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Diocese of Rhode Island.

1790-1890.

CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE.



The Opening

OF THE

One Hundredth Session

OF THE

Protestant Episcopal Church

IN THE DIOCESE OF RHODE ISLAND,

HELD IN

Saint John's Church, Providence,

TUESDAY, JUNE 10TH,

1890.

AT 10 O'CLOCK A. M.

THE COMMUNION SERVICE,

WITH THE FOLLOWING COLLECTS, EPISTLE AND GOSPEL.

THE COLLECTS.

Almighty Father, Whose ways are from everlasting, and Who hast never left Thyself without witness here on earth, we thank Thee for the direction and the help given unto our fathers in establishing a branch of Thy Holy, Apostolic Church in this Portion of Thy heritage. For the precious inheritance we have received from them, for the present strength and size of the tree which Thy right hand hath planted, and for all the hopes that await us in the future, we bless and magnify Thy Holy Name, beseeching Thee to accept this our humble tribute of praise and thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

O God the Son, the Saviour of mankind, Who hath promised to be with Thy Church to the end of the world, we implore Thee to keep this portion of Thy great work under Thy constant guidance and protection. May no erroneous doctrines and no evil practices ever come between us and Thee; may we never be led astray into forbidden paths, nor look for help and salvation to any but Thee, Who died upon the cross for us, and in Whom alone we have eternal life. AMEN.

O God, the Holy Ghost, giver of all spiritual grace, inspire the ministers and members of Thy Church, here assembled in Thy name and presence, with the spirit of Him, Who, when He was upon the earth, went about doing good. May this branch of Thy Church ever be a source of refreshment and blessing to the world, active and zealous in every good word and work, shedding a holy influence upon our government, our schools, and all our social institutions; helping the poor, comforting the afflicted, sustaining the weak, defending the oppressed, uplifting the fallen, and saving the lost,—thus doing the work for which the Kingdom of God was begun upon earth; all which we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom, with the Father and Thee, O Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honor and glory, world without end. AMEN.

THE EPISTLE.

Ephesians i.: the 15th verse.

THE GOSPEL.

St. John xv.: 1st to the 15th verse.

THE 203D HYMN.

Thou, God, all glory, honor, power, Art worthy to receive; Since all things by Thy power were made, And by Thy bounty live.	All worthy 'Thou, Who hast redeem'd And ransom'd us to God, From every nation, every coast, By Thy most precious blood.
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And worthy is the Lamb all power, Honor, and wealth to gain, Glory and strength; Who for our sins A sacrifice was slain.	Blessing and honor, glory, power, By all in earth and heaven, To him that sits upon the throne, And to the Lamb, be given.
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AT 3 O'CLOCK P. M.

THE 277TH HYMN.

With one consent let all the earth To God their cheerful voices raise; Glad homage pay with awful mirth, And sing before Him songs of praise.	O enter then His temple gate, Thence to His courts devoutly press; And still your grateful hymns repeat, And still His name with praises bless.
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Convinced that He is God alone, From Whom both we and all proceed; We, whom He chooses for His own, The flock that He vouchsafes to feed.	For He's the Lord, supremely good, His mercy is forever sure; His truth, which always firmly stood, To endless ages shall endure.
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THE COLLECTS.

THE 326TH HYMN.

God of our fathers, by Whose hand
Thy people still are blest,
Be with us through our pilgrimage;
Conduct us to our rest.

Through each perplexing path of life
Our wandering footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread,
And raiment fit provide.

O spread Thy sheltering wings around
Till all our wanderings cease,
And at our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace.

Such blessings from Thy gracious hand
Our humble prayers implore;
And Thou, the Lord, shalt be our God
And portion evermore.

AN HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

By the Right Reverend THOMAS MARCH CLARK, D. D., LL. D.,
Bishop of the Diocese.

THE TE DEUM.

THE BENEDICTION.



CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, PROVIDENCE,

AT THE

ONE HUNDREDTH ANNUAL SESSION

OF THE

DIOCESE OF RHODE ISLAND,

JUNE 10TH, 1890.

BY THE RT. REV. THOMAS MARCH CLARK, D. D., LL. D.,

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE.

ADDRESS.

ONE hundred and ninety-six years ago Episcopal services were held for the first time within the limits of Rhode Island, and in 1702 Trinity Church, Newport, was established and a church edifice erected. In response to an application made to the Lords of the Council of Trade and Plantations, through the Earl of Bellemont, Governor of Massachusetts, the Rev. James Honeyman was sent to Rhode Island as a missionary, by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," with an appropriation of seventy pounds a year. He entered upon his duties in 1704, and the Church under his ministry grew and flourished to such a degree that in 1726 it was found necessary to erect a more spacious building, in place of the original church. "It was acknowledged by the people of that day," as we read in the ancient annals, "to be the most beautiful timber structure in America," and except for an enlargement in length, made in 1772, it remains unaltered to the present day, with its high square pews, its ponderous galleries, its lofty pulpit in the middle aisle, surmounted by a pagoda-shaped sounding-board, and a spacious reading pew and clerk's desk in front, with a very contracted chancel in the rear, and the tall, painted rods indicating the Wardens' pews.

