House must have been bought about a century ago. In 1780 the liabilities of the Society are thus stated: "Arrears yet due on account of clock £7 3s. 5d. and due Widow Prudence Collins, for sweeping the Meeting House £1 10s. 0d.

Until 1745 this was the only Society and every person in town was taxed for its support. From 1750 to 1790 persons who aided in supporting other Societies were by vote, relieved from the tax for the support of this Society. There is no instance on record in which a request for relief on this plea was refused. From 1800, though this Society had the legal right up to 1819, to tax all, only the members of the Society were, in fact, taxed for its benefit. The proposal to meet necessary expenses by the sale of slips was first made in 1851 and rejected by a large majority. This plan was adopted in 1854 and has continued until the present. Previous to that, committees had from time to time "seated and dignified the Meeting House." The resolutions of 1756, were, that "all persons of the age of 56 years and upwards should be seated in the first rank of seats, and all other persons according to the rates and taxes they have paid towards building said Meeting House." But for special reasons of honor or infirmity, persons were often, by vote, placed in the highest rank. In subsequent seatings, it was usually voted that "no person should be placed lower than he had previously been."

This Society does not seem ever to have received pecuniary aid from sister Churches, or from individuals outside of its own membership. In 1719 an agent was sent to Milford "to see what they would do for the support of the Gospel here." That application was probably to the Proprietors, and there is no record of its result. The Proprietors set apart what were called "Donation" or "Parsonage Lands for the support of the Gospel according to the Presbyterian Congregational order, in the town." From these lands a 24 s. lot was given to Mr. Boardman as part of his settlement, and probably a similar lot to Mr. Taylor at his ordination. The remainder of this land was sold at different times before 1790, and the proceeds given

to the various Societies within the town in proportion to the "List" of their members. And in 1790 the Proprietors appointed a Committee to examine the roads belonging to them, to narrow them and sell the land thus obtained. This Committee completed its work in 1810. Part of the proceeds of the land thus sold from the highways, was donated to this Society, and carefully invested in Hartford Bank Stock, which it holds to this day.

In 1792 Col. Josiah Starr, who had long been Treasurer, purchased some Hartford Bank Stock, for the Society, and to complete the payment advanced out of his own funds \$192 24. Mr. Comstock, a later Treasurer, has recorded that this was never repaid. Col. Starr, doubtless, intended this as a gift to the Society.

September 13th, 1860, a vote of thanks was passed to John P. Treadwell, Esq., then of New York, for the gift of \$500 toward the purchase of an organ.

September 19th, 1834, a vote of thanks to Miss Gratia M. Merwin, for the donation of \$100.

March 3d, 1870, a vote of thanks to Royal I. Canfield, for \$500, given for a permanent fund, the avails to be used for the support of the Gospel. Mr. Canfield had previously (1861) given additional land for sheds, which cost him \$100.

Mr. Homer Beard, who died February, 1871, bequeathed to the Society land which was sold for \$1,030.

And Mrs. Phebe Beard, his widow, who died September, 1874, left to the Society property which netted \$832.

This Society has always shown a characteristic New England thrift and prudence in regard to its finances. So early as 1755, it appointed a committee to "take care of the money, coming from the sale of the Parsonage lands, to loan out said money on good and sufficient security." From that time to this, the Society has always had money loaned, invested in Government securities or in Bank stock. And in 1787, it was voted that only the interest over *six* per cent., should be used for current expenses. But this rule has not been observed or the Society would now be rich.

From 1752 until 1796, all the educational and religious affairs of the town were under the control of this Society. It located the Schools, fixed the tax, collected it, and superintended the Schools through committees annually appointed. It was, in fact, the School Society for the Town,

