

Prepared and Read by Pastor Adams at the 40th Anniversary of Prince Street Baptist Church, Truro, N. S., January 2nd, 1898.

It is said that when Knickerbocker wrote the history of New York, he thought it necessary to begin at the Creation. In writing the origin and history of this church, I do not think it needful to begin quite so far back, nevertheless references antecedent to the birthday of this church may be interesting and suitable to the occasion. The history of the Baptist denomination in Colchester Co. begins with a visit of Rev. Henry Alleine to these parts in August, 1782. While he gained a respectful hearing on this side of Salmon River, it was reserved for Onslow to recognize in this Newlight preacher, an enthusiastic missionary of the Cross. So much was his message blessed to the Onslow settlers, that after filling the house, or barn, to hear the gospel preached, they frequently filled his room as enquirers till 12 o'clock at night. Of course, this revival encountered opposition, such always does, as the following extract from the celebrated evangelist's journal shows:

"One man, who was before a member of one of those churches was convinced and converted; but there were yet many of the Pharisees opposing the work, and laboring to turn away the people from the faith."

My first pastorate in these provinces was the First Yarmouth church, organized in 1797. The first pastor of that church (when it was a Newlight church) was the first pastor of the Onslow church, which was at first also a Newlight church. He was pastor in Yarmouth 60 long years, and died at the great age of 90. His first visit to Onslow was about the year 1785, when he was 24 years old. There was no church there, not even a Newlight, so he left after a short time. Neither was he then an ordained minister. Some time after Rev. John Paysant, of Cornwallis, came to Onslow and formed a church there on the Newlight basis. Before leaving he advised the young church to invite this young man to be their pastor. He came, accepted, and was ordained, and his name was Harris Harding. An ordaining council was called, but through an oversight the only other church represented was Chester, and the only minister the pastor of Chester church, Rev. Joseph Dimock. Rev. Joseph Dimock was the father of the first pastor of this church, and grandfather of the present editor of our well known Truro "Daily and Weekly News." He was a great and good man, and was equal to the four-fold ecclesiastical function of preaching the sermon, offering the ordaining prayer, giving the charge to the candidate, and charging the church. "There were giants in those days." There are five names of men who were mighty in word and deed, and it will never be known in this world how large is Nova Scotia's debt to them, for the preponderance of evangelical religion in the land. They are, Joseph Dimock, Harris Harding, Theodore Harding, Edward Manning, John Paysant.

They were truly the fathers and founders of the Baptist denomination in this Province. In the early days of their ministry the country was sparsely settled; no railways, very few roads, and travel mostly on horse back. On snow shoes they would "penetrate the untracked forest," seeking congregations among the scattered settlers. Exposed to perils by day and perils by night, often faint, cold and hungry, would have to spend the night in the open air. With sturdy constitutions, strong minds and an unswerving faith in the truths they preached, it was evident that God raised them up for this great work of pioneering. Their words and their works followed them, for great numbers were converted, from among whom many preachers arose; churches sprang up on all sides, and we are entered into their labors.

From a comparison of dates it does not seem that Pastor H. Harding remained in Onslow more than five years. It will interest not a few to know that Nathaniel Marsters, M. P. P., J. P., the grandfather of our members, Messrs. T. M. and W. P. King, and Misses Annie and Fannie King, was the first clerk of the Onslow church. The following extract from a report on the state of the country by Lieut. Governor Arbuthnot to the Governor, Lord George Germaine, dated August 15th, 1776, gives a government official's description of the people Pastor Harding had to preach to.

"I proceeded up Cobequid Bay, and landed at Londonderry, Onslow and Truro, three townships inhabited by the offspring of those Irish emigrants who first settled Londonderry, in the Massachusetts, Scotchmen and Irish people, who have been brought hither soon after the place began to be settled—a strong, robust, industrious people—bigotted dissenters, and of course great levellers. But, my Lord, how can it be otherwise, for, to my astonishment, no Governor had ever visited these poor people, or sent any person among them, so as to form a judgment of the necessary steps to make those men useful subjects; but, on the contrary, they have been left to the parent of their own works. I found full 500 men capable of bearing arms, the finest men in the Province, settled on the best land and the most flourishing, because they are the most industrious."