That Mr. Honeyman was of a generous disposition appears in the fact that he contributed not less than thirty pounds out of his little stipend towards the erection of the new church, and the historian informs us that he was also kind-hearted and conciliatory, "living on good terms with other religious persuasions; all of which he embraced with the arm of charity." In one of his earlier reports to

the Society in England he says, "That he preached twice every Sunday, catechises twice a week, and administers sacrament every month, and has baptized in about two years seventy-three persons, of whom nineteen are adults." In 1732 he writes to a friend, "I take the pleasure of telling you this known truth, that betwixt New York and Boston, the distance of three hundred miles, and wherein are many missions, there is not a congregation to compare with mine, or equal to it in any respect; nor does my church consist of members that were of it when I came here, for I have buried them all." It is a fact worth noting that as early as the year 1713 the Wardens and Vestry of Trinity Church, Newport, petitioned the Queen for the establishment of Bishops in America, "setting forth the great benefit that would result to the Church from such a measure."

On the 3d of September, 1729, it being one of the holy-days when divine service was held in the church, a letter was delivered to Mr. Honeyman in the pulpit, announcing that a ship had just reached the harbor, having on board "a great dignitary of the Church of England, called Dean," whereupon the congregation was at once dismissed with the benediction, and they all repaired to the wharf to receive the Dean and his friends. It was no less a personage than the great and good Berkeley, whose eloquent and instructive preaching during his residence here attracted large congregations, and was of great service in setting forward the interests of the Church in Newport. On his return to England, in 1731, he sent as a gift to Trinity Church the organ which is still to be seen there, with its gilded crown flanked by two mitres, a token of the munificence of this saintly man to the Church, which he had adorned by his presence and hallowed by his holy ministrations.

The benefactions of the Venerable Society in England to this parish continued without abatement until 1752, when a reduction of twenty pounds was made in the stipend, and in order to make up the deficit it was necessary to levy an annual tax, "nearly all the pewholders," as we are informed, "submitting to the same." As Newport was

at this time one of the richest and most flourishing towns on the sea-coast, the reduction on the part of the English Society would seem to have been justifiable. After the lapse of about seventy years the Society withdrew its aid altogether, and the parish was thrown upon its own resources for its support.

The Rev. Mr. Honeyman continued in office for nearly fifty years, dying of extreme old age in 1750. There have been but two other Rectors of Trinity Church who have retained their connection with the parish until death,—the Rev. Marmaduke Brown, who died in 1771, after a ministry of eleven years, and the Rev. Dr. Isaac P. White, who died in 1875, who also had served the Church for eleven years.

From the death of Mr. Honeyman until the War of the Revolution the changes in the Rectorship were frequent, and after the evacuation of the town by the British troops services were suspended for a time, and the use of the Church given to a Six-principle Baptist Society. From the date when the regular worship of the Church was resumed there is little in the records which it would be profitable to recall until the Rev. Mr. Dehon, afterward the Bishop of South Carolina, entered upon his duties as Rector in 1791, when harmony was restored, and the Church entered upon a new career of prosperity.

On the opposite side of the Bay, along the Narragansett shore, a number of respectable and wealthy families had taken up their abode, and in 1707 what is known as the Narragansett Church was erected and opened for public worship. The Rev. Christopher Bridges was the first Pastor, and in 1721 the Rev. Dr. McSparran came over from England and took charge of the Church until his death, which occurred in 1759. He was the most conspicuous clergyman sent to Rhode Island by the Society in England, and his published writings give us a vivid, although it may be a somewhat one-sided and exaggerated picture of the times. In 1747 he preached before a Convention of the clergy in Trinity Church, Newport, and

in 1751 he published a discourse on "The Dignity of the Christian Priesthood," which led to one of those violent ecclesiastical controversies which were not uncommon in the good old times, when the zeal of earnest men was wont to outrun the bounds of discretion and decency.

Three years after the death of Dr. McSparran, he was succeeded by the Rev. Samuel Fayerweather, a graduate of Harvard. In 1774 we read of his preaching in King's Chapel, Boston, before General Gage and his officers, and in November of the same year he made his last entry in the parish records, the majority of the Society objecting to the use of the prayers for the King and Royal Family, and during the next ten years no services were held, the church being used as a barrack for the American soldiers. In 1784 nine persons met together, and steps were taken for resuscitating the Church, which had become almost extinct. The region in which the old church was placed had become in a great measure depopulated, and in 1798 it was resolved to move the edifice five miles further north, where it still stands in excellent preservation, and continues to be used in the afternoon, during the summer months, although another and more commodious church has been erected in its immediate vicinity. This is the oldest Episcopal church now existing in the northern portion of the land, and its primitive features remain for the most part undisturbed.

