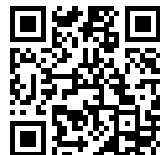


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SECOND PARISH CHURCH  
MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS

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**HISTORY**  
**OF THE**  
**SECOND PARISH CHURCH**  
**(UNITARIAN)**

**MARLBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS**

**BY**

**EDWARD F. HAYWARD**

**PRINTED FOR THE PARISH**

**APRIL, 1906**

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**Note**

At an adjourned Annual Meeting of the Parish, held on May 4, 1905, it was voted to observe the one hundredth anniversary of the West Church, which afterwards became the Second Parish Church of Marlborough; and the Parish Committee, in connection with the minister, were empowered to act as a committee of arrangements. Inasmuch as the church entered upon its existence, in a house of worship of its own, on the 27th of April, 1806, this date was chosen for celebration rather than that of February 23rd, 1808, when it was legally incorporated as the Second Parish by the General Court. The Parish Committee having the matter in charge were Edward E. Allen, Charles F. Brigham, E. Irving Morse, Walter B. Morse and Stillman R. Stevens. This committee was later enlarged by the addition of the following persons: Mrs. Charles F. Brigham, Mrs. E. Irving Morse, Mrs. Walter B. Morse, Mrs. Stillman R. Stevens, Mr. Herbert M. Hazelton, Mr. and Mrs. J. Henry Gleason, Mrs. Webster Eugley, Mrs. Lorren Arnold and Miss Emily Howe.

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### **Acknowledgments**

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the many friends who have helped him in collecting material for his work. The loss of the earlier Parish books and the failure to preserve the Sunday School records has been felt; but he has had valuable assistance from the Public Library officials, from Mr. J. V. Jackman, Mrs. Dennis Witherbee, and many others in the city. He wishes also to thank Mrs. O. Augusta Cheney, of Natick, Mass., daughter of Rev. Horatio Alger, for her contributions concerning her father. There is no likeness of Dr. Asa Packard in existence except a now faded portrait in Philadelphia. A copy made from this portrait is herein presented, through the kind assistance of Mrs. Ruth Q. Powell of Scranton, Pa., a granddaughter, and Miss Anna W. Packard of Hudson, Mass., a great granddaughter, of the first and longest settled minister of Marlborough.

## Beginnings

The causes which led to the establishment of the West Church and Second Parish in Marlborough are involved in more or less of obscurity. The immediate cause was the difference of opinion touching the church site. Doubtless the theological disagreement, which was afterward to become more apparent, also entered into the account. But evidences are not wanting that other motives were present to still further complicate the situation. The history of the preceding hundred and fifty years makes clear that the early people of Marlborough made up a highly individualistic, not to say inflammable, community, which never found it easy to act together either politically or socially or religiously. The principle of independency, the right of private judgment, probably never had a fuller carrying out than here. To outsiders they may have seemed quarrelsome, to themselves they doubtless seemed only tenacious of personal rights and perfectly legitimate prejudices. At any rate they had gradually accumulated among themselves an uncomfortable stock of local factions and animosities, which were liable to start up on the slightest provocation, and which were pretty sure to enter into any question which came up for settlement among them.

During these years when there was only one church in the town, and when it is difficult to divorce the religious history from that which

was secular, this state of feeling is markedly shown by the troubles incident to settling a town minister. On one occasion a period of five years elapsed before a pastor could be found, and on another a period of seven years was necessary. Not only did the people find it hard to agree, but in four or five instances, when a call had been extended, there would be a declination. Such had become the reputation of the town for rivalries and divisions, that the candidate, acting also on the advice of neighboring ministers who had been consulted, did not dare to venture on the settlement.

The church schism really began as early as 1738, when "sundry inhabitants of the easterly part," petitioned to be set off from the town and church. In 1756 an attempt was made to have the old meeting-house taken down, and two new ones erected. The only result of this action was a vote "to repair the present meeting-house on the foreside and the two ends, by making new window-frames and casements to slip up and down, and glaze it with sash glass, set in wood, and to new clapboard the foreside and the two ends, and make new doors and steps at the doors; and to accomplish said work, Mr. Thomas Brigham, Dea. Andrew Rice, Capt. Joseph Howe, Capt. Daniel Barnes, and Capt. Ephraim Brigham, were chosen a committee to cause the same to be done." After the close of the King Philip war, in 1680, an unsuccessful attempt had

been made to secure this enlargement. The people were then worshipping in an unfinished church building, the estimated value of which was only fourteen pounds. Its primitive character can be seen from the fact that its roof was made of a tall grass taken from what was then known as "Thatch Meadow." Finally, in 1688 a new church was erected, which continued to serve the needs of the town till the division of 1806.

### **Preliminary Steps**

Ten years before this latter date the agitation for a new meeting-house began again. In 1801 a vote of more than two to one was obtained in favor of building, but the difficulty of agreeing on a site deferred action till June 4, 1804. Then it was decided to locate at Spring Hill. Many at once left the meeting; and it was only after much discussion and delay that in January, 1805, work was actually begun. This involved a removal from what is now the High School Common to the easterly part of the town, and at once the long slumbering demand for a church in the west part made itself heard. Immediately on the action above mentioned, a meeting was called at the house of Capt. George Williams, in which the dwellers in the West Part met and chose William Boyd Moderator, and Benjamin Rice, Jr., Clerk. After considering the difficulties which existed in the town incident to

building a meeting-house, the eighty members present chose a committee of ten "to notify the Inhabitants of the West part of the Town, to attend at the adjournment of this meeting, that they might express their minds relative to the becoming a Separate Society."

The adjourned meeting took place June 11, 1804, and resulted in a unanimous resolution "to be separated from the Easterly part, either as a poll parish, a precinct, or a Separate Town." It must be understood that the original resolution went farther than it appeared to do, the call for a new religious society being equivalent to the expression of a desire for a new township. The relation of the parish to the town was so close at this time as to carry with it a complete identification of interests, and it is this fact which accounts for the subsequent difficulties which attended the efforts of the West part to obtain for themselves a separate church existence.

A committee of eleven, chosen at the above meeting, met on June 15, and recommended the land of Josiah Fay and Capt. William Gates, west of Wheeler's Lane, and near what is now Broad Street, as a building site. But this did not satisfy public sentiment in that quarter of the town; and on July 12, a further meeting resulted in a petition to the Selectmen to be set off, "with all those privileges and immunities which appertain to towns within the Commonwealth."

## The New Church

However simple now it may seem to us to organize a new church, it was not so easy then to form another parish when that action led, as it so often did, to the creation of a new community, with all the practical questions which at once became involved. Not only did the town in this instance refuse to make the proposed change, by a vote taken July 16, but a subsequent petition to the Legislature was also denied. This petition was signed by George Williams and seventy-five others, and three of their number were appointed to act as agents to present the petition to the General Court and act for the body of the whole. Taking for granted the success of their movement, the petitioners at once proceeded to choose officers, raise money, and make preparations to build a meeting-house.