and as such received Benoni Stebbins' legacy. It fixed and collected the tax for the salary of the ministers, "for the sweeping out of the Meeting House." It also, in some measure, managed the financial affairs of the Episcopal Society; for in 1771, after appointing Ichabod Bostwick to gather the minister's rate, it appointed "Solomon Hodkiss to gather a rate for Mr. Clark." And in 1772 this Society issued a notice "to warn all the Church people to meet together on Monday, the 13th day of instant, April, at St. John's Church at 8 of the clock in the morning, then and there to consult such measures as they shall think proper to procure a Glebe house for the Rev. Mr. Clark, and to do such other business as shall be thought proper." The minutes of the meeting thus warned are recorded as "a meeting of the inhabitants of the 1st Ecclesiastical Society—holden by the Church of England." This was doubtless done, in a fraternal spirit, to give legal efficacy to the action of the Episcopal Society in disposing of one Glebe and purchasing another. This shows the kindly feeling that then, as now and always, has governed the members of this Society. The Church Review (vol. ii, p. 317,—See Hollister's Hist. of Conn. vol. ii, p. 545—Note) states that "certain Churchmen in New Milford were fined for refusing to attend the meetings of the established Church. These fines were, by recommendation of Mr. Beach, paid, and copies of the proceedings taken to be forwarded to the King and council. The fact becoming known, the authorities refunded the money and granted permission to build a church, which before had been refused." I do not know the authority of the Church Review for this statement; but I do know that there is no warrant for it in Town or Society's books. There is no record of any refusal to permit Churchmen to build, nor of the remittance of a fine upon any person for being absent from the worship of this Church; yet the books contain records of scores of votes remitting fines for breach of the Sabbath and other minor offences. From 1752 to 1819 this Society had all the legal rights in its own hand. But, in all the records there is no instance of anything like intolerance, or a disposition to throw obstacles in the way of others; while there are numerous instances of its generosity, and readiness to aid those who entertained a faith different from its own.

This Society has uniformly treated its ministers honorably and kindly. It has always acted with a good degree of unanimity. In every instance, except the first, the Society has found it difficult to unite in the calling of a pastor. At such times feeling has often run high, and when a call was voted, there has often been a few votes in the negative. But the call once given and the pastor settled, parties have disappeared and all united in treating the man with the respect due to his office. Of the 8 pastors who have preceded the present, 3—Boardman, Taylor, and Elliot—died in office. Mr. Griswold left voluntarily, without any action on the part of the Church or Society. Mr. Porter resigned because of his “physical inability to perform the duties belonging to so large and scattered a parish.” Mr. Murdoch resigned to accept the invitation of the Third Church in New Haven. In regard to Mr. Rood, the Church and Society both voted unanimously that a change was needful for their well being; but even then, it voted him a gift of \$400 and borrowed the money to give it to him. In the only other instance in which a change was desired, it was solely because of the physical infirmity of the pastor, who was as universally admired for his talents, as he was revered for his character. On his resignation, the Society voted him a donation of \$500. The Society has always cared for the comfort of its pastors and been faithful to its promises to them. In the times of Messrs. Boardman and Taylor it was very poor and did not always pay promptly; but then it allowed interest on all arrearages. It gave Mr. Boardman a settlement in land and increased his salary from £50 and 40 cords of wood, “good and suitable for the fire,” to £125. It gave Mr. Taylor a settlement of £1,000, payable in installments within three years, and increased his salary from time to time at his request. But in 1779—“the time that tried men’s souls”—Mr. Taylor, “trusting to the generosity of the members of the Society,” relinquished his salary of £150, lawful money, from May 1st, 1778, to May 1st, 1779. And in 1782, Mr. Taylor, “taking into consideration the great burden and heavy taxes now lying on the people by reason of the present war, and he, being free and willing to bear a proportionate part of the cost and burden with others of the Society,” did “abate and discharge to said Society, the sum of £30, lawful money” from what was

then due to him. And the Society, in its vote of thanks, "allowed that £30 was his full equal part, according to his interest or estate." On the ordination of Mr. Griswold, the Society voted Mr. Taylor "a gratuity of £80, in addition to all arrears then due to him." Mr. Griswold's settlement was £200, with a salary of £100, "payable in gold or silver, or produce at such prices as he would accept, with interest on all arrears. £15 was afterwards added to his salary "because he did not receive so much wood as he expected." And from 1794 to 1801 the Society annually voted him, usually £30 "in view of the high price of provisions the current year." Mr. Elliot's salary was \$550; but from 1819 to his death \$50 additional was annually voted to him except in 1826. Mr. Rood's salary was \$600, while Messrs. Porter and Greenwood had \$700; Mr. Murdoch accepted the call of the Church and Society at a salary of \$800, which, on his application, was gradually increased to \$2,000. And in 1868 members of the Society presented him \$1,750.

This statement of facts shows that this Society has aimed to do well by its pastors, and that these pastors were men who were worthy of good treatment.

These pastors were :—

1. Daniel Boardman—Graduated at Yale College, 1709, was ordained here November 21st, 1716, and died August, 25th, 1744.

2. Nathaniel Taylor was born in Danbury, August 27th, 1722; graduated at Yale College, in 1745; was ordained pastor here June 29th, 1748, and died here December 9th, 1800. He fitted many boys for College and married the daughter of his predecessor.

