

ECCLESIASTICAL STATISTICS.*

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Of Fall River was organized in 1781. The names of pastors who have officiated since 1840, are as follows:—Rev. Asa Bronson until 1846. Rev. Velona R. Hotchkiss, D. D., from 1846 to 1850. Rev. A. P. Mason, D. D., from 1850 to 1853. Rev. J. R. Scott from 1853 to 1854; and Rev. P. B. Haughwout, the present pastor, since 1855. The number of communicants connected with the Church in 1861, was 323. Number of pupils connected with Sabbath School, 275; average attendance of pupils, 176.

In this connection, mention should be made of the second pastor of the Church, Rev. Job Borden. One of his successors has furnished the following sketch:

REV. JOB BORDEN.

Among that noble band of Baptist ministers, hard-handed and stout-hearted, to whom the cause of evangelical religion, and in particular, the Baptist representation of that cause, in this part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, are so largely indebted, the venerable Job Borden holds an honorable and eminent place.

He was a man of vigorous intellect; unusually clear in his perceptions, and firm in his convictions; yet void of narrow-mindedness, and possessed of a generous and catholic spirit; a man worthy to be classed with those whose earnest faith and self-denying labors have won, from the gratitude and affection of the church, the title of "Fathers in Israel."

In his early manhood, and before he assumed the office of a christian minister, he was afflicted with the total loss of his eye-sight. And thenceforward, through his long and unusually active life, in all that he accomplished, his efforts were subject to the painful drawback and hindrance of this grievous calamity. Deprived of those advan-

*For statistics previous to 1840, see pp. 45-56.

tages which our schools and colleges confer ; shut out, by his blindness, from the ordinary sources of knowledge, save as they were opened to him by the kindness of those around him ; compelled by his circumstances to depend mainly upon the labor of his own hands for the support of his family ; required, by the exigencies of the time, and the feeble and widely scattered membership of the church, to travel from place to place, and visit from house to house, preaching at all seasons and as opportunities arose ; it is surprising to us that he contrived, in the face of so many obstacles, and under such discouraging embarrassments, to acquire a knowledge of the Scriptures, and a readiness and expertness in the use of it, which were deemed remarkable by his cotemporaries, and which, together with the natural force and quickness of his mind, called forth the homely but honest encomium of the historian Bacchus :—" He is blind, indeed, as to natural sight, but he hath such spiritual light as to be esteemed a clear preacher of the gospel."

There are some among us who still recall the figure of this devoted and laborious servant of Christ, as he went about in his later years, riding upon his old white horse, which, like John Wesley's famous itinerant, had learned to travel, with unerring sagacity, all the rounds of his master.

Father Borden was the first pastor of the Baptist church in Free-town, and continued in that office for forty-two years. And although his decaying strength, and the weight of his many years, made it necessary that the church should summon the aid of other and younger pastors, yet nothing was done to break or impair his tenure of office ; and he remained as a Pastor Emeritus, and prolonged the labors of his earlier years until God called him to his reward. He was twice married, and his widow, who was a school-teacher at the time of her marriage, and who seems to have devoted herself to her husband, and labored to compensate for his great misfortune, in an unusual degree, is still living, in a green old age, among the children of those who listened with her to the sound doctrine and persuasive counsel of her husband.*

*A very good portrait of Father Borden, the generous gift of his widow, hangs upon the walls of the Committee-room, in the First Baptist Church. The remains of father Borden, with those of his first wife, repose in a small grave-yard near the "Narrows," on the site of the first house of worship erected by the church.

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Was organized January 9, 1816. The names of those who have been pastors subsequent to 1840, are, Rev. Orin Fowler, dismissed in May, 1850. Rev. Benjamin Relyea, installed in May, 1850, dismissed in April, 1856. Rev. J. Lewis Diman, ordained in December, 1856, dismissed in February, 1860. Rev. Solomon P. Fay, the present pastor, installed in May, 1861. The membership of the church in 1861, was 204. Number of pupils connected with the Sabbath School, 250. Average attendance of pupils, 150.

A SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Was organized about the year 1817. In 1844, a division took place among the members. A part removed to their meeting house on Franklin street, and the others continued to worship in their building on Main street. The former have no regularly appointed minister. In 1861, they numbered 70 members. The Society which worships on Main street, had in 1861, 115 members. The number of scholars connected with their Sabbath School is 45; average attendance, 32.