In 1719 a parish was organized in Bristol, under the name of St. Michael's Church. The Rev. Mr. Orem was sent over from England, and the sum of 1,400 pounds was contributed for the erection of a church. On the arrival of Mr. Orem, "he found a wooden building with the outside and steeple finished, but nothing done to the inside; but so desirous was the little flock to join in the worship of the church, that on Saturday evening rough boards were laid for a floor, and service was performed on the next day." In about a year Mr. Orem removed to New York, and the Rev. John Usher was appointed in his place; a man whose labors were signally blessed, and

whose hallowed influence and honored name have been perpetuated in Bristol to the present day. Seven hundred and thirteen persons were baptized during his ministry. We are told that "he made the welfare of the church the whole business of his existence, and was called to suffer such deprivations and hardships as few of the clergy are called to endure at the present day." Until the year 1746 Bristol was included within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, and the Episcopalians were taxed for the support of the Congregational minister, but, notwithstanding this, they continued to raise from 80 to 130 pounds annually for the expenses of their own church. It was, however, a little hard upon Mr. Usher, when, in 1730, the Vestry voted that henceforth the Rector should be called to support all the widows of the church. In 1778 the church was burnt to ashes by a band of British soldiers, and for a while the services were suspended,—the few who remained steadfast in the faith continuing to meet on Easter Monday and go through the usual form of electing Wardens and Vestrymen for the ensuing year. A new church was built in 1786, which is still standing, although it has long since ceased to be used for religious purposes. About forty years after this a much finer church was erected, which was destroyed by fire in 1860, when the present substantial stone church was built in its place.

The history of St. John's Church, Providence, I have already given at some length in a discourse delivered eighteen years ago on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the parish, and as there are few persons living who have any recollection of that sermon I may be allowed to quote somewhat freely from its pages on the present occasion. In the year 1722, when the first Episcopal house of worship, known as King's Church, was erected in Providence, the township covered an area twenty-four miles square, with a population of about 4,000 persons. Among them there was a little band of Church people, who, as the record reads, "having resolved to get a minister and live like Christians," with some aid from Newport, Boston and other places, managed to erect a timber building for a

church, and in two years a stated congregation of about one hundred persons were gathered there, with seventeen communicants. During the first thirty years of its existence there were four clergymen settled in the parish: the Rev. George Pigot, a man of fair scholarship and good character, who remained but a short time, having been, as the record declares, "of a roving disposition;" Joseph O'Harra, whose ministry was disgraceful, and terminated in the county jail; the Rev. Arthur Brown, a volume of whose sermons was published; and the Rev. John Checkley, who died in 1753. He was a native of Boston, all his predecessors having been sent out from England, educated in the Grammar school, and finishing his studies at the University of Oxford. On his return to Boston he published an edition of Leslie's "Short and Easy Methods with Deists," with an appendix of his own, "Concerning Episcopacy, in Defence of Christianity and the Church of England, against the Deists and Dissenters." In 1727 he went to England for the purpose of obtaining Orders, but it being represented to the Bishop of London that "he was a bitter enemy to other denominations, a non-juror, and that he had not a liberal education," the Bishop refused to ordain him. In 1739, when he had reached the mature age of fifty-nine, he renewed his application, and was ordained by the Bishop of Exeter. In the same year he became the Rector of King's Church, where he remained until his death. He was an excellent linguist, well acquainted with Hebrew, Latin, Greek and Indian, "a favorite companion of learned and curious men," although, as we are told, "some were offended by his opinions, and others thought him too much of a wag for an intimate acquaintance."

In 1755 the Rev. John Graves was sent to take charge of the church in Providence by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel." "He will, I am fully persuaded," says the Secretary of that Society, "administer richly to you in spiritual things, and I hope you will not be scanty to him in carnal things, and therefore the Society expects and requires of you to purchase a good and decent house,

with a good glebe annexed thereto, and pay him at least twenty pounds per annum." When it is considered that the Society had been from the beginning giving all these churches from sixty to seventy pounds yearly, the demands that were made of their American beneficiaries to contribute towards their own support were not very extravagant.

Mr. Graves continued to officiate until July, 1776, "when he was pleased to absent himself from duty, though very earnestly requested to keep up the worship, saying he could not, as prayers for King George were forbidden." At the close of the war he asked to be re-instated in his office, but the request was refused.

In the records of the Vestry we read from time to time of the Rector being appointed chairman of the committee to draw up a scheme for the next lottery, and of the sale of so many square feet on the floor of the church, with directions to those persons proposing to build pews thereon not to exceed the prescribed height, and various other matters touching upon the censures to be inflicted upon contumacious parishioners, the duties of the sexton, the care of the church furniture and vestments, the rights of interment, the use of the parish pall, and so on.

The four churches of which I have now spoken are the only ones, established here during the last century, that have survived. In 1728 a church, two stories in height, with a steeple and spire, was erected on the post-road near East Greenwich, which was taken down about the year 1764 by the inhabitants of Old Warwick, with the intention of erecting a church there. It is only within ten years that this purpose has been fulfilled, and to-day there may be seen on the altar of St. Mary's Chapel, Warwick Neck, a folio copy of the Holy Scriptures, and another of the Book of Common Prayer, in perfect preservation, presented by the Lord Bishop of London to the Warwick Church in 1750.

At a very early period a large lot of land was deeded by Ninigret, the Chief of the Narragansett Indians, for the erection of a church in the town of Westerly, which Dr. McSparran speaks of as having

been the result of his labors in that vicinity ; the history of which has passed into oblivion.

