SACKVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

At Sackville was located the first Baptist church that ever existed in British North America. This fact alone gives very great interest to our present undertaking, in tracing out the history of this time-honored church from its inception to the present moment. It is scarcely necessary to say that the task has required a good deal of labor and patient research, but the important facts which have been brought to light have afforded ample compensation for the time spent in searching for them.

The origin of the Sackville Baptist church dates back to the very beginning of our civil history as British colonies, to the period when the struggle for supremacy in America between England and France had terminated in the treaty of Paris, in 1763, at which date fair Acadia, and indeed most of the North American continent, became subject to British rule. The fertile valleys and productive dykelands of New Scotland became at once objects of special attractiveness to the people of Great Britain and Ireland, as well as those of the New England colonies.

During the very year in which the treaty of Paris was ratified, a proclamation was issued by Governor Lawrence guaranteeing the fullest religious and civil liberty to such as might come hither to settle, and offering many tempting inducements in relation to easy terms in the purchase of lands. Led by these offers many persons came from distant places with a view to permanent settlement.

Among these a company of Baptists from Swansea, Mass., came to the village of Tantramar, as Sackville was then called. To these people were made the earliest grant of lands in the county of Westmorland, and as some of them had served in the French war, they were in this way remunerated to some extent for their former services. Their names were Nathan Mason, Benjamin Mason, Charles Seaman, Gilbert Seaman, with their wives, and Experience Baker. They were members of the Second Baptist church in Bristol Co., Mass., but seem to have organized themselves into a distinct church for the special purpose of settling in Nova Scotia, the name by which both provinces were then known. Nathan Mason was their pastor. They located at Tantramar in the summer of 1763. Here they remained for eight years, during which time their numbers increased to sixty. In 1771 or 1772 the original immigrants became dissatisfied with the manner in which the government had dealt with them in relation to the fulfillment of the terms of the proclamation which had induced them to come hither, and as the matter was not likely to become adjusted so as to meet their views, they returned to their former homes in New England. Forty-seven members of the church, however, remained, represented by the names of Ayer, Cole, Estabrooks, Killam, Read, Tingley, Smith, Seaman and Ward—names which have stood upon the lists of Baptist church members from the time of Mason's pastorate to the present date. The church of forty-seven members would seem to have carried forward the spiritual interests of the community with some degree of earnestness. A Mr. Job Seaman filled the pastoral office for several years. Joseph Read subsequently became their minister till he removed to Horton, N. S. It has not been my privilege to meet with any records from which we could learn with what success or how long these men labored in Sackville. An eye-witness who came to reside in the place in 1772 leaves on record this interesting statement: "One thing in the inhabitants of Sackville at that time was very commendable—the not forsaking, but assembling of themselves together for worship, though unhappily divided into parties and ready to say to each other, 'I am holier than thou.'"

In the year 1781 Sackville was visited by that remarkable pioneer evangelist, Henry Alline, whose name stands so prominent in the early religious history of these provinces. A marked spiritual awakening attended his labors, and many flocked around him to hear his stirring addresses. In his journal, under date Aug. 4, he remarks: "The church now began to gather together in Gospel fellowship, without any bar or separation about different sects or denominations, but whoever loved and brought Christ and belonged to Him were freely received into full communion." This attempt to harmonize denominational distinctions met with the usual fate: it signally failed. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" Most of the Baptists, whether they were induced to unite in the new-light organization or not, retained the views of Scripture teaching which they had learned from their ancestors, and especially from their Bibles. They lacked a suitable leader and, no doubt, for many years they dwindled in numbers and grew feeble in spiritual things, but they did not become extinct. The venerable Dr. Cramp, whose historical statements are usually so thoroughly reliable, is unquestionably in error when he states, in relation to Sackville, that "the church died out." The little band became weak and scattered, as any church will do when long deprived of pastoral oversight, but they remained as members of the original church right through the dark period which preceded the coming of the man who was destined by Providence to lead them on to higher enjoyments and more enlarged usefulness. Visiting ministers, among whom the names of Messrs. Windsor and Rounds are mentioned, occasionally preached to them toward the close of the last century.