The unfavorable action of January 23, 1805, when the General Court negatived the petition, did not however discourage the petitioners. If they must remain in the old town, it was still their privilege to enjoy a separate church existence. A site was selected, and on April 2, 1805, it was voted to buy land of Benjamin Rice and Windsor Ward, and proceed to the erection of a meeting-house. A subscription paper, circulated at this meeting, resulted in pledges to the amount of five thousand two hundred and twenty-one dollars. The final cost of the church

building, however, was about eight thousand dollars.

The cost of this new church enterprise, it must be remembered, included also a proportionate share in the expense of building a new meeting-house at the other end of the town. This expense had to be met by all the inhabitants of the town, irrespective of locality or personal preference, and instead of a modest eight thousand dollars, it amounted to twenty thousand dollars. A very serious financial situation was thus created, the burden upon the west part building committee being so great that in some instances personal liabilities were incurred, and certain members became embarrassed in consequence.

The year following these preliminaries was given up to building and to meetings relative to the same. Not until April 4, 1806, were formal measures taken to organize the new Religious Society, and it was then voted to do so as soon as possible. On that date, also, a committee, previously chosen, reported that, "we, the subscribers, wishing to form ourselves into a regular Religious Society, have for many years past been satisfied with the services of the Rev. Asa Packard as a minister of the Gospel, and are still wishing him to be our minister, feeling ourselves able and willing to make him a reasonable compensation for his services in the ministry with us."

Having thus independently provided for their separate church existence, they renewed their attempts to gain a legal status. On May 12, 1806, the Selectmen were again asked to call a town meeting to see if the town would consent to the incorporation of a new parish. A petition to the General Court also set forth that the subscribers "had at great expense erected a convenient building for purposes of Public Worship; that they had employed a Public Teacher, who constantly preaches in said building; that they believed that the cause of religion and good morals would be advanced by their incorporation into a religious society, etc." This petition was, as usual, headed by George Williams, and signed by one hundred and ten others.

A later town meeting developed a disposition on the part of each branch of the now divided church to live together in peace and harmony. Indeed, more than one effort was made even yet to bring together the two sections, but in vain. The people at the west part fell back on the favorable action of the ecclesiastical council which had been called by both to adjudicate their difficulty, and on the fact that they had already been worshipping in a meeting-house, and under a teacher, of their own for more than a year.

## The New Parish

Both houses of worship were opened for use on the same day, April 27, 1806; the one in the west part not being completed. But, we are told, "they swept up the shavings, and had a meeting." Meanwhile the movement for legal incorporation was going on. The opposition was great and unremitting, but at last, on February 23, 1808, the Second Parish of Marlborough came formally into existence. The first parish meeting was held March 8, 1808, at which officers were chosen, and measures taken to dedicate the meeting-house and sell the pews. Since then no other parish has been formed in town. New religious societies have been organized within the limits of these two original town parishes; the civil status of the town itself has been changed to that of a city; the old First Church of Marlborough has given up its title and come to be known as Union Church; but through all these vicissitudes the old first and second parishes have remained, as to their form and origin, the sole representatives in town of the ancient order of church life in New England.

In the separation a small majority of the church went 'off, with a minority of the society, twenty-four church members seceding, and twenty-three, including the deacons, remaining with the parent church.

## End of Contention

So ended the contention which had been so long drawn out, and which had been attended with so much of bitter party feeling. That there was need of a new church had been for some time apparent ; and with the other influences of the time which were fast ripening about them, this need was soon to become more evident, The ecclesiastical council, to which reference has been made above, had been called. Berlin, Northborough, Weston, Shrewsbury, Acton, Stow and Concord had sent delegates, who deliberated solemnly on the trying situation for three days. Their recommendation was that each branch of the church should go apart in full liberty, and, without offense to the other, exercise its functions as a religious body. Provisions were also made by the council for the keeping and alternate use of the vessels of the sanctuary. Committees from the two churches met and made an amicable division of the church property. To the West Church fell five pewter tankards, one pewter flagon, two pewter platters, and one wooden bottle ; together with money and notes amounting to the sum of \$154.19. This included \$50.00, one-half of the Priest Fund, which was donated by Hannah Priest for the benefit of the poor. These recommendations were mutually adopted. The slow processes of the law drew to a close in 1808.

On February 23rd of that year the Second Parish in Marlborough was duly incorporated, and on the fifth of March following the West Church, which had already been worshipping in its own house for two years, was formally organized.

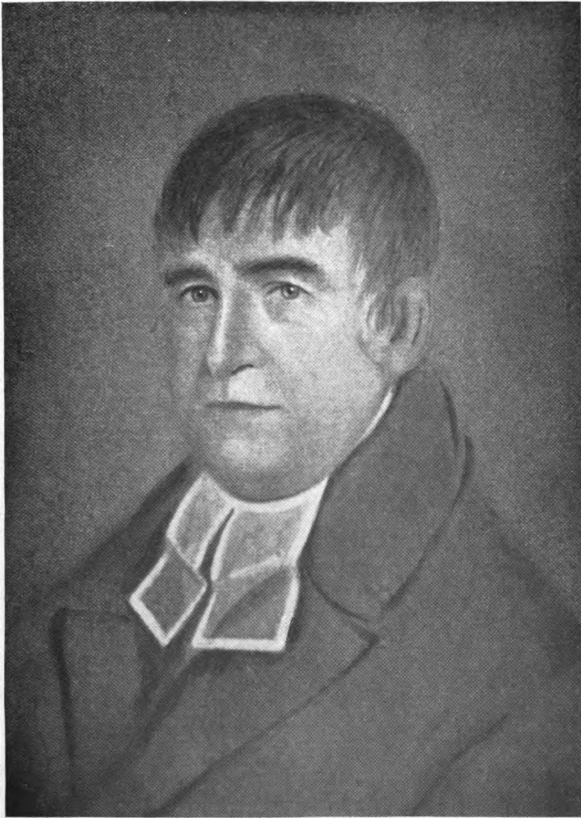
The distinction will be observed that in the old records the inner body, or church proper, was always spoken of as the West Church. The later act of legal incorporation which divided the town into two parishes had a wider significance. It had reference to the town's care for the higher welfare of its inhabitants, and belonged fully as much to the State as to the church. The fact that then the Second Parish of Marlborough came into existence adds a fresh and weightier meaning to the earlier birth of a new religious body which bore, as it has always since borne, the name of West Church. The two facts, however, must not be confounded in any clear understanding of the situation as it then existed.

### **The Unitarian Controversy**

The influences above referred to, which were soon to enter more decisively into the account, were general and theological. The "Unitarian Controversy" was slowly growing through the eighteenth century, and by the beginning of the nineteenth it had gained a definite and portentous character of its own. But as yet it was for the most part silent and unassertive. As a

heresy it had permeated all the churches, but in favoring circumstances it was fast gathering congregations of avowed believers in a more liberal interpretation of Christianity. The great sermon preached by Dr. Channing in 1819 at the ordination of Jared Sparks in Baltimore precipitated all this scattered sentiment into a church movement, but before this there were ministers and congregations about whose Unitarianism there was no doubt or question.