If time permitted I would be glad to linger amid these scenes of old, but, for the present, we must be content with this very meagre sketch of the ninety years that preceded the organization of the church in Rhode Island as a diocese.

Let us, however, before we finally turn away from this period in our history, imagine ourselves to be in attendance at King's Church, Providence, during the ministry of one of its earlier Rectors. The bell tolls for prayer at nine o'clock on Sunday morning ; the people have assembled, arrayed in the brilliant costumes of the times ; the side-men have taken their places, staff in hand, for the preservation of due order and decorum ; the service is reverently read after the stately old English custom and in strict accordance with the rubric ; the clerk responds sonorously ; the choir sing, with little regard for musical science, one or more of the metrical psalms of Tate and Brady, chanting being as yet a thing unknown, and somewhat dreaded as having a flavor of Popery, and the minister, in black gown and bands and silk gloves, ascends the pulpit, solemnly ushered by the sexton, and delivers a short sermon, not overburdened with original thought, very possibly not original at all, free from the slightest taint of fanaticism, decidedly anti-Calvinistic, and reminding one of Seneca rather than of St. Paul. I do not know what effect the repetition of one of these 18th century sermons would produce upon a congregation in our day, with its superabundant classical illustrations, its commonplace similitudes, its tedious arguments to prove what nobody would ever think of denying, its sweeping postulates, assumed without argument, which it would be difficult or impossible to maintain, its occasional ferocity of diction, altogether out of proportion to the thought or the logic, a style of preaching not at all peculiar to our own communion, and how it was possible for our forefathers to listen to such preaching and profit by it, may be regarded as a mystery. And yet, I presume that they did listen and get some good from it.

If it was not fitted to make very saintly men, it stood sentinel over the proprieties and amenities and moralities of life, and taught the current virtues of good citizenship,—honesty, sobriety, thrift, economy, and industry. It helped to make children obedient, and parents considerate and kind, and servants truthful and faithful. If it did not fully apprehend the breadth of Christ's purpose in establishing His kingdom on earth, if the Church was regarded rather as an organic structure than as a living, spiritual power, still it was true to her ministry and order and ordinances, and those services edified and comforted the people, regulated and elevated the plane of common life, and the Sundays and holy days made men understand and feel that there is something higher to live for than the greed of gain, or the follies of fashion, or the appetites of the body, or the rewards of ambition. If Christ was not preached in all his fullness, and the power of the cross brought home with much earnestness to the souls of sinners, and believers were not led along the heights of grace, the way of salvation was indicated, and we doubt not that many, even under this somewhat dry and dreary regimen, with a Liturgy in their hands, pervaded through and through with the truth and spirit of Christ, found peace in believing.

I would not be understood to say that there were none of the preachers in the last century who appealed effectively to the heart and conscience, and fed their flocks with something more substantial than dessicated ethical precepts and rigid ecclesiastical formulas. There were godly men in those days, whose influence continues to be felt down to the present hour ; but it was an age when the standard of religious fervor everywhere was low, and the number of men who were distinguished for theological learning and effective preaching was comparatively small.

Then the want of a complete organization was a serious hindrance to the growth of the colonial churches. The church in this country was Episcopal only in name, and lacked the advantages which are supposed to grow out of its peculiar polity. Every candidate for Or-

ders must cross the ocean, at great expense and some risk of life, to receive his ordination, or the churches be content with such clerical material as floated over from the other side of the ocean; there was no effective supervision of the clergy, no accessible court of appeal in the case of a dispute, no synodical action, and no diocesan boundaries. No church could be consecrated and no person confirmed. In brief there was nothing but the Liturgy to distinguish this church from other Protestant denominations. The Bishop of London, in his palace at Fulham, could have no oversight of the fold, and discipline was impossible. Under these circumstances it is not at all strange that the Episcopal church failed to make any substantial progress, or obtain any stronger hold upon the community at large.

In 1790, one hundred years ago, we enter upon a new period in our history. The first Diocesan Convention was held in Newport, consisting of two clergymen and five laymen, three parishes being represented. It was the day of small things, and all the proceedings of this body are comprised within two printed pages; but the work which they accomplished was by no means unimportant. In the first place they accepted the Canons adopted by the General Convention the previous year, with one valuable addition, prescribing the testimonials to be produced by candidates for Holy Orders, very much in the same terms as we have them now. They then approved of and recommended the use of the revised Book of Common Prayer. They next voted that the Church of this State be united under a Bishop, and the Rt. Rev. Samuel Seabury, D. D., is declared Bishop of the Church in Rhode Island. A Standing Committee is elected, and a committee appointed to represent to the Churches in Bristol and Narragansett the disadvantages resulting from the want of a regular ordained minister, and with thanks to the Rev. Mr. Smith for his excellent discourse delivered this day, the Convention adjourned.

In 1793 Bishop Seabury takes his seat as the Presiding Officer of the Convention, and at this session the first Ordination was held in the new Diocese. At a General Convention, held about this time,

nine States were represented, and Rhode Island appears at the head of the list, accredited with the presence of two delegates, but they actually resided in Connecticut, and acted as the representatives of this Diocese in pursuance of a vote of the Convention requesting them to do so.

