

## Isaacs Harbor Baptist Church.

A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE BY PASTOR W. H. WARREN.  
"Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors" Jno. 4:38.

In these beautiful and suggestive words our Divine Master claims recognition for a most important fact, and emphasizes a pressing obligation arising from this recognition.

The fact is that we all inherit the benefits of a rich legacy bequeathed to us by our forefathers. We are in possession of the results of their labors. They entered the forest primeval and cleared the grounds on which most of your homesteads stand. They fought the battles which have secured our national and religious freedom; and they carefully laid the foundations of our political, our social, and even our commercial well-being. In their earnest desire for the welfare of their children they established most of our best institutions—our homes, our schools, and our churches.

The obligation arising from these facts must be very obvious to every intelligent mind. If we inherit the benefits of other men's labors, then we are responsible for the faithful performance of the duties laid upon us by our ancestors. We must not squander the means which our fathers entrusted to our care; but must in all fairness hand down to succeeding generations the capital placed in our hands with a reasonable amount of added interest. We should leave the world a little the better for our having been in it. Each generation should add some measure of value or beauty to what the past has committed to our guardianship. Such is the evident meaning of the Master's burning words: "Other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors."

The purpose of our present roll-call service is to awaken a renewed spirit of devotion and consecration to Christ on the part of the members of this church; and to induce each one to fall in line with fresh energy in our attempt to carry out the purpose for which we exist as a church.

We desire not only to honor the memory of the worthy men and women who founded and sustained this branch of the Lord's vineyard, but to impress the present generation with a proper sense of the sacred duty resting upon us to endeavor earnestly to carry on the great enterprise which our sainted predecessors so nobly began. It would be a crime of deepest dye for us to neglect this work, or perform our duties in a careless and half-hearted manner. The history of Isaacs Harbor Baptist church is a long and very interesting one; but one must condense our sketch within the limits of an ordinary discourse.

Less than a century has passed since the earliest settlers took up their residence in this part of our province. A few colored stragglers found a home among the rocks of the eastern side of the harbor. Trackless forests fringed the shores of the beautiful sheet of water which still commands our admiration; and no home but the transient wigwam of the humble Micmac was anywhere to be seen. How changed has the scene become—with its present ships and wharves; its mining establishments and neat places of business; its beautiful church edifices and elegant residences!

The progenitors of the older families of the community found their way hither in the year 1833. They came from Lewis Head, Shelburne County and a number of them were members of the little Baptist church in that locality. In the spirit of loyalty to Christ they brought their religion with them; and from the first they faithfully continued in humble fellowship and in religious activity. John Duncan and Allan McMillan, and Simon and Ira Giffin, forefathers of the hamlet, are familiar names. Their families grew up around them in brotherly concord and in the spirit of reverence for religious things. Meetings for social worship were held from house to house, and seasons of true enjoyment and refreshing were experienced.

Nor was the little band forgotten by gospel preachers. Though no public roads then existed in the place, and the means of communication with other sections of the country were very difficult, an occasional servant of the Lord found his way through the trackless forest, along the rocky shore, or in some passing fisherman's boat, to the little settlement, and cheered the feeble band with words of admonition and encouragement. First among these evangelists was the Rev. Anthony V. Dimock, son of venerable patriarch Rev. Joseph Dimock of Chester. This devoted missionary was just beginning his labors as a preacher having been ordained at Falmouth in 1830. His visits to this place were greatly blessed of God, and the harbor was made brighter and happier by his preaching. Indeed his faithful efforts were fruitful in marked spiritual quickening throughout the Maritime Provinces. He was an honored and successful worker till the close of his career in the United States.

Following in his footsteps came other veteran missionaries, bringing words of instruction and encouragement. Among these we may mention Rev. David Harris, a zealous evangelist who had the honor of planting a number of churches in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; Rev. C. H. Martell, senior, who occasionally came this way to cheer up the little band of believers; and Rev. John Whidden, of Antigonish, who also came now and then to deliver a tender message from the Good Shep-

herd to his little flock. Rev. Thomas DeLong, too, made helpful visits among the people, and sounded the clear notes of gospel truth.

