

CHAPTER X.

CHURCH HISTORY CONTINUED – CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH SUBSEQUENT TO 1834 – BAPTIST CHURCH – UNITARIAN CHURCH – METHODIST CHURCH – CATHOLIC CHURCH – EPISCOPAL SERVICES IN TOWN.

The ample lot on which the meeting-house stands was the gift of a prominent member of the church and society, Benjamin Wright. The deed, or indenture, by which the land is held and which bears date of Dec. 29, 1834, is a fine specimen of conveyancing, every word and line of which shows the purpose of the donor, in making the gift, that no doctrines except those of the Orthodox Congregationalists, as then understood, should ever be preached in the house standing on the land donated.

The house was built by subscription, with the intention of having a stock company to control the ownership; but it seemed necessary when the house was finished, to sell the pews and use the money so raised, in part, to pay off debts. The balance of the money accruing from the sale was paid to the subscribers, and the pew-holders became the virtual owners of the house, and are such to-day – a most unfortunate arrangement, as it leaves the society with no practical control of the pews for the purpose of raising revenue for the current expenses.

Mr. Moore preached in the new house but seventeen months. The church, at the time of his resignation, numbered two hundred and twenty-five, and was in a prosperous condition. The whole number admitted during his entire ministry, i.e., from 1802 to 1836, a little more than a third of a century, was three hundred and thirty-five. His residence continued in town until his decease, in his ninety-third year. The last Sabbath he occupied the pulpit as pastor of the church, he preached two sermons appropriate to the occasion. The following are extracts from the afternoon discourse:

“My manner of life you all know, for I have been familiar with you in all the relations and conditions of life. At the bed of sickness you have had my sympathies, and my prayers. I have had some experience myself, and I knew how to feel for other’s distresses. . . . I have been with you in prosperity, under a clear sky, the sun shining in its strength, and I have been with you in difficulty, difficulty which tried men’s souls. I was with you, shoulder to shoulder, and breasted every impediment; obstacles gave way, difficulty vanished, the cause of truth and righteousness triumphed, and by the grace of God, I now stand here; and if I forget thee, O House of my God, let my right hand forget her cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. In the course of the last thirty-three years there have been many and great changes. During that period, about four hundred and sixty deaths have occurred in this town. Death has been no respecter of persons. All along the road of life, from the cradle to the decrepitude of old age, he has gathered his victims. About one half the number which inhabited the town when I first came into it are gone. . . . Most of those, who then stood prominent on the stage of action, are gone. Here and there I see a decayed, leaning trunk, a hoary head and trembling limbs; a new generation is before me.

“I feel as if the results of my whole ministry turn very much on the impressions I make and leave this day. An ill-chosen word, an unguarded expression, an unholy feeling, might, perhaps, destroy more than I ever did in a year, or in my whole ministerial life. God of wisdom, direct me!

“Church of God, companions in Christian arms, connected with myself by the tenderest ties and the dearest associations, I have often urged upon you the necessity of growth in grace, of advancement in holiness, of a higher tone of piety, of greater sacrifice and action for the cause of Christ. It is a day of progress. The system of universal nature seems to have received a fresh impulse. It is a day for great things; great effort must be made, and great objects will be accomplished. The church must not lag behind. The spirit of the age demands your highest and holiest energies. Gather light from the Word, and from the Sanctuary. Gather spiritual animation from the divine throne. Take courage from every occurrence and from every circumstance, and persevere in the work of the Lord. I entreat you in the language of the apostle, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing; and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.”

“The place where I now stand is to me the dearest spot on earth. Everything conspires to make it so. I leave it; but wherever I am, I will look this way, as the Jews have always looked toward their temple with prayer, and it shall

ever be my devout supplication, that the cloud may ever dwell here, and display his glory in the midst of you and to succeeding generations.”

How well he kept his promise, and what a good parishioner he was (the greatest evidence of grace a retired clergyman can give), every pastor who filled the pulpit during his lifetime has testified.

Rev. J. W. Salter was installed two months after Mr. Moore's resignation, and was dismissed October 24, 1838. The records indicate that during his pastorate the utmost harmony did not prevail, although the membership of the church was increased by twenty-two additions. Differences which had arisen during Mr. Salter's ministry increased after his departure, and the church decided to call a council to advise them what to do in their trouble. This is the only council ever called by this church to advise or help settle any internal difficulty. The trouble seems to have been very soon adjusted. In a few months the church and society, with great unanimity and enthusiasm, united in giving Abner B. Warner a call to become their pastor, and in February, 1839, he was ordained. After a pastorate of a little more than seven years his health failed, and he was dismissed October 27, 1846. His labors were greatly blessed; one hundred and two united with the church during his ministry. As a speaker he possessed great power; as a writer his diction was simple, yet forcible; as a preacher he was earnest, and at times pathetic. His tone and manner evinced the tenderness and spirituality of his heart. As a pastor, he was preeminently kind and sympathetic.