The principle of independency, which was the Pilgrim inheritance, had been thoroughly accepted, as we have seen, by the citizens of Marlborough. It was now to appear how sympathetic they were to the new ideas which were modifying the rigors of Calvinism all around them. That these liberal sympathies entered into the demand for a separate church existence may be inferred from the records. No definite statement to that effect, however, is available, and the wording of the earliest covenants would seem to show that radicalism in theology had not as yet seriously affected the tone and temper of the new society. Gradually the thought of the Second Parish appears to have assimilated the growing Unitarianism of this time; and almost imperceptibly it drew over into the ranks of those who were opposed to the religious opinions of the First Church from which it had sprung. Strictly local and sectional considerations probably had most weight in its going off, but there



REV. ASA PACKARD



is no doubt that even in the beginning the liberal sentiment predominated in the West Part, as it was soon to be enthroned as the prevailing religious opinion of the church in that precinct.

### **The First Minister**

The Reverend Asa Packard was an interesting man, in many respects the most interesting of the ten pastors who have served the Society during the hundred years of its existence. Several considerations help to make this so. The very fact that Mr. Packard's ministry bridged over the separation, and that as pastor of both societies he served the town in his official capacity for a period of thirty-four years—twenty-one of which was given to the old, and thirteen to the new church connection—makes him a perennially important figure in its annals. Then too his career as a citizen appeals to the imagination. A native of Bridgewater, which was also the birthplace of two of his successors, he entered the Revolutionary army as a fifer at the age of seventeen. In an engagement at Harlem Heights in 1776 he received a bullet wound, which was followed by a severe illness. A cowardly soldier, who had boasted of his courage, when the fighting grew warm, had seized the musician's fife, at the same time thrusting his own musket in its place. Then he fled to the rear, leaving the astonished fifer in the ranks of the active combatants. The bullet received in this way was

to illustrate the somewhat erratic and highly impulsive nature of the man. Mr. Alger, writing of him, says: "Not having a logical or systematic mind, his faith being the result of impression rather than of conviction, founded on reasoning, he probably in his old age gradually and almost unconsciously grew into some degree of sympathy with the views which, in his change of relations, he was then accustomed to hear from the pulpit. But that he was ever thoroughly and decidedly orthodox there is no good reason to believe."

There is in Mr. Felton's Journal a curious entry to the effect that, "July 2, 1790, Rev. Asa Packard married Miss Nancy Quincy (of Braintree). It is said that he advertised for a wife, and was answered by Miss Quincy. She was sister of Josiah Quincy, Jr., the patriot."

### **Clerical Succession**

Mr. Packard was succeeded by Rev. Seth Alden, like his predecessor, a native of Bridgewater, and a direct descendant of John Alden of Mayflower fame. On his mother's side he was descended from the Pilgrim Governor Carver. He is described by Mr. Alger as a man of grave and dignified manners, of even temperament and gentle spirit, sympathetic as a pastor, and solid rather than brilliant in the pulpit. The custom of entering marriages on the church

records was discontinued by him. He claimed that they did not belong there, and his successor, Mr. Morse, concurred in the custom and opinion, from which Mr. Tenney, one of his successors, vigorously dissented. Mr. Alden, after a pastorate of fifteen years, removed to Brookfield. He died in Westborough November 13, 1853. He had come from his home in Lincoln on an exchange. While reading a hymn at the opening of the afternoon service he expired. The hymn closed with these words :

" And fit us for those realms of joy  
Where nought impure shall enter in."

Little is known of Rev. William Morse, who followed Mr. Alden. He was a native of Connecticut, and had previously ministered at Nantucket, Quincy, and perhaps other places. During his pastorate of ten years the Church Covenant was shortened and the pulpit lowered; the Ladies' Charitable Society was formed; the church building was changed and repaired; a clock was put upon the meeting-house at a cost of \$300.00, which was met by subscription. Mr. Morse went to Tyngsborough, where he preached for nine years, and died later somewhere in New Hampshire.

Rev. Horatio Alger, who followed Mr. Morse, was father of the well-known writer of boys' stories bearing the same name, and himself the compiler of a very brief sketch of the society which the parish asked him to prepare. This

was published in 1850. The following memorandum in his handwriting has been found of questions which he wished to settle touching this bit of historical writing. It begins with a note of confession which is both characteristic and illuminating.

“There is a multitude of things which I want and ought to do. I cannot accomplish but a small part of them. The way to accomplish the greatest number of them is to do one thing at a time, and work on it till it is done. Here is a list of some things to be done. Write an article on Wicklif; a Review of Sir T. F. Buxton; Finish my Church Record; Bring it before the Church next Communion; Get material for Parish History; Consult Town Church Proprietors and Indian Records, and gain all the Information I can about town affairs; Write several letters and make a lot of calls.”

Mr. Alger's pastorate lasted fourteen years. It was marked by ability, faithfulness, and especially by aggressive action and expression on the slavery question. Just before its close he preached three historical discourses, the last of which was a Farewell Sermon also. Judging from the tone and contents of this latter, Mr. Alger must have been a person of high spirituality and great magnanimity, as well as of more than usual force of character. In this sermon he mentions the fact that at the time of its delivery there was but one person in the church

who had been a member of the original parish before the separation. Mr. Alger was a public spirited citizen, untiring in his efforts for social betterment. He served several times in the Legislature, and for nearly forty years identified himself closely with the cause of education in the capacity of School Committee or private instructor. He was also interested in art, science and history. His three pastorates were of about equal length, and covered a period of about forty-five years. After leaving Marlborough he was settled in Natick, where he died on his seventy-fifth birthday on November 6, 1881.

Rev. William C. Tenney, who succeeded him, was the first minister to enter on his pastorate without the calling of a council and the holding of a formal service of installation, "neither Pastor nor people desiring any unnecessary formality." Mr. Tenney was a man of imposing presence and of somewhat truculent disposition, who, soon after leaving Marlborough, went into business, and died recently in the West.

The following is the list of ministers down to date :

- Rev. Asa Packard, March 23, 1808, to May 12, 1819.
- Rev. Seth Alden, November 3, 1819, to April 8, 1834.
- Rev. William Morse, June 25, 1834, to July 14, 1844.
- Rev. Horatio Alger, January 22, 1845, to July 18, 1859.
- Rev. William C. Tenney, October 6, 1861, to —, 1864.
- Rev. Eugene DeNormandie, October 19, 1865, to July 4, 1869.
- Rev. Calvin Stebbins, November 4, 1869, to August 25, 1872.