In 1795 a Constitution, consisting of thirteen articles, was adopted for the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Rhode Island.

In 1798 the Rt. Rev. Dr. Bass, of Massachusetts, was elected Bishop of Rhode Island, Bishop Seabury having died in 1796, and from this time the connection between the two States of Connecticut and Rhode Island ceased. The office was accepted by Bishop Bass, but he was never present at any meeting of the Convention.

Ten years have passed away and the Church has made no progress. When the Convention met in the year 1800, but one parish was represented, and that one only by laymen, and this is the entire record: "No representative appearing from the other churches in the State, it is expedient to adjourn without day."

In 1806, after the death of Bishop Bass, the Diocese was put in charge of Bishop Moore, of New York, but there is no record of his visiting the Diocese. On the roll of the Convention appears, for the first time, the name of the Rev. Alexander V. Griswold, as the Rector of St. Michael's Church, Bristol, who afterwards became so intimately associated with the interests of the Church, not only in Rhode Island, but also throughout the larger part of New England.

To those of you who were familiar with the stately form and melodious voice of one who was so long the Senior Presbyter of this Diocese, as he sat with us here in Convention, mingling earnestly and actively in its debates, and helping to shape its counsels, it must seem very strange to read in the far-off Journal of 1807, eighty-three years ago, this entry, "The Rev. Nathan Bourne Crocker presided President." For nearly sixty years he was closely identified with all the proceedings of the Church in Rhode Island, and by the purity of his life, the gentleness of his spirit, and the earnestness of his ministra-

tions, he won a place for himself in our hearts, and left an impression for good upon the whole Church that will not soon be effaced. At this Convention the initiatory steps were taken which resulted in the formation of the Eastern Diocese and the union of all the New England States, with the exception of Connecticut, under the jurisdiction of one Bishop.

Ten years more have elapsed and there is still nothing on record to show that any advance has been made in the growth of the Church in 1810. There were only three clergymen present in Convention and three parishes represented.

In 1812 the Convention assembled under the Presidency of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Griswold, who had just been elected Bishop of the Eastern Diocese, while he still retained the Rectorship of St. Michael's Church, Bristol. For the space of thirty-two years he discharged the duties of his extensive jurisdiction with such a degree of wisdom and moderation, with such a sincere humility, joined to the most inflexible firmness, with so much zeal and holy earnestness untainted by the slightest touch of weak fanaticism, as well entitled him to the honored place long since assigned him amongst the revered and saintly fathers of the Church. He was the first Bishop whom I ever knew; I was confirmed, ordained and married by him, and for some time was an inmate of his family. How well I recall that cold winter afternoon, forty-seven years ago, when I saw him, a few minutes after his death, lying on the floor of Bishop Eastburn's study, on whose door-step he had fallen, never to rise again, with his calm and placid face and beautiful silvered locks, lying there in the dark blue flowing garment that he always wore in the winter season,

" Like a warrior taking his rest,
With his martial cloak around him."

As the evening shades drew on, I accompanied his lifeless body to the home from which he had gone forth that afternoon for the last time, and there with my own hands I arrayed his body for the burial.

" The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish while he sleeps in dust."

In 1813 the first statistical reports appear in the Journal of the Convention, showing that there were only 254 communicants in the Diocese, St. Paul's, South Kingstown, making no report. During the year there had been 137 baptisms, 106 of these being in St. Michael's Church, under the ministrations of Bishop Griswold.

In 1816 the spell is broken, and a new Church appears upon the record, St. Paul's, Pawtucket, the first parish that came into existence here under the auspices of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Tradition tells us that the formation of this Church was the result of Dr. Crocker's missionary labors, he having been accustomed to hold services in Pawtucket on Sunday evenings, after his work at home was over.

Two years later the name of Christ Church, Chepachet, appears in the Journal, and the same parish re-appears in 1819 as Christ Church, Glocester, and this is all that is ever heard of it.

About this time the first indication of a missionary spirit in the Diocese appears, and the Bishop is requested to appoint a missionary in this State, the Convention engaging to furnish such sum for his services as the Bishop shall name. It is also recommended to the Clergy to preach on the subject and have a contribution made in their congregations on a certain Sunday, and still further it is recommended to form Sunday Charity Schools for instruction in reading the Scriptures, and in the principles and doctrines of the Church.

The day star is now dawning, but the darkness still lingers. In 1820, thirty years after the first Convention was held, there are but 535 communicants in the Diocese, and only four Churches represented in Convention.

Three years after this we find the first entry of missionary contributions, amounting to \$639.20.

In 1826 a movement was started to raise a fund of \$2,000 for the support of the Episcopate, of which nothing further is heard.

The conservatism of the Convention appears in their action, when, in 1827, certain alterations in the Liturgy and Constitution of the

Church, proposed by the House of Bishops and House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, were submitted for approval. The subject was taken up, and after a little debate the question was put, "Will this Convention approbate the proposed alteration?" When the negative appeared almost unanimously.