Mr. Warner came to the church at a critical time, and he proved himself equal to all demands. The church and society had at an early day espoused the temperance cause, and were at the time of his settlement taking up the slavery question as a matter which must have the attention of Christian people. In 1840 Parson Moore represented the town in the legislature through the influence of the anti-slavery people, and took an active part in the discussion of the slavery question presented in the house by a communication from the governor of one of the Southern states. By the vote of the anti-slavery party he was the next year made a member of the state senate, and did what he could to advance the cause which was so dear to his heart.

In less than two years after Mr. Warner had become pastor, we find the church passing the following resolutions:

“Resolved, That we believe slaveholding to be contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and that it threatens the peace, purity, and permanence of the religious institutions of the land, and greatly embarrasses the operations of Christian benevolence.

“Resolved, That we as a church earnestly protest against the course, wherever pursued, of receiving into the treasury of the Lord the avails of unpaid labor – the price of slaves, and the souls of men.”

At the annual Thanksgiving service in 1842, Mr. Warner preached a sermon of great power, in which we find the following burning words:

“No! the soil of the Pilgrims shall not be trod by the human hounds that hunt for the panting fugitive. We will resist the aggression of the lords of rice-tierce and cotton bales; not with violence and blood, but with that burning righteous public opinion that better than cold steel and bristling bayonets will keep off the enemies of the race.”

The sermon was printed at the unanimous request of the parish, and stand to-day a most eloquent witness to the position of pastor, church, and society at that early day upon this question, which was then beginning to be agitated in religious bodies.

In 1844 the church published a series of resolutions denouncing slavery, which were followed by an invitation to all the churches of Hillsborough county to meet in convention at Milford for the object of discussing the anti-slavery question, and to take some action upon the subject. All Congregational churches were not as advanced as the brethren of Milford, and not being willing to indorse the position of the denomination at large upon the slavery question, and because this church was not ready to cut loose from all pro-slavery churches, a score or more of respected and prominent members of the church here, withdrew, and were called “come-outers.” But no unchristian feelings were indulged or unkind words uttered, and in subsequent years, all those who came out for conscience's sake in the forties became again attendants at this church, or found a congenial home in the Unitarian church, excepting those who meantime had found a home in the “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” In the great conflict, of which this generation has seen the end, this church has a record of which it need not be ashamed.

After leaving Milford, Mr. Warner had a pastorate of six years at Medford, Mass., where he died in office in May, 1853.

In March, 1847, the church and society united in giving Rev. Lycurgus P. Kimball a call, and he was installed May 19, 1847. Mr. Kimball was a man of eminent piety, and labored with great earnestness and accomplished much good. His health failed, and he was compelled to leave his work in August, 1848. Twenty-two united with the church during his ministry.

In November, 1848, the church and society gave Rev. E. N. Hidden a call. He declined, giving as a reason his relation to his own people. In April, 1849, the church and society renewed their call; he again declined. In September, 1849, the committee of the church and society visited Mr. Hidden, bearing a written request, signed by all the male members of the church and society, urging him to reverse his decision and become their pastor. In October he sent his letter of acceptance, and November 21, 1849, was installed. During Mr. Hidden's ministry the congregation increased until it became necessary to enlarge the house. The house was cut open in front of the pulpit, and twenty-eight pews were added. Mr. Hidden preached one Sabbath with an open space between him and his audience. In the early part of 1857, his eyes becoming so troublesome that he could read or write but little, he felt compelled to resign. In November, 1857, he closed his labors with the church and people, respected and loved by all who knew him. One hundred and seven united with the church during his ministry.

April 7, 1858, Rev. S. C. Kendall was installed pastor. In 1859 he asked to be dismissed in order to accept a call from another church. A council, mutually called, refused to advise the parties to dissolve the relation so profitably existing; but in 1860 his former parish made an earnest appeal for his return, and he resigned, closing his labors in Milford November 1, and was reinstalled at Webster, Mass., the following week. Thirty united with the church while he was pastor. He is remembered as a man of marked ability and spirituality.

May 1, 1861, F. D. Ayer was ordained pastor. His ministry commenced with the outbreak of the Civil war. He remained a little more than six years, and was dismissed September 8, 1867, to accept a call from the North church in Concord, where he still remains the honored pastor of one of the best known and most beloved of the ministers of his denomination. Seventy-five united with the church during his ministry, and his work and influence in the town will be felt long after his earthly career is ended.