In 1798 Joseph Crandal, the pioneer evangelist of New Brunswick, found his way to Sackville. He was then a young, unordained man, but his preaching was with such power that, in his own words, "saints rejoiced and sinners were converted to God." He was received very cordially by the people and his faithful labors were greatly blessed. A strong desire was manifested for his permanent settlement in the community. In Oct., 1799, a council of brethren from Nova Scotia was called, consisting of Elders Edward Manning, T. S. Harding, Joseph Dimock and Wm. Chipman, and Deacon John Bradshaw. Several days were spent in preaching and in visiting from house to house. Twenty of the scattered members were gathered and re-organized into a church, and Joseph Crandal was ordained as their pastor Oct. 8, 1799. Joseph Dimock, in his journal, remarks in relation to this event: "The saints of God awoke from their long slumbers, backsliders returned to the fold of the Redeemer and shouted aloud the victory through a Saviour's blood." These records demonstrate that members of the original Sackville church were living at the period of Joseph Crandal's ordination, and that they formed the constituent elements of the church of which he was made pastor. It was really the same church revived and re-instated.

A year later, 1800, the revived church purchased a piece of land and erected a suitable place of worship, where for thirty-six years the people continued to assemble for divine service. It stood in close proximity to the site of the present Bethel. Here, for many years, Elder Crandal continued to break the bread of life unto the people. Marked revivals attended his preaching and many were brought to a saving knowledge of the truth through his instrumentality.

In harmony with a general movement among other Baptist churches, the brethren at Sackville, in the year 1808, avowed their strict adherence to Scriptural communion. About the first entry in the old record book, which is still preserved, is a resolution that "none but baptized believers should be received as members." From this sound policy the church never afterwards departed.

Elder Crandal spent much of his time in visiting other places in missionary work. He was successful in planting the good seed in many parts of New Brunswick, and churches sprang up wherever he labored. It was his delight to exercise a sort of episcopal care over these growing interests, even when they had pastors of their own. He spent the greater part of his ministerial life at Salisbury, where he died February 20, 1858, at the advanced age of 87 years. Among Baptists generally, especially in New Brunswick, no name is more familiar or more revered than that of "Father Crandal."

At Sackville was held the tenth session of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Association. It met in June, 1816, and, so far as we can learn, it was the first meeting to have the records of its proceedings preserved in printed form.

In 1814 David Harris, a young man from Nova Scotia, visited Sackville and preached with much acceptance. He was invited to remain as pastor, and his ordination soon afterwards took place in response to the request of the church. A blank in the records of the church renders it difficult for us to ascertain how long he filled the office of pastor or what results attended his efforts.

The association met again at Sackville in 1820, at which meeting Rev. James Munro was chosen as moderator and Rev. Charles Tupper as clerk. Dr. Bill intimates that the Home Mission movement, so far at least as New Brunswick is concerned, had its origin at this meeting. Another interesting feature of the gathering was the ordination of three young men—Samuel McCully, Charles Miller and Timothy Robertson.

As a sequence of this ordination Elder McCully was called to the pastorate of the church in the following year. His residence continued to be at Amherst, where he was a co-pastor with Elder Tupper. For about twelve years the pulpit at Sackville was somewhat irregularly supplied by Elders McCully, Tupper and Crandal. One of the most remarkable and extensive revivals ever enjoyed by the church took place during this period under the labors chiefly of Elder Crandal. It is still spoken of as the "Great Reformation."

An important temperance movement was begun by Elder Tupper in the year 1830. The people at Sackville were much stirred up by faithful sermons and lectures. A temperance society was formed at this date, which is regarded as the first organization of the kind in New Brunswick.