In 1830, after the Diocese had been in existence forty years, we find two more churches added to the list, Grace Church, Providence; and St. Mark's Warren. In 1832 St. Paul's Church, South Kingstown; Trinity Church, Pawtuxet; and St. James's Church, Smithfield, were admitted into union with the Convention. In 1835 the following new parishes appear: St. Luke's, Tower Hill; St. Paul's, Portsmouth; St. Luke's, East Greenwich; Christ Church, Lonsdale; Christ Church, Westerly; St. Peter's, Kingston; and Emmanuel Church, Manville. At this Convention all the clergymen entitled to seats were present, and a large delegation of the laity. Everything at this period indicates a wonderful awakening of spiritual life, and from this time the Church begins to move on with a quickened pace. The voluminous parochial reports are full of the most intense expressions of religious fervor, and read like earnest and impassioned sermons.

At this Convention a movement is made for the relief of Bishop Griswold from some portion of his duties, by providing for the support of an assistant minister in his parish, as, up to this time he was obliged to traverse the whole Eastern Diocese and also discharge all the duties incident to his Rectorship, which was now transferred to Massachusetts, with no other provision for his support but the salary received from the parish that he served. It was not a very exorbitant sum assessed by the Convention of the Eastern Diocese, only \$400 per annum, of which \$100 was charged to Rhode Island, the Rev. Dr. Crocker and the Rev. Mr. Bristed personally pledging themselves for this amount. With some considerable caution, the Convention agreed to redeem this pledge, the Committee on Finance, in their very dignified report, "Subjoining the expression of our opinion that, although we disclaim the legal right of taxation, we have

a surer hold upon the resources of the Church in this State, in the self-respect and concern it ought to feel for the proper support of every branch of its ecclesiastical interest."

In 1840 the semi-centennial Convention assembled in St. Paul's Church, Pawtucket, at which time there were 17 Clergymen in the Diocese and 19 Churches. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Henry Waterman, and as he had been in Orders only four years, his selection to be the preacher on this occasion was a very marked indication of the position that he held among the Clergy, and in richness of thought, felicity of diction, aptness in rare and pertinent quotations, as well as in the pious fervor of his preaching, he was to the end of his life excelled by few. I have regretted to find that this sermon makes no direct allusion to the history and condition of the Diocese.

At this Convention a committee was appointed to prepare an historical sketch of the Diocese, who made their report two years afterward, and this was disposed of by a vote directing the committee "to publish such part or parts of the Report as might seem proper in the *Christian Witness* or other papers, without expense to the Convention,"—a gentle way of consigning it to oblivion.

Three years afterwards Bishop Griswold was removed by death, and the Eastern Diocese was dissolved. A special Convention was called to elect a Bishop for Rhode Island alone, and the choice fell upon the Rev. John Prentiss Kewly Henshaw, D. D., at that time the Rector of an important Church in Baltimore, and in the Annual Convention of 1843 he appeared and took his seat on the right of the President. In the August following he was consecrated in St. John's Church, Providence. It so happened that I was in this city at the time, for the purpose of delivering a Missionary address at Grace Church, and of course I attended the consecration services, with very little thought that it would ever be my lot to take up Bishop Henshaw's work when his earthly career was over. The newly elected Bishop found his Diocese in a sound and vigorous condition. Before his coming a great degree of enthusiasm had been aroused,

and, mainly through the instrumentality of the Missionary Convocation, many new Churches had been established. Such men as John Bristed, and John A. Clark, Nathan B. Crocker, and James M. Pratt, and George Taft, and Alexander H. Vinton, and Henry Waterman, with other like-minded men, full of the Holy Ghost and inspired with an earnest zeal for the salvation of souls, had been laboring for years to elevate the standard of religion in the Church and to extend its borders, and Bishop Henshaw came in at the right time to reap the fruits of their toil. This he did with no diminution of the fervor which had moved the hearts of the men who had gone before him; tempering his course with a somewhat higher tone of churchmanship than that which had characterized most of the older clergy, but never giving offence by any extreme of doctrine or excessive rigidity in matters of form and usage. He was a wise as well as an earnest man, and never spared himself when there was anything to be done for his Master. Grace Church, Providence, is his monument, and but for his untiring and patient efforts, that Church might to-day have been in the possession of some other religious body than our own. During the term of his Episcopate, which continued from August 11, 1843, to July 20, 1852, Bishop Henshaw ordained 15 Deacons, 16 priests, and confirmed 975 persons in his own Diocese. At the time of his death there were 22 Churches and 31 Clergy in his Diocese.

It was while in the act of performing official duties for one of his brethren in a distant diocese that he was suddenly removed by death, and at a special convention, called in 1852, after a suitable recognition of his valuable services and an expression of the deepest sympathy and sorrow in view of his departure from earth, the Rev. Dr. Francis L. Hawks was elected Bishop of the Diocese. The Rt. Rev. George Burgess, D. D., was requested to take charge of the Diocese during the ensuing year.

In 1853, the announcement was made that Dr. Hawks declined to accept, and it was resolved not to proceed at once to another election; Bishop Williams, of Connecticut, being invited to discharge Episcopal duties in Rhode Island.