After the close of Mr. Ayer's labor, Rev. George F. Stanton was engaged to supply for six months. Before the expiration of this time the church voted to give him a call to become their pastor; the society did not concur.

In 1868, Rev. George E. Freeman was installed pastor, and was dismissed in December, 1871, to accept a call from the church in Abington, Mass. Thirty-two joined the church while he was pastor.

In 1872, Rev. George Pierce, Jr., was installed pastor, and remained for a little over six years. Two hundred and ten were added to the membership of the church. In 1878 he was dismissed to accept a call to Andover, Mass. Three years later he closed his earthly labors, having in a comparatively short career done much work for his Master. No deceased pastor is more tenderly remembered than Mr. Pierce.

In September, 1878, Rev. William A. Lamb was called as acting pastor, and remained until October 4, 1881. Thirty-two members were added to the church during the three years of his ministrations, and a debt of more than seven hundred dollars was paid off. He left the church stronger than he found it, and in opposition to a unanimous desire of the parish that he remain.

June 28, 1882, Rev. Charles H. Taintor was installed. Two years later he was dismissed to take the office of field secretary of the American Congregational Union, a position he is now filling with marked success. The church received sixty additions during his term of service.

Rev. John C. Rollins was installed February 25, 1885, and was dismissed October 3, 1887, having received forty-nine to church membership. During his connection with the church the interior of the meeting-house was remodeled and repaired at an expense but little less than the original appropriation for building the house.

On the 20th day of November, 1888, the church, being one hundred years old, celebrated this anniversary. The services were attended by nearly all members, resident and non-resident, and by citizens of the town and neighborhood in large numbers. The committee of arrangements, consisting of F.W. Farnsworth, D.S. Burnham, Dea. Moses French, Dea. Addison Heald, Dea. John E. Foster, Dea. Abel C. Crosby, and Dea. D. M. Heald, prepared an ample programme, which was carried out to the satisfaction of all. Dea. John E. Foster presided, making an opening address which, with the entire exercises, can be found in a neatly printed pamphlet issued soon after. Mr. D. S. Burnham read a carefully prepared historical address, upon which the writer has drawn largely in preparing this article. Rev. Dr. F. D. Ayer, Rev. W. A. Lamb, and Rev. S.C. Kendall, former pastors, made interesting addresses. Rev. Dr. J.G. Davis and Rev. F.D. Sargent were present – the former reading the Scriptures and offering prayer, the latter making the closing address. The services occupied the entire day and evening. Abundant refreshments were served in the chapel.

Rev. William Arthur Thomas was installed as the first pastor in the second century of the church's history, December 18, 1888; resigned and was dismissed April 28, 1892. Fifty were admitted to membership during the three years of his stay in town. His resignation was a surprise to the church and society. Mr. Thomas is now filling an important pulpit in the West.

Rev. H.P. Peck was installed April 28, 1892, and is now the esteemed pastor of the church.

THE BAPTIST CHURCH

There were communicants of the Baptist church in town before its incorporation. They were few in numbers, and their residences were in different parts of the town. For these reasons they did not at first attempt the formation of an independent church organization, but connected themselves with the Baptist church at Mason. They were known as a branch of the church of Mason. They were allowed to observe the ordinance of communion by themselves, Isaac Bartlett, a deacon in the Mason church, officiating here. Elder William Elliot, of Mason, occasionally preached in town in private houses.

With the opening of the new century, these devoted men, maintaining their religious opinions, without the sympathy of the standing order, as the Congregational body was sometimes called, and without the aid from the town treasury, began seriously to consider the question of building a house in which to worship God. Increasing membership seemed to warrant the doing of something in this direction. Many Baptists at this time had settled in the northwest part of the town and near each other. Upon the organization of the second school-district on the north side of the river, it was mutually proposed that the Baptists join the district in the erection of a school-house. The following are the records upon the subject:

“April 24, 1806. The inhabitants of the second school district in the town of Milford met pursuant to a warrant to them directed by the selectmen of said town, and voted Isaac Bartlett moderator and Jacob Flinn district clerk.

“Voted: To build a school house twenty-six by twenty-four feet; ten and one half feet posts.

“Voted: To accept the following offer made by Isaac Bartlett, Andrew Hutchinson and Ebenezer Pearson for the Baptist denomination:

“Whereas the building of a school house in the second school district in the town of Milford is in contemplation, therefore, we, the subscribers, for ourselves and heirs, hereby promise and agree that we will pay all the land may cost more than four dollars, on which to erect the same, and set up and underpin the frame; the south and west sides with hewn stones, and the north and east sides with split stones: and deliver on the spot agreed to, for building the said house, one thousand feet of merchantable boards and one thousand board nails, on or before the tenth of June next; and also bear our proportion in finishing said house; provided we or any of ours of the Baptist denomination, in future, during the continuance of said frame or house may have the privilege of using said house for religious purposes on Sundays, and on other days, not to interfere or interrupt any school appointed by said district that may at any time be keeping therein, or any public meeting of said district duly warned and appointed therein, and that we will make good all damages done by our meetings, extraordinary casualties excepted.