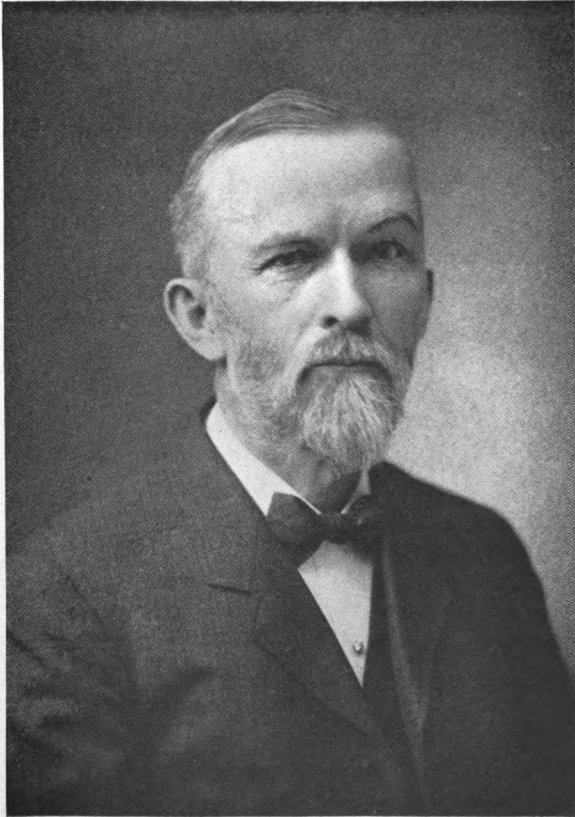
Rev. James H. Wiggin, March 2, 1873, to June 27, 1875.

Rev. Richard A. Griffin was installed June 29, 1877, after preaching a year for the society as a supply. His Farewell Sermon was delivered October 28, 1888.

✓ Rev. Edward F. Hayward, the present incumbent, began his pastorate on January 1, 1890. It will be seen from the above record that his length of service already exceeds that of any clergyman who has preceded him.

### **The Old Church Book**

There is in the possession of the Parish a very interesting volume, which contains the records of its church life from the time of the Ecclesiastical Council held in October, 1806, which formally divided the ancient First Church of Marlborough. This Parish Book is bulky, brown of cover and brown of faded leaves, written in with many ministerial hands, most of them of quaint, old-fashioned penmanship, but bearing witness to an almost pathetic faithfulness in matters of detail which are apt to be neglected in the rush of modern life. Looked at superficially, the book might seem to be largely a record of troubles incident to filling the office of deacon, so many candidates feeling called on in their modesty to decline, and the parish as persistently declaring by vote its confidence in their fitness to serve. Then, as now, the constant stream of change in residence is recorded. The freshly developing life to westward is here indicated in the frequent dismissal and removal of members. The growth, too, of the parish is to be seen, the welcomes and the God-speeds existing side by side



S. HERBERT HOWE



on the dingy, time-stained pages. Here are baptisms and burials, marriages and memberships recorded; and many another fact interesting to natives of Marlborough and their scattered descendants, could such but be brought to their attention. Up to 1860 the entries are full and complete. After that they begin to grow scantier. Before 1870 they have ceased altogether. The interval between these dates and 1890 is unfortunately a blank which cannot be filled; but in the latter year the record begins again; and it is to be hoped that in future the main facts of the church's life will find a place in this written repository of its history.

### **Incidents and Parish Happenings**

A few incidents have been selected from the record as worthy of mention here.

When Mr. De Normandie was being installed as minister of the church (October 19, 1865,) there was an eclipse of the sun which lasted throughout the day. The sermon was preached by Dr. Cyrus A. Bartol of Boston, and the subject which he had selected was, curiously enough, "The Ministry of Light." The record says that the Brother made several "pertinent and pleasant allusions" to the peculiar condition under which the service was held.

In 1850 a concise sketch of the origin and history of the West Parish was prepared by the

minister, Rev. Horatio Alger, and printed by the Society from the income of the Church Fund. In the meeting at which the request was voted for such a memorial, some remarks were made. The substance of them was that there were quite a number of individuals, whose names stood on the Record, and who were, nominally at least, members of the Church, who yet did not attend the services of the Church, who in some instances did not belong to the Parish, and who apparently did not intend to take part in its life any more. Discussion was had on the subject, and it was voted that such persons should be labored with as opportunity offered.

It is significant that as early as 1854 the Society put itself clearly on record as opposed to slavery. After the Communion Service, July 2, 1854, the minister, Mr. Alger, asked the Church to tarry to see if action could be taken on this subject, which he had made the theme of his morning discourse. "I stated," runs the record, "that it had long seemed to me that inasmuch as there are many churches in our Land consisting, wholly or in part, of slave-holding members, it was the duty of those churches who believed *Slaveholding* to be a sin, it being in diametrical opposition to the principles and spirit of Christianity, — to declare this their conviction, and put on record their determination to have no fellowship as Christians with it or those who are guilty of it. And I suggested to the Church

that if they sympathized with my views and feelings on this subject, it might be well to raise a Committee to consider and report to the Church at some future time, whether, in their opinion, the Church ought to take any action in relation to this subject. A Committee of the Church accordingly met and drew up a set of resolutions, which were afterward presented to the parish for action, in which the evils of slavery were uncompromisingly condemned."

### **Church Property**

The church which was built in 1806 served the Society for sixty years. For some years the question of improving the property had been agitated by the Parish, and in the Spring of 1866, during the ministry of Mr. De Normandie, it was voted to remodel their house of worship. Formerly the church had faced the south. It was now turned about so as to front the east. The old building was then practically taken down, only the frame remaining. The large timbers were cut out, the roof was raised eight feet, the spire carried out in front eight feet and elevated fifty feet. These alterations consumed nearly a year's time, and an expense of nineteen thousand dollars. While they were in process, the congregation met in Forest Hall, a building near the church belonging to Mr. Henry O. Russell. During the winter of 1866 services were held in the vestry, but the church was not

rededicated until April 25, 1867. The sermon on this occasion was preached by Rev. James Freeman Clarke.

December 15, 1879, a committee of three was appointed to circulate a paper for subscriptions to a fund for building an addition to the church. It was composed of John A. Frye, Stephen A. Howe, 2nd, and Mrs. Henry O. Russell. Feb. 5, 1880, the Parish voted to enlarge the church according to plan proposed by the Ladies' Charitable Society, provided it could be done without incurring any debt to the Parish. At the same meeting fifteen persons were chosen as a committee to procure a new organ, and this committee was also directed to carry out the plans for enlarging the church, subject to the approval of the Parish Committee. The addition was formally accepted April 18, 1881, and receipts for the same were noted as follows:

Raised by subscription . . . . .	\$1,715.00
Received from Ladies' Charitable Society . . . . .	400.00
Received from New Organ Fund . . . . .	290.56
Received from Unity Club . . . . .	46.41
Received from old organ sold to S. H. Howe . . . . .	200.00
	<hr/>
	\$2,651.97

The New Organ Fund contribution represented the difference between the cost of the new organ and the amount raised for that purpose.