3. Stanley Griswold was born in Torrington, November 14th, 1763; graduated at Yale College, in 1786; was ordained pastor here June 20th, 1790; became a Unitarian, threw open the sacraments to all, and was censured by Consociation. He left town in 1802, and edited a political paper in New Hampshire. In 1805 he was appointed Secretary of Michigan Territory. In 1809 he was sent to the U. S. Senate, was afterwards Chief Judge of the N. W. Territory, and died at Shawneetown, Ill., August 25th, 1815, aged 52.

This Church and Society united in forming the Litchfield South Consociation, on July 7th, 1752. But feeling

aggrieved by the action of the Association and Consociation in relation to Mr. Griswold, the Society, September 1805, by a unanimous vote withdrew from said Consociation, for intermeddling in the private affairs of this Society and excommunicating the pastor unheard in his own defence. It stood unconsociated until the installation of Mr. Elliot, when dropping the half-way covenant, which was adopted here in 1769, it was received into the Fairfield Consociation, February 24th, 1808. It returned to Litchfield South Consociation, April 27th, 1836.

4. Andrew Elliot, son of Rev. Andrew Elliot, of Fairfield; graduated at Yale College, in 1790; was ordained pastor here February 24th, 1808, and labored most successfully until his death, May 9th, 1829. No pastor of this Church has exerted a more powerful and healthy influence upon the town than Mr. Elliot. The most extensive and genuine revival that ever blessed this community, was under his ministry.

5. Heman Rood was born in Vermont; graduated at Middlebury College in 1819, and Seminary in 1825; was ordained pastor at Gilmanton, N. H., June 12th, 1825-30; was pastor in New Milford from 1830 to 1835. Mr. Rood's pastorate was the briefest this Church has ever had. He was afterwards professor in the Theological Seminary, at Gilmanton, N. H., 7 years.

6. Noah Porter, son of Rev. Noah Porter, D. D., of Farmington, was born December 14th, 1811; graduated at Yale College, in 1831; at Yale Seminary, in 1836; was ordained pastor here April 27th, 1836, and resigned December 31st, 1842; after serving the South Church, Springfield, Mass., 4 years, he then became a professor in Yale University of which institution he was elected President, and inaugurated October 11th, 1871.

7. John Greenwood was born in Berwick, Yorkshire, England, June 5th, 1794, and was ordained pastor at Royston, Cambridgeshire, June 20th, 1822—July 17th, 1836; installed pastor at Bethel, April 18th, 1838—February 1842; after serving this Church as settled pastor for one year, he was installed pastor April 24th, 1844, and resigned May 19th, 1849. In 1843 he received the honorable degree of A. M. from Yale College.

8. David Murdoch, was born in Glasgow, Scotland; graduated at Union College, in 1845; Union Theological Sem-

inary, 1848; ordained pastor here September 18th, 1850, and remained until September 28th, 1869. He was installed pastor of the New Haven Third Church, October 1st, 1869, and remained until May 15th, 1874.

9. James B. Bonar graduated at Wabash College, 1853; at Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1856; ordained ——— by the Third Presbyterian Church, New York, March 18th, 1857; installed pastor American Presbyterian Church, Montreal, Canada, June 6th, 1857, and left in 1869. He was installed pastor at New Milford, June 30th, 1870.

The Church connected with this Society was organized November 21st, 1716, with 8 male and 5 female members. During the first pastorate 225 more were added by profession and letter. During Mr. Taylor's ministry of 42 years, 301 names were added to the roll. Mr. Griswold kept a full record of Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths during his entire ministry. His list of admissions to the Church is only to January 1st, 1797. From that date he seems to have invited all persons to the Sacraments. Under his ministry only 34 persons united with the Church. At his ordination Mr. Elliott found only 43 members—showing how the Church had been broken up in the 8 years preceding. Nine years later, after the Church at Bridgewater had been formed, Mr. Elliott reports a membership of 118; but this was before the revival that moved the town. Three hundred and nineteen members were added to the Church during Mr. Elliot's ministry—most of them on profession of faith. There were added to the Church under Mr. Rood, 153, Mr. Porter, 116, and Mr. Greenwood, 46. After the retirement of Mr. Greenwood Rev. E. W. Andrews was acting pastor for 6 or 8 months, and received 63 persons to Church fellowship. In the 19 years of Mr. Murdoch's ministry there were added to the Church, 243 persons; and under the present pastorate of 6 years 80 have been received. The number of names on the Church roll up to this date is 1593. In 1861 there was a reported membership of 476; but the roll had not been revised and corrected since 1836. A careful sifting of the list in the Fall of 1870, showed a Church membership of 310 at the beginning of the present pastorate. The actual membership to-day is 332—27 of them over 75 years of age, and one of them over 100 years. At the head of the list is Mrs. Polly Canfield who united in 1812. Two persons are said to have