“Isaac Bartlett,

Andrew Hutchinson,
Ebenezer Pearson.”

April 24, 1806, the district voted to accept the proposition, and that the Baptist denomination should have the privileges desired upon the proposed conditions; and also voted to raise two hundred dollars for the purpose of finishing a school-house.

That the Baptist denomination fulfilled their part of the agreement, we find the following record:

“October 10, 1806. In school meeting the following report was presented: “We, the subscribers, committee for the second school district in said town, having viewed the work done and offered by the Baptist denomination, find the same to our acceptance.

“John Wallace Committee
Ebenezer Averill,

“Voted: To accept the above report.””

Soon after this it was thought desirable to sever their relationship with the Mason church and form an independent body, and an invitation was sent out for a council to consider the matter. The council met at the house of Andrew Hutchinson, September 5, 1809, at eight o'clock in the forenoon. It consisted of delegates from nine Baptist churches, viz., Dublin, Temple, Mason, New Boston, Weare, Hollis, Salem, Derry, and the second church, Boston. It was organized by choosing Elder William Elliott moderator, and Charles Cummings clerk. The sermon was preached by Elder Isaiah Stone, and the hand of fellowship was given by the moderator. The public exercises were held in the school-house, which was the place of worship until 1816. Thus the First Baptist church of Milford was organized, and consisted of thirty members, twenty-eight of whom were from the Mason church. There have been connected with the church to the present time (January, 1893) nine hundred and twenty five persons. The present membership is two hundred and sixty-four. The largest number uniting with the church in one year was sixty-one, in 1831.

The church was connected with the old Boston association until the organization of the Milford Baptist association, October 13, 1828, to which latter organization they reported as follows:

“We have enjoyed an interesting revival during the past year; twelve persons have been baptized; the church has done more for the cause of mission than in any preceding year; we recommend entire abstinence from ardent spirits; many of our members have set this example; in our Sunday School are sixty scholars; the school will continue through the winter.”

Elder William Elliot had the pastoral charge of the church the first three years of its existence, preaching the first Sabbath in each month. George Evans, a licensed preacher from South Reading, Mass., commenced his labors in 1812, and continued until July 1, 1817. Rev. Ezra Wilmarth was the first resident pastor, and preached for one year from September, 1817; Rev. Matthew Bolles, from October, 1818, to March, 1822; Rev. George Evans, from March, 1822, to 1824. Samuel Everett supplied the church from August, 1824; was ordained and settled as pastor January 12, 1825, and continued until April 27, 1832. Mark Carpenter succeeded him in April, 1833; was ordained March 5, 1834, and dismissed February, 1840; John G. Richardson was ordained April 22, 1841; dismissed February, 1845. Rev. O. O. Stearns was pastor from May, 1845, to February 7, 1848; Rev. Ira Person, from December, 1848, to May, 1853; Rev. Edward Anderson, from August, 1853, to September, 1858; Rev. J. W. Horton, from November 25, 1859, to March 25, 1862; Rev. W. B. Clapp, from April, 1863, to April, 1864; Rev. J. D. Tilton, from June 3, 1866, to May 4, 1873; Rev. R. B. Moody, from October, 1873, to December 28, 1879; Rev. L.J. Dean, from April, 1880, to June, 1882; Rev. H. W. Tate, from January, 1883, to October 1, 1886; Rev. A. E. Woodsum, from April, 1887, to February 23, 1890; Rev. J. V. Stratton, from April, 1890, to July 15, 1892; Rev. F. L. Knapp, from December 1, 1892, to date (1893).

Andrew Hutchinson and Ebenezer Pearson were the deacons officiating from the organization of the church, until the infirmities of age compelled them to resign in 1843. William Wallace and Abner H. Bartlett, a son of Dea. Isaac Bartlett, of the Mason church, were appointed, February 27, 1843. Deacon Bartlett died July 19, 1852, and his son,

George F. Bartlett, was chosen to take his place December 1, 1852, and continues to the present time. Dea. William Wallace having removed from town, Aaron Mills was chosen his successor June 2, 1855. He resigned May 4, 1878, and William P. Colburn was elected February 15, 1875. W. H. Ware and T. P. Fisher were elected July 1, 1886; the latter severed his membership May 31, 1889.