But in the latter part of the thirties Rev. George Richardson seems to have come to the place with a more definite purpose. Having emigrated from Ireland in 1820, he took up his residence at Sydney, C. B., and shortly afterwards he was ordained at Hammonds Plains. His efforts as an evangelist were confined chiefly to the eastern counties of N. S. He visited Isaacs Harbor about 1837 or 1838 and preached with much acceptance to the people. He was induced to take up his residence here for several years, supporting himself partly by preaching, and partly by teaching night-school for the benefit of the young people. Some of his pupils are with us today and they can well remember their youthful experiences in connection with this primitive institution of learning.

In 1840 the little church was formally organized by Pastor Richardson. It consisted of nine members; and the room in which they met is familiar to the neighborhood. They chose as their deacon, Bro. Simon Giffin, senior, who honorably filled this office till his death in 1864. Meetings were held from house to house, and the blessing of the Lord rested upon these gatherings. Pastor Richardson would seem to have remained as overseer of the flock till about 1844. He subsequently returned to Cape Breton where he spent the remaining years of his life in faithful service for the Master till 1878, when at the good old age of 88 he passed over to the golden city and the great redeemed throng.

For some years after his departure from this community the little church was without regular pastoral watch-care. But one or other of the missionaries already named made an occasional visit giving comfort and stimulus to the infant church. New messengers also came to the community, of whom we are about to make brief mention.

Rev. William Hobbs, a native of Argyle, Yarmouth Co., who afterwards became pastor of the church at Pagwash, and, still later, pastor at Charlottetown, repeatedly came to this neighborhood. He was an eloquent preacher and a very successful winner of souls. Many persons were led to Christ through his instrumentality. He afterwards went to New Zealand, and thence came to California. He made his home in different parts of the United States until called to his heavenly reward.

Another of the pioneer missionaries was Rev. J. C. Hurd, who had been ordained at St. Margaret's Bay in 1853. This servant of the Lord became pastor of the Baptist church at Canso, where he made missionary visits to various parts of Guysboro Co. His brief calls at Isaacs Harbor are still well remembered by the older residents of the place, and his preaching was much appreciated by the large congregations which gathered to listen to his words. He subsequently removed to the Western States where he suddenly died in comparatively early life.

In the early fifties Rev. Obed Chute made brief visits to this harbor, going among the homes of the people, and preaching the gospel as he went. He was a worthy man and much good resulted from his earnest labor.

About the year 1849 there came to Sonora a devout and zealous gospel worker—Rev. Henry Bagley, a native of Gaspereau, Kings Co., and a man of great faith and marked energy. He had been pastor of the Baptist church at Kempt, Hants Co., in 1842, but he came to Sonora to make his home for the residue of his days. He organized 2nd St. Marys church, and from this centre he extended his efforts to neglected communities throughout the county. For a number of years he spent every fourth Sunday at Isaacs Harbor, preaching to large and attentive congregations. His labors were much blessed in keeping the church united and active in the Master's service; and helpful accessions were made to the list of members.

About this period Rev. Manson Bigelow made occasional visits to our harbor in evangelical work. He manifested much zeal in laboring both in this place and along the eastern shore of our county; and to his diligent efforts are due, under the divine favor, the planting of several of the churches in neighboring settlements.

In the later sixties Rev. James Meadows came to take pastoral charge of the church. His preaching was much appreciated and his stay in the community resulted in an encouraging measure of success. Rev. C. H. Martell, jr., may also be mentioned here as having been instrumental as a missionary in sowing the good seed of the kingdom, and strengthening the energies of the church. His stay was however not long.

At various times during the seventies and later the church was visited by Rev. Isa. Wallace, General Missionary of the Home Missionary Board. This veteran evangelist was greatly helpful in promoting the spiritual interests of the community. His preaching was marked by unusual fervor and earnestness, and large numbers were led to consecrate their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is still in the Master's service; and we are pleased to note that he is about publishing a volume giving some account of his faithful efforts in these provinces. Such a book will be read with much interest by our people.