died in this town over 100 years of age—Harry Carpenter a colored man, and Noah Nodine, who was born in the 17th century and died in the 19th. Miss Sally Northrop, who celebrated the anniversary of her 100th birthday on the 28th of June is still living.

During the last century, the Church was sensitive as to the character of its Deacons. Instead of electing brethren at once to the office, it choose them to serve during the Church's pleasure. If acceptable after one or two years trial, they were, by vote, "established as Deacons." And in 1750 the Church voted that one brother, who had thus been on trial for two years, "should not be established in the office of Deacon." Twenty-one persons have so far served the Church in this office viz :—Samuel Brownson, James Prime, John Bostwick, Job Terrill, Samuel Canfield, Bushnell Bostwick, Roger Sherman, Benjamin Gaylord, John Hitchcock, Sherman Boardman, Elizur Warner, Joseph Merwin, Dobson W. M'Mahon, John Beecher, Micanor Stilson, Geo. W. Whittelsey, Geradus Roberts, Seymour B. Green, William Hine, John J. Conklin, and Ethiel S. Green. From 1716 to 1803, the Lord's Supper was administered 4 times a year; since 1808, every two months.

Nineteen men from this Church have entered the Gospel ministry, viz :—

1. David Bostwick, born here January 8th, 1721; was ordained pastor at Jamaica, L. I., October 9th, 1745, where he stayed until 1746. He was installed pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, in New York City, in 1753, and died in 1763. His work on Infant Baptism was published here and in England, and republished in 1837.

2. Joseph Treat; graduated at Princeton College, in 1757. He was ordained pastor colleague of Rev. Dr. Bostwick, First Presbyterian Church, N. Y. City, in 1762, where he remained until 1784.

3. David Brownson; graduated at Yale College, in 1762, and was ordained pastor at Oxford in 1764, staying until 1779. He died in 1806.

4. Benjamin Wildman; graduated at Yale College, in 1758; was ordained pastor at Southbury, in 1766 and died in 1812.

5. Whitmon Welch; graduated at Yale College in 1762, and died in 1776.

inary, 1848; ordained pastor here September 18th, 1850, and remained until September 28th, 1869. He was installed pastor of the New Haven Third Church, October 1st, 1869, and remained until May 15th, 1874.

9. James B. Bonar graduated at Wabash College, 1853; at Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1856; ordained —— by the Third Presbyterian Church, New York, March 18th, 1857; installed pastor American Presbyterian Church, Montreal, Canada, June 6th, 1857, and left in 1869. He was installed pastor at New Milford, June 30th, 1870.

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5. Whitmon Welch; graduated at Yale College in 1762, and died in 1776.

6. Gideon Bostwick was born here in 1742 ; graduated at Yale College in 1762. He was a teacher of the Classical School established in Great Barrington, Mass., by Dr. Whiting, Col. Dwight and other members of the Episcopal Church, in 1766. Invited to act as Lay reader, he went to England and received orders from the Bishop of London, and was Rector at Great Barrington, from 1767 to 1793. He died here while on a visit to Mrs. Boardman, who was Dr. Whiting's daughter. [See Schroeder's Memorial of Mrs. M. A. Boardman.]

7. David Sandford was born in Milford, December 11th, 1737 ; graduated at Yale College in 1755 ; was ordained pastor at Medway, Mass., April 14th, 1763, and continued there until April 7th, 1810.

8. John Stevens ; graduated at Yale College, in 1779 ; was licensed by Litchfield South Association, 1780, and died in 1799.

9. David Baldwin.

10. Daniel Marsh was born in 1762 ; graduated at Williams College ; was pastor of Bennington, Vt., from 1806 to 1820 ; died at Janesville, New York, in 1843.

