

History of the Hammond's Plains Church, Halifax County.

Prepared by E. M. Saunders, D. D., and read before the N. S. Central Association.

In the year 1811 the Rev. Isaac Case from the United States attended the Association at Onslow. After the Association closed he says he rode through the woods 60 miles to Halifax with the Rev. John Burton. After staying a few days with Mr. Burton, he rode 12 miles to a place called Hammond's Plains. There were then 11 families in the place. Mr. Case preached to them. He says they were much affected by the gospel. They had not heard a sermon for 15 years. He says he found among the people one Christian woman.

The first settlers of this place were Germans. About the time Mr. Case visited Hammond's Plains, Robert Thomson had moved there from Chester. He was an Episcopalian, but his wife, whose maiden name was Margaret Duncan, was a member of Mr. Dimock's church at Chester. It is very probable that the Christian woman found by Mr. Case was this Mrs. Thomson, the mother of a large family well known in that place. Amos and Nathaniel Melvin and their wives moved from Chester to Hammond's Plains about the time of Mr. Case's visit. Their wives were members of the church in Chester.

By the foregoing facts it is seen that the church at Hammond's Plains was a colony sent out by the church at Chester. They were visited from time to time by Rev. Joseph Dimock and other fathers in the ministry. The Rev. George Richardson visited Hammond's Plains in 1822. Under his labors there was an extensive revival. A church of 28 members was organized, and he became its pastor. The Hammond's Plains church from the first in employing pastors has co-operated with the St. Margaret's Bay church and also with the one at Sackville from the time it was organized, which took place Feb. 9, 1832. The original church after Mr. Richardson left it, lapsed into disorder and became almost extinct. David Webber and David Ellis who had been deacons of the Hammond's Plains church were among those who took their dismission to unite with the church at Sackville. In 1824 Mr. Richardson baptized 15 converts. These made the membership stand at 43 until 1834, when it decreased to 34. In 1828 it came up to 37; in 1829 to 39; in 1830 it was 39, in 1831, 36; in 1832, 54; in 1833, 26 were dismissed to form the Sackville church. The membership was 39 in 1841 when the revival under the Revs. Ebenezer Stronach and T. H. Porter took place. Some of those who had been members of the church under the Rev. George Richardson came forward, confessed their wanderings from God and expressed a desire to unite in church covenant and sustain the worship of God. In addition to these, 24 members were received for baptism. These were baptized on the first of May by the Rev. T. H. Porter and Ebenezer Stronach. Since that time the church has been kept in an active state. On the 25th of September, 1844, the Rev. William Hobbs was ordained pastor of this church and for a few years continued to labor with it, and the St. Margaret's Bay and Sackville churches.

In 1849 the Rev. Thomas DeLong labored among them and baptized a number of converts. The Rev. Silas Vidito became pastor in 1851 and remained for a year. He was followed in 1852 by the Rev. Nelson Baker, who labored with the church half the time for two and a half years. Mr. Baker, failing to resign, was by vote of the church dismissed from the pastorate, simply because the church did not wish to continue his services. The Rev. T. H. Porter was invited and accepted the invitation to be Mr. Baker's successor. The Rev. George Richardson gave his assistance to the church in this trying ordeal. In 1866 the Rev. Robert Walker was engaged for three months. In 1871 the Rev. Edwin Clay, M. D., held a series of meetings at Hammond's Plains, and there was an extensive revival of religion. In the same year the Rev. H. Morrow was employed for half the time as pastor at a salary of \$300. Mr. Morrow left in March, 1873. In September of that year Dr. Clay was engaged for half the time for one year. In May, 1876, Dr. Clay baptized twelve converts. Mr. B. P. Shaffner, a student at Acadia College, was engaged for the summer vacation. Mr. Shaffner and Dr. Clay co-operated in preaching for the church.

Rev. William Spencer, who had been preaching for the church for about a year, resigned in November, 1877. He was succeeded by M. P. King, June 31, 1881. On the 16 of March, 1882, Mr. King was ordained. In 1883 Mr. King removed to New Brunswick.

In 1887 the Rev. E. E. Locke labored for some time with the church. Mr. Arthur, a student from McMaster University, was for a time a laborer among them. He was followed in 1886 by the Rev. E. N. Archibald, who continued to labor for two years and a half. After Mr. Archibald left Mr. Sloughenwhite, a student, spent a summer on this and the adjacent fields. Then came Rev. Asaph Whitman, who spent two and a half years in pastoral work. S. C. Freeman came after Mr. Whitman. He labored for fifteen months. He was succeeded by the Rev. W. A. Snelling, who is the pastor at the present time.