## **Parsonage**

August 24, 1870, it was voted to buy or build a Parsonage, and again to allow the Parsonage House to be built on the Parish Common, and that the money to build the same be raised by voluntary contributions. September 19, 1871, it was voted "to accept the Deeds of land and buildings thereon contributed by individuals for a Parsonage for said Parish, and to request the building committee to furnish the Parish Clerk with the names of the contributors to the fund." No record has been found of this request ever having been complied with.

## **Church Membership**

At the time of the organization of the West Church, seventy-two signed the Covenant of membership, thirty-four men and thirty-eight women. During Mr. Packard's ministry twelve male members were admitted and thirty-seven females, forty-nine in all. Forty-seven additions to the church membership were made under Mr. Alden, of which twelve were men and thirty-five women. Some of these admissions were by letter from other churches. Fifty-seven was the number admitted while Mr. Morse was minister, fifteen men and forty-two women. Down to 1850 the record of Mr. Alger gives sixteen memberships, making the total, outside of the original members, for a period of forty-four years,

of 169 additions. Occasionally the record shows that a number joined the church at one time, but some years were a blank, and the more common showing is one, two, and three admissions in a given year.

### **Original Deacons**

Benjamin Rice, Jr.	Elected April 28, 1808
William Barnes	Elected April 28, 1808
Moses Ames	Elected April 28, 1808
Eli Rice	Elected May 15, 1823
Stephen R. Phelps	Elected Sept. 22, 1825
Abraham W. Rice	Elected Oct. 31, 1849
Dennis Witherbee	Elected Dec. 27. 1849

### **Original Members**

The following is the list of Original Members of the West Church. The Covenant, it must be remembered, was signed by male members only. The female members whose names are added were found, not from the Church Record, but by patient labor on the part of Mr. Alger, who studied the First Church Records, and gained access to the private memoranda of original members and personal recollections of aged members. Rev. Asa Packard, Caleb Brigham, Hannah Brigham, John Gassett, Sarah Gassett, Deacon Benjamin Rice, Jr., Persis Rice, Samuel Brown, Betty Brown, Deacon Moses Ames, Lydia Ames, Deacon William Barnes, Elizabeth Barnes, Joseph Brigham, Anna Brigham (Stone),

Jabez Rice, Alice Rice (Goddard), Warren Brigham, Lucy Brigham, George Williams, Molly Williams, William Boyd, Lydia Boyd, Benjamin Rice, Susanna Rice, Solomon Barnes, Judith Barnes, Phinehas Howe, David Temple, Artemas Howe, Anna Howe, Stephen Felton, Lavinia Felton, Peter Rice, Lovina Rice, Daniel Stevens, Lavinia Stevens, Gershom Rice, Susanna Rice, Joel Felton, Susanna Felton, Sylvanus Howe, Sarah Howe, Ithamar Brigham, Matthias R. Brigham, Anna Brigham, Roger Phelps, Elizabeth Phelps, Gershom Bigelow, Jr., Mary Bigelow, Archelaus Howe, Lucy Howe, William Arnold, Relief Arnold, Thomas Rice, Abigail Rice, Phebe Maynard, Abraham Howe, Jonathan Crosby, Anna Crosby, Elizabeth Howe, Joseph Howe, Jr., Eunice Howe, Deacon Eli Rice, Lucy Rice, Thankful Reed, Susanna Rice, Catherine Howe, Experience Gleason, Sophia Bigelow, Grace Howe, Rachel Howe.

### **Covenants**

There have been four covenants in use by the Church at different times in its history. The first, which was signed by the original members, was probably prepared by Mr. Packard and was written by his hand in the Church Book in 1806. In 1820, during Mr. Alden's ministry, a revised covenant was adopted, which served the church for fourteen years. Then, in 1834, while Mr. Morse was minister, a third modification was

made. All these changes indicate a desire for simplification. The statement of faith in all continued to be severe in form and evangelical in tone. The Covenant of 1834, however, shows a great advance over its predecessors. It is much more modern both in its phraseology and in its theology. It is given below as coming nearest of the three to the present position of the church.

### **Profession and Covenant of 1834**

You profess to receive the Bible as the rule of your faith and practice in religion, and acknowledge your mind to be seriously impressed with the importance of the truths revealed in that book.

You believe that the Scriptures contain a revelation of the character and will of the One Only Living and True God, whose nature is Love.

You also believe that there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, the Son of God, the Redeemer and Savior of the world.

You likewise believe that to the one Infinite Father of mankind the supreme love and homage of your heart are due, and that, as a Christian, you are bound to imitate the example and obey the precepts of Christ, and to exercise charity towards all men.

This you solemnly and sincerely profess and believe before God and men, engaging to submit



**JOHN A. FRYE**



to the discipline of this church, and to walk as a peaceable member of the same.

As the appointed organ, I now, in the name of this church, declare you a member in full communion, entitled with us to all its privileges.

With the help of God, we promise, on our part, to aid, watch over, and encourage you in your Christian course ; and to conduct towards you, in all respects, as the Gospel requires.

While we continue members of Christ's Church on earth, may we cherish towards each other the spirit of peace and love ; and may we at last unite with all the ransomed of the Lord, in that purer and holier communion,—the spiritual and eternal Kingdom of God.

At a meeting held Nov. 15, 1899, a new statement of belief and constitution was adopted. One hundred and seventy-eight persons signed their names to this, which stands upon the Church Book as follows :

### **Covenant and Constitution of 1899**

Unitarians accept the religion of Jesus, holding in accordance with his teaching that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man ; and they cordially invite to their working fellowship any who, while differing from them in belief, are in general sympathy with their spirit and practical aims.

ARTICLE I. The legal name of this Unitarian Church shall be the Second Parish of Marlborough.

**ARTICLE II.** Any person may become a member by presenting his or her name to the Fellowship Committee, and signing the Constitution and By-laws. Only those eighteen years of age or older are entitled to vote.

**ARTICLE III.** The purpose of its members and their pledge of loyalty are expressed in the phrase, In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

### **Organizations**

#### **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

It is to be regretted that no history or past records of the Sunday School can be found. Mr. Alger in his Historical Addresses, after referring to this lack of record, states that it was commenced either in 1827 or 1828, and that it "has been continued from that time to the present. Previous to this, it had been customary for the minister from time to time to get the children of his charge together and examine them in the catechism. The establishment of the Sunday School was a great improvement. The Sunday School, though far from being all that it should be, is believed to have been as prosperous and useful as those of any of the neighboring parishes."

This was written in 1859. When Mr. Wiggin was pastor, he and some other members of the parish looked up the records, and decided that

the school was first organized in 1830, on the first Sunday in June. Proceeding on this supposition, the school observed its forty-fifth anniversary on June 5th, 1875.

