

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

It is intended in this chapter to embody a succinct account of the rise, progress and state of each religious society in Providence, at the adoption of the city charter. To obtain the facts necessary for this purpose, the author addressed a circular to the pastors of the various churches, craving their aid and assistance in the matter. In most instances, the answers received have supplied the desired information, and in some, almost the very language of the answers is preserved. Where none were received, recourse was had to printed histories, where such existed, and to oral communications with the clergymen, officers and old members of the societies. I have designed to arrange the sketches in chronological order, dating each society at the time it first met as a distinct church.

There can be little doubt, as to what were the religious tenets of the first settlers of Providence. At the time of their removal here, they were members of Plymouth and Massachusetts churches. Those churches, as it respects government, were Independent or Congregational, in doctrine, moderately Calvinistic and with regard to ceremonies, Pedobap-

tists. The settlers of Providence, did not cease to be members of those churches, by their removal, nor did the fact of their being members, constitute them a church, after it. They could not form themselves into a church of the faith and order of the Plymouth and Massachusetts churches, until dismissed from them ; and after such dismissal, some covenant or agreement among themselves was necessary in order to effect it. That they met for public worship is beyond a doubt ; but such meetings, though frequent and regular, would not make them a church. Among the first thirteen, were two ordained ministers, Roger Williams and Thomas James. That they preached to the settlers is quite probable, but there is no evidence of any intent to form a church, previous to March 1639. When they did attempt it, they had ceased to be Pedobaptists, for Ezekiel Holyman, a layman, had baptized Roger Williams, by immersion, and Mr. Williams afterwards, had baptized Mr. Holyman and several others of the company, in the same manner. By this act they disowned the churches of which they had been members, and for this, they were soon excommunicated, by those churches. After being thus baptized, they formed a church and called Mr. Williams to be their pastor. This was the first church gathered in Providence. It has continued to the present day, and is now known as

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

Copious extracts from the early records of this church, are to be found, in the first volume of Benedict's History of the Baptists. Previous to 1775, the records were very irregular and scanty. Mr. Stan-

ford, who was then preaching for this church, spent much time and labor in reducing them to their present order. He derived much assistance from the collections that had been made a few years previous, by Morgan Edwards of Philadelphia, for a History of the Baptists in America. One volume of Mr. Edwards' collection, is now in the possession of the R. I. Historical Society. The following particulars in relation to the succession of pastors, up to the decease of Dr. Gano, is derived from Mr. Benedict's History.

Mr. Williams held the pastoral office about four years, and then resigned the same. Mr. Holyman was his colleague. His successors were Chad Brown and William Wickenden, the first ordained in 1642 and the other, by Mr. Brown.

Gregory Dexter succeeded Mr. Wickenden.— He had been a preacher of the Baptist denomination before he came to New-England. Thomas Olney, who succeeded Mr. Dexter, is said to have been born in Hertford, England, about 1631, and to have arrived in Providence in 1654. He withdrew and formed a separate church, which continued but a short time. The ground of difference was, the necessity of the laying on of hands. His successor, Pardon Tillinghast, came to Providence, in 1645. Ebenezer Jenckes succeeded him. He was born in 1669, was ordained in 1719, and died, pastor, in 1726. James Brown, grandson of Chad Brown, born in 1666, was next ordained, and continued pastor till his death, in 1732. Samuel Windsor succeeded Mr. Brown.

He was born in 1677, ordained in 1733, and remained in office till his death, in 1758. Thomas Burlingham was colleague pastor with Mr. Windsor, and was ordained at the same time with him. He left his charge some time before his death, which was in 1740, to preach to a new church in Cranston. Samuel Windsor, son of the preceding Samuel, was next in office. He was born November 1, 1722, and ordained June 21, 1759. About the year 1770, he made repeated complaints to the church, that his duties were too arduous for him to perform, and requested them to give him an assistant. The church acceded to his request, and John Sutton was invited to preach as his assistant, which he did for six months. After he left, James Manning, President of Rhode-Island College, removed to Providence with that institution. He was requested, soon after his removal, to preach to this society, after which, the pastor invited him to partake of the communion with the church. His acceptance of this invitation gave offence to some of the church members. Several church meetings were subsequently holden, at which President Manning's privilege of communion was repeatedly confirmed, Mr. Windsor then exerting himself against it. The reason assigned for this opposition was, that the president did not hold imposition of hands to be a pre-requisite to communion, although he himself had submitted to it, and administered it to such as desired it. Some attributed the change in Elder Windsor's views, to the president's "holding to singing in public worship, which was very disgustful to Mr. Windsor." In

April 1771, Mr. Windsor presented to the church a writing, signed by a number of the members, stating that they were in conscience bound to withdraw from such as did not "hold strictly to the six principles of the doctrine of Christ, as laid down in Hebrews vi. 1, 2." In May following, he also withdrew and joined the Separates. After advising with some other Baptist churches, this church, in July 1771, chose President Manning for their pastor. He accepted the office, and held it until near his death, in 1791. The general meeting, or Association of the Baptists, in September 1771, recognized the church under Mr. Manning, as the old church.

During the life of President Manning, John Stanford preached some months for this church and society.

Jonathan Maxcy succeeded Mr. Manning in the charge of the church, and in the presidency of the college. He was a graduate of Rhode-Island College, and has ever been regarded as one of her most talented sons. After about two years, he resigned both offices, and removed to Schenectady, to take the Presidency of Union College. Subsequently he was President of Columbia College, South Carolina, which office he held till his death.

Rev. Stephen Gano had the charge of this church, after President Maxcy, for thirty-six years. He was a native of New-York, born in 1762, and educated a physician. He received ordination at the age of twenty-three, and in 1792, removed to Providence and became pastor of this church. He died in August 1828, universally lamented. No man ever had

more friends, or warmer ones, than Dr. Gano. If any of his hearers estimated the pulpit labors of other ministers above those of their pastor, it was not because they were supposed to possess more piety toward God, or more love to man, than he did.

After remaining more than a year and a half without a pastor, they united in calling Robert E. Pattison to that office. He accepted their call, and commenced his labors in March 1830. In August 1836, his health having become infirm, he resigned his office, and accepted the Presidency of Waterville College, in Maine.

William Hague, pastor of the First Baptist church in Boston, was elected to fill the vacancy caused by Mr. Pattison's resignation. He entered on his duties on the 25th day of June, 1837, and remained pastor until August 1840, when he resigned to take charge of the Federal-Street church, Boston. During this period, Mr. Hague was absent eight or nine months, in Europe, for the improvement of his health.

The church being again without a pastor, and Mr. Pattison having in the mean while resigned the Presidency of Waterville College, he was a second time called to the pastoral office, and resumed his duties in April 1841. In February 1842, he was appointed one of the Corresponding Secretaries of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, and at the earnest solicitations of several friends of the mission, he accepted the appointment, after having a second time tendered to the church his resignation as their pastor, to take effect after the first Sunday in April 1842. The vacancy caused by this resig-

nation had not been permanently filled, in September following.

Most of the preceding statements are founded on the records of the church. Other sources of information have been resorted to. Where that information differs from the record, the difference will now be given, together with such other facts in relation to this church, as have been collected from all sources whatever. The record states that Mr. Williams held the pastoral office about four years. A letter of Richard Scott, appended to "A New-England Fire-Brand Quenched," and published about 1673, states that Mr. Williams left the Baptists and turned Seeker, a few months after he was baptized. Mr. Scott was a member of the Baptist church for some time, but at the date of this letter, had united with the Friends. According to Mr. Williams' new views as a Seeker, there was no regularly constituted church on earth, nor any person authorized to administer any church ordinance, nor could there be, until new apostles should be sent by the Great Head of the church, for whose coming he was seeking. He was not alone in these opinions. Many, in his day, believed that the ministry and ordinances of the christian church were irretrievably lost, during the papal usurpation. It has been supposed, by some, that Mr. Williams held these opinions while in Massachusetts, and that this was the reason he denied the church of England to be a true church, and withdrew from his connexion with the Salem church. Aside from the statement of Mr. Scott, above quoted, that Mr. Williams turned Seek-

er, after he joined the Baptists and walked with them some months, the supposition is shown to be groundless, by his administering baptism in Providence, as before stated, and joining with the first Baptist church there. These acts he could not have performed, had he then been a Seeker.

Mr. Holyman may have succeeded Mr. Williams, after this change in his views, but it is quite improbable that so small a society as this must have been, would have needed two pastors, at the same time. Mr. Holyman removed to Warwick soon after January 1643. His proposed removal may well account for the ordination of Chad Brown in 1642.

There were two Baptist churches in Providence, as early as 1652; one of the six, and the other of the five, principle Baptists. This appears from a manuscript diary kept by John Comer, a Baptist preacher, in Newport. The diary is now in the possession of that gentleman's descendants, in Warren. It states that one of the members of the first Baptist church in Newport, "came to Providence, and received imposition of hands from William Wickenden, pastor of a church there, lately separated from the church under Thomas Olney," and that Mr. Wickenden and Gregory Dexter, returned to Newport with him, and that the same ordinance was administered to several others, who in 1656, withdrew from the first church in Newport, and formed a new church, "holding general redemption, and admitting to communion, only those who had submitted to imposition of hands." The records of the

church make Mr. Dexter the successor of Mr. Wickenden, and Thomas Olney, the successor of Mr. Dexter. They also state, that Mr. Olney was born in 1631, and came to Providence in 1654. Now, the records of the town shew, that Thomas Olney, senior, came to Providence about 1638. He was there baptized, with his wife, about 1639. They had a son Thomas, who came with them, a minor, and who was afterwards town clerk, for many years. He is probably the person referred to in the church records. Dr. Styles states, in his manuscript itinerary, that in 1774, he conversed with John Angell, then aged 83, who told him that his mother was daughter of Gregory Dexter, and that Mr. Dexter was the first Baptist elder of the six principle church. There is in the cabinet of the Historical Society, a letter from Governor Jenckes, dated March 19, 1730, which contains some facts as to the succession and religious tenets of the elders of this church. From this, it appears, that one Dr. John Walton, formerly a practising physician in the county, was then preaching to a Baptist church in Providence. He, it seems, was in favor of singing in public worship. The governor was his intimate friend. He says, "as to his singing of psalms, I have heard him say, he would not urge it as a duty, on the church." Dr. Walton expected some allowance by way of contribution, for his services. The governor writes on this point, "Elder Tillinghast taught, that a pastor might receive, by way of contribution, although for his own part, he would take nothing." It seems further, from the same letters, that Dr. Walton op-

posed the laying on of hands, if “performed to obtain the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost,” and that he thought the want of it ought not to be a bar to communion with those who were rightly baptized. Governor Jenckes adds, “at first, in the Baptist churches in this colony, those under laying on of hands continued fellowship with those who were not, until one taught that laying on of hands was a doctrine of devils; then there arose a separation.” Here he evidently refers to Mr. Olney. After Mr. Olney’s death and after a meeting-house had been built, it is probable, only one meeting was kept up, and one church, under Mr. Tillinghast—that Mr. Jenckes succeeded Mr. Tillinghast, neither of them insisting so strongly on the points of former difference as they would have done, had there been a society of opposite sentiments in the same town with them. After Mr. Jenckes’ death, while Dr. Walton was preaching, other differences led them to stir again, the old embers of contention. Mr. James Brown succeeded him. What were his principles appears from the following certificate.

May 25, 1732. Whereas there was a meeting appointed by some of the Baptist church of Providence this present day, at Elder James Brown’s, the few of us that have met together to reconcile this woful breach or division that has happened of late, about the bounds of our communion, we think it needful to bear each others’ burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. The difference between us is this, that some of us have bore with larger communion than others. We shall endeavor, by the help of God, not to offend our brethren in this thing, nor any thing whereby it shall offend their consciences, but shall endeavor to be a building up of peace and tranquility within the spiritual walls of Jerusalem. We do all further agree, that there be no

contradictions, but that we may all speak the same things, for as we all agree and allow the six principles in Heb. vi. 1. 2. to be the doctrine of Christ and to be the bounds of our communion, so we ought to be of one body and not tearing one another to pieces. We further agree that if any brother or sister shall join in prayer without the bounds of the church, they are liable to be dealt with by the church for their offending their brethren.

Samuel Fisk,	Edward Manton,
Joshua Windsor,	James Brown,
Elder Place,	Samuel Windsor,
Thomas Burlingame jr.	Thomas Olney,
James King,	James Brown, jr.
John Dexter,	Joseph Sheldon,
John Dexter, jr.	Ebenezer Jenckes,
Jonathan Jenckes,	Elisha Greene,
Nicholas Sheldon,	Daniel Sheldon,
Benjamin Carpenter,	Joseph Williams, jr.
Edward Fenner,	Daniel Sweet,
Edward Mitchel,	Daniel Fisk.

Samuel Windsor, whose name is attached to the foregoing certificate, was probably the first pastor of that name. If so, his sentiments are also known. The sentiments of the second Mr. Windsor appear in his note sent to the church, about the time of the division, in 1771.

Mr. Edwards, in the volume of his collections, before referred to, gives the following as the succession of pastors in this church. Roger Williams, from the establishment of the church, until he left the colony for England, in 1643, and that he then resigned it to Messrs. Brown and Wickenden. Mr. Holyman was his assistant. Mr. Chad Brown died between 1660 and 1665, leaving the church in charge of his colleague. Messrs. Dexter, Tillinghast, James Brown, Jenckes, Windsor, Burlingham, Wind-

sor and Manning, successively held the same office, but the times of their appointments are not given with any exactness. Thomas Olney, it is there said, withdrew from the church with a few others, in 1654, being dissatisfied with the doctrine of laying on of hands. They formed a new church, which continued its separate existence until 1715, when Mr. Olney resigned the care of it.

It will be seen that there is considerable discrepancy between the several statements here given, as to the doctrines held by successive pastors of this church. The reader has before him, all that I have been able to collect, upon the subject, from all sources.