A special convention was called in 1854, for the purpose of electing a Bishop, there being present twenty-four of the clergy and seventy-one of the laity. On the second day the present incumbent was elected, and received his consecration in Grace Church, Providence, on the 6th of December following. Not the remotest suggestion had ever reached me that my name had been thought of in connection with the Episcopate of Rhode Island, and no one could be more astonished than I was when the fact of my election was communicated. Of those who participated in that election, the Rev. Dr. Henshaw is the only clergyman remaining amongst us, and there may be now living some two or three laymen who were present on that occasion.

It has been my privilege to preside in thirty-six Annual Conventions of the Diocese; but a new generation has come upon the scene, it is not the same body that I used to address more than thirty years ago, the same familiar voices are not heard here, the same faces do not appear, almost all who once joined in our deliberations and guided our counsels, have crossed the dark river, and will be seen here no more. In the House of Bishops I find but two left out of the thirty-eight that were enrolled when I entered its doors, and more than sixty of our number have, since that date, passed into the land of silence.

I have not much to say as to the details of the last thirty or forty years, they have been marked by no striking events, the Diocese has been for the most part peaceful and united, and we have moved on with a quiet and steady pace, and as rapidly perhaps as could be expected in an old and established community. At the time of my election there were 28 clergymen in the Diocese, 20 of whom are now dead; there are now 58 connected with the Diocese. There were 23 churches and chapels, and there are now 53. I have consecrated 36 churches and chapels, and one more has been built which remains not consecrated.

Twenty-six Rectories have been erected or purchased, and three important charitable institutions established: St. Mary's Orphanage, the St. Elizabeth Home, and the Grace Memorial Home. Ninety-

eight persons have been admitted as candidates for Holy Orders, of whom 72 have been admitted to the Diaconate, and 68 have been ordained Priests. The whole number of baptisms is 22,187, not including those baptized during the last year, and there have been 13,624 persons confirmed.

The number of Sunday-School teachers has increased from 346 to 938, and of scholars from 2,236 to 8,610, as reported last year. The roll of communicants has increased from 2,614 to 9,102. In 1854 the amount of the offerings for Missions and church charities was reported to be \$10,167; last year it was \$60,867, and in addition \$154,989 for the support of public worship. During the last 35 years the whole amount reported is \$3,245,851; \$1,374,934 being for mission work, and the remainder for parish purposes. Until the year 1866, no report was made of the latter contributions. It is impossible to estimate the full amount of money that has been raised for religious and charitable work; but it is gratifying to know that, although our churches have never been over-liberal in furnishing the means for carrying on their Diocesan missions, this Diocese is proportionally the largest contributor to our General Foreign and Domestic Board, and its actual contributions are exceeded by only four other Dioceses. It still remains true that we are far from approaching the standard that we ought to reach, for this is a wealthy Diocese and bound to provide liberally for the help of those who are in need of aid.

The compactness of the Diocese has been favorable to its growth. There are but one or two other Dioceses where the proportion of communicants to the whole population is as large as it is in Rhode Island, and there is scarcely a village of any considerable size where our services are not established. With such a limited area that I can reach the most distant parish in the space of an hour, it is easy to keep all the destitute regions in view, and wherever there is an opening for the Church, with a fair prospect of success in starting a new mission or parish, we cannot help seeing it. The advance of the Church in Rhode Island has been in a great degree the result of direct missionary effort; we have now 15 mission stations, and 17

of our self-sustaining parishes, some of them among the strongest and richest in the Diocese, owe their existence to missionary zeal.

The limits of our territory are such as allow the clergy to live together upon terms of more familiar intercourse than is possible in our larger Dioceses. Instead of seeing each other only once in a year at the session of the Annual Convention, they can assemble every month, as has been their custom, to confer together and consider the subjects in which they have a common interest, and the absolute freedom with which the most delicate questions are discussed, the mutual forbearance on the part of those who differ most widely in opinion, the growing feeling, as the result of this free and candid conference, that, with all their differences, they are working for the same great end and trying to serve the same Master,—all this has tended in some degree to free our clergy from that narrowness of vision which is apt to come upon them, when they live and labor alone, while it serves to correct the acerbity of spirit, which almost always develops itself, when they come together for the purpose of assault, and not with the desire to find out how it is that good men can look at the same truth from such different angles of vision.

