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The Baptists of Aylesford and their New Church.

The past week has been one of unusual interest to the Baptists of Aylesford, N. S. It has witnessed the rededication of their house of worship, just rebuilt in modern fashion, and the meeting in it of the 50th anniversary of the Central Association. The ground occupied by the Aylesford Baptist church is situated in the upper or eastern end of the Annapolis Valley, and may be said to mark the division between the Annapolis and Cornwallis valleys, since the two streams take their rise not far from the eastern boundaries of the township. Aylesford is a fine, fruitful section of country, although from the light and sandy appearance of the soil which falls under the eye of the traveller as he passes by train through the poorer and less cultivated part of the country, he is not likely to suspect the extent of its resources and the degree of its productiveness. Like other sections of the valley, Aylesford is remarkably adapted to fruit culture. Orchards abound, and the light and early character of much of the soil is especially favorable to the cultivation of the smaller fruits and early vegetables. In consequence of the abundant rains of May, vegetation is this year particularly luxuriant, and it may be safely asserted that the valley never looked more beautiful than it does in this present leafy month of June. The prevailing dry, warm weather, is however rapidly using up the moisture in the soil, and unless rains come soon the crops will suffer severely. The prospect for the apple crop is now considered to be excellent, and unless a continued drought should cause an undue proportion of the fruit now forming to fall, there seems to be good reason to expect that the apple crop of 1900, in Nova Scotia, will be one of the largest in its history.

There have been Baptist people living in Aylesford since early in the century, and the fathers of the denomination were accustomed to preach there at least occasionally in private houses. The first Baptist house of worship was erected there probably about 1840. At that time there were a number of Baptist families living in Upper Aylesford, and holding their membership in the original Aylesford church, whose centre was at Kingston. On March 11th, 1846, 30 members of that church were dismissed to form the present Aylesford church. The first pastor of the church was Rev. Wm. Chipman. His pastorate continued from 1846 to 1852, he was succeeded by Rev. Charles Tupper, 1852-1855, and he by Rev. Abram Stronach 1855 to 1858. In November of 1858, Rev. James L. Reed became pastor of the church, and continued in that relation until January, 1889, a period of more than 30 years. Mr. Reed was succeeded by Rev. H. N. Parry, who was pastor from 1889 to 1891. Rev. J. W. Bancroft's pastorate extended from 1891 to 1896, and the present pastor, Rev. J. B. Morgan, entered upon his work with the church in December of the latter year.

The church building which has just been dedicated occupies the site of the former one, and indeed the framework of the old building forms a part of the new. The enlarged building, however, has been so thoroughly remodeled and modernized that, in architectural effect as well as in all essential respects, the result is a new structure. In its external appearance the Aylesford house is now one of the handsomest Baptist churches in the Annapolis Valley. Its internal appointments are also very pleasing, nor does it seem that in any respect utility and convenience have been sacrificed to appearance. The building reflects much credit upon the architect, Mr. H. H. Mott, of St. John, and the contractor, Mr. J. F. Bent, of Springfield. The seating capacity of the main audience room is something over 200 and the schoolroom in the rear, connected by sliding doors with the audience room, will afford 150 or more additional sittings when required. Large windows afford abundance of light, and the

metallic sheathing on the walls and ceiling give a pleasing effect. The audience room is handsomely paneled in oak and ash, and the seats are very comfortable.

The dedication services were held on Friday morning. A large congregation was present, including a considerable number of ministers and other delegates who had come to attend the Association which was to open in the afternoon. The preacher of the dedication sermon was Rev. Dr. Keirstead. His discourse, founded on Acts 20:28, was a masterly and eloquent discussion of the Relation of the Church to the Development of the Spiritual Life. The sermon was strong in thought and rich in food for the spiritual life. No Christian listener could fail to gain a larger idea of the significance of the church and its power, as a medium and minister of the grace of God, to ennoble and bless the souls of men.

Following the sermon there was a short ordination service in which Bro. Spurden Bishop was set apart to the office of Deacon. Rev. D. E. Hatt gave a short address, S. McC. Black offered prayer, and the pastor gave to Deacon Bishop the hand of fellowship. Pastor Morgan then spoke of the steps which had led up to the completion of the new building. It was on March 19th that the church resolved to build and appointed a committee to push forward the work. On April 20th the contract was let and on the 29th of that month work was actually begun.

Deacon C. J. West, a member of the building committee, being called upon to say something in respect to the building operations, said that the committee had been heartily supported by the people. He alluded especially to the deep interest taken in the work by Deacon Bowlby, lately called away from earth, by the ladies who had helped enthusiastically, and especially by Pastor Morgan who has worked indefatigably and beyond his strength in order to bring the work to completion by the time appointed. Mr. West also alluded in terms of generous praise to the contractor, Mr. A. F. Bent, for his energy and disposition to meet the wishes of the building committee.