It is stated in the records of the church, as quoted by Mr. Benedict, that "the church, at first, met for worship in a grove, unless in wet and stormy weather, when they assembled in private houses;" that afterwards, Pardon Tillinghast, "at his own expense, built the first meeting-house, about the year 1700." This house was situated on the west side of North Main-street, nearly opposite Star-street. In 1711, Mr. Tillinghast, in consideration of the love and good will he bore the church, over which he was then pastor, executed to them and their successors in the same faith and order, a deed of the meeting-house and the lot on which it stood. In the same instrument, he describes the faith and order of the church to be the same as that now held by the Six Principle Baptists. The same record of the church states, that "a larger house was erected in its place in 1718." This can scarcely be the case,

for in 1726, they were erecting a house. This appears by their application to the town for leave to occupy with their new house then building the lot south of that on which the old house stood. The request was granted by the town. This house was raised May 30, 1726, as appears from the following memoranda, copied from an old account book of Richard Brown, who, for many years, was clerk of the proprietors.

“ May the 30th, 1726. The account of what charge I have been at this day as to the providing a dinner for the people that raised the Baptist meeting-house in Providence (it being raised this day) is as followeth.

One fat sheep which weighed 43 lbs. the quarter,	£0,14,04
For roasting the said sheep, &c.	8
For one lb. of butter	1
For two loaves of bread which weighed 15 lbs.	2
For half a peck of peas	1,03

December the 6th day. To money which I delivered to Mr. Thomas Olney, which I gave toward the finishing said house,

3,13,06”

In 1740, the church had permission of the General Assembly, to occupy the court house for meetings for public worship. The occasion of the application does not appear. The house erected in 1726, was occupied for a meeting house, until the erection of the one now in use. The old house and lot was sold by leave of the General Assembly, and the proceeds invested in the present one. In January 1773, the town granted them a lot, sixteen rods by twenty, to be laid out in the cove, opposite Steeple street. It is very doubtful whether they had any intention of occupying this lot, at the time they applied for the grant of it. The tradition is, that they

then had in view the lot on which their present house stands, which belonged to John Angell, and was improved by him as an orchard. He, they thought, would not sell it to be used as a site for a Baptist meeting house, for any consideration. After the grant of the town to them, they procured one of the members of the Episcopal church to purchase the orchard and convey it to them. They broke ground for their present house, on the first day of June 1774. It was opened for public worship, for the first time, on the 28th day of May 1775, though it was not completed until some months after this. This is a wooden structure, eighty feet square of the Roman-Ionic order of architecture, having a steeple at the west end, one hundred and ninety-six feet high, embellished with all the appropriate ornaments of that order. This house, standing amid the array of meeting houses in Providence, is not excelled by any one, in chasteness and beauty of design, or in manner of execution. Mr. Sumner was the chief architect. The main floor originally contained one hundred and twenty-six square pews. The roof and galleries are supported by fluted columns. The ceiling over the body of the house is a continued arch; over the galleries it is intersected. The interior was altered in 1834, and some think improved. The old pulpit and sounding board, together with the square pews, were removed, and an elegant pulpit of more modern style, and long slips substituted. Convenience may have been consulted in these alterations, but the unity of the house was wholly destroyed by them. The steeple was fur-

nished with a good clock and bell, both imported from England. The bell weighed 2515 lbs. and bore the following motto.

“ For freedom of conscience, the town was first planted,
Persuasion, not force, was used by the people.
This church is the eldest, and has not recanted,
Enjoying and granting, bell, temple and steeple.”

This bell was split in ringing, in 1787. Jesse Goodyear afterwards recast it, at Hope Furnace.— The present bell weighs 2387 lbs. and bears the following inscription: “ This church was founded A. D. 1639, the first in the state, and the oldest of the Baptists in America.” Great dissatisfaction was expressed at the tone of this bell when it was first hung. Some individuals attempted to break it with a blacksmith’s sledge hammer. They exhausted their rage and strength in breaking a small piece from it. Either this improved the tone or else taste has changed, for this is now regarded as one of the finest toned bells in Providence.

In 1774, some of the principal members of this church and society, obtained a charter of incorporation, under the name of “ The Charitable Baptist Society,” in order more readily to manage their concerns and property. This corporation is the legal owner of the meeting house. Some, at first, thought that the acceptance of such a charter was a departure from the principles upon which the Baptists first started, as it was seeking the aid of law, to carry on their religious concerns. It was answered, that they neither sought for, nor would accept, any power to raise money for the support of public worship, except by voluntary contribution. In 1808,

this society obtained power to tax pews for repairs of the house, and in 1832, the further power to raise money, by similar taxes, for the support of the ministry. This is not now considered as an infringement of the voluntary principle, "since no one is thus taxed, except by his own consent."

This church, from its first establishment, never had any written creed or covenant. They have ever professed to make the Bible their standard of faith and practice. It would seem that there has scarcely been any time when the members were uniform in their belief. Nor has the faith of the church as a body, always been the same. Sometimes it has confessedly leaned toward the Six Principle and General Baptists, and sometimes toward the Five Principle and Particular Baptists. To which side its founder inclined, it is quite impossible to say. Now it leans towards the particular Baptists.

The power of choosing and settling the pastor, is in the church, subject to be controlled by the Charitable Baptist Society. At the first, it is probable, the Pastors received but little for their services; and that little was raised by voluntary subscriptions and contributions. Some even doubted the right to receive what was so collected. The expenses of public worship, including salaries of pastors, are now raised by taxation on pews.

In early times, the question whether singing should be used in public worship was gravely debated in this society; now, they listen to the swelling notes of an organ, and it raises no suspicion that they have departed from the truth or the ancient faith of their predecessors.

For more than a century after the establishment of this church, the banks of the Moshassuck and Wanasquatucket witnessed the burying in baptism of those who united themselves with it. These streams were the Jordan, under whose waves they passed, as they professed, in obedience to the commands of the Head of the church. It is questionable whether some of the early members, if they should revisit the scenes of their earthly pilgrimage, would approve of the baptistery, in which converts of later times profess to follow the example of their Lord. They would see in many things, a change, even in some which they deemed unalterably fixed by the last testament of their Master.

In 1730, before any towns were set off from Providence, there were at least two other Baptist churches within its limits; one in that part subsequently called Smithfield, established in 1706, and the other in that part called Scituate, established in 1725. Several churches have been formed, either in whole or in part, out of the members of this church. In addition to those now in Providence, of which sketches will be given in their order, there were formed churches in Johnston, Cranston, Pawtucket, Pawtuxet, East-Greenwich, and perhaps others. Still this is one of the largest churches in the state. It numbered, in September 1842, about five hundred and forty members. This church still retains its independency. It makes a part of the Warren Association of Baptists, and looks to it for advice and counsel.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

The first appearance of Friends in New-England, was in 1656. In July of that year, two females of this denomination of christians, arrived at Boston, from Barbadoes. This event gave rise to the first of a long succession of cruel and sanguinary laws against them in the province of Massachusetts, and in all the other colonies in New-England, excepting only, the colony of Rhode-Island. They attempted to compel this colony also to the same course, at a very early period, as will appear by an extract of a letter written to Mr. Clarke, the agent of the colony in England, by a committee appointed by the General Assembly, November 5, 1658, published on page 122. That letter shows the character of the early Friends in New-England, and the indomitable spirit of the state, in relation to religious freedom. These circumstances, combined with others, rendered futile the attempts of the other colonies to prevent the ingress of Friends into their jurisdictions. The several towns in the colony of Rhode-Island, received and comforted them, in their sufferings, and the consequence was, the adoption of their opinions by some of the inhabitants of almost every town, at a very early period. The first person in Providence, who adopted the principles of Friends, is stated by tradition to be Richard Scott. He was one of the early settlers of the town ; at first he joined the Baptists, but remained with them but a short time. His wife Catharine, and two daughters Patience and Mary, were also among the first members of the Friends' Society. All three of these suffered corporeal pun-

ishment in Massachusetts, at an early period, the wife as early as 1658. One of the daughters subsequently intermarried with Christopher Holder, whose name appears, more than once, among those who suffered corporeal punishment in Massachusetts, as Friends. That these met together for worship with such others as agreed with them in principles, is highly probable, though there is no direct proof of the fact. In 1666, Thomas Burnyeate, a Friend from England, held a meeting at Providence, as appears from his journal. Their numbers increased both by converts from among their neighbors and by emigration from the neighboring colonies, to such a degree, that in 1672 the government of the colony was in the hands of Friends. This year George Fox, the founder of the sect, visited the island of Rhode-Island, and attended the Yearly Meeting of Friends in New-England, then holden in the house of Governor William Coddington. This house was standing until within a few years, and some trifling parts of it, by way of memorials, are now preserved by the Historical Society of the State. While on this visit, George Fox held a meeting in Providence, "in a great barn, which was thronged with people." This was just after the yearly meeting, and in all probability was the immediate cause of the challenge sent by Roger Williams to him and Friends with him, to debate fourteen propositions which he had drawn up in relation to Friends' doctrines. The challenge bore date July 13, but did not reach its destination in Newport, until July 26, after George Fox had left this part of the country. It contained the four-

teen propositions, seven of which he wished to debate at Newport, and seven at Providence. John Stubbs, John Burnyeate and William Edmundson, English Friends, who were in Newport when the challenge arrived there, accepted it without hesitation. Roger Williams was himself so much engaged in the matter, that he rowed himself in his canoe to Newport, a distance of thirty miles, though then over seventy years of age. They spent three days in debate, at Newport, and one at Providence, convincing more persons of the honest zeal of the disputants, than of the truth of the positions assumed by either of them. Mr. Williams published his account of the debate in a volume entitled "The Fox digged out of his Burrowes," which was answered by a volume equally ponderous, entitled "A New-England Fire-Brand Quenched." Both are curiosities now, and should be examined as such, bearing in mind that a far greater latitude in language was then allowed in polemical divinity than would now be allowed in political debates. No memorial is left of the place in which the day's dispute in Providence was holden.

The foregoing facts prove that there were Friends in Providence at an early period, but they go but a little way to show that they held regular meetings for worship, and much less, the existence of any meeting house there. From a minute in the records of the Rhode-Island quarterly meeting, it seems, that as early as the 4th of 4th mo. (then June) 1691 "it was proposed that some have a mind to buy Sucklin's lot of land at Providence." The object of the purchase could have been no other than to obtain

a site for a meeting house, or it would not have been brought before this meeting. No order was taken on the matter at that time, but from what subsequently appears in the same records, it is probable the lot was obtained.

From the same records, it appears, that a weekly meeting was established at Providence as early as the 1st mo. (March) 1701. In the following year the project of building a meeting-house was resumed. It was laid before the Portsmouth monthly meeting, and by them referred to the Rhode-Island quarterly meeting, holden on the 2d of 10th mo. (December) 1701. The minute made by the quarterly meeting was as follows :

“ It was proposed and agreed unto, that two Friends should go to Providence, the persons are Gideon Freeborn and Abraham Chace, to see what encouragement Friends and Friendly people will give, every way, toward building said house, and make their return to said meeting at Portsmouth this day, five weeks.”

At the next meeting, 1st of 1st mo. 1702, further progress was made in the matter, as appears by the following extract from the records :

“ As to the business of building a meeting house at Providence and at Weekopimsett, and settling a meeting at Freetown, which matter was accounted should have been resolved before this meeting, yet the weather being so tedious did obstruct : and whereas Gideon Freeborn and Abraham Chace were appointed to see what encouragement Providence Friends and Friendly people would give as to a house being built there, in answer to which, Abraham Chace or his brother William, to day brought a subscription of forty of the inhabitants of Providence, amounting to the value of £60,15, as has and may be seen, which Friends were glad to see, but their dimensions being bigger than the land they speak of, given for that use, would bear, so this meeting pro-

pose a house of thirty feet square to be built, which is according to said land given, if money can be raised to answer the premises; in further pursuance of which, this meeting have desired Walter Clark, Jacob Mott, Joseph Wanton and Abraham Chace, they being also free, God willing, to go to treat with Providence people further about the premises, to know what the cost may be judged, and who of them will undertake the building and take this subscription, with other money that is first to be seen how can be raised, and make return of what may be done to Rhode-Island, that themselves, Dartmouth and Greenwich members of our said quarterly meeting, may make way toward the obtaining of what money may be wanting of the said subscription for the accomplishing the premises."

It would be pleasing to present the subscription referred to above, if it could be found. It probably contained the names of most of "the Friends" and "Friendly people" then in Providence. The lot referred to was probably "Sucklin's lot," mentioned in 1691. The size of the lot must have been very small, if not large enough to accommodate a building more than thirty feet square. After the laying off of the purchasers' house lots on the east side of North and South Main streets, the proprietors conveyed "warehouse lots," generally forty feet square, on the opposite side of those streets. One of these warehouse lots was probably referred to, but where Sucklin's house lot or warehouse lot was, I have not been able to ascertain.

Subsequent quarterly meetings agreed to an exchange of location for one near the dwelling house of Eleazer Arnold, and upon the last named one, a meeting house was erected between June 1703 and July 1704. The following extracts from the same

records show the progress of the business from time to time :

“ As to what relates to Providence meeting-house, some of the Friends appointed having been there, and it seems, could not fully resolve what the last quarterly meeting requested, by reason the land given to set a meeting-house on was so nigh the common road, so that the subscribers desired that it might be exchanged for some higher up ; it might be so this meeting might judge it convenient, that those Friends that the meeting appointed before, be yet continued to make a further progress in the premises, answerable to the meeting’s request, and make return of what they do therein, at the next monthly men’s meeting at Portsmouth, on Rhode-Island, if may, without too much difficulty, or at furtherest, at the next men’s meeting at Newport, about 21st 5th mo., so that one of these meetings, in behalf of the quarterly meeting, may act and transact, as near as may be, to what the precedent quarterly meeting hath proposed in the premises, which monthly meeting, we also desire, to acquaint the next quarterly meeting what they do in the premises.

3d 1st mo. 1702–3. At this meeting it was agreed, that a meeting house should be built at Providence, if money can be raised to accomplish the same. There was also a subscription begun of about forty of the inhabitants of Providence, about £60 and now (illegible) is appointed to hand it about ; to encourage Friends in the premises, when he thinks meet, in behalf of our quarterly meeting.