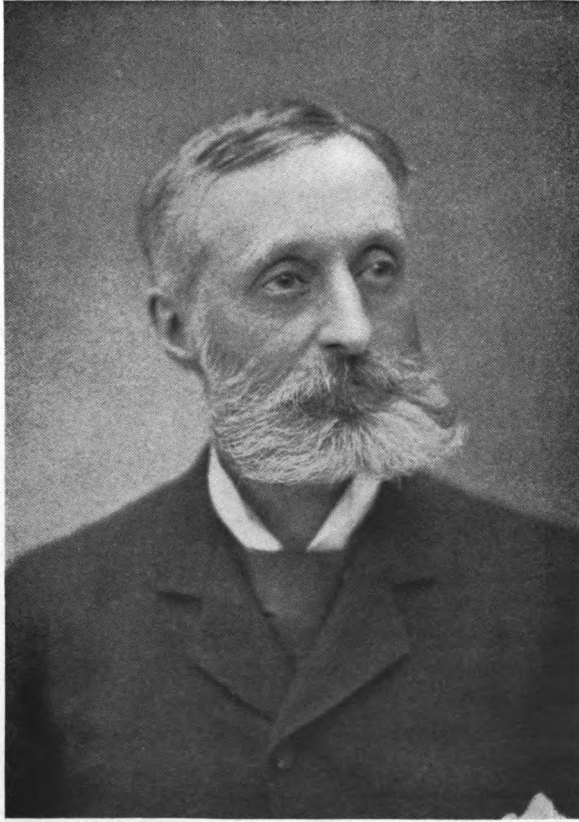
Whichever authority be accepted for the date of the school, very much the same might be said of it today as was said by Mr. Alger in his day. Changes in family life have of late tended to decrease the number of pupils, without bringing, with increased freedom from home cares, any proportionate increase in the number of available workers in the Sunday School. There are at present something over a hundred names upon the roll, and a small band of devoted and self-sacrificing teachers, under the able leadership of Mr. D. Howard Fletcher, himself a former pupil in the school.

### **Ladies' Charitable Society**

On April 13, 1837, in the old red school-house, District No. 2, was organized by a number of ladies of the West Parish of Marlborough "The Ladies' Society for the promotion of charity and mutual improvement." The preamble of the Constitution states that the purpose was to benefit the poor in said parish, and encourage them to attend public worship, and to induce them to join the Sunday School, and also to promote their own social and religious improvement. The membership for ten years did not greatly vary from the original number of fifty-seven ;

but after that time it gradually increased, till it reached its maximum of 140 in 1900. One of the original number, Mrs. Dennis Witherbee, is still living and an honorary member. Mrs. Pitt Brigham, another of the older members, is also an honorary member. The first officers were, Sophronia Morse, 1st Directress ; Harriette Witherbee, 2d Directress ; Harriette N. Baker, Secretary ; and Lavinia Howe, Treasurer. Mrs. Morse served the society as President or Directress for eight years. Miss Baker was Secretary eleven years, three of which she acted as Treasurer also. Her active interest in the society lasted through a long life, and she was made a life member in 1894. The society has had twenty-eight Presidents in its sixty-eight years of existence, sixteen of these, all the earlier ones, being now gone. The oldest in term of service as President now living are Mrs. Joseph Boyd, 1874, Mrs. John A. Frye, 1880, Mrs. Stephen A. Howe, 1882, and Mrs. James M. Ingalls, 1883-1886.

The meetings were first held at the homes of the different members, later in the Vestry of the church, and finally in the Parlor when the last addition was made to the church in 1880. From the first the society has been helpful to the Parish and Sunday School, and has faithfully responded to all calls upon its energies and means. In the early years its work was principally done in aid of needy families in the Parish. The



**STEPHEN A. HOWE**



members sewed for the "Home for Destitute Children" also, and the "Home Mission of Boston." In 1856 much work was done for the Kansas sufferers, and when the Rebellion broke out they began sewing for the soldiers. The first mentioned meeting for this purpose was that of May 2d, 1861, when flannel shirts were made for soldiers, and there was no let up as long as the war lasted. In various ways over \$600 was raised to carry on the work. The books of the society furnish an interesting record of the many articles made and sent to the front.

After the war help was needed at home to assist in making extensive repairs upon the church building, and during two years \$1600 was contributed by the society towards this object, besides the purchasing of new lamps. Help for the sufferers by the Portland fire was also contributed at this time. When the Parsonage was built in 1870, the society materially assisted, and since that time it has largely attended to repairs upon the same. One year it helped the Parish by meeting the expense of the church music. In the years intervening between 1874 and 1880, the society raised nearly the whole amount necessary to purchase a new church organ, with the exception of \$300 given by Mr. John A. Frye. In one year alone, 1874, it got together over \$800 toward this Organ Fund. Every year it has contributed to the Parish Expenses, sometimes giving as much as

\$600, and never less than \$200. It furnished the new Parlor, and held its first meeting there in the fall of 1880. In 1891 it paid for refurnishing the church, buying new carpets and cushions, and putting in electric lights, at an expense of about \$800. A little later it remodelled the old kitchen into a cloak-room and bought new chairs for the Vestry, helped to pay for painting the church, and a little later still bought new hymn books. For many years it has remembered the sick and aged at Christmas time. It has planted trees around the church common, and has always cared for the same. Furnishing flowers for the church on Sundays, and decorating it has been a part of its work. Besides occasionally assisting in fairs for outside objects, such as the G. A. R., the Marlborough Band, and the Michigan sufferers in 1882, it has held many Church Fairs of its own, and a number of Lawn Parties on the church common.

On May 6th, 1897, the 60th Anniversary of the Society was celebrated. All the older members were at this time entertained, including two of the original members, Miss Baker and Mrs. Witherbee. In recognition of the helpful spirit and work of the society, Mr. George N. Cate in 1901 bequeathed it \$1000.

### **Shenstone Society**

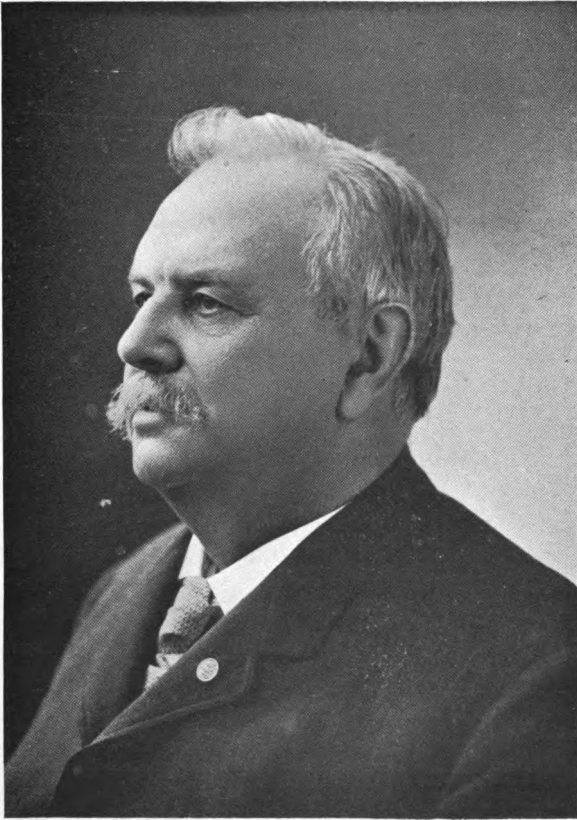
An interesting off-shoot of the work of the Second Parish was the Shenstone Society, which