Mr. Bent being called to the front, spoke in the highest terms of Pastor Morgan and the people of Aylesford. It had been necessary to hurry the building to completion. This had involved working night and day at times. Some had said that the work could not be completed in time, but the proof of what courage and persevering work could accomplish was before them. The work might not be perfect, but he hoped that it would be found worthy of approval.

Pastor Morgan spoke of the long-felt need of a better house of worship, his own purpose and effort on behalf of this object and his joy in the success which, by the blessing of God, had now crowned the united effort of himself and people. He spoke in high praise of the interest which the people had taken in the work, especially the young people and the ladies of the church. He explained that the memorial window, back of the platform and the choir, had been contributed by Mrs. George West, in memory of her husband, and by Mrs. Andrew Lee in memory of her husband and of Rev. William Raymond, missionary to Africa 1840-1847. Large memorial windows are to be placed in each end of the audience room but the glass for them has not yet been received. One of them will be known as the Pastors' Window and will have inscribed on it the names of the seven pastors who successively have ministered to the church since its organization in 1846. The other memorial window will be known as the Deacons' Window and will bear the names of six deacons who, having served the church well in that office, have entered into rest. The names of these deacons are George West, Beriah Graves, Elisha D. Harris, Zachariah Whitman and Samuel Bowlby. Pastor Morgan having requested the deacons and the trustees of the church to come to the front, read a short service of dedication, and prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Goodspeed.

The total cost of the building is about \$4,000. Of this amount about \$2,500 has been contributed in cash or in pledges which are considered as equivalent to cash, leaving a balance of \$1,500 which it is hoped will be speedily paid off. One of the members of the church who has already given liberally, has generously offered, we are informed, to advance the money necessary to pay off the debt, without interest, and give the people until the end of the year to make up the amount.

Mr. Morgan and his people are to be congratulated on their beautiful and convenient house of worship and upon their favorable financial position. During Mr. Morgan's pastorate a debt upon the church property of a thousand dollars has been removed, improvements have been made upon the parsonage property, what is practically a new church has been built, and when the debt of \$1,500 now resting upon the church is paid off, as it should be promptly, the condition of the Aylesford church will be such as to leave little to be desired in respect to its church property.

South Africa and China.

The war in South Africa is not yet ended, but it seems to have reached its last stages. There may be more fighting yet, but such warfare as is now going on is of a desultory character. The British forces are generally tightening their grip upon the country and occupying the places of importance, while the Boers are either surrendering or being pushed back. They are still, however, able to cause annoyance in the northern part of the Orange Colony. They recently attacked the British position at Honigspruit on the line of railway and before reinforcements could arrive from Kroonstad they had burned three culverts, besides inflicting loss on the British to the extent of thirty-seven killed and wounded. Lord Roberts reports that Buller has reached Standerton, on the line of railway from Durban to Pretoria, where he found a good deal of rolling-stock. General Hamilton's force which has occupied Heidelberg, is pushing eastward to join hands with General Buller. When this line of railway is well secured, the Boer forces in the Transvaal will be quite cut off from those in the Orange Colony. General Hunter's brigade had reached Johannesburg on the 22nd. The prisoners captured by the Boers since the occupation of Pretoria have been taken to Machadodorp. General Baden-Powell has arrived at Pretoria. He describes his march through the country as uneventful, a large number of Burgers had given up their arms to him. The Canadian mounted infantry were in the battle which took place to the eastward of Pretoria the first of last week, and as usual rendered a good account of themselves. The men of the first contingent are employed in guarding lines of communication, and have seen no active fighting since the surrender of Pretoria. Interest in the South African war has been almost eclipsed by the growing seriousness of the troubles in China. Information from the scene of the disturbances is so indefinite and contradictory that it is impossible to state what the real situation is. There is a statement, forwarded by the French Consul-General at Shanghai, and purporting to come from the Chinese director of railroads and telegraphs in the Province of Chi-li, to the effect that the foreign legations at Peking were safe on June 19th, and preparing to leave the capital with the consent of the Chinese government. Little confidence, however, can be placed in this report. It can only be hoped that the legations and the missionaries are safe, and that the force of 2300 men led by Admiral Seymour in the direction of Peking are safe, and able to render effective protection to foreign residents in that part of the country, but there is no assurance that this is the case. The foreign quarter of the city of Tien Tsin where four thousand foreigners reside, is reported to be bombarded by a great force of Chinese, and any force which the European powers have been able as yet to send to their relief has proved quite inadequate. Troops are being hurried forward by Russia, Great Britain and Japan. Great Britain is sending from India eight battalions of infantry, a cavalry regiment, artillery and engineers as a fighting force, besides two battalions to guard communications. The Czar has issued an order to raise the troops in the Amur military district to a war footing. It appears from the despatches that the power now arrayed against the foreign element in China is not merely that of the Boxers, but that of the Chinese government troops. It also appears that these troops are far better armed and more formidable as a military force than they had been supposed to be. It is not, however, probable that China has any army that could offer effective opposition to a European or a Japanese army. If considerable forces of foreign troops are sent into China it will be overrun and subdued, but what would be the sequel of such action it is difficult to say.