Dea. Ebenezer Pearson was elected clerk at the organization of the church, and served one year, and again for one year from 1812 to 1813. Joel Howe served during 1810 and 1811; Allen Goodridge during 1813; Jesse Hutchinson for two years, 1814 and 1815; Dea. Andrew Hutchinson from 1816 to 1834; Dea. William Wallace from 1834 to 1854; Dea. Geo. F. Bartlett from 1854 to 1863; William N. Hartshorn during 1863; William P. Heald in 1864; David Goodwin from 1865 to 1876; J. M. Stanyan, 1876 and 1877; E. J. Parker, 1878 to 1881; G. A. Worcester from 1881 to 1887; E. S. Heald during the year 1887; E. C. Ware from 1888 to 1890; R. C. Bartlett from 1890 to the present time (1893).

The treasurers have been, -- Dea. E. Pearson, Dea. A. Hutchinson, John Wallace, Benjamin Goodwin, John Mace, Calvin Averill, Daniel Putnam, Daniel Cram, J. Hood, Dea. A. Mills, G. L. Melendy, Mrs. A. R. Worcester, and Dea. W. H. Ware.

By an act of the New Hampshire legislature the First Baptist society was incorporated June 7, 1813. Their first meeting-house was built in 1816, upon the hill just south of the residence of the late W. P. Richardson, and was fifty-four by forty-two feet; without a spire; had square pews, and a pulpit (supported by two fluted pillars) so high that a man could stand upright under it. There were wide galleries, with a row of pews against the wall and free seats in front. After a frame was raised, boarded, and shingled, it was used for a while before being finished. The finished house was dedicated February 11, 1817. Rev. Drs. Sharp and Baldwin, of Boston, preaching the sermons on that occasion. In 1836, the house was moved from the hill to its present location (it now being the Methodist Episcopal church), and a vestry finished underneath. In 1846 it was enlarged by the addition of fifteen feet to the front; a spire added; the pulpit reduced in height, the galleries reduced in width; the old pews changed for those of more modern design; -- all at a cost of about seventeen hundred dollars. In 1856 a bell was placed in the spire, weighing 1,451 pounds and costing thirty-two cents per pound without the hangings, the total cost being five hundred dollars; the money was raised by the ladies of the society. In 1874 the pews were relinquished by the owners to the society, and a lot of land was purchased of George Daniels on South street for twenty-five hundred dollars and the present church built, which is eighty by fifty-five feet on the ground, and has a spire one hundred and fifty feet high, which contains the old bell. The interior contains a commodious audience-room with chapel, vestry, pastor's study, ladies' parlor, class-rooms, and kitchen with all modern conveniences, the cost of the whole being (including a fine pipe organ) about twenty-four thousand dollars.

In its membership we recognize the names of many who have done the town good service. At its beginning, the church and its clergy seem to have placed but little reliance upon the learning of the schools, but as time passed the opinions of its membership changed in this respect, and for the larger part of its history its ministers have been men not only of eminent piety, but also of sound scholarship and liberal culture.

For nearly a century has this church stood in this community, a power for good, at first with very limited accommodations in which to assemble upon the Sabbath and other occasions, and yet holding on and keeping the faith under all circumstances and conditions, until now it has a prominent place among the churches of the denomination in the state.

UNITARIAN CHURCH.

UNITARIANISM IN MILFORD.

Early in the present century the doctrines of liberal Christianity were taking root. This was true not only of this town, but of some of the adjoining towns. In the neighboring town of Wilton it had a foothold, and it told not unfavorably on the religious interests of the town, and some its earlier ministers who preached a liberal gospel are remembered as burning and shining lights. Amherst, too, at one period, had a company of adherents to free religious thought, and the old court-house was not only a seat of justice, but of free religion as well; and later, under the leadership of Hon. Charles H. Atherton, they were able to have a church for their own use, which they occupied for a number of years.

In Milford, some of those who had undergone a change in their religious views were members of the Orthodox church in regular standing, and they were accorded some privileges which satisfied them for a time. They were allowed, a few Sundays each year, to select preachers of their own views; but this arrangement was not long satisfactory to either party. Those whose theological conclusions were in advance of the majority were conscientious, and only desirous of disseminating what to them appeared true Christianity. They accepted as true the tender affirmation of Rev. John Robinson to the Pilgrim church, that "God had new truth to reveal from His Word and Providence." They had discovered new truth which satisfied their reason and conscience, and they rejoiced in it. It emancipated them from the hard doctrines of Calvin and his followers. Many others joined them, and it was determined to form a third church (the Baptist already having an organization). To this end an act of incorporation was obtained in 1834, and accepted by the grantees. The records of the society are complete to October, 1841. No real estate was ever owned by the society. Between fifty and sixty heads of families volunteered contributions of money, and the preachers they wished to hear were invited to fill the pulpit.