11. Nathaniel W. Taylor, grandson of the second pastor of this Church, was born here, June 13, 1786 ; graduated at Yale College, in 1807 ; converted in College ; was ordained pastor at New Haven, on the first of April, 1812, and retained the position until December 1822. He was then Professor in Yale College Theological Seminary, and died in 1858. He trained nearly 700 young men for the ministry.

12. Charles A. Boardman ; was pastor at New Preston from June 1818, until March 1830 ; was installed pastor at New Haven, on the third of March, 1830, remaining until September 1832. He was also installed pastor at Westport, February 1833, and stayed until December 1836. He died in 1860.

13. Orlo D. Hine was born here, October 28, 1815 ; graduated at Yale College, in 1837 ; was ordained pastor at Clinton, April 14th, 1841, laboring there until October 25th, 1842. He was also acting pastor at Fair Haven, Vt., from 1843 to 1845 ; acting pastor at Pontiac, Mich., from 1846 to 1851 ; installed pastor at North Woodstock, January 6th, 1852, and stayed until November 5th, 1855 ; and was installed pastor at Lebanon the first of May 1856,

14. Merrit S. Platt was born in 1805 ; graduated at Hamilton College ; was ordained pastor at Madison, N. Y. September 1837, remaining until 1855 ; was acting pastor at Hamilton, N. Y., 1855, staying until 1864 ; was also acting pastor at Glassboro, New Field, Franklin, New Jersey, in 1864. He is still living.

15. Eliezur Beecher, ordained by the Baptists about 1814 ; was never settled ; preached mainly in this town.

16. Asahel Bronson was ordained about 1820 or 1825 ; supposed to be dead.

17. John Treat Baldwin ; graduated at Princeton College ; was ordained about 1820. He is still living.

18. George Todd ; graduated at Yale College about 1820 or 1825 ; supposed to be living.

19. George Sterling was ordained pastor at Wayland, Mich., December, 1874.

At least four men in this town have been active in National affairs. The most distinguished was Roger Sherman, a native of Mass., who came here in 1743. He was clerk to this Ecclesiastical Society, from 1753 to 1761, and established in the office of Deacon in 1757. Here he wrought as a shoemaker, aided his brother in the store, and in 1745 was appointed land surveyor for the County. Removing to New Haven in 1761, he became judge of the court of Common Pleas, a member of the upper House in the Legislature, and judge of the Superior Court. In 1774 he was appointed a member of the first Congress, in which he continued until his death, at which time he was in the Senate, to which he was elected in 1791. He was a member of the Governor's Council of safety, and Mayor of New Haven from 1784 to his death, July 23d, 1793. In the Congress of 1776 he was a member of the Committee appointed to draft the Declaration of Independence, as well as of many of the other most important Committees, and he was also a member of the board of war, and of the board of treasury. His services to the Country were invaluable, and few of his contemporaries left their impress more clearly upon American institutions.

Elijah Boardman, third son of Deacon Sherman Boardman, and grandson of the first pastor of this Church, was born March, 7, 1760. In 1821 he was elected to the U. S. Senate ; he died August 18th, 1823. Mr. Boardman's earlier years were in connection with this Society ; but hav

ing married a daughter of the aforementioned Dr. Whiting, a zealous Episcopalian who engaged in a pamphlet controversy with Dr. Billamy, he afterwards identified himself with the Episcopal Church and died in its communion.

Perry Smith, who died in 1852, was elected to the United States Senate in 1836, and served one term. He was connected with the Episcopal Society.

Orange Merwin, born here July 3, 1776, was in Congress in 1826-7, during the administration of John Quincy Adams. He died September 5th, 1854. He was a member of this Society.

The Sabbath School was begun in 1812 or 14 by Rev. Mr. Elliott, who for some time was the only teacher. The first appropriation of money for its benefit by the Church was in 1821. The present membership of the Sabbath School is 300. The Infant Class in the Chapel was begun, under its present teacher, Miss Isabella Wilson, in 1872.

Under Mr. Elliott's ministry, prayer meetings became common in the town. They were held on Sundays between services, in the Town House and in the school houses of the outlying districts. In times of religious interest many week day meetings were held in various places. A Saturday evening prayer meeting was held for years in the parlors of Mr. and Mrs. Eli Mygatt, when they lived on the spot now occupied by the residence of Mrs. Sanford and afterwards in the Town house. But no regular mid-week Church afternoon service was established until during Mr. Rood's pastorate, when the Friday afternoon meeting was begun. The Tuesday evening meeting was commenced in 1865 or 66. The Mother's Monthly Prayer Meeting began in 1869.