1st 4th mo. 1703. “ Inasmuch as the monthly men’s meeting of Rhode-Island at Portsmouth, the 27th of the 2d mo. 1703, did encourage, upon their request, the Providence Friends getting their meeting house proposed to be built near Eleazer Arnold’s, the major part collecting thereto being willing, the which matter is also approved by this meeting, understanding also, that it is generally agreed on amongst themselves, and now that the Rhode-Island monthly meeting takes notice and encourages the subscription in behalf and until the next quarterly meeting, &c.”

5th 7th mo., 1704. “ Whereas it hath been proposed and agreed unto at several precedent quarterly meetings, for the en-

couraging the building a meeting house at Providence, and several Friends have contributed thereto already, and Friends there have been courageous and noble being but few, and have built a fair large meeting house for worship of God, and the burden lying pretty heavy on some particulars, they have expectation of further assistance from this meeting according to the first encouragement. This meeting agrees to make a subscription towards glazing and finishing said house, and that each monthly meeting appoint two Friends to encourage it in pursuance of the same, to be delivered to Thomas Arnold, Edward Smith and William Wilkinson, or to whom they shall appoint it for said use."

Thomas Story, in his journal page 359, states, that on the "28th 5 mo (July) 1704, he attended a yearly meeting, at Warwick, at Benjamin Barton's house, and continued by adjournment to the meeting house in Providence the next day, being the first day of the week." In the records of Providence, there is a deed dated October 2, 1708, from Eleazer Arnold to Thomas Smith and others, of a tract of land near the dwelling house of Eleazer Arnold, seven rods by twelve, "on which stands a certain meeting house, of the people called Quakers." From a most interesting letter received by me from John Osborne, clerk of the present Smithfield monthly meeting, in answer to one requesting information, I learn that this is what is now known as "Lower Smithfield" meeting house. At the date of all the proceedings referred to, Providence comprehended the whole county of Providence, except Cumberland. The town of Smithfield was set off from it and incorporated in 1730. The following extracts from a valuable letter from Thomas Howland, clerk of Greenwich monthly meeting, is inserted as explanatory of some of the usages of Friends, without a knowl-

edge of which, it would be difficult to understand some of the following statements.

“ It appears by earliest records that I have in my possession, that there was a ‘ monthly meeting for business, established by the advice of the yearly meeting for New-England, in the fifth month 1699, called ‘ Greenwich monthly meeting.’ This meeting, it appears from various circumstances, embraced all the members of the society living west of Narragansett Bay. Although it appears that soon after the organization of Greenwich monthly meeting, that Friends of Providence sent representatives to that meeting, it does not determine either the place of their individual residence or the place of their assembling.”

In the beginning of 1718, “ Providence monthly meeting” was set off from “ Greenwich monthly meeting,” and consisted of Providence and Mendon meetings. The name was subsequently changed, in 1731, to “ Smithfield monthly meeting.” In 1783, the present Providence monthly meeting was set off from Smithfield monthly meeting. At the time the first Providence monthly meeting was established, John Osborne says, in his letter before referred to, “ there were four meetings for worship, viz. Mendon, and what are now upper and lower Smithfield, and Providence; but at what precise period of time these meetings commenced, I am unable to say.— The records of the monthly meeting make no allusion to it.”

The first meeting house at upper Smithfield, ac-

ording to the same letter, was built in 1719. The minute by the monthly meeting directing it, being as follows :

“ 10th mo. (December) 1719. Whereas, this meeting has had a matter in consideration, about building a meeting house at Woonsocket, on the burying ground lately purchased; to build a meeting house twenty feet square, and John Arnold is appointed to build the same, the height thereof left to him.”

This was the second house of worship built by Friends in Providence. It remained until 1775, when the house now standing there was erected, in its place.

In 1724, commenced the design of erecting another meeting house in Providence. The earliest notice of the intention is in the records of the Smithfield monthly meeting in the following minute :

“ 9th month (November) 1724. Whereas, it is concluded by this meeting, a house shall be built in Providence town, and there being a frame offered us, it is concluded by this meeting, that if Edward Smith and Thomas Arnold approve of the frame, that the money be paid to Daniel Abbot, as quick as can be, with convenience.”

It was then laid before the quarterly meeting, on the 8th of 11th month (January) 1724-5 as appears by the following extracts from the records :

“ The Friends of Providence, having, both at our last, and also at this quarterly meeting, represented the service of a meeting-house being built at Providence town, which their concern is well approved, and this meeting will also contribute something towards accomplishing the same, and also thinks proper, that the matter may be proposed to the yearly meeting in order for a subscription by particulars or otherwise as may be thought proper.”

The yearly meeting holden in the 4th month (June) of the same year, passed the following order:

“The quarterly meeting of Rhode-Island having represented to this meeting, that it is most likely for the advancement of truth, to build a meeting-house in the town of Providence, which proposal is approved of, and for the present that the work may be going forward, do agree to raise the sum of one hundred pounds, of which it is desired that the quarterly meeting of Rhode-Island do collect the sum of eighty pounds; and also desires the quarterly meetings of Sandwich and Scituate to collect the sum of twenty pounds, and to send the same up to Samuel Aldrich, Thomas Arnold, and Benjamin Smith, of Providence.”

The next quarterly meeting took the matter into consideration, and the following entry appears on their records:

“9th 5th mo. 1725. We received an epistle from the last yearly meeting on Rhode-Island, informing that they having approved of the proposal for building a meeting-house in the town of Providence, and think proper to raise and contribute the sum of £100 towards the same, and desires this quarterly meeting to contribute the sum of £80 of said hundred, which this meeting proportions as follows, viz.

The monthly meeting of Rhode-Island, the sum of	£52
The Monthly meeting of Dartmouth,	10
The monthly meeting of Greenwich and Kingston,	8
The monthly meeting of Nantucket,	10
	£80

And send their several proportions as soon as conveniently they can to Samuel Aldrich, Benjamin Smith and Thomas Arnold, of Providence, and make return to the next quarterly meeting.”

The house was probably built soon after this, and is a part of the meeting-house now standing between South Court and Meeting streets. The deed of the lot was made in the beginning of the year 1727, and

describes it as then having on it a meeting house. An addition was subsequently made to it in the years 1784-5. The town was accustomed, for a long time, to hold their town meetings in this house, and a school was, for many years, kept in the upper part of it.

At the quarterly meeting holden 10th day 2d mo. (April) 1730, Greenwich monthly meeting gave notice,

“ That they are in want of some assistance by money towards finishing a meeting-house at Shantituck, in which case this meeting desires further information as to the necessity and circumstances, &c.”

Shantituck, or Meshantituck, as it was sometimes called, was in that part of Providence, since set off and incorporated under the name of Cranston. It remained, however, a part of Providence, until 1754, and hence the meeting house there should be considered as in Providence, making the fourth erected there by Friends. At the following quarterly meeting, the Greenwich monthly meeting inform,

“ That besides the subscription made for building the meeting-house at Meshantituck, they have expended the sum of £49,19, for work already done, and considerable more is wanted to finish it.

It is therefore recommended to the several monthly meetings to consider the said Friends of Meshantituck, and lend them such help as in brotherly freedom they may think meet, and it is desired, that what is collected for said service may be brought up to our next quarterly meeting.”

From the foregoing, it is apparent that before the division of Providence, there were at least four so-

cieties of Friends having meeting-houses, within the town. The oldest was what is now called lower Smithfield, the second upper Smithfield or Woonsocket, the third in Providence town, and the other in Cranston. It is not presumed that either of these would vie with the costly structures built in more modern times by other denominations of Christians. They were probably small wooden buildings, sufficiently large to accommodate the company ordinarily assembling in them, in the construction of which, regard was had to convenience and comfort, rather than to appearance. The buildings and lands were generally held by trustees for the use of the Society, but are now by an act of the General Assembly in 1827, held by officers termed "Overseers of Society" for the time being. It is impossible to ascertain the numbers attached to these several meetings at the time of their first formation. With their present population, excepting that of Providence, we have nothing to do. Providence meeting, by a document published in 1836, was supposed to contain 158 individuals. The number has probably increased since that account was taken.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

The worshipping assembly next gathered in Providence, I suppose to have been a Congregational Pedobaptist Society. This was formed about 1720. Undoubtedly there were some Pedobaptists here, at all times, from the first settlement. They may have met, as a distinct worshipping assembly, previous to 1720, but such meetings, if any took place, were

not stated and regular. Nor is it probable that there was a large number of these individuals here at any time previous. The principle held forth from the settlement of the town, of an entire separation between church and state, had been pronounced a foul heresy, and the consequence of that heresy, a multiplicity of sects, all equal in the eye of the law, had been repudiated by the churches of Plymouth and Massachusetts, as subversive of all religion, and pregnant with incalculable evils to civil society, and the best interests of man. In those days of enthusiasm and bigotry, great must have been the inducement, which could have led any orthodox religionists to take up their abode in such a place, in point of religion, as Providence was represented and believed to be. On the other hand it cannot be doubted, that when any such came to Providence, they did not receive that hearty welcome which awaited their opponents. They were admitted to equal civil rights, it is true, but not to equal love or respect. Instead, then, of being surprised that no worshipping assembly was gathered earlier than 1720, our surprise should be, that there was a sufficient number of Pedobaptists, at that time, in Providence, to render such a step advisable. In corroboration of these views, the following letter is inserted from three distinguished Congregational Clergymen in Massachusetts, and the answer thereto. Jonathan Spreague, who subscribes the answer, was a Baptist preacher.

“ To the honorable Joseph Jenckes, Esq., late Deputy-Governor, William Hopkins, Esq., Major Joseph Wilson, Esq., Joseph Whipple, Esq., Col. Richard Waterman, Esq., Arthur

Fenner, Esq., ——— Wilkinson, Esq., Philip Tillinghast, Esq., Capt. Nicholas Power, Esq., Thomas Harris, Esq., Capt. William Harris, Esq., Andrew Harris, Esq., ——— Brown, Esq., Jonathan Burton, Esq., Jonathan Spreague, Jun. Esq., and to the other eminent men in the town of Providence. Pardon our ignorance if of any of your Christian names, or if your proper order be mistaken.

Honorable Gentlemen,—We wish you grace, mercy and peace, and all blessings for time and for eternity, through our Lord Jesus Christ. How pleasing to Almighty God and our Lord and Redeemer, and how conducive to the public tranquillity and safety, an hearty union and good affection of all pious protestants, of whatever particular denomination, on account of some difference in opinion, would be, by the divine blessing, yourselves, as well as we, are not insensible of. And with what peace and love, societies of different modes of worship have generally entertained one another in your government, we cannot think of without admiration. And we suppose, under God, 'tis owing to the choice liberty granted to protestants of all persuasions in the Royal Charter graciously given you; and to the wise and prudent conduct of the gentlemen that have been improved as governors and justices in your colony. And the Rev. Mr. Greenwood, before his decease at Rehoboth, was much affected with the wisdom and excellent temper and great candour of such of yourselves as he had the honor to wait upon, and with those worthy and obliging expressions of kind respects he met with when he discoursed about his desire to make an experiment, whether the preaching of our ministers in Providence might not be acceptable; and whether some, who do not greatly incline to frequent any pious meeting in the place, on the first day of the week, might not be drawn to give their presence to hear our ministers, and so might be won over, by the influence of Heaven, into serious godliness; and although God has taken that dear brother of ours from his work in this world, yet it has pleased the Lord to incline some reverend ministers in Connecticut and some of ours to preach among you; and we are beholden to the mercy of Heaven for the freedom and safety they have enjoyed under the wise and good government of the place,

and that they met with kind respect, and with numbers that gave a kind reception to their ministrations among you. These things we acknowledge with all thankfulness. And if such preaching should be continued among your people, designed only for the glory of God and Christ Jesus in chief, and nextly for promoting the spiritual and eternal happiness of immortal, precious souls, and the furtherance of a joyful account in the great day of judgment, we earnestly request, as the Rev. Mr. Greenwood in his life-time did before us, that yourselves, according to your power and the influence and interest that God hath blessed you with, will continue your just protection; and that you add such further countenance and encouragement thereunto as may be pleasing to the eternal God, and may, through Christ Jesus, obtain for you the great reward in Heaven. And if ever it should come to pass that a small meeting-house should be built in your town to entertain such as are willing to hear our ministers, we should account it a great favor if you all, gentlemen, or any of you, would please to build pews therein; in which you and they as often as you see fit, may give your and their presence and holy attention. And we hope and pray that ancient matters, that had acrimony in them, may be buried in oblivion; and that grace, and peace, and holiness, and glory, may dwell in every part of New-England; and that the several provinces and colonies in it may love one another with a pure heart fervently. So recommending you all, and your ladies and children, and neighbors and people to the blessing of Heaven, and humbly asking your prayers to the Divine Throne for us, we take leave and subscribe ourselves your servants,

PETER THACHER,
JOHN DANFORTH,
JOSEPH BELCHER."

"To John Danforth, Peter Thacher, and Joseph Belcher, committee of the Presbyterian Ministry.