The old meeting-house was used by this society whenever meetings were held after 1833 (the majority of the original Congregational church having given up their rights in the town meeting-house and built a church edifice for themselves). Meetings were held as many months as money was subscribed to pay for. No debts were allowed to accumulate for future perplexity. The society never felt itself able to offer settlement to any minister, but, with Amherst uniting, by an agreement made with the Milford society, Rev. John B. Wright was invited, and, after supplying the desk through the summer of 1839, removed his family here in the autumn or early winter, and remained till the spring of 1841, giving entire satisfaction to both societies. Soon after, Mr. Wright was recalled to his former parish at Wayland, Mass., and the society worshipped in a hired hall during the summer months for a few years.

But from unavoidable causes the society was destined to an early decline. Mr. Atherton's death about this time deprived the Amherst people of their principle support and the ability to cooperate with the Milford society. The leading supporters of this society had died, or were removed for other reasons. Its decline may be dated in 1849. Its history as an organization ends here. Its vital spark had not, however, fled, and an occasional Sunday witnessed a company of worshippers. Liberalism had come to stay.

The second movement to establish a Unitarian society was made in 1870. In the autumn of that year a meeting was held in Odd Fellows' hall, attended by about twenty persons. The subject of forming a new religious society in the town of Milford was discussed, and much interest manifested. The next year the following was inserted in the *Farmer's Cabinet*:

"Notice is hereby given that William Lane, J. B. Moulton, George C. Gilmore, C. S. Averill, I.J. Burns, J. W. Pillsbury, and others have formed an association and taken the name of the First Unitarian Society of Milford, N.H., agreeably to the provision of the Statute authorizing the formation of voluntary corporations.

“[Signed] J. W. Pillsbury, Clerk,.

“Milford, Feb 1, 1871.”

A ladies' association, anticipating the formation of the society, had been formed June 1, 1870, which took the name of "Ladies' Christian Union," which has ever done efficient work for the support of the society.

A Sunday-school has been coexistent with the society. It even bridged over a wide space when preaching was suspended for lack of funds.

Preaching commenced in 1870 by temporary supplies, and in the year following the society had a more permanent supply in the person of Rev. John Edgar Johnson. He was a young man of ability and a pleasing speaker; but toward the end of the year his mind was leaning toward Episcopalianism, and he resigned. He was succeeded after an interval by Rev. Samuel R. Priest. He was a young man of fair address, but after several months his services were cut short by lack of means.

In 1873, in order to expedite the building of a house of worship, a proposition was made through Rev. A. M. Pendleton to the effect that several neighboring Unitarian ministers untied would give a year's preaching on certain conditions. The ministers who volunteered their services were Rev. A. M. Pendleton, Rev. I. S. Lincoln, Rev. C. B. Ferry, and Rev. A. W. Jackson. The proposition was carried out on both sides in 1873 and 1874.

In 1875 the society purchased of Miss E. A. Livermore the lot on which the church now stands, for \$1,500.

Among other candidates, Rev. Loring E. Beckwith was the choice of the society of 1875. He was a young man of marked ability. He preached two years, and resigned.

No direct efforts were made to build a church till October, 1877. On the 21st of that month it was decided to employ Rev. A. M. Pendleton to come to this place to superintend the building of a church and preach for the society while it was building. On the 24th of December following, a building committee was chosen, consisting of W. H. W. Hinds, R. R. Howison, C. S. Averill, A. M. Pendleton, and William P. Richardson. It was resolved to build of stone, after a plan submitted by Mr. Rand, and architect of Boston.

In the spring of 1878 the committee were ready to commence operations. The walls were reared, the building covered, and chimneys built the first year. Afterward the work went on more slowly, and it was not till the 22nd of August, 1880, that the first meeting was held in the vestry part, that part being first made ready for occupation. Up to that time the meetings were held in halls. The auditorium was not ready to be occupied till June, 1888.

A brief description of the edifice may here be given. The stone work above the foundation is laid in ashler work. The greatest length of the structure is eighty-four feet; the greatest breadth, eighty-one feet. There is a basement under the whole, and the floor above it is supported by forty brick piers. There are on the same floor, auditorium, vestry, parlor, library-room, kitchen and its appurtenances, minister's room, and vestibules. The auditorium will seat about two hundred and fifty persons, and the different rooms can be opened together, if need be, by rising doors. The rooms are finished to the roof, and the rafters and truss work are of finished southern pine timbers. The roof is slated, and the windows are of stained glass. Two furnaces, a stationary and portable one, warm the two parts.

The dedication was in the afternoon of June 15, 1888, and all the parts were well and ably performed, Rev. Prof. Francis G. Peabody, of Harvard Theological school, preaching the sermon. An evening service was also held, in which important themes were discussed.