A census of the Township of Truro, taken in 1770 will give us a more definite idea of the class of folk here at that time. There were, English, none; Acadian, 7;

Scotch, 11; Irish, 40; American, 221; total, 279. Whether or not, this was the composition of the settlers on the other side of Salmon River, I cannot find out. But one thing I notice, that there are not as many Macs (either Scotch or Irish) among the names in the records. And I rather think many of the Onslow names have an English flavor; the only way to find out is to spend a day in the cemetery at Onslow, among the headstones of the dead.

In 1791, the Newlight church at Onslow, which was on the mixed membership plan, was organized on a Scriptural basis, being composed of those only, who gave clear evidence of being born again, and followed the Lord Jesus in the ordinance of believers' baptism. All the early pastors were pioneers, travelling all over the county, preaching wherever a door was opened. As a consequence, the Onslow church became a mother of many children in the course of years. Preaching in school houses, barns, kitchens, and in the open air, was followed by many conversions; Sunday Schools formed, prayer meetings held, churches grew, till there were Baptist churches all over the County. East Onslow was organized in 1809; Lower Economy in 1828; Lower Stewiacke in 1832; Wentworth 1838; Upper Stewiacke in 1842; Portauquique, 1842; Oak River John, 1848; Greenville, 1848; New Annap, 1849; Tatamagouche, 1849; De Bert, 1851; Great Village, 1856; then came Truro, 1858. Since Truro, churches have been built at Belmont, Bass River, Beaver Brook, Five Islands, Upper Economy, Masstown, Brookfield, Forest Glen, Wittenberg, Acadia Mines, Westchester, Higginville, Meagher's Grant, Little River, Immanuel and Zion. As the old lady at Onslow climbs Penny's Mountain, and, gazing over the whole county, sees her numerous family, she must feel great pleasure in the prosperity of her children and grand-children. And as they look at the dear old lady, in her 106th year, they ought to make a united effort to express their gratitude to God for what she has done for them. The old Onslow church has not only exercised a powerful and far-reaching influence in evangelizing the people, it was in her meeting house that a great battle was fought in the interests of Christian Colleges versus State Universities. In 1843 Joseph Howe, and others, formed a plan for capturing the electorate of Onslow, in the interests of a Metropolitan University at Halifax. The Baptists learning of the arrangements, brought the powerful President of Acadia, Dr. Crawley, to meet the Premier. The result was a disastrous defeat to Howe's plan, and conserved for our country those noble Christian Colleges, which are towers of strength to our people. At the close of the meeting, confusion prevented a correct count. They then divided East and West of the church door, but still it was not satisfactory; they then formed on either side of the road. A correct count showed 202 for Dr. Crawley and Denominational Colleges, and 161 for Joseph Howe, and one State University for the whole Province at Halifax. This notable gathering and discussion settled the subject, so that each denomination has gone on its own way, to unite the heart and the head in their educational work.

Why Should a Baptist Sunday School Convention Exist?

Paper read before the Albert County Baptist S. S. Convention at Nixon Settlement by Rev. S. W. Keirstead and published by request of the Convention.

This question is often asked, but generally by people who are not Baptist, or those who may call themselves Baptists, but whose sympathies are so strongly interlaced with other doctrines that they forget the best interests of their own. There are a good many people who try to imitate Paul, by being all things to all men, but, missing the apostle's meaning, they can believe anything and teach anything, or leave the truth untaught if necessary, to suit the tastes of those around them.

Baptists, as a body, profess loyalty to the Bible and its author. We cannot afford to leave any of its truths untaught—we believe them, therefore we must teach them. But even if this be done, "Why should this Convention exist?"

1st. Why should any convention exist? It is true that conventions, unions, leagues, societies, etc., are rapidly multiplying in connection with all denominations of people. These must be regarded as beneficial and conducive to the best interests of the various objects they are intended to help. Now, from the fact that there is in existence such a thing as a Baptist Sunday School, and that every Baptist church is an independent body, and hence every S. S. in connection with such church is in the same sense independent, therefore we believe that a convention composed of members of these schools is necessary, in order that we may confer together, in regard to the best interests of the several schools. The object of the convention is that we may have an interchange of thought, and get the best ideas in regard to the conducting of the schools and the methods of teaching. All great enterprises have an organization of some kind at their backs in order that their interests may be successfully carried out. Our Sunday school work is one of great importance; one that should receive the best efforts of the best men and women in the world. It is

the moral and religious training of the young and old, or the teaching of the Scriptures as they are given to us. The best interests of our young people, for time and eternity, may hang to some extent in the efficiency of our Sunday Schools. Then we should have a convention for the purpose of making these schools effective in doing the work they are intended to do.