Sirs—We, the inhabitants of the town of Providence, received yours, bearing date October 27, 1721, which was read publicly, in the hearing of the people, and we judge it uncivil to return you no answer. But finding the matter to be of religious concernment, we counted it our duty to ask counsel of God, lest

we should be beguiled as Israel was by the Gibeonitè. And inasmuch as the sacred scriptures were given forth by the Spirit of the living God to be our instructor and counsellor, we shall therefore apply ourselves to them. And in the first place, we take notice of the honorable titles you give to many of us. Your view, as we take it, is to insinuate yourselves into our affections, and to induce us to favor your request. But, we find flatteries in matters of religion to be of dangerous consequence; witness the Hivites, who said, *We are your servants, and have heard of the fame of the God of Israel.* In this way did Joash set up idolatry after the death of Jehoida. Elihu abstained from flattery for fear of offending God, while the enemies of Judah, for want of the fear of God, practised it. By the same means was Daniel cast into the lion's den, and Herod sought to slay the Lord Christ; and some at Rome sought to make divisions in the church of Christ by flattering words and fair speeches, to deceive the simple; but, saith the Spirit, *such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;* and saith the apostle Peter, *through covetousness and feigned words they shall make merchandize of you.* To conclude this article. We see that flattery in matters of worship has been, and now is, a cloak to blind men and lead them out of the way; and serves for nothing but to advance pride and vain glory. Shall we praise you for this? We praise you not. Next. You salute all as saints in the faith and order of the gospel, wishing all of us blessings for the time present and to all eternity. It is not the language of Canaan but of Babel to salute men of all characters as in the faith of the gospel. This is the voice of the false prophets, which daub with untempered mortar, sewing pillows under every arm-hole, and crying, peace! peace! when there is no peace. Is this your way to enlighten the dark corners of the world? Surely, this is darkness itself. Moreover, You highly extol liberty of conscience to men of all persuasions, affirming it to be most pleasing to God, and tending most to love and peace, and the tranquillity of any people. And you say, *We are not insensible of this any more than you.* To which we say, *Amen;* and you well know it hath been our faith and practice hitherto. Fourthly. We take notice, how you praise the love and peace that dissenters of all ranks entertain one another with, in this

government; and it is as you say, *to your admiration*: and you suppose *that* under God, it is owing to the choice liberty granted to protestants of all denominations in the Royal Charter graciously given us, and to the discreet and wise rulers under whose conduct we enjoy this happiness. We answer, This happiness principally consists in our not allowing societies to have any superiority one over another, but each society supports their own ministry of their own free will, and not by constraint or force upon any man's person or estate; and this greatly adds to our peace and tranquillity. But the contrary, which takes away men's estates by force, to maintain their own or any other ministry, serves for nothing but to provoke to wrath, envy, and strife. This wisdom cometh not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish. In those cited concessions we hope too, that you are real and hearty, and do it not to flourish your compliments; otherwise you make a breach on the third commandment. This is but a preface to make room for your request, which is, *That we would be pleased, according to our power, to countenance, protect, and encourage your ministers in their coming and preaching in this town of Providence.* To which we answer:—We admire at your request! or that you should imagine or surmise that we should consent to either; inasmuch as we know, that (to witness for God) your ministers, for the most part, were never set up by God, but have consecrated themselves, and have changed his ordinances; and for their greediness after filthy lucre, some you have put to death; others you have banished upon pain of death; others you barbarously scourged; others you have imprisoned and seized upon their estates. And at this very present you are rending towns in pieces, ruining the people with innumerable charges, which make them decline your ministry, and fly for refuge some to the Church of England, and others to dissenters of all denominations, and you, like wolves, pursue; and whenever you find them within your reach, you seize upon their estates. And all this is done to make room for your pretended ministers to live in idleness, pride, and fullness of bread. Shall we countenance such ministers for Christ's ministers? Nay, verily. These are not the marks of Christ's ministry; but are a papal spot that is abhorred by all pious protestants. And since you wrote this letter the constable of Attleborough has been taking away

the estates of our dear friends and pious dissenters to maintain the minister. The like hath been done in the town of Mendon. Is this the way of peace? Is this the fruit of your love? Why do you hug the sin of Eli's sons and walk in the steps of the false prophets, biting with your teeth, and crying peace? but no longer than they put into your mouth but you prepare war against them. Christ bids us beware of such as come to us in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves; and your clothing is so scanty that all may see your shame, and see that your teaching is like Gideon's, who taught the men of Succoth with the *briars and thorns of the wilderness*. In the next place; You freely confess that we entertained you kindly at all times. We hope we are all so taught of God *to love our enemies, and to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them who despitefully treat us*. And since you admire the love and peace we do enjoy, we pray you to use the same methods and write after our copy. And for the future never let us hear of your pillaging conscientious dissenters to maintain your own ministers. O, let not this sin be your everlasting ruin. Further. You desire that all former injuries, done by you to us, may be buried in oblivion. We say, Far be it from us to avenge ourselves, or to deal to you as you have dealt to us, but rather say with our Lord, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* But if you mean that we should not speak of former actions done hurtfully to any man's person, we say, God never called for that nor suffered to be so done; as witness Cain, Joab and Judas, which are upon record to deter other men from doing the like. Lastly. You desire of us to improve our interest in Christ Jesus for you at the throne of grace. Far be it from us to deny you this, for we are commanded to pray for all men. And we count it our duty to pray for you, that God will open your eyes and cause you to see how far you have erred from the way of peace; and that God will give you godly sorrow for the same, and such repentance as is never to be repented of; and that you may find mercy and favor of our Lord Jesus Christ at his appearing. And so hoping, as you tender the everlasting welfare of your souls and the good of your people, you will embrace our advice; and not suffer passion so to rule as to cause you to hate reproof, lest you draw down vengeance on yourselves and on the

land. We, your friends of the town of Providence, bid you farewell. Subscribed for, and in their behalf, by your ancient friend and servant for Jesus' sake,

JONATHAN SPREAGUE.

Feb. 23, 1722."

In 1721, they set about erecting a house for public worship. Dr. Hoyle, one of the most active and efficient of their number, visited the neighboring colonies to solicit pecuniary aid, and he met with considerable success in his mission. On his return, and without the concurrence of his associates, he commenced erecting a house on a lot of land, near the junction of Pawtuxet and High-streets. So great was the dissatisfaction, at the conduct of Dr. Hoyle, that the house was torn down after it had been partially finished, and, as tradition says, in the night season.

In 1723, the society erected a house for worship at the corner of College and Benefit-streets, now known as the "Old Town House." When first erected, it was much smaller than at present. I have been informed by Job Danforth, a highly intelligent old gentleman of this society, who died in 1838, at the advanced age of ninety-four years, that two additions have been made to the original structure, one on the south and the other on the east part of it. I am induced to believe that the enlargement on the east side, consisted simply in the addition of a tower, which according to the same authority, formerly stood there. When the upper part of this was taken down, a belfry was erected on the west side of the house on the roof.

In 1794, the society sold this house to the town,

and commenced erecting a more spacious and elegant one, at the corner of Benevolent and Benefit-streets. They began to raise this building on the 19th day of August 1794, on which occasion, Dr. Hitchcock, the pastor of the society, delivered an address. It was dedicated to the service of Almighty God, on the 16th day of August 1795. This edifice was of wood, eighty-seven by seventy-one feet on the ground. The front was ornamented with two spires, on whose fine proportions the eye rested, with peculiar satisfaction and delight. Mr. Caleb Ormsbee was the architect. The whole house was a beautiful copy of one of the most beautiful houses of worship in Boston. It was destroyed by fire on the morning of the 14th of June 1814.

Measures were immediately taken by the society for the erection of the still more spacious and elegant structure, which they now occupy. It stands on the same site with the preceding one. The corner stone of this house was laid with appropriate religious ceremonies, on the 29th day of May 1815, and the building dedicated, on the 31st of October in the following year. It is built of granite taken from the Waterman "Snake-den" ledge, in Johnston. The front and two sides are of wrought granite in courses, the rear, of rubble work. It measures seventy-seven feet by one hundred, including a vestibule of twenty feet. The main wall is thirty feet high above the basement. The tower is of stone, eighty feet high to the bell deck. The whole spire is about two hundred feet high. This society is indebted to the genius and taste of John H. Greene, for their

beautiful house. Its cost exceeded \$50,000. Since its erection some alterations have been made in the interior of the building, which may have added to its convenience but they have not increased its beauty.

Previous to the settlement of any minister over this society, several clergymen from the neighboring colonies, occasionally preached for them. Dr. Styles in his itinerary, mentions a Mr. Dorrance and a Mr. Danforth as among these. Samuel Moody, of York, Maine, also preached for them. The society were desirous of obtaining his services as pastor, but his church at York refused to part with him. With their consent however, he preached at Providence three months. During this period he baptized sixteen persons. They had no settled minister until 1728. In the spring of that year, Josiah Cotton commenced preaching for them, and in the following autumn was ordained, eighteen churches being present by their delegates to assist at the ordination. The church was formed on the same day that Mr. Cotton was ordained, and consisted of nine persons, viz. Cornelius Salisbury, Nathaniel Blague, William Randall, Joseph Bagley, Timothy Carpenter, Joseph Barstow, John Church, Thomas Pollock and John Taylor. Mr. Cotton remained in the pastoral charge of this society and church until 1747, when he was dismissed, at his own request. After an interval of about five years, they gave John Bass an invitation to preach for them as their stated minister. He commenced his services in 1752 and continued with them until 1758, when he left the ministry and commenced the practice of medicine. He

died in October 1762, in the 46th year of his age. During his ministry it is said "the number of hearers did not oftentimes exceed twenty, and the church was so scattered and divided that it was scarcely known whether there were any of them left." In 1761, the members of this scattered church again united, and being joined by some members of other churches, renewed their covenant, the whole number then, being eleven males and ten females. The following year, they obtained the services of David S. Rowland, who continued with them until he asked and received his dismissal, in 1774. Dr. Lathrop, of Boston, officiated with them nearly the whole of the year 1775. After his return to Boston the revolutionary war broke up the society so much, that they had only occasional preachers, till the fall of 1780, when Enos Hitchcock, was applied to and engaged to become their permanent pastor. He was not installed, however, until October 1783.—His connexion with the church and society continued until dissolved by his death, on the 27th of February 1803. Mr. Hall, the present pastor of this society, in an historical discourse, from which most of the materials for this memoir have been taken, thus most eloquently and truly, closes his sketch of Dr. Hitchcock. "The character of his mind, the working of his heart, the creed of his life, might be written in a line: 'faith, hope and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity.'" He left a legacy exceeding \$6,000 to the society, besides which, it is said he frequently subscribed toward his own salary of £200.

Henry Edes, of Boston, succeeded Dr. Hitchcock in the pastoral charge. He was ordained in July 1805. His ministry terminated in June 1832, at the request of the pastor.

The present pastor, Edward B. Hall, was installed in his office on the 14th of November 1832.

The lot on which "the old Town House" stands, was originally conveyed to trustees for the use of the society; the only secure mode which could be adopted by an unincorporated society. In 1770, a number of persons belonging to the society, procured a charter of incorporation, under the name of "the Benevolent Congregational Society," for "the purpose of raising a fund by free and voluntary subscriptions, contributions, legacies and donations, for the support of public worship, in the Congregational Society in the town of Providence aforesaid, of which the Rev. David S. Rowland is at present minister." It included thirty-six persons by name, among whom were many of the most influential individuals in the town and colony. This it is believed is the oldest charter for such a purpose, granted in this state. The increase both of church and society has been great, since 1761. It is now one of the most numerous congregations in Providence, and it has always numbered within its pale, its full proportion of the most honored inhabitants. Among its most munificent benefactors, Enos Hitchcock and John Dorrance should be named.

In former years, it was much more common than now, for religious societies to apply to the General Assembly for leave to raise money by lotteries.—

Most of the early societies in Providence did so, and this among the rest.

Two churches and societies have sprung from this one since its establishment. The first in point of time was the present Beneficent Congregational church, from which the Richmond street Congregational Society and the High Street Congregational Society have arisen, and the other the Westminster Congregational Society. The circumstances attending the formation of each, will be given hereafter. The present number of communicants is about two hundred.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.

Notwithstanding the assistance that members of the Church of England received from the mother country, toward maintaining ministers and erecting houses for public worship, in the colonies, I can find no trace of Episcopalianism in Providence, until about 1722. The society established for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign parts, as early as 1704, sent Mr. Honyman a missionary to Newport. He occasionally preached at Providence. In one of his communications to the society, he stated that "no house could hold the congregation" at Providence, "so that I was obliged to preach in the open fields." This was in 1722, when he exerted himself in gathering a subscription to erect a church. Dr. Hufnries, in his history of that society, draws no flattering picture of the state of religion in Providence, about this time. "The people," says he, "as described above," (that is in the copies of the

letters, from the missionaries sent by the society) "were negligent of all religion, till about the year 1722; the very best were such as called themselves Baptists or Quakers, but it was feared many were Gortoneans or Deists." Bad as they were, they subscribed £250 among themselves, obtained a subscription of £200 more in Newport, £100 in Boston, and £200 in other places, and then borrowed £200, with which to erect a church. And on St. Barnabas' day, 1722, they raised one, sixty-two feet long by forty-one broad, and twenty-six feet high. Dr. Stiles says this church was erected in 1723. The first date is obtained from Dr. Humfries' History, above referred to. The chief contributor was Col. Joseph Whipple, who gave £100. This church occupied the same spot on which St. John's church now stands. It was pulled down in 1810, but will long be remembered as a remarkably neat and pretty church. The steeple was not erected until a long time after the main body of the church. In 1762 and in 1771, leave was given by the General Assembly to raise money sufficient to repair the church and to build a steeple, by lottery, from which it is perhaps reasonable to infer that the steeple was not built until after that time. The first bell in Providence, according to Mr. Job Danforth, was hung in the belfry of this steeple.

The corner stone of St. John's church, was laid on the 5th day of June 1810, and the edifice completed so as to be dedicated on the 11th June 1811. The exterior walls of this building are of natural faced stone, laid in irregular blocks, a kind of ma-

terial peculiarly appropriate for the style of the building. It is eighty-two by sixty-seven feet on the ground, with a chancel sixteen feet by thirty-four. It contains one hundred and eight pews. Much credit is due to John H. Greene, the architect, for the consistency which pervades all parts of this building, within and without, satisfying the beholder with it, as being a whole, the work of a single mind.

Tradition refers to Gabriel Bernon, a French Huguenot, who came to this country at the revocation of the edict of Nantz, as one of the earliest members of the Church of England, in this town. It is supposed that it was through his influence that the missionary at Newport occasionally visited and preached at Providence, and that it was at his house that the meetings were holden. This house occupied the site of the brick house, No. 149 on North Main street, and a part of it is still standing in the rear of that house.

