

The first clergyman who officiated in this building was the Rev. John Beardley, of Stratford, Connecticut, who came to St. John as Chaplain of Colonel Beverley Robinson's Regiment. He removed to Maugerville in 1784, when St. John was left without a clergyman and the church folk had to suffer the loss of the ministrations of religion. Services seem to have been occasionally taken by the Hon. and Rev. Jonathan Odell, but no regular services were maintained until the arrival of the Rev. Samuel Cooke, D. D., on Sept. 2nd, 1785. His first work was to make the place of worship more suitable and capable of larger accommodation. A "Vestry," was called and £90 were raised from the principal inhabitants, by which the house was ceiled, and a gallery erected on three sides of the building. During the first four months of his stay in St. John, Dr. Cooke baptized 26 white persons, and 6 colored, buried 4 persons and married 10 couples. On New Year's Day, 1786, the Holy Communion was administered to 28 communicants. Few women, we find it stated, attended the service held on that day, on account of the cold, and that the clergyman, going warmly clothed, stood it tolerably well.

On Easter Day, 1786, there were 38 communicants, and on Whit-Sunday, 46. In addition to his regular pastoral duties in St. John, Dr. Cooke visited Campobello, St. Andrews and Digdeguash. St. Andrews then consisted of 200 houses, where, owing to the want of a clergyman, there were 60 children unbaptized, which, it is worthy of remark, gave their parents *great uneasiness*. Dr. Cooke did not remain long in St. John, for owing, it seems, to the seat of government being transferred to Fredericton, he removed there in August, 1786. On leaving St. John he wrote that he was "happy in the reflection that his unremitting endeavours to establish the Church in St. John had been so far effectual, that he left his successor in possession of a decent, well furnished church, with a very respectable and well behaved congregation." He was immediately succeeded by the Rev. George Bisset, from Trinity Church, Newport, Rhode Island, who came to St. John July 25th, 1786, and was the first Rector of the Parish. His first care was to provide more accommodation for the congregation which had outgrown the building then in use. For that purpose he visited England, and with the money there obtained and other efforts that were made,

steps were taken for the erection of  
"OLD TRINITY" CHURCH.

Mr. Bisset was not, however, allowed to see his labors completed, for he died on March 3rd, 1788, after a ministry of less than two years. His loss was keenly felt by the congregation, for on his death they wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, that, "with the keenest sensations of heart-felt grief they undertake the melancholy office of announcing the death of their late Rector, the beloved Mr. Bisset, and they are persuaded that no church or community ever suffered a severer misfortune in the death of an individual than they experience from the loss of that eminent servant of Christ, this best and most amiable of men."

After an interval of more than a year the Rev. Mather Byles, D.D., was appointed to the vacant rectorship on the nomination of the Bishop of Nova Scotia. He was born at Boston and graduated at Harvard in 1751. For many years he was a Congregational minister in New London, Connecticut, but afterwards was admitted into Holy Orders, and was appointed to the Rectorship of Christ Church, Boston, in 1768. On the evacuation of Boston by the British troops, in 1776, he removed to Halifax, where he was the Garrison Chaplain until he came to St. John, as its second Rector, on May 4th, 1789. In the interval that had elapsed since the death of Mr. Bisset, the work of church building had been pushed forward. In June, 1788, two lots on Germain street were granted by General Coffin and Mr. Cochrane, and two lots on Studholm, now Charlotte street, were granted by Thomas Whitlock, Esq., a merchant, and for many years a Vestryman and Churchwarden, as a site for the church. The corner stone was laid by the Right Rev. Chas. Inglis, D.D., the first Bishop of British North America, and the first Colonial Bishop of the Church of England, on Wednesday, August 20th, 1788, followed by a charge to his clergy, and the ministration of the Rite of Confirmation. The builders of the church were Messrs. Bean and Dowling; the former was afterwards a member of the vestry. It was built of wood and consisted of only a nave and two side aisles. As such it could not have presented much beauty; its want in that respect may have been owing more to the prudent economy of the congregation who were not disposed, as too many are now, to incur heavy church debts for their