Mr. Pendleton's connection with the society was dissolved in July, 1888. In addition to his pastoral work, he was the leading spirit upon the building committee during the time the house was in process of erection. Soon after, the society made choice of Rev. Solon Lauer, a young man from Ohio. His ordination followed, January 9, 1889, Rev. M. J. Savage preaching the sermon. Mr. Lauer gave great satisfaction, but his pastorate proved of short duration, for, in a little over a year, owing to impaired health, he resigned, February 2, 1890. This caused much grief in the congregation, and he was induced to suspend his resignation and take a long vacation. Six months were voted to him; but before the expiration of the time he wrote from his retreat in the West that he would not be in condition to return to his labors, and the society reluctantly assented.

In the autumn a call was given Rev. A. J. Rich, who had recently resigned a seven years' pastorate in Fall River, at a salary of \$1,200. After several weeks' consideration, he decided to accept. He commenced his regular labors with the year 1891. He is now (in 1893) a faithful and untiring laborer in the vineyard, and has done much to build up the society and extend its influence in the community.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In the fall of 1852, Rev. S. Tupper and Rev. H. Moulton, members of the New England conference, came to Milford to confer with the few Methodists who had settled in the village. The result of the interview was that a series of meetings was held, those interested were very much quickened, a number were converted, and the Methodist Episcopal church of Milford was organized.

For a number of years the society was supplied with preaching from surrounding towns, or by students from the Biblical Institute of Concord, and the meetings were held in private houses, or in halls belonging to temperance and other societies.

In 1877 the old Baptist church was purchased at a cost of \$1,500, improvements were made upon the building costing about as much more, and it was dedicated August 19 of that year, when a sermon was preached by Rev. J.W. Hamilton, of Boston. January 1, 1892, the last indebtedness on the property was paid, and now the society is free of debt.

The board of trustees at this time are as follows: P. Bartlett, W. W. Greenwood, J. R. Wilkins, A. W. Merrill, F. F. Grafton, Geo. A. Raymond, and A. G. Tinker.

Board of stewards as follows: A. W. Merrill, J. R. Wilkins, Henry Heald, P. Bartlett, J. F. Grafton, Abbie Bartlett, Susan M. Brown.

The first student who supplied the society from the Biblical Institute of Concord was J. W. Clough. The first board of stewards was appointed June 19, 1853, and consisted of the following: A. A. Farnsworth, J. Philbrick, C. Aiken. At this time the Rev. J. A. M. Chapman was the pastor, and J. Perkins the presiding elder. In addition to those whose names are already mentioned, the following have been prominent as officers and helpers in this church: Joseph Philbrick, Chas. Allen, Levi Duncklee, Jacob Gove, Andrew Raymond, Joseph H. Fisher, Henry N. Austin, Barzillar Hinds, J. C. Davenport, G. E. Stowell, Joseph Cushing, Chas. Lovejoy, Ira Smith, R. Palmer, and others.

Among the women who are entitled to honorable mention are Lucy J. Cushing, Selina A. Hinds, Caroline Sabine, Hannah Smith.

After the church was organized, and Mr. Chapman was appointed pastor, the church was supplied with pastors only at irregular intervals. Among those who supplied was Rev. J. C. Emerson, who was appointed in 1855 and served for about two years; but from 1856 to 1872 no list or record can be found.

List of pastors from 1872: 1872, Rev. G. W. Ruland; 1874, Rev. C. W. Cressy; 1875, Rev. J. W. Bean; 1876, Rev. J. L. Harrison; 1878 Rev. E. Bradford; 1880, Rev. James Noyes; 1881, Rev. H. B. Copp; 1882, Rev. W. J. Murphy; 1883, Rev. G. W. Ruland; 1884, Rev. W. T. Johnson; 1887, Rev. C. H. Leet; 1889, Rev. A. W. L. Nelson; 1891, Rev. W. Woods; 1893, Rev. D. W. Downs.

The present total membership is seventy-four.

From the time of its organization this church has made itself felt in this community. Its membership has been zealous in maintaining a high degree of spirituality among its communicants as well as good fellowship and citizenship in town. The pastors who have ministered at this altar have been men of worth and culture, nor only serving the church but the town at large as opportunities offered.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MILFORD

Its history in this, as in other towns of the state, is interesting and worthy of notice on account of its rapid growth.

The erection of the Souhegan mill was one of the principal motives of the Catholic settlement in this neighborhood. In 1848 the first Catholic family, that of Patrick O'Connor, arrived and took up its residence in a house since torn down, at the upper end of the Souhegan mill pond. Of the other families which soon followed were those of John Crane, Richard Barry, Mrs. James Finerty, Thomas O'Connor, Thomas Garrity, and Michael Holland.