There is a little discrepancy between Dr. Humphries, in the work above referred to, and Dr. McSparran, in a pamphlet entitled "America Dissected," as to the Episcopal minister who first preached in Providence. The former would seem to give that honor to Mr. Honyman. Dr. McSparran says that he entered on the duties of his mission to Narragansett, in 1721, and adds, "I was the first Episcopal minister that ever preached at Providence, where for a long time I used to go four times a year; but that church has now a fixed missionary of its own." This was written in 1753. The truth was that pro-

bably both he and Mr. Honyman occasionally preached here. The first person settled over the church here, as a "fixed missionary," was George Pigot. He was sent by the society, to Stratford, Conn. in 1722. The following year he removed to this town on his own suggestion, and was settled over this church. He remained here but a short time, when he was succeeded by Mr. Charro. Mr. Charro was dismissed from his charge on account of improper conduct. In October 1730, Arthur Brown became rector. He was highly esteemed by his congregation. He remained with them till 1736, when he removed to Portsmouth, N. H. and was succeeded in 1739 by John Checkley. Mr. Checkley was a native of Boston. He received his education at Oxford, and was admitted to holy orders by the Bishop of Exeter. When he visited England for the purpose of ordination, several of the dissenting ministers of Massachusetts, sent a remonstrance against him, containing such allegations as delayed his admission to holy orders for some time. From all accounts, he was a man of eccentric character. His ideas of the deportment proper for the christian minister were formed from the English clergy of the established church, and not from the puritan ministers of New-England, and, of course, the latter deemed him erroneous. Before he came here, he published "Some Strictures on Episcopacy," which subjected him to a prosecution in Massachusetts for a libel.—It was written in the spirit of the times, but on the wrong side of the question, for the author to escape punishment. Mr. Checkley continued in discharge

of his duties as rector until his death in 1753. During his sickness and after his decease, the pulpit was supplied by several Episcopal clergymen until 1756, when John Graves succeeded him in the rectorship. Mr. Graves attended the service of the church until July 1776. He then declined to officiate, unless he could be permitted to read the usual and ordinary prayers for the king, which he considered himself bound by his ordination vows to offer for him. The patriotism of his hearers forbade this, and the consequence was, that the church was closed, most of the time during the war of the revolution. During a part of this time however, Thomas F. Oliver officiated as lay reader. After the restoration of peace, Mr. Graves offered his services to the parish, which were refused, they being under obligations to Mr. Oliver. Mr. Oliver soon received ordination from Bishop Seabury, the first American Bishop, and remained in this parish until 1786, when he left them, by their consent, to officiate among his friends and relations at Marblehead. Mr. Graves died here in November 1785. In September 1786, Moses Badger succeeded to the rectorship, which he held until his decease in September 1792. Abraham L. Clarke succeeded him, commencing his labors in March 1793. He resigned the rectorship March 14, 1800. Nathaniel Bowen, afterwards Bishop of South-Carolina, succeeded him in the rectorship, November 12, 1801. Mr. Bowen left this church for St. Michael's church in Charleston, S. C. in November, 1802. Nathan Bourne Crocker performed divine service in this church on Sunday, October 24, 1802, as lay reader. He con-

tinued to officiate in this capacity until May 1803, when he was ordained, and chosen rector. In January 1804, ill health obliged him to resign. John L. Blackburne succeeded him, in December 1805, and in March 1807 he resigned. The same month Mr. Crocker was again invited by the church to become its rector. He entered upon the duties of his office at once, and has continued in the discharge of them, without interruption, to the present time.

In May 1794, John Smith, of Providence, presented a petition to the General Assembly in behalf of the minister, church-wardens, vestry and congregation of the Episcopal church, representing that "that church was founded in the reign of George the First, then king of Great Britain, of blessed memory, who reigned over the colonies of Great Britain with justice and paternal regard; that, in consequence thereof, the proprietors of the said church from the purest motives of gratitude and affection, named it King's Church; but the conduct of the present king of Great Britain and of the people thereof, hath been so totally different, that the citizens of the United States have been under the necessity of declaring themselves independent, and renouncing monarchy in all its forms; and that said minister, church-wardens, vestry and congregation conceive the present name of the said church to be highly improper, and pray that the said name may be abolished, and the church called St. John's Church, in Providence." The Assembly readily granted the petition. It was not strange that the proprietors wished a new name. Beyond a doubt their old one, borne as it was by a

society who professed to belong to what in common parlance was called the church of England, had been the means of subjecting them most unjustly to suspicion, ridicule, and even absolute injury. In October following, a number of persons received from the Assembly a charter of incorporation under the name of "the United Society of St. John's Church." The petitioners were members of the congregation of St. John's church, and the object was to raise a fund by voluntary contribution and subscription for the more effectual support of public worship. In 1812, upon "the petition of the minister, church-wardens, vestry and congregation of St. John's church," and "the United Society of St. John's church," their two charters were abrogated and a new corporation created under the name of "St. John's Church, in Providence."

Since this last charter, public worship has been supported by taxes on pews, income of funds, and voluntary donations. In government, doctrines, rites and usages, it conforms to and is a part of the Protestant Episcopal Church, of the United States of America. The number of communicants in 1842, was between 180 and 200.

BENEFACTIC CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY.

During the time that Josiah Cotton had the pastoral charge of the First Congregational Society, a part of his church and congregation seceded from his watch and care. The seceders deemed his preaching destitute of sound evangelical principles. They accused their pastor of preaching "damnable

good works." The final separation took place on the 7th day of March 1743. Among the seceders were, deacon Joseph Snow, Benjamin Cary, Thomas Knowlton, Alexander M'Crary, Solomon Searle, Peter Tefft, John Paine, Joseph Snow, jr. (afterwards their minister) Ebenezer Knight and Barzillai Richmond, together with fifteen females. These composed a large part, if not a majority, of Mr. Cotton's church, at the time, and, it is believed they claimed to be the first church, in opposition to Mr. Cotton and his adherents. They began religious meetings by themselves, and opened for the worship of God, the first meetings that were stately attended and maintained on the west side of the river. In the language of the record of Mr. Cotton's church, "they set up a separate meeting, where they attended to the exhortations of a lay brother, who had been brought up in the business of house-carpentry." "Every method for healing the uneasiness that had arose, proved fruitless and vain; enthusiasm raged with a most furious impetuosity. These held separate meetings, at a private house, where they were entertained, on the Lord's day, with loud and vociferous declamation, on the downfall of Babylon, and on the necessity of coming out and being separate, not touching the unclean thing; and such like exhortations were liberally held out." The lay brother alluded to, was Joseph Snow, jr. whom they elected to the office of pastor and teacher. After some years, he was induced by their repeated solicitations, and, as he believed, by the Spirit and Providence of God, to consent to be ordained; which cer-

emony' took place on the 12th day of February 1747. The separatists were suspended from Mr. Cotton's church on the 25th of March 1744. Soon after this, they commenced erecting a house for public worship; and the tradition is, that the elder, profiting by his previous knowledge of "house-carpentry," "led some of his principal members into the woods and there cut down and hewed timber for that purpose." The house was erected upon a lot of land given them by Daniel Abbott, on the 29th day of May 1744. It is now occupied by the meeting-house of the society. The house was built of wood, and originally measured thirty-six by forty feet. As the congregation increased, they enlarged it, first by building a piece in the middle, then by adding a piece to the rear, and finally by building a story under the house, as the hill was removed upon which it was originally built. The spire had attained nearly one hundred feet in height, in 1772. The bell was imported from England about 1760, and is still in use by this society. This continued the meeting-house of the society until 1808. George Whitefield, Robert Sandeman, Mr. Ashbury, first superintendent of the Methodists in America, Mr. Murray, and other eminent ministers often preached in it. These circumstances with the length of time the house had been used for religious uses, and the very many associations connected with it, induced the society, for some years, to submit to many inconveniences, rather than to its demolition. When they yielded to necessity, in 1808, the older members contemplated its destruction with any feelings but those of pleasure. The present

meeting-house was erected in 1808-9. This is of brick, much larger and more commodious than the former one, having one hundred and fifty pews on the ground floor, and spacious galleries. The expense of erecting this house was paid by sale of pews, and a fund of nearly \$20,000 was realized, over and above the cost of the house. In the autumn of 1836, it was materially improved, both in its appearance and in its convenience, externally and internally, at an expense nearly equalling its first cost. The eye rests with pleasure on its lofty dome and imposing facade.

In October 1785, the General Assembly granted a charter of incorporation to six of the members of this church, under the name of "the Beneficent Congregational Society." The first meeting under it, was holden in April 1786. The measure did not, at first, meet with the approbation of all the members of the old society. After considerable time, it was unanimously adopted, and has ever since been their fundamental law.

Mr. Snow continued the beloved pastor of a united people for many years. In 1783, "the fair character and exemplary lives" of such as had been formerly suspended from Mr. Cotton's church, in 1744, compelled that church to take off their censure, and to restore them to full fellowship. The peace and harmony thus restored, was soon disturbed in an unlooked for and unexpected manner. On the 27th of May 1791, James Wilson, a native of Ireland, as he was passing on a journey through Providence, was invited to preach for this society.

After preaching ten discourses, he was engaged as colleague pastor with Mr. Snow, who had previously requested an assistant. Mr. Wilson continued to preach for this society for nearly two years, when it was proposed to ordain him as colleague pastor. Mr. Snow manifested a decided opposition to this measure; objecting to Mr. Wilson's doctrinal sentiments, he having been a Methodist minister before he came to this country. It is said, that while a majority of the church members sided with their old elder, a majority of the society took part with Mr. Wilson, and he was accordingly ordained. This was in October 1793. Upon this, Mr. Snow and his adherents withdrew themselves, and held meetings in Mr. Snow's own house, forming a new religious society, now known as the Richmond Street Congregational Society.

Previous to the ordination of Mr. Wilson, the church agreed upon a constitution, and at the same time adopted a covenant and articles of faith, which remain unaltered to the present day. Twenty males and eight females signed the covenant, at first. Although Mr. Wilson was ordained only as colleague to Mr. Snow, after that ordination, he performed all the duties of pastor.

On the 12th March 1835, Mr. Wilson requested of the church an assistant in the ministry, he having completed the 75th year of his age. The church acceded to his wishes, and on the 30th June following, invited Cyrus Mason, of the Cedar-Street church, New York, to become his associate pastor. He accepted the call, and was installed on the 7th

of October. After continuing with the church about one year, he asked a dismissal, on account of ill health, and returned to New York. In May 1837, the church invited Mark Tucker, of the Second Presbyterian Church in Troy, N. Y., to become associate pastor, in which office he was installed, on the 21st of June following. Mr. Wilson closed his labors and his life, on the 14th of September 1839, in the 80th year of his age. Dr. Tucker has now the sole pastoral care of the church and congregation.

In December 1834, the church dismissed fourteen of its members, at their request, to unite with others in forming what has since been called the High Street Congregational Church. Notwithstanding this, the church has increased in its numbers, so that in 1842 it contained 468 members. The congregation is one of the largest in the city.

The power of choosing a pastor resides in the church, while the control over the house is with the society. The pews are liable to taxation only for repairs of the house; the expenses of public worship are defrayed from the income of funds and voluntary contributions.

RICHMOND STREET CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

After the ordination of James Wilson as colleague pastor with Joseph Snow over the Beneficent Congregational Church and Society, Mr. Snow and a part of the church, withdrew and set up a separate meeting by themselves. The grounds of their withdrawal, were the doctrinal sentiments of Mr. Wilson. It is supposed that a majority of the church mem-

bers adhered to Mr. Snow, while a majority of the congregation were the adherents of Mr. Wilson.— On this ground, the present Richmond Street Church has sometimes claimed to be the elder of the two. In fact the claim has sometimes been extended to priority over the First Congregational Society.— Without pretending to decide this nice question of precedence, I have deemed it proper to rank this as the third Congregational church in Providence, because Mr. Snow and his adherents when they withdrew from the church under the care of Mr. Cotton, left them in possession of the name and property of the church and Society. And so when they left the Beneficent Congregational Society, they assumed a new local habitation and name for themselves.

They at first met for public worship at the dwelling house of Mr. Snow. They soon however commenced the erection of a meeting house. This was the wooden structure standing on the corner of Pine and Richmond-streets, and now generally recognized under the name of “the old Tin Top,” from the material with which the top of the spire is covered. It was dedicated on the 16th of August, 1795, but was not completely finished until the autumn of 1807, when Thomas Williams, then pastor of the church, solicited and obtained the means of finishing it, from Massachusetts and Connecticut. The bell was the gift of Mr. Williams, from his own resources. This house was abandoned by the society, after the erection of their present house in 1827. Since then it has been used successively by

various new societies as a place of worship. Its walls have listened to almost all the doctrines which divide and sub-divide Christendom. After it ceased being a house of public worship, it was transformed into a circus, and since then into a brewery, for which purpose it is still used. The present meeting house also stands on Richmond street a little west of the old one. It is built of wood, seventy-five by sixty-five feet on the ground, having one hundred and ten pews on the lower floor. Its style of architecture is chaste, and the building is of pleasing appearance and fair proportions. The expense of its erection was defrayed by sale of pews. It was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God on the first day of January 1828.

Mr. Snow continued his pastoral care of this church and society until his death, which occurred on the 10th of April, 1803, in the 89th year of his age and 58th of his ministry. Stephen Gano, then pastor of the First Baptist church, preached his funeral sermon. In it he observed, "if uniform piety, unshaken faith in the divine government, a persevering attachment to the religion of Jesus Christ, an ardent love to the souls of men, an exemplary life of godliness, and a sweet serene composure in prospect of the approaching dissolution of his body, give evidence of being approved of God, we may safely conclude our friend and father in the Gospel is now mingling his songs of praise among the spirits of just men made perfect, enjoying the reward promised to the faithful laborer." Few men receive, and fewer deserve, such a character.

“ After Mr. Snow's death, his church and people were few in number and feeble in all respects. Under these discouraging circumstances, rather than to have no meetings for public worship, and having been befriended by the Baptists in Mr. Snow's day, they received into their pulpit Joseph Cornell, a Baptist minister, who came and offered his services. While he preached in their meeting-house there was an unusual attention to religion. During that attention Mr. Cornell formed a Baptist church, and received into it a number from the remnant of Mr. Snow's flock, and gained nearly the whole congregation to his measures; and claimed a right to possess and occupy the meeting-house.

To these movements and claims of Elder Cornell, Mrs. Snow, the widow of Elder Snow, and a few sisters in the church, accounted themselves obliged to object, in duty to God, and by their public and solemn profession of religion. Mrs. Snow took many journeys to obtain the advice and assistance of ministers, in their trials and sorrows.

In the year 1806, she obtained for a few weeks, James Davis, an itinerant minister of the gospel, to preach in their meeting-house. Whilst Mr. Davis was employed, Elder Cornell and his people held their meetings on the sabbath in the town house, though they held weekly meetings in Mr. Snow's meeting-house, until, by a singular occurrence, they were induced to leave that house; yet they still claimed a right to it. This claim was renounced, after a proper examination of the subject, during the first months of Thomas Williams' ministry.

