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Bridgewater and the Baptists of Lunenburg County.

The editor of this journal had the privilege of attending the recent meeting of the Nova Scotia Central Association at Bridgewater, and as he had not previously visited that part of the country, the occasion was to him one of unusual interest. Bridgewater is reached from St. John by the Bay of Fundy Steamer and the D. A. R. and N. S. Central Railways. The junction of the two roads is at Middleton, and a run thence of 56 miles, occupying about three hours, brought us about 6 o'clock p. m. to Bridgewater, where we were most kindly entertained at the beautiful home of Robert Dawson, Esq. Mr. and Mrs. Dawson are faithful supporters of the Presbyterian cause in Bridgewater, but they could not have bestowed upon members of their own church a more gracious hospitality than that which was received at their hands by the pastor of the Windsor church and the aforesaid editor. The editor was a day late for the Association, but that enabled him to escape a tremendous rain storm which overtook the delegates who travelled on Thursday, and also to see the country between Middleton and Bridgewater under a sunny sky. A considerable part of the way the railway runs through wilderness lands, but traverses several fine settlements, the principal of which are Nictaux, Springfield and New Germany. Much of the land is fertile, though for the most part too rocky to be very attractive to the agriculturist. But in the sections mentioned and others there is much good land and very productive farms. Much of the country appears to be well adapted to orcharding, and there can be no doubt that Lunenburg has large possibilities in the line of fruit culture yet undeveloped. The scenery is pleasantly diversified. There are some fine lakes along the way and the river increases in volume and breadth as Bridgewater is approached. Everyone has heard of the lumber industry of the La Have. This industry centres at Bridgewater, and as we proceeded evidence of the fact was afforded by the immense quantity of logs in the river, and the mills at which they are to be converted into lumber. The lumbering industry here is somewhat smaller in volume than in former years, but it is still very considerable. The Davison's are now, as formerly, the principal manufacturers.

Bridgewater is very pleasantly situated on the banks of the La Have, principally on the west bank, about twelve miles from the river's mouth. The sail down the river or the drive along its banks is very delightful. It is an incorporated town of about 2,000 inhabitants, with six churches representing as many denominations. There are Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Baptists. The town is just introducing a water and sewerage system at an expense of about \$50,000. Bridgewater now has regular steamboat communication with Halifax, and railway communication with Mahone Bay and Lunenburg, while the Central Ry. also puts it in touch with the D. A. R. and other railway systems of the Continent. The completion of the projected South Shore line will bring Bridgewater as well as Lunenburg and other South Shore towns into easy communication with Halifax and with one another. The trade of quite a wide district of country centres at Bridgewater, a fact that is indicated by the large number of carriages and vehicles of various kinds disposed along the principal business street of the town on a Saturday.

In the early history of Lunenburg county there was a considerable immigration of Germans and Swiss, and, as many family names indicate, the present population of the county is in no small measure composed of their descendants. The German element is however stronger in some other

parts of the county than in Bridgewater. These early settlers were for the most part Lutherans. But the names on our church books bear evidence to the fact that many of their descendants are now numbered with the Baptists. Many families of German ancestry are also to be found connected with other evangelical churches. The Lutherans are however, still quite numerous in some parts of the county. In 1880, when they celebrated in Lunenburg town the three hundred and fiftieth presentation of the Augsburg Confession before Charles V. one of the speakers stated that the church had 1,500 communicants in the county and claimed a Lutheran population of 5,000.

The Baptist cause in Lunenburg county has had an interesting history. Its beginnings were connected with the labors of Joseph Dimock, whose name is held in honored remembrance as a man of beautiful spirit, a faithful minister of Christ and one of the fathers of the denomination in these Provinces. In 1788 a church was organized at Chester, "upon the open communion plan," and of this church Joseph Dimock became pastor in 1793. In 1811 the Chester church, with those at Halifax, Wilmot and Springfield, was admitted into the Baptist Association. In 1814, the Association met at Chester. The Chester church, and the old Lunenburg church, organized at Northwest, in 1812, are the parent Baptist interests of the county, and largely through the influence which went forth from them the other Baptist churches have been established. There are now ten Baptist churches in the county, and the census of 1891 gave the Baptist population of Lunenburg as 5,584.

The Baptist church at Bridgewater, was first organized in 1837, and was reorganized in 1848 with a membership of only 14. Services were for a time held in a hall, but in 1854, the then little band purchased a house which had been erected as a union house of worship, by the Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Lutherans. This church has recently undergone great improvements. It has been refloored and reseated, an addition has been made to the rear for the choir and a wing, adjoining the main audience room, for a school room, and a baptistry has been put in. These improvements which have cost some \$2,000, make the house highly attractive and comfortable, and very satisfactorily meet the needs of the congregation. Adjoining the church is the parsonage, a very pleasant and comfortable home for the pastor and his family. We were gratified to hear Pastor Freeman and his wife spoken of in the highest terms both by their own people and by those of other denominations. We judge that the Bridgewater pastor is a wise and faithful minister who is serving his own church and the cause of God generally in his community with a single-hearted purpose and a large measure of success.