The first official visit of a priest to the town occurred in November, 1853, Rev. William McDonald, of Manchester, having been called to administer the last rites of the church to Mrs. James Finerty.

Seven years after the first Catholic arrived, Rev. Fr. Donnelly, then a missionary, now bishop of the see of Clogher, Ireland, celebrated the first mass February 5, 1855, at the residence of Patrick O'Connor, in the presence of thirty persons. During the same year, Catholic services were held by another Catholic missionary, Father Daley. The

following year the regular celebration of mass was begun by the Rev. John O'Donnell, of Nashua, whose mission extended as far as Concord.

By the united efforts of the infant congregation, St. Patrick's church was erected in 1859. The land on Souhegan street was the gift of John Finerty and Patrick O'Connor. It was enlarged in 1864 to twice its original capacity, and dedicated in 1867.

In May, 1868, Rev. Patrick Houlihan succeeded to the charge of the growing mission. His field of labor included the larger towns of Milford and Harrisville. In 1870, Right Rev. Bishop Bacon, of Portland, administered confirmation for the first time to many members of the congregation.

In July, 1876, Rev. E. E. Buckle became the pastor of the mission, succeeding Rev. P. Houlihan, who was transferred to Keene. Divine services were then held twice a month until July, 1890, when the towns of Milford and Wilton were formed into one parish, and then the services of the church were held in each town regularly every Sunday.

In 1891, on the death of the Rev. Patrick Houlihan, Rev. E. E. Buckle having been transferred to Nashua, this mission was placed in charge of Rev. P. L. McEvoy.

The increase of the Catholic population rendered necessary the erection of a more commodious church edifice, which was begun under the administration of Rev. E. E. Buckle in 1890. It is situated on Amherst street, 100x50 feet in size, will seat eight hundred persons, and when completed will have a cost of twenty thousand dollars. The basement, now complete, accommodates about five hundred. Indeed, it is in itself a beautiful church, well furnished with all that is necessary for divine worship, vespers, and other devotional services, which are held several times a month. Mr. Edward Finerty, one of the old residents of Milford, and a staunch Catholic, deserves great credit for his unceasing zeal in the above work.

Should progress in the past be an omen for the future, then our Catholic fellow-citizens will have reason to be proud of the growth of the mustard seed.

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL MISSION.

At present under the charge of the Rev. Charles Bancroft, M. A., rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Nashua.

Episcopal services were held in town during the year 1879, the Rev. Jacob Leroy, rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, at Nashua, officiating. A church guild was established with a membership of seven ladies. Monthly meetings were held, and from the work accomplished sufficient money was realized to defray the expenses of the services. The guild continued to hold meetings three months, and was then discontinued in the absence of two of the most active members. Soon after, the mission met with a serious loss in the death of Hon. Timothy Kaley, who was an active member and an earnest advocate of the Episcopal church.

Seven years later interest in the Episcopal mission revived. Services were held once or twice a month, the Rev. W. H. Moreland from Nashua, officiating. The ladies' guild was reestablished with a membership of twenty. Soon after the ladies' auxiliary was formed and considerable mission work was accomplished for the Orphans' Home at Concord, and the Holderness school.

The average attendance on church services during the year was excellent. Holy baptism was administered to four adults and one child. The bishop of the diocese confirmed two members. The subscriptions were sufficient to meet the running expenses, while generous donations from church people in and out of town enabled its members to lay the foundations of a church fund. At the close of the year the treasurer's report showed a balance of \$183.

During the intervening years, services have been held at different intervals, the rector of the parish generously officiating. Each year entertainments have been given for the benefit of the church fund, which has been liberally patronized by the citizens. Special offerings from church friends in other towns have been received. The late Mrs. Lucia A. Rand from Middletown, Conn., generously gave the handsome sum of \$300, which was appropriated

towards purchasing a lot of land near the center of town for the location of a church when needed. The family of W. H. Young, from Troy, N.Y., have given material aid, and interested others in this mission, particularly the members of the Holy Cross church in Troy, N.Y.

Since the establishment of the mission, holy baptism has been administered to six adults and fourteen children; six members have been confirmed by the Rt. Rev. W. W. Niles, bishop of the diocese. The communicants of the church now number fourteen members.

The mission owns a lot of land valued at seven hundred dollars, and its bank account shows a balance of seven hundred and forty-seven dollars.

Owing to a loss of members by death and removal from town the mission now languishes, but a few ladies in face of all discouragements, with earnest purpose and unfaltering devotion to the ancient order of the Holy Catholic Church, are untiring in their efforts for the establishment and perpetuation in this beautiful valley of the Souhegan.