In September 1806, Mrs. Snow, by the advice of Dr. Emons, applied to Thomas Williams, of Pomfret, Connecticut, to come to Providence, and be their minister. To this application, after the most serious consideration for four months, he gave a reluctant and trembling consent. He came to Providence on the first of January 1807, with no prospect of a pecuniary compensation for his services. On the first sabbath he had for his hearers, Edward Wilbur, who was never able to learn to read; John Clarke, an excommunicated free-will Baptist; and Massa Basset. Mr. Basset sat in the gallery, played on a bass-viol and sang tenor, assisted by Mrs. Elizabeth Sampson, and her sister,

Rebecca Snow, nieces of Elder Snow. Besides these persons, he had from eight to twelve aged, pious women, all of whom, except two or three, were widows.

After Mr. Williams had been in Providence a month, in which he attempted by the means in his power, to ascertain whether there remained of Mr. Snow's people what ought to be accounted a church; he attempted to call a meeting of such men, as had been members of the church during his ministry. To accomplish this object, he rode ten miles into Smithfield, and there found Joseph Whipple, who had been one of Mr. Snow's members, but had gone to other meetings for some years; he rode eight miles into Attleborough, and there found a Mr. Armington, who had also been a member, but had attended no meeting for a number of years; he went into Seekonk, and there found Deacon French, an aged and infirm man, who had been to no place of worship for a long time, but had formerly been one of Mr. Snow's deacons; and in the town of Providence, he found William Eddy, who had been a member of Mr. Snow's church, but had withdrawn himself and gone with Elder Cornell.

Two or three of these four men agreed to attend what was called a meeting of the church, on a day which was appointed for the purpose. They came according to the appointment, and voted to receive Calvin Park, a professor in Brown University, and Paul Jewett, a tutor in the same institution, into the church, provided they shall procure a dismissal from the churches of which they were members, and unite themselves to the church in Providence. They obtained dismissal, and became members of the church."

"The congregation under Mr. Williams' ministry, slowly but constantly increased, until the number who commonly attended his meeting was from four to six hundred; the members of the church were about one hundred, with an unusual proportion of occasional communicants; and a greater number of the students in the college attended his meeting than at any other place of public worship. Mr. Williams never attempted nor desired to obtain hearers from other societies; for it was his opinion, that such persons, as were of any worth, were needed in the societies, to which they belonged; and that it would be no benefit to gain persons of a different character.

Mr. Williams had no definite compensation for his services; one year, for eight months, he went from house to house for his food, without a single dollar, during that time, for his labors. He had a small room, in which he lodged and studied. His clothes were washed by Phillis Fitch, a colored woman, who afterwards went to Africa, under the direction of the Colonization Society, and died within a year from the time she left Providence. She was born and bred in Pomfret, in the family of Schuyler Putnam, a son of Gen. Israel Putnam. She was a pious and worthy woman, and became a member of the church, while Mr. Williams was their minister.

Mr. Williams continued in Providence, without installation or regular settlement, until the 7th of April, 1816. At that time he renounced his connection with the church and people in that town, on account of the constant opposition to his ministry; chiefly through the influence of Abner Kingman, who declared that he had been tormented by his preaching nine years, and that he would no longer bear it.

During Mr. Williams' ministry the church adopted the covenant, the doctrinal articles, and the articles of discipline, which they have since retained, and took the name of the Pacific Congregational Church; and the society which was incorporated in the year 1808, was called the Pacific Congregational Society. While Mr. Williams was their minister, Massa Basset made an organ, which he offered the society, to be used in the public worship of God, and which they accepted, against the avowed sentiments and decided judgment of their minister.

When Mr. Williams left the society, they were free from debt, and owned in pews and other possessions some amount of property.

In July, 1816, Willard Preston was installed pastor and teacher of the Pacific Congregational Church and society. They gave him, at first, six hundred dollars a year; and some part of the time more than that sum. He was, for a little time, very popular with his people and in the town. But difficulties and contentions soon arose in the church and continued and increased, until a part of the church, with advice of a council, withdrew and formed a new church, by the name of the Calvinist Congregational Church. They had for their minister

Calvin Park. They held their meetings in a hall on Pine-street. Mr. Preston was dismissed in 1821, leaving the church, under the evil effects of the contention and disorder, that had existed during his ministry; and the society, enfeebled and embarrassed with debts. Under these troubles, they who had acted with Mr. Preston, and particularly Abner Kingman, who had been chosen a deacon in the church, applied to Mr. Williams for counsel and assistance. On the 2d of July, 1821, he began to supply the pulpit which he had formerly filled in Providence, and in November of that year moved with his family to that town. There he continued to preach, until the 5th of August 1823. The society then, through the influence of Abner Kingman, rejected his services and refused, under the control of the same man, to assign any reasons for their conduct; nor would they consent that Mr. Williams should be heard by the councils who were called for his dismission. Mr. Williams' offence chiefly consisted in the measures which he took for the re-union of the church, which had been divided by Mr. Preston's ministry.

After Mr. Williams' second removal, Elam Clark was ordained pastor and teacher of the church and people, and continued in office about a year. After his dismission Albert Judson was employed by the Pacific Society in the ministry of the gospel, about two years, without any installation. While he was there, in August 1825, most of the members, who had been divided during Mr. Preston's ministry, became united, under the name of the Union Congregational Church. The church at that time had 88 members.

On the 12th of December 1826, Thomas Tileston Waterman, was ordained rector of the church. In the year 1827 the society built the meeting house now standing on Richmond street. When the house was dedicated, the church and society changed their name, and have since been called the Richmond-street Congregational Church and Society.

Mr. Waterman was dismissed on the first of January 1837.— Charles Turner Torrey was ordained in the month of March, the same year, and remained there almost a year. In December, 1838, Willis Lord was installed and continued in the ministry nearly two years. After his dismission, their next pastor was Jonathan Leavitt, who was installed November 1840; and re-

mains with that church and people, until this day, 28th April, 1842."

The choice of pastor has always been with the church, the society having a negative on their choice. The expenses of public worship are defrayed by a tax on the pews. The church now (1842) consists of about 300 members. It is independent, but is associated with and forms a part of the Rhode-Island Consociation of Congregational Churches.

The author is indebted to Thomas Williams, for the greater part of the foregoing sketch.

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH.

In answer to the circular before referred to, the author received from A. D. Sargent, in 1836, a memoir of the rise and progress of Methodism in Providence. This memoir is so full, that little more has been done than to adapt its phraseology to the preceding parts of this work. In making out that sketch, the writer referred to the records of the church, and to the recollections of its aged members. The first clergymen of the Methodist Episcopal Church who visited Providence and preached, were Freeborn Garrettsen and Jesse Lee. The time of their first visits cannot be ascertained. After them there were many who occasionally called and preached in the town. Mr. Ashbury, Superintendent of the Methodists in America, preached here in June 1791. In 1798, Joshua Hall came to this place, tarried a few months, taught a school, and preached on Sunday evenings, and occasionally at other times.

On the 24th of November, in the same year, he

organized a church, and formed a class for regular meetings. The church consisted of only five persons. Meetings have been kept up regularly, from this time ; but there was no regular preacher until after some years. The first baptism by a Methodist clergyman, was on the first day of May 1801. The clergyman was Joseph Snelling, and the person baptized, Diadama Tripp. On the 28th of August following, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered for the first time, at which were present five male and seven female members. John Finegan was the officiating clergyman. The first quarterly meeting was holden in the Town House, on the 12th and 13th days of August 1803. George Pickering preached on that occasion. In the spring and summer of 1804, Erastus Kibby preached in the Town House. So few attended his meetings, that he became discouraged, and told one of our citizens now living, he was tired of preaching to the walls. In July 1815, Van Rensalaer Osborn came to this place, and preached in a school house near the corner of Pleasant and Middle-streets. His preaching was attended with great and good results, and by the middle of September, the church numbered thirty-three members. He met with great opposition, and had many and great obstacles thrown in his way, yet the society increased to such a degree that they deemed it expedient to undertake the erection of a house of worship. Mr. Osborn obtained about \$500 for this purpose, by subscription. Encouraged by this, the society purchased a lot and erected a meeting house thereon,

at the corner of Aborn and Washington-streets. It was dedicated on the 8th day of June 1816. The church then consisted of 111 members. Mr. Osborn was stationed over the church by the Annual Conference. In February 1817, a board of trustees was incorporated by the General Assembly, to hold the house and lot in trust for the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the same manner as all the meeting houses of that church are holden. When first erected, it was designed to have the seats free. In a short time it was found expedient to pew the house and rent the pews. Solomon Sias was stationed here in the years 1817 and 1818, and Moses Fifield in 1819. In 1820, Bartholomew Otheman became pastor of the church. He remained here two years, during which time the church and society increased so much, that the house was found too small to accommodate them. They therefore resolved to erect a new house, and a suitable lot for it, at the junction of Chestnut and Clifford-streets, was generously given to the society by Daniel Field. The old house was disposed of, and subsequently converted into a dwelling house. The corner stone of the new house was laid on the 6th day of August 1821, and the house dedicated on the first day of January 1822. This, like the first, is built of wood. It is sixty-five by seventy-five feet on the ground, a gallery around three sides of it, and a large and commodious room under the east part of it, used for evening and conference meetings. A steeple and bell have been since added.

Timothy Merritt followed Mr. Otheman in the

care of the church, and in 1823 and 1824, Enoch Mudge was stationed here. In 1825, Daniel Webb succeeded Mr. Mudge, and was followed by Asa Kent, Jacob Sanborn, David Kilburn, Jotham Horton, Jacob Sanborn again, Aaron D. Sargent, Daniel Fillmore, Abraham D. Merrill, and David Patten, Jr., according to the custom of the Methodist church, the last of whom was stationed here in 1841. Notwithstanding the church set off a part of its members in 1833, to form the Power-street church, and a part withdrew in 1841, to form the Fountain Street Wesleyan Society, the number of its members, in 1837, was 293, and in 1842, about 400. The congregation usually assembling in this house, is very large and respectable.

All the current annual expenses of the society have, from its first establishment, been paid by the voluntary subscriptions and contributions of its members. They are attached to the great body of the Methodist Episcopal church in the United States, agreeing with them in doctrine and church discipline. All the preachers that have been stationed over this church, since 1816, are, with their wives, now living in 1842; a remarkable circumstance. It is questionable whether the statistics of any other denomination could present a similar one.

PINE STREET, OR SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH.

The Pine street or Second Baptist Church, was organized on the first day of May 1805. Its first members were Jeremiah Rose, William West, Benjamin Ham, William Ham, Samuel Gorton, Reuben

Burke, Chace Webb, Laban Lake, Thomas Reynolds, Nancy West, Frances Gorton, Mercy Webb, Sarah Lake, Abigail Jenks, Lillis Paul and Rachel Mason, most of whom had been members of the First Baptist Church. Joseph Cornell became the pastor, at its first organization. He was a native of Swanzey, Mass. born February 11, 1747. He was ordained in Lanesborough, Mass. in 1780, after which he devoted himself to the work of the ministry to the end of his life, in 1826, with a zeal and faithfulness rarely equalled. With a very limited education, and entirely self-taught, he possessed such sound common sense and such a thorough knowledge of the springs of human action and passion, as enabled him to catch and hold the attention of his auditory, and make most deep and lasting impressions on their minds. He resigned the pastoral charge of this church in November 1811. From this time till October 1812, the church had no pastor. Elisha Cushman preached for them a part of the time. In October 1812, Daniel Lewis became pastor, but resigned his office at the end of a year. The church were again without a pastor until December 1814, when Luther Baker, assumed the pastoral care. He resigned his office in May 1822.— In December following, Peter Ludlow commenced preaching to the church. He was ordained in August 1823, but in consequence of ill health, resigned his charge in September following, and removed to Georgetown, S. C. James N. Seaman became pastor in December 1825, and relinquished the office in August 1828. In October fol-

lowing, Pharcellus Church became pastor. The church accepted his resignation in July 1834. In September following, John Blain commenced his labors as pastor of this church. He remained with it until the close of the year 1836. Soon after, the church succeeded in obtaining the services of J. S. Maginnis, who was, however, compelled to relinquish his charge, by ill health, in less than one year, and accepted the professorship of Theology, in the literary and theological institution at Hamilton, N. Y. After continuing for several months without a settled minister, the church and society invited the present pastor, John Dowling, then of New-York city, who entered upon his labors in this city in January 1839. Under the ministry of Mr. Dowling, the church has received large accessions, and now numbers about 500 communicants.

The church, from its first organization, until July 1806, worshipped with the Congregational society now known as the Richmond Street Congregational Society, in their old meeting-house on Richmond street. Mr. Cornell, before referred to, had been engaged, before the organization of this church, to preach for that society in this house, they being then destitute of a pastor. When the Congregational society obtained a minister of their own order, the Baptist church removed to "the Old Town House," under Mr. Cornell, as their pastor. This was in July 1806. In March following, they purchased the site on which their present meeting house stands, and erected a meeting house of wood on it, in the course of the same spring, which was dedicated to

the service of Almighty God, in June. The funds for erecting this house, were raised by subscription and sale of pews. In "the great storm" of September 1815, this house was swept from its foundations by the tide, and wholly destroyed. It will be remembered as a plain unassuming structure. For some time after its first erection, the water, at spring tides, flowed under a considerable part of the house. What is now known as Dorrance street, was then nothing but a dock, extending nearly to the line of Weybosset street. The water flowed over this dock, almost every tide, and at its ebb, disclosed the reason which obtained for it the name of Muddy Dock.

After the loss of this house, the church held meetings in the academy in Aborn street, and subsequently in the brick school house, then standing near Chestnut street. They immediately took measures for the erection of a new house. Two of their members were appointed to visit some of the principal cities and towns in the United States, and solicit aid for this work. They succeeded in obtaining about \$4,000. The new house was dedicated in November 1816, and cost, when completed, about \$10,000, the balance of which was paid by the sale of pews. It was a wooden structure, measuring fifty by seventy feet, and containing seventy-eight pews, besides those in the galleries. The tower extended just above the roof of the house. The steeple was added subsequently, and in 1837 the house was enlarged to its present size, fifty by eighty-five feet. It now contains one hundred and six pews, with large accommodations for evening

meetings and other purposes, under the main body of the house. It is now an ornament to the city.