Beginning at 1843 and continuing a statement of membership in a regular succession of years it was 39, 47, 48, 53, 53, 58, 43, 43, 41, 41, 35, 80, 79, 79, 66, 66, 65, 64, 58, 54, 39, 39, 35, 35, 34 in 1870. At present it is 45.

The Rev. C. H. Haverstock, now of Pugwash, and Rev. W. E. Bezonson, of Mahone Bay, have been given to the denomination by the Hammond's Plains church.

The Famine in India.

DEAR EDITOR.—I presume many of your readers who have subscribed to the fund for Famine Relief are anxious to know the true state of things in our mission field, as to how the famine is affecting us and also as regards what is being done with the money sent to us. Will you allow me space in your paper to write briefly of things as they are.

And first I am glad to say we have no real famine in the territory covered by our mission. When I arrived on the field at the close of last year and learned how the crops had been cut off, especially on the Bobbili field, I could not see how the people were to subsist during the dry season and until crops could be grown. The outlook for some of our Christians, whose crops had been destroyed, was specially dark and I wrote a few lines asking for help for them. Well things have not been as bad as I feared. So far the people have managed to live. How they have done so is rather a mystery to me. There is a great deal of poverty and much suffering but not absolute famine. We have had to help some of our Christians and shall have to do so still more if present conditions continue. But the money I have spent for the help of our Bobbili Christians came to me through private sources and thus the money sent me by Bro. Manning is partly still in hand and has partly been sent to missionaries of other societies, where real famine exists. I should have expended more in this way than I have, only that the money was received while at Ootacamund and I did not care to distribute it very freely until I could return to our mission field and have a talk with my fellow missionaries about the needs and prospects in our part of the country. But while at Ootacamund several missionaries were communicated with and inquiries made as to their needs. On arriving at Vizianagram we found our brethren and sisters met in conference and this question of famine money was discussed and a committee appointed to take the whole matter into consideration and report to our Board and people. One reaching Bobbili, day before yesterday, we found some letters from missionaries in famine districts in reply to letters of inquiry sent to them. Some of these I think I must copy. In reply to these letters I sent off at once six cheques, each for one hundred rupees, equal to thirty-three dollars. Besides this, I have handed over to our own missionaries in all the sum of one hundred and eight dollars and the remainder is in the bank.

The money I have sent to other missions has gone right into the midst of the famine and I am sure will be the means of saving life and helping those whose lives are saved to make a new start. I shall go in, under the advice of the famine committee, to spend the rest of the money as may seem best. But what is best? While, as I have said, we have no real famine on our mission field at present, it may not be very far away unless we have good rains soon. In the neighborhood of Bobbili we had some early showers which enabled the people to plant some early crops and these are now beginning to ripen. But the case of Bobbili is a marked exception.

During our long ride from the foot of the hills to within ten miles of Bobbili I saw very little cultivation going on, when it depended on the rainfall. Indeed, there is more of growing crops in the neighborhood of Bobbili, than I saw all the way we came by daylight. This means that all through this wide stretch of country the present food supply is being exhausted with no crops in sight for the future. It means too, that prices are increasing and famine spreading wider and wider and only a good rainfall in the near future can save the Telugu country, or at least that part of it not irrigated by rivers, from great suffering. Indeed much suffering already exists in some districts where the American Baptist Union is at work. To two of these missionaries I have sent cheques. Of course the season is not so far gone but that a good rainfall will help to make up for what has been lost. And just now reports in the papers of good rains in western India encourage the hope that it may soon be true of all India.

Some extracts from letters received will give an idea of the famine and need of help. Rev. M. B. Fuller, Bombay, writes: "We have six stations in Gujerat in the heart of the famine. The needs are many and very great. Food, clothing, seed grain, tools and implements for working the field, supporting orphans and all the lines of famine work. A few hundreds of rupees can help in the work of any station but would not go far. There are starving and dying people on every side." E. Chute, Baptist Mission, Palnim, writes: "We are supporting more than 400 destitute school children, with coolies and children daily increasing." Mrs. Plomer, Methodist Episcopal mission, Ajmere, says: "The famine is very severe here. Thousands and tens of thousands have died. A man lay down outside our gate and was found dead three days ago—a perfect skeleton. We have taken into our famine orphanage 300 boys—several have died. The sights in the village are distressing. Seven persons huddled together under a tree, man, woman and children dead. Died trying to get into Ajmere for help. A man killed his children and was just going to kill himself when the police caught him. He said, 'I could not bear to hear them cry for food so I killed them, and meant