The gifts to the Church, so far, are these: July 14th, 1815, Deacon Dobson, and W. M'Mahon gave the Church \$100, the interest to be used for relief of poor members, or for books. February 26th, 1820, Deacon M Mahon gave \$400 to be used for the same purposes.

In 1844 Miss Lois Wells gave the Church \$200 for the relief of the poor, sick and destitute female members.

Mrs. Anna Hine, widow of Stephen, who died in 1851 or 2 bequeathed \$200 to the Church.

And in January 6th, 1860, Miss Sally Northrop, who completed her 100th year a few days ago, gave \$200 to be added to the Church Fund.

The Benevolent Library originated in the gifts of Deacon M'Mahon Col. Samuel Canfield and Philo N. Heacock, who took great interest in it. No additions have been made to it for some years. It consists of about 600 volumes of standard works, and merits more attention than it has lately received.

It is impossible to form any estimate of the amount of money contributed by this Church and Society, to religious and benevolent objects. Until after the installation of Mr. Porter there was no system or regularity in its charities. Collections were taken up as the town was visited by agents, or as necessity seemed to require. It is thought that contributions have been made regularly to the A. B. C. F. M., and the Am. H. M. S., ever since these societies were formed. The oldest record of any contribution by this Congregation is the receipt of the County Treasurer for £94 16s. 0d. which this Society gave "for the suffering and distressed inhabitants of the towns of New Haven, Fairfield and Norwalk." This receipt is dated September 1779, three months after the towns named had been sacked by Major General Tryon.

From 1836 to 1871 the Congregation contributed regularly to the Am. E. L., the Bible, the A. H. M., the Seamen's F. & S. S. Union, the A. B. C. F. M., and the A. Tract Societies. Since 1871 we have contributed annually to the Bible S., Congregational Union, A. H. M. S., Fund for Disabled Ministers and their widows, the A. B. C. F. M., and the A. M. Association.

The Rev. W. H. Moore states that, in the 17 years from 1859 to 1875, this Congregation contributed \$18,876.53. Dividing this into two periods, he finds that in the first nine years you gave \$3,765.99, and in the last eight years \$11,810.63, a gratifying increase, which, it is hoped we shall fully maintain.

The Ladies' Mite Society was formed in 1817 as a Dorcas Society. For 50 years it has annually contributed about \$75, divided between A. H. M. S., Seamen's F. and A. Ed. Societies.

The Auxiliary to the Woman's B. of Missions was formed in May 1872. "The Golden Links," and "Star Circle" a year later. These organizations last year, together, contributed \$389.

Such, in brief, brethren, is the story of your Church,

Society and town. It is one of which you need not be ashamed. A careful study of these old records has increased my respect and reverence for the men of the past. Their courage in facing difficulties, their heroic endurance of privations, their sturdy independence, their delight in the ordinances of the Gospel, their readiness to assist each other, and their generosity towards those who differed from them in opinion, are worthy not only of warm praise, but of careful imitation.

And yet these men of the past were not all saints and patriots. In 1776 there were some bitter tories here: One of these was compelled by a company of riflemen to walk before them from New Milford to Litchfield carrying one of his own geese the entire distance. At Litchfield they tarred him, made him pluck his own goose, bestowed the feathers upon him, and drummed him out of the place, after obliging him to kneel down and thank them for their leniency. And in 1757 David Ferriss was paid 11s. out of the Society's treasury, to reimburse him for counterfeit money which he had received as Collector. This nest of counterfeiters was not broken up until 1763, when a dozen of them were arrested. The old Church books show that immorality was not unknown among Church members. The pastoral letter which was issued to the Churches by the Litchfield South Consociation in 1752, reveals a state of things in these Churches worse than any known to-day. Sixty years ago (1816) there was a distillery in every town—169 in Litchfield County,—26 of them in New Milford. To day there are three distilleries in town, and soon it is hoped these will disappear and the nine places licensed to sell liquors.

There is abundant cause for gratitude. There has been progress in every direction. In our beautiful village—than which there is not now a lovelier or a healthier in New England—with our system of concrete walks, lamps and water works, our substantial Town Hall and enlarged school privileges—we may here spend life as pleasantly and profitably, doing the will of God from the heart—as was could anywhere on the face of the globe. With all these blessings and privileges there is, of course, an increased responsibility. It becomes us to conserve and improve all that the fathers have left us, and hand down an unimpaired inheritance to the generations that are to follow.

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