The society obtained a charter of incorporation in February 1817, which was amended in February 1831, and the name changed from "the Second Baptist Society," to that of "the Pine Street Baptist Society." Previous to the last date, the salary of their pastors was raised by voluntary subscriptions, and since then, by tax on pews, a power to assess which tax, was given by the amended charter. The church forms a part of the Warren Baptist Association, but is strictly independent. By the charter, the power of appointing a pastor is given to the society, but is at the same time limited to such person as the church shall select.

THIRD BAPTIST CHURCH.

In preparing a sketch of this church and society very great assistance has been derived from a communication from William C. Barker. Not only his facts but his language also, will be generally adopted.

The congregation first associated, as a distinct worshipping assembly, in 1820. After meeting a number of times, they withdrew from the First Baptist Church, and formed themselves into the Third Baptist Church in Providence. The church at first consisted of fourteen individuals, nine males and five females. Among the most prominent of these were George Dodds and Isaac Peck. They at first adopted a written creed, but subsequently, in 1828, laid it aside, taking the holy scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice.

Allen Brown was the first settled pastor. He entered upon his duties in December 1821, and was ordained in January following. He retained the office of pastor, till January 1828, when he resigned it. From January to November 1828, there was no settled pastor over the church. On the first sabbath in November 1828, William Phillips engaged in the duties of pastor, which duties he discharged, to the satisfaction of church and society, until November 1836. He was succeeded by Joseph A. Warne, in February 1837. Mr. Warne's connexion with the society terminated at his request in January 1838. He was succeeded by Miron M. Dean, and he by Thorndike C. Jameson, who is the present pastor.

The number of the members of the church in 1837, was 195. Since then it has received many additions, the number in 1842, being about 450. The church acknowledges no obedience due to any other body on earth. It is strictly independent. It is however connected with the Warren Association of Baptists. The pastor is usually chosen by concurrent vote of church and society, although the society have no power of controlling the church in that matter.

The church met for worship first, in private houses. Afterward they purchased a lot of land on Tockwotton plain, and commenced erecting a meeting-house upon it in 1820. The house was completed, and dedicated to the service of God, on the 29th day of June 1822. It was of wood, forty-five feet by fifty, with a convenient room in the basement. The funds necessary to erect this house were

obtained partly by subscription and contribution, and partly by sale of the pews. The house underwent very considerable alterations, after its first erection. In 1832 it was lengthened twenty-four feet, and raised two and a half feet, making it forty-five by seventy-four feet. A cupola-steeple and bell were also added. Since then the house has been farther lengthened, and is about forty-five by ninety-nine feet.

The society received a charter of incorporation in June 1832. The whole expense of public worship was at first raised by subscription, and so continued until within a few years, when the pew owners consented to subject their pews to taxation, for that purpose.

The church and society has always had munificent benefactors, who from their abundance, contributed much, but over and above them all, should be borne in remembrance George Dodds. Of humble fortune, and past the period of life when he could hope to add to it, Mr. Dodds devoted himself to the service of this church and society from its commencement. His unostentatious piety, secured him the esteem and love of all who knew him, and many gave their mite to this society for the sake of the good old man who solicited it. Long may he be remembered. That small canvass bag which he carried so long, ready to receive the offerings of all to aid in erecting this church, should be esteemed an invaluable relic. Others did well, but he exceeded them all.

THE FOURTH BAPTIST SOCIETY.

A number of gentlemen residing in the northerly part of Providence, met on the 26th day of April, 1820, for the purpose of consulting, on the practicability of erecting a house of public worship, in their vicinity. Benjamin Peck, was the chairman, and Samuel Thurber, clerk of the meeting. They appointed a committee to select and purchase a suitable lot for the purpose, and to open a subscription to raise sufficient funds to carry their design into effect. On the fifth of June, this committee reported, that they had purchased a lot, and collected by subscription, nearly enough to pay for it. They advised the appointment of another committee to solicit subscriptions toward the erection of a house. Dexter Thurber, Stanford Newel, Asa Pike, Samuel Thurber, Enos Angell, David Cole, Consider Miller, Holden Pearce, Esek Esten jr. and Joseph Veasie, were appointed this committee, with full power to take such steps to attain the great object in view, viz. the erection of a meeting house and the establishment of a religious church and society, as they might think most expedient. Among the earliest steps taken, was the procuring of a charter of incorporation, which was granted by the General Assembly at their October session, A. D. 1820. This differs from most charters for similar purposes, as it includes fundamental articles of government agreed upon by the society, touching not only the disposal of the property of the society, but the creed of the church which should assemble within the society's house. These last provisions breathe a spirit above

all sectarianism. They resolved that the meeting house shall be a Baptist meeting house, as a majority of persons engaged in the erection of it were Baptists, and they assumed the name of the Fourth Baptist Society. This is all the sectarianism in the charter or agreement, and this is neutralised in a very great degree, by a subsequent article which declares, that no subscription to any creed, article of faith or covenant, shall be required to constitute any person a member of said society, or of the church which may meet in their house, and that no person shall be required to make any confession of faith, other than a belief in the scriptures of the old and new testaments.

The first meeting under the charter, was holden on the 28th day of May 1821. Among other things, they then appointed Dexter Thurber, Enos Angell, Jabez Gorham, Peter Daniels, and David Cole, a committee to superintend the erection of their meeting house. The house was completed in the summer of 1822, and was dedicated on the 26th day of August. It is a wooden structure, forty-seven by sixty-seven feet on the ground, and containing sixty-eight pews, with a projection, thirteen by thirty feet, supporting the steeple, which is ninety feet in height, and is furnished with a good bell. It is a well proportioned building, and neatly finished both inside and out, being an ornament to that part of Providence and doing honor to the persons who planned and carried the project into execution. The cost of the house exceeded six thousand dollars. Donations to the amount of \$611 were received

from sundry persons not members of the society. The sale of the pews yielded more than \$4,500. In January 1825, the society received the grant of a lottery from the General Assembly, from which they realized two thousand dollars.

The first settled pastor over this church and society, was Zalmon Tobey. He was invited to that place in February 1823. Previous to that time, their pulpit had been temporarily supplied, by various preachers. Mr. Tobey continued his connexion with the society until April 1833, when he was dismissed at his own request. He was succeeded by Peter Simonson, who continued pastor of the church until October 1836, when having received an invitation to become the agent of the New-Jersey Baptist State Convention, he requested and received a dismission from his pastoral charge.

Thomas B. Ripley soon after accepted an invitation from the church and society to become their pastor, and continued to fulfil the duties of that office until August 1840.

Their present pastor, Francis Smith, commenced his labors among them on the first of January 1841, and was ordained on the 30th of March following.

The compensation of the pastor, and all the expenses attending public worship, have been defrayed by tax on pews and voluntary subscription. The power of choosing and settling pastors is in the church and society. The present number of church members is one hundred and ninety-seven; the congregation usually assembling for worship exceeds three hundred.

The following remarks were written by one of the members of the church, and are inserted by particular request :

“ In the summer of 1835, a discussion arose in the church, in relation to the terms of communion ; which resulted in the passage of a resolution to invite “ all members of evangelical churches, in good standing, who have been buried with Christ in Baptism,” to a seat at the sacramental board.

The adoption of this measure, by the church, gave offence to some of the friends of the society, who believed that one of the most important articles of its charter, had been rendered void. The church, however, still continued to occupy the house, and have done so up to the present time ; and a committee was some time since appointed by the society, to petition for an alteration of the charter.

The introduction into that instrument, of the article which declares that “ no subscription to any creed, article of faith, or covenant, shall be required, to constitute any person a member of said society, or of the church which may meet in their house,” and that “ no person shall be required to make any confession of faith, other than a belief in the scriptures of the old and new Testaments,” was effected by men who were, beyond all question, the true friends of liberty, both civil and religious. It is believed, however, that in the adoption of this measure, they overlooked one important feature in the constitution of a church of Christ :—the fact that the only real bond of union, among the members of such a body, is love. In all other organized bodies, men may act together effectively, without being influenced by this feeling ; but the prosperity and influence of a church are exactly in proportion to the sincerity and fervency of the affection which the members feel for one another, and for their Great Head. This principle alone can hold them together, and enable them to act together ; and this is their distinctive badge : “ By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” This being the case, how useless must it ever be, to attempt, by legislative enactments, to bind together, in the form of a church, individuals who differ entirely in their

views of religious doctrine ; and how vain to expect that men will labor, in concert, and with their whole hearts, for the support and for the promulgation of truth, who can never agree in regard to " what is truth."

Measures like this, so far from being promotive of religious freedom, are, in fact, calculated to perpetuate religious thralldom, inasmuch as they compel men either to labor for the promotion of what they regard as error, or to refrain from acting in the defence, the support, and the propagation, of that which they believe to be truth.

The question, " how can two walk together, except they be agreed ?" has been conclusively answered by the history of this church. During the first thirteen years of its existence, it was obliged to struggle hard for life, encumbered as it was, by a principle, which, however beautiful in theory, was found to be ruinous in its practical influence. But no sooner did it resolve to abandon the attempt to live under such circumstances, and to take a stand upon the broad and sure " foundation of the apostles and prophets," than it began to thrive ; and, from that time to the present, has enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, the number of its members having been increased nearly three-fold, while its influence in the region where it is situated, and the amount contributed for the support of the various benevolent operations of the day, have been augmented in something like the same proportion."

FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY.

The answer of Mr. Balch, pastor of the Universalist Society, in 1837, to the circular before referred to, has furnished most of the facts, and much of the language, which will be used in the sketch of that society.

In the autumn of 1772, John Murray came to this town, bearing a recommendation from General James M. Varnum to Nicholas Brown. He preached in Mr. Snow's meeting-house. He visited this

town occasionally, for many years after this, and preached in such places as could be procured for him. After Mr. Murray, Elhanan Winchester, Adam Streeter, Richard Carrique, and various others, preached occasionally to those professing a belief in the salvation of all men through him "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." These meetings were usually holden in the "Old Town House," but no regular preacher was employed, till after the organization of a society in 1821. On the 16th of February 1821, a subscription paper was circulated and signatures procured for the purpose of organizing an Universalist society. Their first meeting was holden at the court house, on the 10th day of April 1821, and the following persons were present, viz. Rufus Waterman, Charles Harts-horn, Oliver Carpenter, Esek Eddy, Jeremiah Fenner, Sion Fenner, William A. Smith, Samuel W. Wheeler, Thaddeus Curtis, William Olney, Benjamin Snow, Rhodes G. Allen, Dutee Roberts, James Anthony 2d, John Lassell, James Stetson, Lucius Dyer, Henry Brickley, Asa Ferguson, Nehemiah Arnold, James W. Mitchell, John F. Sheldon, Calvin Thomas, William Calder, John Martin.

At this meeting, it was "resolved, that we will form ourselves into a religious society, to be known by the name of the First Universalist Society in the town of Providence, and that we will receive into our body such persons of good moral habits, as choose to associate with us." The subscription paper circulated for signatures began thus: "We the subscribers, believing in that gospel which God

preached to Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed, do hereby," &c. This was the creed or covenant under which the society was organized, and it has not since been altered. Rufus Waterman was chosen President, Oliver Carpenter, Treasurer, and Samuel W. Wheeler, Clerk. An act of incorporation was obtained in October 1821, on the petition of fifty-three members.

On the 7th of December 1821, Fayette Mace, of Strong, (Me.) was invited to the pastoral care of the society. He entered upon his duties, the following spring, and continued to discharge them, until January 1823, when he took his leave of the society and returned to Maine.

February 17, 1823, David Pickering, of Hudson, N. Y. being invited to become pastor of the society, accepted the invitation and entered upon his labors as such, on the second sabbath in May following. He was installed June 4, 1823. He continued with the society, until the first sabbath in October 1835, when he removed to New-York, having previously asked and received a dismissal. Nov. 30, 1835, William S. Balch, of Claremont, N. H. was called to the pastoral charge of the society, which call he accepted and entered upon his duties on the 5th day of March 1836. Having accepted a call from the city of New-York, he took his leave of the society in November 1841. Henry Bacon, of Marblehead, Mass. succeeded him. He is the present pastor, having been installed March 17, 1842.

The society resolved, the 22d day of October 1821, to erect a house of public worship on the lot

which they purchased of Nathan Mathewson, at the corner of Westminster and Union streets. The corner stone of the edifice was laid, with appropriate religious ceremonies, on the third of June 1822. A silver plate deposited in the stone bears this inscription.

“The First Universalist Society in Providence, was incorporated by an act of the General Assembly of the State of Rhode-Island, at their October session 1821. The corner stone of this edifice, designed for the service of Almighty God, through his son Jesus Christ, was laid by Rev. Fayette Mace, on the 3d June, A. D. 1822. John H. Greene, architect, Caleb Mosher, Zachariah Chafee, joint master-builders. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice. Ps. xcvi. 1.”

The house was built of stone. It contained one hundred and twenty-eight pews, cost upwards of \$20,000, and furnished conclusive evidence of the good taste, talents and skill of the architect and master-builders.

The money expended in the erection of this house was raised by subscription among the society; each subscriber being allowed, in pews, the amount of his subscription. This house, with several other buildings in the vicinity, was destroyed by fire on the evening of the 24th of May 1825. The fire originated on the opposite side of Union-street, in a cabinet maker's shop, then occupied by Rhodes G. Allen. The society held a meeting the day after the destruction of their house, when it was “voted that the society will immediately build a new house for

public worship, provided sufficient subscriptions can be obtained," &c. June 4th, it was "voted unanimously, that we build a new house for the public worship of Almighty God, on the foundation of the old house recently destroyed by fire." The corner stone of this house was laid by David Pickering, with appropriate religious services. It was completed at an expense of upwards of \$24,000, and dedicated on the 29th day of December 1825. The cost of this house was defrayed as the cost of the former one had been, with the exception of some private donations, and about six hundred dollars, raised by collections taken up by the Universalist Societies in Portsmouth, N. H. Boston and Gloucester, Mass. This is a handsome Roman-Ionic brick building, containing one hundred and twenty-two pews on the floor, with a handsome steeple, furnished with a good bell and clock.