2nd. But why have a Baptist S. S. Convention? Well, just because we have Baptist Sabbath Schools. In these schools we desire to teach the doctrines of Scripture in their purity. It is true that we hold some doctrines which are not taught by many other denominations. If a convention is of any benefit to the schools of which it is composed, then the schools must be influenced by what is said and done at its meetings. If then we are to maintain our principles in their purity, we must have a convention in which these principles and doctrines can be freely discussed and supported.

We are often confronted by the question, "Will not a convention including all denominations do as well? Why not make the convention larger and hence get a wider range of thought?" We have no objections to others doing as they please, but we cannot afford to compromise a single principle that we hold. Inter-denominational signifies between two or more denominations and therefore neither the one nor the other. Non-denominational means nothing and hence no doctrine can be promulgated. If such conventions are consistent, then why not inter-denominational or non-denominational churches? If we can unite with those who differ from us in Sabbath School work, then why not in all church and religious work?

3rd. The aim of this convention is to support and foster Baptist Sunday Schools. As Baptists we are more deeply interested in our own schools than we are in those of other religious bodies of people; therefore we desire to maintain this convention in order that our schools may have the benefit of the combined intelligence of the best S. S. workers in our churches.

As a body, we believe we are capable of doing our own work, and we believe the convention will draw out the talent and sympathy of our people better and more effectively than to be linked with those who so widely differ from us in doctrine and practice. If we expect our children to believe the Bible and accept its teaching we must not give them to understand that it makes no difference what we believe; but we must be loyal to our principles and teach the doctrines as we firmly believe they are laid down in the Word of God.

4th. One of the objects of this convention should be to increase the efficiency of weak schools. Some arrangements should be made by which the weak schools in small communities might receive some assistance from larger schools in more favored communities. This, I think, might often be done with great profit both to the strong and weak schools.

5th. We need a Baptist S. S. convention for the purpose of organizing Baptist Sunday Schools where there are none in existence. The work of the parish superintendents, according to the constitution of this convention, is to visit the schools in the parishes and organize new schools where there are none. We sincerely hope that not only these officers, but all true S. S. workers will take an interest in this work, and while we throw no stumbling block in the way of others, we desire to press forward in the course which we believe to be right.

Fishing for Souls.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER, D. D.

Jesus Christ commissions his servants to be "fishers of men." As ministers and Christian people are now commencing another year's labors, a good motto for them is in Christ's command to Peter on the shore of Galilee—"Launch out into the deep!" Peter's reply to his Master was that they had been toiling all night and had caught no fish; "nevertheless, Lord," he says, "at thy word I will let down the net." He was despondent, but not despairing. The command of his Lord is enough to rally his faith. To the eye of faith many things are clear that to the eye of sense are exceedingly dark. Faith sets the bow of Peter's little smack towards the deep water; the fish are there, and not in the shoal water near the shore. So out into the deep they pull; down goes the net, and lo! such a multitude of fishes are enclosed that two boats are required to bring the abundant haul to land!

Here is a lesson for pastor, Sunday School teachers, parents, and all who long for the salvation of souls. Perhaps last year was not a year of success. Failure in any good undertaking is a calamity; it often breaks the back of a weak Christian's courage. Failure ought to provoke a true Christian to fresh ardor, and new attempts to retrieve the losses of the past. Spiritual failures commonly have a good reason for them; for God does not work blindly with his people. A scanty crop of spiritual results is apt to mean poor ploughing, stingy sowing, and careless cultivation. No crop at all may mean indolence or unbelief, or both combined. Failure has a reason for it; and it ought to stir every honest heart to the solemn inquiry—whose fault was it? God does not break his promises; his injunction is—be not weary in

your good work faint not.

At the beginning of the year, faith is to make "launch out," too much of a temporary inter-spiritual significance in our hearts of the soul's revival in his heart or she is in feeling, shall I?

The minister of the deep truths of the unconverted setting sin, or Christ; and it must upon My brother, Philips Brooks life that does eternity can see the doctrine, sinner's soul.

Fishing for the pulpit; and an ardent a "profession" done in a set by a whole multitude of powerful and conversions of hearts. A pair of close friends preaching. The faithful talk work does the hook, baited with an unconverted talk if it is unmistakable persuasion, sin and to lay souls.

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