has now become "but a name," but which was once very active in beautifying the streets of Marlborough with shade trees. In his "Record of Remarkable Events in Marlborough and Vicinity," Cyrus Felton has a note to this effect: "On July 30, 1853, the Shenstone Tree Society was instituted in the West Parish in this town, with the object of adorning the streets with ornamental trees and making sidewalks." In his Farewell Discourse, preached July 17, 1859, Rev. Horatio Alger remarks that the Shenstone Society, which had been started six years previously, "may be considered one of our Parish Institutions, though it includes some who are not members of this society. Having for its objects at once to beautify our village and to improve its members, it is believed to have essentially promoted both those objects and to have been productive of much good. The monthly meetings with their varied entertainments, its autumnal fairs, and its Christmas celebrations with their interchange of gifts and friendly greetings, have been pleasant and profitable occasions. Should it do no more than to take care of the trees they have already planted, future generations will have reason to be grateful for their labors."

The meetings of the Society were held in the church vestry. Thus on December 22, 1853, Mr. Felton records that "The Ladies of the Shenstone Tree Society formed this year, held a Fair

at the Vestry of the West, or Unitarian Church in Marlborough." On August 16, 1860, the first number of the *Shenstone Laurel* appeared, a monthly publication to which the members contributed prose and verse. It is an interesting fact that the *Laurel* was the second local venture in the field of journalism, the first having been the *Marlborough Mirror*, which antedated the *Laurel* by one year, under the editorship of Stillman B. Pratt. In 1859 Mr. Edwin Rice, a member of the parish, having added printing to his stationery business in Forest Hall, entered upon the publication of the *Shenstone Laurel*. Hon. O. W. Albee and Mrs. C. F. Morse presided over it as editors. The sheet was twenty-three inches by sixteen, the subscription price was twenty-five cents per year, and the number of subscribers 150. Mr. Rice has since presented a handsomely bound volume of the paper to the Public Library, where it may still furnish an entertaining hour to the reader. One entry in the Journal of Mr. Felton will serve to show the practical nature of the work of the society. "About May 1, 1854, The Shenstone Tree Society of West Marlborough procured and set beside the streets one hundred rock maples." After twenty years of useful existence the society ceased to be.

Other organizations may have existed in the past, of which now nothing can be recalled. The present minister, on coming to the Church,



**JOHN S. FAY**



found a Unity Club, which continued for a year or two. This was followed by a Society of King's Sons and Daughters, which developed later into a Knights Excelsior Society for boys only. The Young People's Religious Union should be noted also, the West Parish Boys' Club, and the Sunshine Club for Girls, all of which have done good work in their way and time.

### Parish Library

Nothing better marks the spirit of those who founded the Second Parish and have since worked for its welfare than the ample provision made for good reading matter. The present library of between three and four thousand volumes, many of them standard, and some of them rare and valuable books, makes an important adjunct of its work, and one which might be more fully used and appreciated than it is. In a wide acquaintance with our churches, the writer has found only two other Parish Libraries which equal or surpass it. The Library has been fortunate in bequests and in the gifts of friends, among the latter in recent times the late Miss Hannah E. Bigelow and the late Frederick A. Hartshorn. "Early in my ministry," writes Mr. Alger, "steps were taken for the establishment of a Parish Library. The Ladies' Charitable Society had several years before laid the foundation of a small Library for the use of its members, to which small additions were made

every year : but larger provision seemed desirable to supply the wants of the reading community, and in the spring of 1847, a benevolent lady proposed to the Parish to give them the sum of \$500.00 to constitute a Library Fund, the interest of which should be annually expended for the purchase of books, on certain conditions, one of which was that the Parish should raise not less than \$80.00 with which to commence the Library ; another was that 'the right of taking and using the books shall be limited to the members of the Parish.' "

This lady was Mrs. S. R. Phelps. The donation was accepted, money enough was subscribed to purchase 120 volumes, and in May, 1847, the Library was opened for use. In the following January Henry Rice, Esq., of Boston presented 204 volumes, to which number he afterward added sixty-eight more. The Parish voted that the Library should be called "The Parish Library," founded by Mrs. S. R. Phelps. In 1849 a catalogue was printed containing 395 titles. A supplement three years later brought the number up to 625.

In May, 1873, the Ladies' Benevolent Society offered its Library to the Sunday School. This led to the Pastor's proposing that the Ministerial Library should be joined with the Sunday School's, Ladies' Society's and Parish libraries, to form one Library, with one catalogue and one care-taker. This Ministerial Library had sprung

from a donation of \$75.00, made in 1848 by Mrs. S. R. Phelps, for the purchase of professional books for the use of the minister of the Parish and his successors in office. This suggestion was carried out, a new catalogue was prepared, an Indicator was made in Boston, a modern system of card distribution inaugurated. In 1885 the number of books had grown to nearly 3000, and a new catalogue was then printed which is still in use. A later catalogue has recently been made by Mr. J. V. Jackman, for many years the efficient Librarian, but it has not been printed. Many of the old books have become worn and their place has been supplied by new ones. A good Reference and Working Library for Sunday School teachers has lately been added, and a bookcase of theological works has been placed in the minister's room at the left of the pulpit.

### **Burial of the Dead**

In the Brigham Cemetery is a stone, set into the wall, which bears the following inscription :

“This land was given to the Unitarian Society in 1808. By Ephraim Brigham, Esq. In 1882 a fund of \$1000 was established by Mrs. Abbie A. Bigelow of Worcester and others, to be known as the Gibbon Fund, to be held in Trust by said Society, and the income of which is to be devoted to its care and embellishment for future generations. Let actions in keeping with the place be always observed by those who frequent its grounds.”

Mr. Hudson, in his History of Marlborough, complains of the absence of trees and shrubbery, although he allows that the location of Brigham Cemetery is naturally pleasant. The intervening half century has supplied the lack which he deplores, and the place is now as shady as it is quiet and peaceful. The history of this plot of ground is interesting. It was originally an outlying part of Mr. Brigham's farm on Clover Hill. His parents had died of small pox, and were according to the custom of that time debarred from burial in the cemetery in consequence. After the epidemic was over, he gave the field in which their bodies had been laid for a burial ground, in his own words, "being moved thereunto by respect for the remains of my honored and beloved parents which were deposited there because infected with small pox."

The gift was made on the 13th of June, 1808, and as a further motive is indicated in the deed the natural situation of the land, and especially its relative nearness to the West meeting-house. It is therein described as consisting of an acre of ground. The Parish accepted the gift with thanks, and chose a committee, "to take care of the said burying ground, to fence the same, and to make such arrangements respecting the said ground as they may deem necessary."