The first place of worship in Isaacs Harbor was, as we have intimated, the room in Deacon Ira Giffin's home, in which the little band was organized. For many years

services were held from house to house, and delightful seasons of spiritual refreshing were enjoyed in this way. Subsequently a small building, which stood near Bro. Jno. McMillan's store, was used as a place for holding religious gatherings. The accommodations soon proved to be entirely insufficient, and it was therefore decided that a suitable place of worship should be erected for the benefit of all concerned. About 1854 the building now used for day-school purposes was erected, and for many years it was the Bethel, the house of God, in the locality. But, as the population of the place increased, even this house became inadequate for the accommodation of the people.

In the early seventies it was decided to erect a more commodious and attractive place of worship. The hill on which the present structure stands was selected as a suitable site, and a fine large building, elegant in style and convenient in arrangement was erected in 1873. But, unfortunately for the friends concerned in it, a severe storm passed over the land carrying wreck and ruin before it. The new sanctuary was leveled to the ground, and a scene of desolation presented itself where the people had been joyously anticipating the pleasure of gathering together in a beautiful and comfortable place of worship.

Still the dark cloud was not without its silver lining. Faith prevailed over despondency. A good brother visited various counties in our province soliciting aid in renewing the fallen sanctuary. His efforts were so largely successful that the work of rebuilding was speedily resumed, and in a short time a fine building—that in which we are met to-day—stood forth in all its attractiveness to adorn our harbor and to afford abundant accommodation for all religious purposes. The new house was publicly dedicated in 1877.

Returning now to our sketch of successive pastors, we find that Bro. L. M. Weeks, a licentiate, came hither about 1873, as a missionary. His efforts were greatly appreciated in the community, and in 1874 a council was called to ordain him to the gospel ministry as pastor of this church. Bro. Weeks continued to labor until about 1876 with much acceptance, many having been added to the church under his instrumentality. He left the locality for a time; but returned at a subsequent date, spending another year or two in pastoral service.

Rev. J. B. McMillan, a native of Cape Breton, came to this community in 1876 and took pastoral charge of the church. He spent about four years in Isaacs Harbor during which time the church made some progress in spiritual life. There were lights and shadows connected with this pastorate; but substantial good was done.

About 1879 Rev. A. R. Ingram was called to the supervision of church affairs. He gave his best energies to the interests of the community; and his labors were not without some measure of blessing. He remained about one year. Bro. Ingram is still at work in our province.

The next regular pastor was Rev. Trueman Bishop, a native of Greenwich, N. S., and a graduate of Acadia College. He had been ordained at Tryon in 1879. In 1885 he came to Isaacs Harbor and remained till 1890 in successful labor. Bro. Bishop is remembered with affectionate interest by many in this place. He was a faithful minister and many were led into the light of truth through his earnest efforts.

Following closely in his footsteps came Rev. David Price, one of our most energetic and popular pastors. For four years he labored on both sides of this harbor, and cheering results followed his administrations. He is now located in Yarmouth.

In 1894 Rev. A. J. Vincent was called to the pastorate of this field. He too was a vigorous and earnest preacher. A revival of religion seems to have been awakened resulting in a large ingathering of young converts. Some serious difficulties unhappily arose in church affairs, resulting ultimately in the formation of a separate organization on the other side of the Harbor. A kind Providence has overruled this matter for good; a spirit of harmony now prevails between the two congregations; and the Lord's work is moving forward steadily in both sections.

Three young men connected with this church have consecrated their lives to the ministry of the gospel, their names being Charles Salsman, Frederick Salsman and Dr. McGregor. They are still filling useful places in Christian work in different parts of the Continent.

In May, 1899, Rev. George A. Lawson was called to the pastoral care of this section of the field. He entered upon his labors with much zeal and devotedness. His untiring labors among the young people was especially appreciated; and his ministry was blessed of God in the bringing in of many renewed souls to the fellowship of the family of believers. Long will the memory of his late beloved partner be cherished in the hearts of the many friends among whom her presence was like a gentle benediction. Bro. Lawson removed to Bass River in 1902; and in September of that year the present pastor entered upon his labors in response to a unanimous call from the church.

A devoted band of workers has, since the organization of the church, striven to uphold the hands of their various pastors. Whatever difficulties may have occasionally