It is difficult for those who are now coming on the stage to appreciate the extraordinary changes that have been developed in the Church since the semi-centennial of our Convention was celebrated. If the good Bishop who was so much shocked, some fifty years ago, by an innovation in the old St. Stephen's Church in this city, which consisted in nothing but the introduction of a lectern in place of a reading-desk, leaving the prayers to be said at the end of the altar, which is still the custom in the same church edifice, as to make it a matter of severe rebuke and earnest warning in his annual address, could revisit the earth to-day and look around upon the churches of his Diocese on a Sunday morning, and more especially on an Easter Day, it is not easy to imagine just what his emotions would be. Fifty years ago, not a cross was to be seen in any chancel or on the outside of any church, not a candle lighted or unlighted on any altar, not a flower about the premises on the occasion of any

festival, not a colored or embroidered stole or vestment, nothing but the black gown ever seen in the pulpit, no acolytes in or about the chancel, no periodical changing of color in altar-cloths and book-marks, no elaborate rinsings and wipings of the sacred vessels at the close of the Holy Communion, no surpliced choirs, no processions or recessions, no intonings and no chanting of versicles and creeds and amens, no announcement of masses or high and low celebration, no confessionals in churches or rectories, no bowing to the altar or turning to it except for purpose of convenience or when it was prescribed by the rubric, no variation whatever in the conduct of public service by which High Church could be distinguished from Low Church,—everything outwardly moved on in all quarters after the same fashion, and there was nothing in the air to indicate the wonderful changes that were soon to come.

It cannot be denied that in many respects a great advance and improvement has been seen. Between forty and fifty years ago I was rector of a church, built on a heathen model of the temple of Bacchus, with large imitation wine-butts in bronze on each side of the chancel, with carved Bacchantes as the ornaments of the chancel-rail, the pulpit being in the form of an Egyptian cenotaph with its outstretched wings and other peculiar symbolism, and in place of an altar there was a recess in front of the reading-desk with a marble slab on which the sacramental vessels were placed. No such church as this would be erected now, and the peculiar features of the edifice which I have just described were years ago removed. The adornments of our churches in these days are usually appropriate and seemly, even when they may be thought somewhat excessive, and the prevailing mode of conducting our services is richer and more attractive than it was in days gone by. At the same time it is not to be forgotten that, with the reaction from the dryness and barrenness that once existed in many of our churches, our present danger may lie in the direction of excess and exaggeration in outward ornament and symbolism, and we must be on our guard against the introduction of practices which are offensive to sensible people, because they are puerile, or dangerous and mis-

chievous, because they represent a doctrine which is foreign to our communion.

In the department of Christian activity a wonderful advance has been made. Not only have our public services been greatly multiplied and every effort made to render them more attractive, not only have we enlarged the sphere of our direct missionary work at home and abroad, but we have also established a multitude of agencies for bringing the influence of the Church to bear upon all the various phases of society,—guild-houses, libraries, reading-rooms, gymnasiums, hospitals, halls of rescue, homes of various descriptions, orphanages, orders of the St. Andrew's cross, and the Iron cross, and the Red cross, and the White cross, King's daughters, deaconesses, brotherhoods and sisterhoods, societies in honor of all the female saints in the Calendar,—the time would fail me to enumerate them all. The question here arises again, whether this popular tendency to increase the machinery of the Church may not be carried to excess.

As might have been expected, there has been a corresponding enlargement in the range of subjects brought within the cognizance of the Church and discussed in our pulpits. The time has been when the Episcopal Church was supposed, more than almost any other denomination of Christians, to stand aloof from the great social questions of the day, confining herself strictly to matters ecclesiastical and doctrinal. To-day this Church is conspicuous for its practical interest in everything that pertains to the moral and physical good of the community. Such subjects as the civil service reform and political reform in general, the adjustment of capital and labor, the monopoly of land, the elevation of the secular press, the purification of our popular literature, the rescue of the fallen and the abatement of social vice, the great temperance movement, the substitution of coffee-houses and other wholesome places of resort in place of the drinking saloon, the prevention of cruelty to children and animals, the wiping out of filthy and wretched tenement houses, the surest way of lifting the poor out of the mire,—these are the kinds of subjects which now, to a great extent, interest the Church;

as the conviction has been slowly forced upon us that it was the original design of this institution not only to save men from suffering hereafter, but also in every possible way to elevate their condition while they are living here on earth.

In the domain of thought and opinion there has been a great change in the last fifty years.

It is very suggestive to observe how little interest the present generation feel in the controversies which, within the memory of some of us, shook the Church to its foundations, and also to see how the old party lines, which seemed as if they must be indelible, have gradually faded out and become extinct. We have at last discovered that some of those old discussions relate to matters which lie beyond the compass of our finite understandings, and still further that they might not be found to have any very direct relations to our personal duty, if they were capable of being solved. The circle of dogmatic speculation has been steadily narrowing, and there is now a gravitation towards certain great fundamental principles, as constituting the essentials of the Christian faith.

That gravitation is more and more towards Christ,—not merely as the Author of our religion and the Head and Founder of the Church, not merely as the centre around which all our doctrinal beliefs are to cluster, but as the very sum and substance of our faith; a Being who does not need to be authenticated by external signs or Scripture texts, or ecclesiastical authority; but One, who authenticates Himself; whose existence is the great standing miracle; who could never have been if He had not been filled with all the fullness of the Godhead; a Being who authenticates Himself to us personally, by finding us in our sin and misery, and giving us the only thing that could lift us out of our degradation and save us from despair; by taking upon Himself that burden of the past, which no effort of ours could lighten; by infusing into us His grace, so that we become holy, as He is holy; by inclining us to do His work, so that we shall not have lived entirely in vain; by leading us on through the darkness and the storm, and at last allowing us, worn and weary with the toils and sorrows of life, to lie down and sleep in Him.