### Bells

In the Historical Discourses, preached just previous to his departure, Rev. Horatio Alger

states that the first bell of the church was made by Mr. George Holbrook of Medway. The agreement had been for a bell which would weigh about a thousand pounds. He brought with it a certificate that it weighed 1288 pounds, and it was raised and hung on the 30th of May, 1808. A suspicion having arisen as to the correctness of the certification, the Parish took measures to have it weighed and found that it fell short 150 pounds. Deducting the amount refunded on account of this deficiency, the whole expense of the bell was \$510.24. When in 1839 the alterations were made in the church, the bell was found to be somewhat damaged, and a new and somewhat heavier one was substituted by exchange. The balance was defrayed partly by subscription.

### Notes

Some notes from Rev. Mr. Alger's Historical Discourses may prove interesting. "In June, 1832, Greenwood's Collection of Hymns was introduced into use in place of Belknap's which had been previously used."

"In March, 1833, it was voted to appropriate \$70 to provide stoves for the meeting-house. Previous to that the house had never been warmed for public worship."

March 16, 1824, it was voted in Annual Parish Meeting "that there should be but one religious service on the Sabbath in the three months of

the following winter." Mr. Alger adds that "it is believed that this arrangement was not carried into effect." This was undoubtedly the beginning of the modern movement, now so almost universal, in favor of one Sunday service.

In the spring of 1853 an organ was introduced, a smaller organ and a seraphine having been used on trial during the year previous. This instrument was built by Mr. Holbrook of Medway, the expense being met by subscription. It was first used in worship on Fast Day in April, 1853.

### **Parish Expenses**

Up to 1875 the Parish raised its funds by taxation, but at that date the pew-owners donated their pews to the society, and adopted the system of free seats which has ever since prevailed. A poll tax is levied on voting members, but otherwise the expenses are met by voluntary contributions.

### **Trust Funds**

The Second Parish has always been generously remembered by its friends, who have in many instances kept up a living connection with its work after their decease by liberal bequests in their wills. The society holds the following funds in trust :

Communion Fund, originally \$250 ; now \$300. Paid to Collector.

Priest Fund, originally \$50 ; now \$100. Paid to Collector.



REV. EDWARD F. HAYWARD



George N. Cate Fund \$2000. \$1000 to Ladies' Society ;  
\$1000 paid to Collector.

Mary A. Winchester Fund \$3000. Paid to Collector.

Mary E. Howe Fund \$5000. Paid to Sunday School.

Cyrus Felton Fund \$100. Paid to Library.

Elizabeth Phelps Fund \$780. Paid to Library.

Francis Bigelow Fund \$100. Paid to Library.

Bent Lecture Fund \$100. Paid to Collector.

Gibbon (Brigham Cemetery) Fund \$2000. Paid to  
Trustees.

### **Bent Lecture Fund**

Among Cyrus Felton's Notes we find the following record :

"May 26, 1817, Jabez Bent died, aged 60. The Founder of the Bent Lecture. The funeral the 28th, old election day. His donation 100 dollars." The event is thus referred to by Rev. Mr. Alger : "In 1817, a bequest was received by the Parish from Jabez Bent, who died on the 26th of May in that year, consisting of a pew in the Meeting house and a Promissory note of \$100 to constitute a fund, the income of which should pay for an Annual Lecture to the young. Out of respect to his memory, and gratitude for his generosity, the Trustees of the Ministerial Fund and the youth of the Parish attended his funeral and walked in procession to his grave. To perpetuate the memory of his gift, the Trustees voted that this Annual Lecture should be called the 'Bent Lecture.' 43 Bent Lectures have been delivered : the first by Mr. Packard

on the 11th of June, 1817; the last I delivered on the 11th of June of the present year."

Since the time of this writing the custom of this delivering a Lecture to the Young People, entitled the Bent Lecture, has been kept up year by year with unfailing regularity.

### **Gates Fund**

Another bequest recorded by Mr. Felton is the following:

"July 22, 1829, Lt. Col. Abraham Gates died, aged 45. Gave \$1000 to the Academy in Marlborough. Also \$1000 to the West Marlborough Church, the income to support singing and music."

### **Life's Business**

Members of the West Parish have ever been prominently identified with the best interests of Marlborough, active in its business, and foremost in its philanthropies. Many of the families connected with it today are in direct descent from the founders; while others, equally earnest and devoted, have become residents of the city in recent years. But all alike, as the foregoing story tells, have put their service and sacrifice into the religious cause for which the parish stands. In many crises and emergencies they have borne the burden and heat of the day. From the standpoint of a hundred years of recorded achievement, they can see what has already been done, and go on to accomplish better

things in the future. Of one thing they can be sure, the world is better for their labors.

In the War of the Rebellion the Parish sent a full quota of its sons to the front. The Otis Russell family alone had five sons serving in the army of the North, of whom two never came back alive.

The names of S. Herbert Howe and John A. Frye have long been associated with local manufactures, as were those of Joseph Boyd and Henry O. Russell before them. The various members of the old mercantile house of Morse and Bigelow for four generations have been connected with the parish. Among the lawyers who have gone out from it have been F. A. Packard and E. M. Bigelow; of physicians, it has had Doctors John Baker, Edward F. Barnes, John W. Stimson, Nathan S. Chamberlain, Edward H. Ellis, Ralph E. Stevens, and Henry M. Swift.

Three of the ministers of the church have given sons to the Unitarian ministry. The Rev. Horatio Alger, Jr., soon left the pulpit to devote himself to writing stories for boys. Rev. Frederick R. Griffin is now settled in Braintree, Mass., and Rev. Laurence Hayward at Newburyport, Mass. Mr. Frank D. Witherbee, who is now engaged in sociological and philanthropic work, is a graduate of Meadville Theological School, and is frequently heard in Unitarian pulpits as a temporary supply. The Rev. Daniel

Waldo Stevens spent his life in the Unitarian ministry, being located for many years at Vineyard Haven, Mass., where he died at an advanced age in 1891.

Formerly the members of the parish were largely engaged in farming, but of late years they have been doing their part as manufacturers, merchants, bankers and industrial workers. One of its members, Mr. John S. Fay, has the honor of being the oldest Postmaster in length of service in the United States, he having received appointment by President Andrew Johnson in 1865, and by every occupant of the White House since.

In works of philanthropy and public utility the city will long have reason to remember the names of S. Herbert Howe, John A. Frye, Edward L. Bigelow, Mrs. Hannah C. Swift, Miss Hannah E. Bigelow, and others who in less conspicuous ways have ministered to its welfare.

Whene'er a noble deed is wrought,  
Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,  
Our hearts in glad surprise  
To higher levels rise.

Honor to those whose words and deeds  
Thus help us in our daily needs,  
And by their overflow  
Raise us from what is low !

— *Longfellow.*





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HAYWARD, Edward Farwell

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