

**HISTORY OF THE FIRST
CHURCH IN
CROMWELL, 1715-1915**

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History of the First church in Cromwell, 1715-1915 by Homer Wesley Hildreth

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HOMER WESLEY HILDRETH

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HISTORY
OF THE
FIRST CHURCH IN CROMWELL
1715 -- 1915



EDITED BY
THE REV. HOMER WESLEY HILDRETH
MINISTER

A FOREWORD

Two centuries of life and labor for the Christ and His Church is the record here chronicled and consummated.

The place of this record is the First Congregational Church of Cromwell, Conn. The date, May 23d and 24th, 1915.

The duty and the privilege of preparing this History of the First Church in Cromwell came to the writer as an heritage due to the fact that his was the pastorate during the commemorative year of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of this Church's life.

The documentary records of both Church and Society have been faithfully and fully kept. Their story has been substantiated and amplified from the collateral of Town and Colonial records.

Acknowledgements for kindly and considerate assistance in the editing of this book are due to many, but especially to my colleagues on the Program Committee, Mrs. Harvey Jewell and Dr. Charles A. McKendree; also to Rev. Dr. A. W. Hazen, Pastor of North Church, Middletown, Conn., Rev. Dr. Samuel Hart, President Connecticut Historical Society and the Data Committee for the Bi-Centennial, is the writer indebted for frequent and valuable help.

Conscious of the venerable past of this Church's life and devoutly thankful for the vaster vision and the larger task that awaits us, "let us lay aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset us and looking unto Jesus the Author and Perfector of our Faith, let us press on toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord." — For

"The Ages come and go,
The Centuries pass as years.
And Him evermore I behold
Walking in Galilee.
* * * * *

He toucheth the sightless eyes;
Before Him the demons flee;
To the dead He sayeth: Arise!
To the living: Follow me!
And that voice still soundeth on
From the Centuries that are gone,
To the Centuries that shall be!"

Dedicated

to the

Members of the First Church in Cromwell, Conn.
To both those who are now fellow workers together
with us in His Vineyard here, and to those who have
gone afar to live and labor in His Name, and also
to the memory of all those who were once of this
fold but have now entered into the eternal inherit-
ance which is prepared for all who loved the Lord
Jesus and have labored acceptably for Him—

As a Tribute of Love and Honor

For the Living and the Dead.

By This Church's
Fifteenth Minister.

HISTORY OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN CROMWELL, CONN.

1715

1915

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF CROMWELL, CONNECTICUT
cordially invites you
to be present at the Celebration of
THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CHURCH
MAY TWENTY-THIRD AND TWENTY-FOURTH
Nineteen Hundred and Fifteen

Responding to this invitation, both the Church and the community made these days of Fellowship and Commemoration of lasting remembrance. These were days to restore the old ways, to revive the inner life, and to rejoice over the better days to be.

The celebration of the Bi-Centennial extended over two days, commencing Sunday morning, the twenty-third of May. That day was known as Fellowship Day and opened with an organ prelude entitled, *Andante Cantabile* from Fourth Organ Symphony, by Charles Marie Widor. Invocation by the Pastor. An anthem, "Return, O Wanderer to Thy Throne" was sung by the choir.

Then the pastor and the people dedicated the Memorial Pulpit to the first four pastors of the Church in these words:

To the holy keeping of the Sabbath of the Lord, our God.

We Dedicate this Pulpit.

To the many pleadings and warnings; the gracious promises and spirit-illuminated truths, uttered by the Prophets of God.

We Dedicate this Pulpit.

To the ever-living; ever-comforting; ever-saving words of the Son of God.

We Dedicate this Pulpit.

To the outbreathing of every prayer bringing mankind unto the Secret Place of the Most High.

We Dedicate this Pulpit.

To all hymns of our most holy faith, arising from the strife and triumph of the Saints, the Martyrs and the Fathers.

We Dedicate this Pulpit.

To all the messages of Hope, leading the weary to Rest, the sorrowing to Peace, the sinner to Repentance, and the faithful to the Joys of that City whose Builder and Maker is God.

We Dedicate this Pulpit.

To the manifold witness of the Holy Spirit; the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the world-wide coming of the glorious Kingdom of our God.

We Dedicate this Pulpit.

The congregation united in singing "Come Thou Almighty King," and the offertory was a contralto solo by Miss Ruth Austin of Cromwell. The morning lesson and sermon was by the Rev. Henry G. Marshall of Milford, one of the former pastors of this Church. With a fine sense of fitness Mr. Marshall selected for his theme, "A Glimpse of a Small Portion of the Kingdom." His text was —

One calleth unto me out of Sier, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night. If ye will inquire, inquire ye: turn ye, Come. — ISAIAH XXI, 11, 12.

This is an entire prophecy, one of the briefest in the Bible, a question repeated, no doubt, for emphasis. Coming from the Sier, the capital of Edom, the ancient and inveterate enemy of Israel, he puts the reiterated question to this watchman who, stationed upon the walls of Zion, is looking out for all the interests of the Holy City. If we note the *time* of this question we find it may be when Zion is in captivity, a time of deep distress in the nation, therefore, judging from both the *source* and the *time* of the question we see that it is less an inquiry for information than a *taunting* question, as if this hostile questioner was saying, "your prospects are not brilliant. What of the *night*? What has it brought? What is it bringing you? Is it deliverance and safety or deeper gloom? As men of the world are now tauntingly saying in the midst of the present terrible world-wide war, where is your Christianity? What of the dark night of Paganism into which we seem to be plunging. What have you to say who have been set to watch? The prophet answers, The morning cometh and also the night. It may be but a