to kill myself.' We have three kitchens and are feeding over 1000 persons daily." Rev. C. E. Hume Byculla, writes: "Your kind note with the enclosed draft for Rs 50 received today. It will be of great and immediate use, for today we have welcomed 55 new famine boys into our school. Some of the boys have arms only 3/4 inches around above the elbows. There is no end to the terrible need." Such is the state of things over a great territory. We hope our own mission field may be spared such suffering. May the Lord's blessing rest on those who have given towards relieving the destitute and starving.

G. CHURCHILL.

Bobbili, July 21st, 1900.

A Letter From Wales.

Many things have occupied the attention of your correspondent since his last letter to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR. In the first place, ever since we heard of the sorrow in three pastoral homes in Nova Scotia, viz., at Onslow, Ohio and Halifax, his heart has been touched with deepest sympathy for them, and has gone forth in earnest prayer to God that they might be sustained. He has felt the peculiar nature of the sorrow in every one of the homes, and hence the sympathy is all the deeper and sincerer. Also, your correspondent recognizes the loss the Foreign Mission Board has sustained in the departure of our two missionaries, Miss Gray and Mrs. Hardy. Mrs. Hardy was new to the work, and as yet untried; but with her heart full of love to the Saviour and with the brightest prospects before her. Miss Gray knew the work well and was an experienced laborer in her Lord's vineyard. Why these sisters should be taken just now, when seemingly there were years of usefulness before them, is surely a great mystery to us, but the Lord knows his own business better than his servants. "Be still and know that I am God," is what he says to us in the world. He will raise up those that will work for him in the land of the Telugus.

I am migrating about very much since I landed in "the land of my fathers." I paid two visits to Lancashire, besides my peregrinations in Wales. The first thing that struck me after I left Chester on journey towards Lancashire was a manifest change in the sound of the Queen's English. I shall not attempt to reproduce any of it, for the simple reason that it is beyond my kin. It has to be heard to be appreciated—or, depreciated. All I can say about it is that it is the Lancashire dialect, and I dare say you have heard of that.

The Baptists are comparatively strong in this country. I am told that between the two counties of Cheshire and Lancashire they number about twenty thousand. However they are strong enough to employ an Associational Secretary for his whole time, to whom they pay a salary of two hundred pounds a year. His principal business is to help and succor weak points and to look out for new points. The present occupant of the office is an old playmate of mine. The same pastor baptized us and we began to preach at the same time and prepared for College together. Since then our paths have diverged very widely as far as our spheres of labor are concerned, and I had not seen him for twenty years until the other day.

I had it deeply impressed upon my mind whilst in Lancashire that the Baptists of that county are more varied in character than the Baptists of the Maritime Provinces. In most of the towns there are to be found at least three kinds of Baptists. There are the open membership Baptists, they admit immersionists and sprinklers alike into membership. These Baptists are not a few. Next come the open communion Baptists. They admit only immersed believers into membership, but invite Christians of other denominations to the Lord's table. This kind of Baptists seem to be the most numerous. And last come the close communion Baptists. These are the weakest. And this is so, to my mind, because they have no gospel for the unsaved. They have the Dr. John Gill type of theology. These are all banded together in one association. How such a medley of views and practices can exist without frequent explosions is more than I can tell. Among the Welsh such a condition of things would be impossible. At the Eastern Glamorgan Welsh Baptist Association, which I attended, there was a brother pastor who had moved from its jurisdiction to that of the English Baptist Association of the same county. He applied for a letter of dismissal to the English Association, and because that Association tolerated open communion in its membership he was refused the dismissal. This shows the difference between the Welsh and the English in their associational relationships. Of the two I prefer the Welsh, because of the closer adherence to principle of the New Testament type visible.

Will you allow me, Mr. Editor, through your medium to tell our many friends that the summer's rest has done me a world of good in every way. The first week in October, if all goes well, will see us bidding farewell again to British shores to return to the Maritime Provinces.

Kindest regards,

DAVID PRICE.

10 Stanley Crescent, Holyhead, Wales,
August 20, 1900.

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