THE FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Was organized in June, 1827. The names of pastors who have officiated since 1840 are given, with date of their ordination:— 1840, Rev. Isaac Bonney; 1842, Rev. Thomas Ely; 1844, Rev. George F. Pool; 1845, Rev. James D. Butler; 1847, Rev. David Patten; 1849, Rev. Daniel Wise; 1851, Rev. Frederic Upham; 1853, Rev. Elisha B. Bradford; 1855, Rev. John Howson; 1857, Rev. Thomas Ely; 1859, Rev. Andrew McKeown; 1861, Rev. Chas. H. Payne, the present pastor. The membership of the church in 1861, was 252. Number of pupils connected with Sabbath School, 450; average attendance, 280.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Was organized in the year 1829. The names of pastors who have been installed since 1840, are: Rev. P. R. Russell, installed January, 1841. Rev. A. M. Averill, March, 1843. Rev. Elijah Shaw, March, 1845. Rev. Charles Morgridge, April, 1847. Rev. Stephen

Fellows, June, 1848. Rev. David E. Millard supplied the pulpit six months. Rev. B. S. Fanton, January, 1853. Rev. Warren Hathaway, installed March, 1855; dismissed October, 1860. There has been no settled pastor since 1860. The membership of the Church in 1861, was 280. Increase of membership since 1840, 259. Number of scholars connected with Sabbath School, 215; average attendance, 151.

THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH

Was organized in 1832. The names of pastors who have been ordained since 1840, are: Rev. John F. W. Ware, ordained in May, 1843. Rev. Samuel Longfellow, in February, 1848. Rev. Josiah K. Waite, in September, 1852. Rev. W. B. Smith, the present pastor, January, 1860. The number of communicants connected with the Church in 1861, was 50. The number of families connected with the Society is 126. Number of pupils connected with Sabbath School is 173; average attendance, 110. In 1860, the church located on Second street was taken down, and a portion of the old materials used in the erection of the present house of worship, on North Main street.

THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

Was organized in 1836. The Rev. George M. Randall entered upon his duties as pastor, July, 1838, but was not installed rector until 1840. The Rev. Amos D. McCoy succeeded him in 1845, and remained a little over two years. In 1849, the present incumbent, Rev. E. M. Porter, entered upon his duties as rector. The number of communicants connected with the Church in 1861, was 112. Number of Scholars connected with Sabbath School, about 300; average attendance, 208.

In 1850, the Society suffered a severe loss in the destruction of its church edifice by fire; but after more than a year of exertions on the part of the parish, and with assistance from abroad, they were enabled to erect the small but tasteful structure in which they now worship.

SAINT MARY'S CHURCH,

(Roman Catholic,)

Was established in 1836. The first name was St. John Baptist, which was changed upon the occupation of their new cathedral in

1855. The corner stone of this cathedral was laid by the Right Rev. Fitzpatric, Bishop of Boston, August 8, 1852. The dimensions of the structure are 67 feet by 150. It is built in the Gothic style, and of uncut granite. The first pastor of the church was Rev. John Corry ; second pastor, Rev. Richard Hardy ; third pastor, the present incumbent, Rev. E. Murphy, appointed April, 1840.

THE CENTRAL CHURCH,
(*Congregational*.)

Was organized November 16, 1843. Rev. Samuel Washburn, the first pastor, was installed April 24, 1844, and dismissed January 2, 1849. Rev. Eli Thurston, the present pastor, was installed March 21, 1849. The whole number received into the church since its organization is 396, of whom 195 were received upon profession. There have been dismissed to other churches 96, 52 have died, a number have been excommunicated, leaving 232 as the present membership. The number of scholars in the Sabbath School is 260. Average attendance 173.

THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH,

Worshipping in the Baptist Temple on South Main street, was organized in June, 1846 by 157 persons, mostly from the First Baptist Church in this city. Rev. Asa Bronson was the first pastor, and remained in this office until October, 1857.

Revivals of religion have signally marked the history of this church. The aggregate increase during the fifteen years of its history has been 433, of which about 300 have been by baptism. The decrease in the same period has been 281. The present number is 309. The Sabbath School numbers 350, with an average attendance, the past year, of 245.

Rev. Charles Snow, the present pastor of this church, was ordained and installed July 7, 1858.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Was organized in 1846. The number of members at that time was 22. For five years after the organization there was no stated pastor, and only occasional religious service. The first pastor, Rev. David A. Wallace, was installed June, 1851 ; the second, and present pastor, Rev. William Maclaren, in November, 1854.

According to the last annual report, dated May, 1861, the number of church members was 140, and the number of families, 110. The whole congregation numbers about 400. The number of scholars connected with the Sabbath School is 150.

The place of worship on Pearl street was purchased by the Society in 1849. Aided efficiently by the influence and efforts of their present pastor, they completed the payment of the church debt in June, 1861, and they now own their commodious and substantial church edifice and the ground connected with it, free of all incumbrance.

ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Was organized April 20, 1851. The names of its pastors since that time, with date of their installation, are:—1851, Rev. Daniel Wise; 1853, Rev. John Hobart; 1855, Rev. M. J. Talbot; 1857, Rev. Samuel C. Brown; 1859, Rev. J. B. Gould; 1861, Rev. J. A. M. Chapman, the present pastor. The membership of the church in 1861 was 220, being an increase since 1851 of 120. Number of scholars connected with the Sabbath School, 270; average attendance, 225.

CHRIST'S CHURCH,

At Globe Village, was organized in 1849, and its house of worship dedicated in 1850. There were no pastors installed. Rev. S. S. Ashly, Rev. Mr. Harmon and Rev. Mr. Cummins, supplying the pulpit until 1854, when the church was disbanded, and their house purchased by the Rev. David Patten, for the use of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Was organized in the autumn of 1854. The names of pastors who have been connected with it since that time, are, Rev. A. H. Worthing; Rev. C. A. Merrill; Rev. A. U. Swinerton; Rev. Elihu Grant, the present pastor. The membership of the church in 1861 was 34. Average attendance at the Sabbath School, 150.

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

Was organized in November, 1854, by the Rev. Thomas Worcester, of Boston. It then consisted of seven members. The present num-

ber is thirteen. It has no pastor, but its services are conducted by a leader, who is annually elected by the Society. It has ministerial services four times a year, usually, and sometimes oftener.

The average attendance at its meetings is between 30 and 40 persons. The average attendance at the Sabbath School is 26. The meetings are held in the room formerly occupied by the Young Men's Christian Association on Main street.

Mr. John Westall has been the leader and conductor of the services in this church, from its organization to the present time.

According to these statistics the total number of communicants connected with the various churches is 2,341, and the total number of pupils in Sabbath Schools, 2,918.

MISSION SCHOOLS.

In 1816 our town was a vineyard of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Society, into which she sent laborers, to toil and sow the seed of christian doctrine and teaching. The seed soon sprung up, and under the culture of the vine-dressers, the dews of the spirit, and the showers of grace, became a strong and spreading vine, shedding the sweet fragrance of christianity here and there, and gladdening the hearts of the laborers with large clusters of heavenly fruit.

Many churches were subsequently established here, strong in the faith of the Lord Jesus, which, in their turn, send forth men and money for the culture of other vineyards.

From time to time branches of domestic missionary effort have been shooting out from this vine. Perhaps the one most worthy of notice was that which appeared in the spring of 1853, called, "The Fall River Domestic Missionary Society." This Society had for its object "the diffusion of religious knowledge among the destitute in Fall River and vicinity, by the employment of one or more missionaries to labor from house to house, and by the distribution of Bibles, Tracts, and religious books." It chose for its missionary Mr. Thomas

Boardman, who labored under its patronage with devotion and acceptance, about four years and a half.

This effort in the form of a Society continued five years. Richard Borden, Benjamin Earl, Elihu Grant, and Jeremiah Young, acted successively as Presidents.

A Ladies' Society was formed, auxiliary to this, in the summer of 1853, for the purpose of supplying clothing for Sabbath School children. It continued in existence nearly six years, and gave out hundreds of garments to destitute children. Under the auspices of these societies, and the labors of the missionary, three Sabbath Schools were sustained. One which had been commenced in the summer of 1851, by two or three ladies in a private room, and afterwards transferred to the vestry of the Central Church, was organized as a Union School. Two others were commenced—one in the south-west part of the town, and one at New Boston. These schools continued their operations after the societies were dissolved.

In connection with the first mentioned school a Sabbath School Society was organized May 28th, 1854, called, "The Fall River Mission Sabbath School Society," which controls its affairs. At a meeting held May 28, 1860, a committee was appointed to relieve the school from embarrassment in regard to a place for holding its sessions, and authorized to provide a place free of expense to the Society.

Through the benevolent assistance of the friends of the school, they offered to the Society the use of the chapel on Pleasant street, which they entered February, 1861.

In June, 1859, the First Baptist Church assumed the care of the school in the south-west part of the city, and a chapel was built on Spring street, for its use, which they entered in June, 1861. At the present time, 1862, there are connected with the several schools as follows :

Fall River Mission Sabbath School, Pleasant street Chapel ;	
Superintendents and teachers, 41 ; scholars, 438.	
First Baptist Mission Sabbath School, Spring street Chapel ;	
Superintendents and teachers, 22 ; scholars, 167.	
New Boston Mission Sabbath School ;	
Superintendents and teachers, 12 ; scholars, 90.	
Three other Mission Schools sustained in suburbs of the city ;	
Superintendents and teachers, 20 ; scholars, 150.	
Total—Superintendents and teachers, 95 ; scholars 845.	