Among the Baptist pastors of Lunenburg county are Revs. H. B. Smith at New Germany, Josiah Webb at New Canada, Asaph Whitman at New Ross, W. B. Bezanson at Mahone, R. O. Morse at Chester, M. B. Whitman at Chester Basin, H. S. Erb at Lunenburg town and J. A. Porter at Tancook. It will then be seen that the Baptist cause in the county is well served and the churches, we believe, are enjoying a fair degree of prosperity.

While we recognize the value of the men who are now bearing the burden and heat of the day, we must not forget the veterans who have so faithfully served the cause in the past, the fruit of whose labors are now being reaped. We were pleased to meet at Bridgewater our esteemed brother in the ministry, Rev. Stephen March, who has given more than thirty years of faithful and efficient service to the Baptist cause in Bridgewater and vicinity, and who having grown grey and worn in the service, is now spending the evening of his days with one of his sons in the neighborhood of the town. Mr. March told the congregation on the Sunday morning of the Association that the day was the fortieth anniversary of that on which he had first entered upon his work as pastor there. Our brother is feeling the stress of years and of recent illness, but he still preaches, as occasion offers, the gospel of the grace of God, which for so many years it has been his delight to proclaim.

The editor's first visit to Lunenburg County was of so pleasant a character that he hopes to be permitted some day to go back and extend his acquaintance.

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—Speaking of some things which Acadia Seminary should have, Principal DeWolfe, in his address at the Central Association, spoke of the need that existed for a number of scholarships for the assistance of young women who are possessed of superior ability, but who are not financially in a position to avail themselves of the advantages of the school. This is an important suggestion. Necessarily the cost of an education at the Seminary excludes many young women who have naturally endowments of a high order and who would make excellent use of an education. It is doubtful if the Baptist denomination in these Provinces could invest \$10,000 or \$20,000 more wisely than in the endowment of scholarships to assist young women of that class to take the course at Acadia.

—In spite of the savage and lawless severity with which in the Southern States the crimes of negroes against white women are punished, those crimes continue to be perpetrated, and the consequent lynchings appear to grow more brutal and fiendish in the torture and death inflicted upon the wretches who are guilty of, or who at least are charged with, those outrages. However deserving the wretched victim of the lynching may be of all that is inflicted upon him, the effect upon the mob of men and women witnessing and gloating over his sufferings cannot but be in the last degree debasing. It is well that some of the leaders in society and government in the South are alive to the injustice and brutalizing effect of mob law. Governor Aycock of North Carolina, has recently offered a large reward for the arrest of persons who have taken part in lynchings, and there is said to be a fund of \$40,000 available for this purpose. The Governor has also shown a disposition to befriend the negroes by taking a firm stand against the proposal made in the Legislature of the State to divide the school funds so that the negroes should get only the benefit of the school taxes paid by the members of their own race. In both these matters, says the *Outlook*, the Governor's attitude in favor of the rights of the negroes is an attitude in favor of the honor of the whites. The lynching of negroes . . . is incomparably more degrading to the race which inflicts than to the one which suffers the wrong. And the starvation of the negro public schools would in the long run create negro class schools which would educate in the negroes the very spirit the South wishes to eradicate. Indeed the closed school houses would, from the very outset, prove the most effective of all educators in this spirit. Governor Aycock's position, therefore, is not merely that of humanity but of statesmanship as well.

—The "Away from Rome" movement in Austria has resulted, it is said, in the transference of some twenty-five thousand persons from the Roman Catholic church to Protestantism, and the agitation is still active. One of the results of this agitation is a counter movement, the watchword of which is "Away from the Middle Ages." It recognizes the inferiority of the Austrian clergy and the non-progressive character of the Roman Catholic church as reason for the movements towards Protestantism. The *raison d'être* and aim of the Away from the Middle Ages agitation has found voice in a book by Professor Eberhardt of the University of Vienna, which discusses Catholicism and the Twentieth Century in the Light of Ecclesiastical Development. The trend of this agitation is not toward Protestantism, at least it is not consciously or professedly so. The purpose of Professor Eberhardt's book is said to be rather to elevate Catholicism to a higher and more spiritual state by restoring it to the condition of a purely spiritual church. It is held that the church should rid itself of the embarrassments in which it is involved through the attempt to exercise control in matters of state, society, science, literature, etc., and then by its inherent truth its doctrines would become in the modern world living realities and the triumphs of the church would be greater than ever. Such a reformation would of course leave much to be desired in the eyes of evangelical Protestants, but it is an indication that there are forces in the church which have grown restive under the trammels of Ultramontanism and are pressing for spiritual liberty.