The original mode of raising money for the support of public worship, was by voluntary subscription; but the charter of the society was so amended in October 1832, that a tax upon the pews, not exceeding five per cent. on the original appraisal, may be levied for that purpose, and the money has been thus raised ever since. The whole power of choosing, settling, and dismissing pastors, rests solely in the society, which acknowledges obedience to no other power save the Great Head of the church, which is his body the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. It is strictly independent. There were, in 1837, ninety-seven members of the society. The congrega-

tion usually assembling for worship, ranges from 500 to 600.

There is a church formed in connexion with the society. It requires no profession of faith, except a belief in Almighty God and his Son Jesus Christ. Each member takes the Bible as his creed, and covenants with the church, to walk in the statutes of the Lord, blameless. All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, whether public professors or not, are respectfully invited to communion. The church claims no authority in the settlement or dismissal of a pastor, nor control over its members, further than admonition and dismissal for unchristian conduct. It meddles not with the peculiar sentiments of its members, any of whom can withdraw at pleasure.

CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND PAUL.

A few Catholics in Providence, and a few in the vicinity, in the year 1827, demanded the spiritual care of a priest. Robert D. Woodley, was sent to them by Benedict Fenwick, the Catholic Bishop of New-England. Mr. Woodley continued to attend to their spiritual affairs until 1830, when John Corry succeeded him in the pastoral charge. At that time the number of Catholics was from 150 to 200. During Mr. Woodley's time, they held their religious exercises in Mechanics' Hall. Soon after Mr. Corry assumed the charge, the civil authority of the town granted them the use of the "Old Town House," which they used four or five years. In January 1832, Mr. Corry purchased the lot of land upon

which the Catholic church of St. Peter and St. Paul was subsequently erected. In November 1832, Mr. Connelly succeeded Mr. Corry, who was then stationed in Taunton. At that time, the Catholics numbered about 300. In a short time, they greatly increased in numbers, owing to the rail-roads then in the course of construction in the vicinity. In May 1834, Mr. Lee succeeded Mr. Connelly, and held the pastoral charge for three years and a half, being occasionally assisted by Messrs. Lynch, McNamee and Mills. The Catholics then numbered about one thousand. In 1836, in July, the foundation of the church of St. Peter and St. Paul was laid. But little progress was made in the building that season, through want of funds. The work was, in fact, wholly discontinued from October 1836, to September following. At the last mentioned date Mr. Corry was again stationed in the city, and re-commenced the building, and had it closed in, by the first of December, when religious exercises were held in it for the first time. In the course of the following summer, the interior was more decently fitted up for divine service. At the Christmas of 1838, Messrs. Philip Allen & Son presented the church a fine toned, Spanish bell, weighing about one thousand pounds. A sweet toned organ was placed in the church in 1841. The whole expense of the lot, church, organ, and church furniture, was about \$12,000. The church covers an area, ninety-eight feet by forty-four. It is thirty-four feet high, having a fine basement story, in which are two good school rooms. The walls of the house are built of slate

stone, covered with cement. It is a castellated gothic structure, with a tower, of fine proportions and finish.

As early as 1813 or 1814, the Catholics celebrated mass in a small wooden building then standing on the north side of Sheldon-street, about one hundred feet east of Benefit-street. Public service, according to the rites and ceremonies of that church, was performed there for nearly a year. The building then occupied was a small one, which had previously been improved as a school house. It was subsequently removed from this lot, and blown down in "the great gale" of 1815. Bishop Cheverus occasionally officiated in this chapel.

WESTMINSTER CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY.

In January 1828, a number of individuals professing Unitarianism, associated themselves together under the name of "The Religious Association." Subsequently, one of the deacons and fourteen of the members of the First Congregational church, having been at their own request dismissed from that church, united with this association and formed what has since been known as the Westminster Congregational society. They first met for public worship in the "old tin top" meeting house, on Richmond street. In 1829, they erected, at an expense of \$35,000, a handsome and spacious church, on the west side of Mathewson street, of the Ionic order of architecture, containing one hundred and six pews. The walls are of stone, covered with cement. There is no church in the city which is more

chaste in its style of architecture, or which exhibits more classic taste in its exterior, than this. The funds for building this house were raised by subscription and sale of pews.

Frederick A. Farley was the first pastor of this church. He was ordained September 10, 1828.— He resigned his charge in July 1841, and was succeeded by the present pastor, Samuel Osgood, who was installed December 29, 1841. The pastor is chosen and settled by the society. The expenses of public worship are raised by tax on pews. In June, 1828, the General Assembly granted a charter of incorporation to the society. The church has no written creed, but only a written covenant. The number of church members in 1842 was between 40 and 50. The church is strictly independent.

GRACE CHURCH.

The parish of Grace church was organized in May 1829. It consisted of about forty families, or two hundred persons, including thirty-one communicants.

In December 1836, the congregation had increased to about 140 families, and 261 communicants. During the first year, this parish was supplied by the neighboring Episcopal clergymen. Samuel Fuller, jr. officiated from May 1830, to April 1831, George F. Hawkins a part of the year 1832, and John A. Clark from October 1832, to October 1835. He was succeeded by the present (1842) rector, Alexander H. Vinton.

The society first met for worship in the old Con-

gregational meeting house, at the corner of Pine and Richmond streets, known as the "old tin top." In the year 1832, they purchased the Providence Theatre, at the corner of Westminster and Mathewson streets, and converted the same into a commodious place of worship. It is now a very handsome Gothic building, with appropriate tracery on the windows and doors, and is an ornament to that part of the city. It contains one hundred and ten pews; but the society has increased so much, that they will soon be compelled to abandon it, for one of more ample accommodations. The expense of the purchase and alteration of this house was raised by subscriptions and sale of pews. The parish received a charter of incorporation, in June 1829. Public worship is supported by a tax on pews and income of the funds of the society. It was originally established according to the doctrines, rites, and usages of the Protestant Episcopal church of the United States. The power of calling a minister, resides in the vestry, the corporation having the liberty of nominating.

ROGER WILLIAMS BAPTIST CHURCH.

In December 1829, a number of persons belonging to different Baptist churches, judging it expedient to have a congregation for public worship, on Christian Hill, procured a private room on High street, for their accommodation, and engaged William C. Manchester, for their minister. On the 22d day of March 1830, twelve persons, eight of whom were from the Six Principle Baptist church in Scitu-

ate, two from that in Coventry, one from that in Cranston, and one from that in Johnston, assembled at their usual place of worship and associated themselves together as a church, under the name of the Roger Williams Christian Hill church, now known as Roger Williams church. Agreeably to the practice of the churches, to which the members of the newly constituted church previously belonged, they subscribed to no written creed or covenant, but receive the holy scriptures, as furnishing every article of necessary belief, and teaching them their duties to one another and to all men. There was however, a mutual understanding, that, with slight exceptions, the doctrines set forth in a treatise on Doctrine and Practice just published by the General Conference of the Freewill Baptist denomination, were taught by the scriptures. Their numbers continuing to increase, in June 1831, they petitioned for a charter of incorporation, which was granted them under the name of the Roger Williams church of the Six Principle Baptists in Providence. The church and congregation continued to occupy their hired room until 1832, when they removed to a school house on Battey street, a few rods north of High street. Soon after obtaining their charter, they commenced building the house they now occupy on Burges street. It is a wooden structure, 70 by 45 feet, on the ground, with a handsome steeple and a bell. It was dedicated on the 25th day of December 1833. The funds for erecting the house were obtained, partly by private subscription, and partly by sale of the pews. The charter gives power to

tax the pews for repairs of the house, but all the expenses of public worship, are raised by contribution. The church united with the Rhode-Island and Massachusetts Conference, of the Six Principle Baptists, in September 1830. That Conference in September 1835, received a charge against the church of using instrumental music in public worship. The matter was referred to a committee, to examine into the same and to deal with the church in relation thereto. Upon a hearing before the committee, the church admitted the charge, and attempted to justify it.—The committee, not agreeing with the church, passed a vote of censure on them and excluded them from their communion, while they continued the use of musical instruments in public worship. Upon being informed of this result, the church protesting against the power of the Conference to delegate the powers exercised by their committee, resolved to withdraw from the Conference. In May 1836, an attempt was made to connect this church with the Warren Association of Baptists, but it was ineffectual, owing to dissimilarity of sentiments, on some points. They remained, therefore, wholly independent and disconnected with any other body of Christians whatever, until May 1837, when they united with the Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting of the Free-will Baptists, still maintaining the peculiarities of the old Baptists, excepting strict communion.

The congregation, during the first year, consisted of from 30 to 60 persons. Since then, it has been gradually increasing. After passing through vari-

ous and severe trials, the church is now in a prosperous condition. The congregation varies from two to four hundred, generally rising two hundred, and the number of communicants in the church is 130.—“As a church, they are utterly opposed to slavery and intemperance, and all things that tend to these: yet to abolish these with every other evil, they choose to call no man, or class of men, Master, but steadily to follow that course they judge to be pointed out to them by the Word, Spirit and Providence of God.” July 7, 1837, Elder Manchester was dismissed from the church as a minister and member. September 30, 1837, L. D. Johnson, of Boston, Mass. became their pastor, and was installed, an unusual ceremony with the connection. Their next pastor was Arthur A. Caveno, of Strafford, N. H. who continued with them a year. Their present pastor is James A. McKenzie, of Newport, R. I. who commenced his labors with them May 1, 1840.

THE PAWTUXET STREET CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

A church of this denomination of Christians, was organized here more than thirty years since, but for want of a pastor, its members soon became scattered, and the church extinct. In the winter of 1833-4, a few individuals associated together, and invited ministers from abroad to visit and preach to them. Their meetings were holden at private houses. As their numbers increased, and a greater interest became manifested in their meetings, they engaged Elijah W. Barrows, of Connecticut, for a pastor, and established their meetings in the old meeting

house of the present Richmond Street Congregational Society, standing at the corner of Pine and Richmond streets. This was in April 1834. Their numbers were still small, the congregation varying from forty to eighty persons. The church was organized in July of the same year, and consisted of nineteen members. In November, they commenced the erection of a small chapel for their accommodation, upon a lot of land at the corner of Pawtuxet and Fenner streets, which they hired for the purpose. It was completed so as to be dedicated to religious service, about the first day of January 1835. The cost of the building was \$1000, which they raised by sale of pews. Elder Barrows continued with them until April 1837, when he was dismissed, at his request. After a few months, Edward Edmunds, of New-York, was engaged to succeed him. He was ordained elder of this church in November. The church and congregation increased very rapidly under his charge. In the summer of 1838, they enlarged their chapel, so that it could accommodate over two hundred and fifty persons. They purchased the lot at the northwest corner of Pawtuxet and Fenner streets, in 1839, and removed their house on to it. Mr. Edmunds resigned his office in April 1840, and Benjamin Taylor, formerly of Massachusetts, but more recently of Michigan, succeeded him in June following, and continued with them one year. During this time, the congregation increased very much, so that their chapel would not accommodate them. In July 1841, they broke ground for a new chapel, forty-

seven by seventy feet. It was soon completed, at a cost of \$10,000. It contains eighty pews on the floor, with an orchestra and side galleries, and will accommodate at least seven hundred persons. The cost of this, as well as of their first chapel, was raised by sale of pews. John Taylor, formerly of Massachusetts, but recently of Portsmouth, R. I., became pastor of this church and society in June 1841. The church now consists of upwards of two hundred members.

In settling a pastor, the church recommends, but the power of election is in the society. The pastor's salary, and all the expenses of public worship, are defrayed by monthly subscriptions and collections. The church is strictly independent in its government, and for its creed, takes the holy scriptures as their only rule of faith and practice. The society was incorporated in 1834, under the name of "The Pawtuxet Street Christian Society."

MEETING STREET BAPTIST CHURCH.

This church occupies the house formerly known as the African Union Meeting and School House. It was built in 1819, upon a lot on Meeting street, given to them by the late Moses Brown. The design, in its erection, was to establish a building in which all the colored people of Providence might assemble for public worship, and in which a school could be kept exclusively for their children. The work was undertaken without any reference to sectarian differences among them, and was approbated by most of the clergymen in Providence, and by

professing Christians of all denominations. It was vainly supposed then, that denominational distinctions might be buried, among this class of people, and they be induced to forego their own opinions on religious matters. At first, they proceeded with much unanimity. They raised about five hundred dollars, among themselves, and their agent, Nathaniel Paul, was successful in obtaining subscriptions for their aid, in other places which he visited for that purpose. In April 1819, they commenced the erection of a wooden building, fifty feet by forty, with a large room in the basement, appropriate for a school room. The school room was fitted for use in June 1819. Meetings were holden in it also till August 1821, when the upper part being finished, was dedicated to the service of Almighty God. The cost of the structure exceeded two thousand dollars; of this amount rising eight hundred dollars were subscribed by people of color. Much credit is due to the Rev. Henry Jackson for his active and zealous exertions in relation to this house. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that without them, it would not have been built.

The friends of the colored people who were engaged in this enterprise, were soon disappointed, for the same causes which have produced sects and dissonant creeds throughout Christendom, operated to divide and subdivide the colored people of Providence.

The churches of colored people now in Providence, generally originated and met first for worship in this house.

The friends of the original enterprise have by this circumstance, probably done more good than they anticipated. The great body of colored people are now divided into sects, having distinct houses of worship, while before 1819, they had no house of any kind, and probably would not have had, up to the present time, had it not been for this very movement.

A portion of the colored population still meet in this house, a part of whom constitute "the Meeting Street Baptist Church." They were first recognized as a regular Baptist church and congregation, on the 8th day of December 1841. The church then consisted of nine persons, seven males and two females. It has now increased to thirty-three. The congregation were about fifty in number. Jeremiah Asher, of Hartford, Conn. was then ordained their pastor, and has continued that relation up to the present time. At that time the members of the church entered into a covenant with one another, but they never have had any written creed. Their annual expenses are defrayed by voluntary subscription and contribution. The power of choosing and settling a pastor, is in the church and society. The church is strictly independent, acknowledging no obedience due from it to any other body on earth.