

PRESBYTERIAN FATHERS.

The following is Part I. of the address given by Rev. P. G. MacGregor, D. D., at Mr. Baxter's Jubilee, held on the 11th July at Onslow.

Other congregations have had their Centennial Celebrations, and, at rare intervals, ministers their Jubilees; and the public services connected with these have proved both interesting and useful. It is therefore fitting in every way that the congregation of Onslow and this Presbytery of Truro should suitably mark Mr. Baxter's completion of his half century since the commencement of his pastorate.

Sympathizing heartily with the object I cheerfully accepted an invitation to speak, and must now, though with some misgivings, submit my contribution to the interest of this auspicious meeting.

And so our venerable Father has been half a century in the ministry! When he began his work as a preacher in 1831, I think I am correct in saying that His Honor Governor Archibald, whom I am happy to see on the platform, Dr. Ross, President of Dalhousie College, Dr. McCulloch, Dr. Geddie, John Campbell, Charles Robson, and William Fraser, one of the Clerks of the General Assembly, were students, and Sir H. Hoyle, Sir Thomas Archibald, Baron of Exchequer, Dr. Dawson, President of McGill College Montreal, and Messrs. Christie, Byers, John McKinlay, Hiram and Edward Blanchard, J. W. Carmichael, Esq., and some more of us members of a later class were still at school. And yet I feel that I can recall the main lines in his course, not only for fifty years, but a little beyond that starting point.

I went to Mr. Baxter's school, and can remember the very tones of his voice in declining *Penna* and *Dominus*, and in conjugating *Amo* and *Doceo*. And though it is now the fashion to associate all reminiscences of the schools and teachers of half a century ago with birch rods and leathern taws, I can say, either that such representations are entirely overdrawn—caricatures in fact or Mr. Baxter was a notable exception, and a very paragon of good nature, and pedagogic mildness. Law reigned, indeed it did, but with little show of physical enforcement. It will scarcely be believed, I suppose, that once in a while he appeared amongst us on the playground, and wonderful to tell, initiated us into new games, a kind of learning in which we showed great aptness and proficiency.

Where Mr. Baxter learned these games I do not know, but I suppose he brought them with his first Latin lessons from the Parish School of Annan to which memory will now carry him back, with even more frequency and tenderness of feeling than to its name sake, New Annan, his second home. But this I know, for I remember well that the campus where this physical training was encouraged lay around the old log school house in New Glasgow, where he succeeded the late Andrew McKinlay, Esq. of Halifax, who there also began in Nova Scotia his career of usefulness and of honor. The very mention of a log school house in New Glasgow contrasts strangely with the graded Seminaries in that town now, and with the hundreds of handsome school edifices in every village and hamlet at the present time.

I will occupy no time with Mr. Baxter's arts or theological course, with his licensure, or probationer's work, either in Nova Scotia or in New Brunswick where he fulfilled a mission around the Bay Chaleau as far as New Carlisle, for I do not consider that I am expected to give details.

In 1832 he was settled at Onslow; but the congregation at that time included Brookfield in one direction and Upper Londonderry in another.

Some 25 or 30 years afterwards Upper Londonderry was separated, so that the people of that district might call a pastor for themselves, when Old Barns, now known as Clifton congregation, was added in the direction and Mr. Baxter's labours extended in another to East Mountain and North River. Dr. Patterson represents Rev. Mr. Dick, first minister on the Shubenacadie, as saying that his congregation was 36 miles long but the breadth had never been ascertained; but from the account just given of Mr. Baxter's it is doubtful if either the length or the breadth has yet been ascertained.

To discharge fully all the pastoral duties in such a field was simply impossible. To work the congregation fairly was a herculean undertaking, and involved many a weary drive by day and by night, in summer's heat and winter's cold, and worse still through the deep mud of spring and fall. And yet he kept his appointments when many, nearer, failed. Doubtless the work was often done imperfectly but when it was considered that the salary was both limited and irregularly paid and involved the necessity of working land, the wonder is that he did so well; and it was through the co-operation, self-