About 1833 Elder Tupper removed from Amherst to Tryon and Bedeque, P. E. I., leaving the entire field at Amherst in care of Elder McCully. This necessarily left Sackville unprovided for. It was therefore decided by the brethren to secure a pastor for themselves. Rev. Robert Davis was called to the pastorate and he cheerfully complied with the invitation. Mr. Davis possessed many excellent traits of character, and he was a man of acknowledged ability as a preacher. But he was stern and overbearing in disposition, and greatly lacked the discretion and forbearance which are so indispensable to ministerial success. Difficulties which might easily have been obviated were permitted to arise in church affairs, and disastrous results followed, by which the church was rent into contending factions for nearly half a century. The question mainly at issue was whether a parsonage, recently erected, should be given as a present to the pastor or retained as the property of the church. On such a question it was confessedly difficult for any pastor to give impartial advice. Doctrinal divergences also came into the discussion, adding intensity to the already excited feelings of the people. The unhappy outcome of it all was dissension, division and alienation. A large portion of the church separated themselves from their brethren, and with the assistance of Elder Crandal, they were organized into what for many years was known as the Second church. Father Crandal took pastoral charge of the new organization for a number of years, whilst Elder William Sears, after the removal of Rev. Robert Davis, was called to the pastoral care of the First church. The two parties continued for some years to worship alternately in the old meeting-house.

The members of the Second church eventually determined to erect a place of worship for their own exclusive use, and they chose a site within a few feet of the old grounds. A fine new building was soon erected, and on April 2, 1842, what has ever since been familiarly known as Bethel, was formally opened for public service.

Two years later, in January, 1844, a new house of worship was opened by the First church, and designated by the suggestive title of Benish. Elder Sears continued his labors in connection with this church till 1846, when he removed to another place. He was a man of fair ability, but he entertained some peculiar doctrinal views, which ultimately led to his separation from our denomination.

In the spring of 1846, Rev. Willard G. Parker was called to the pastoral care of both churches. He accepted the call and for two years faithfully discharged the duties of his office throughout the entire field. Under his efforts an interest was started at Lower Sackville and a place of worship erected, henceforth known as Salem, affiliating with the Second church and rapidly developing into a most important section of the field. Bro. Parker also held occasional services at Wood Point, where a union meeting house became subsequently erected. At the end of two years Elder Parker resigned his charge over the First church, Sept., 1848, and gave a larger part of his time to the Second, devoting some attention also to the growing interests at Midgic and Point DeBute. Three years were spent in these new relations.

Meanwhile the pulpit of the First church was supplied for six months of 1849 by Rev. Jarvis Ring. Elder Patrick Duffy followed in pastoral work for one year, giving one-quarter of his time to the First church and the remainder to various other places. He closed his labors in the autumn of 1850.

The brethren at Point De Bute who had formed part of the First church, asked for their dismission in 1850, in order that they might form themselves into a distinct church. This request was cordially granted, but the new interest was not fully organized till 1852. Rev. W. G. Parker labored successfully on this field for nearly two years after it was set off, resigning in the early part of 1852.

After a year of irregular supplies in the pulpits of the First and Second churches, Rev. Levi Marshall, of Nova Scotia, was invited to the pastoral care of both churches. He remained but one year, and was followed by Rev. W. A. Coleman, who also took charge of both churches till the close of 1855. The union was further continued by the coming of Rev. G. F. Miles in 1856. He labored with much acceptance and success till November, 1857.

Rev. David Lawson became pastor of the First church in 1858, remaining on the field three years, during which time many were added to the church by baptism. At the same time Rev. D. McKeen was pastor of the Second church. His preaching was much appreciated, and his efforts in winning souls were greatly blessed.

In March, 1859, the brethren at Midgic asked for letters of dismission in order to be organized into a separate church. Their request met with a cordial compliance, and about two weeks afterwards the new church was duly formed. It continues to grow in numbers and in strength, and is now recognized as one of our most important denominational centres.

The churches once more united in calling a pastor in August, 1861. Rev. Thomas Todd came in compliance with their invitation, and for nearly twelve years he labored on this field with many encouraging indications of spiritual advancement.

After his departure in 1873, Elders Carpenter and Miles successively filled the pulpit of the First church for about three years, whilst Rev. W. A. Coleman took pastoral charge of the Second church till his death, March 7, 1877. Rev. D. McKeen occupied both pulpits till August, 1878.

In September, 1878, Mr. G. E. Good, a licentiate from New Brunswick, visited Sackville and preached for a few weeks. Both churches united in calling him to the pastorate and in asking for his ordination to the Gospel ministry. After one year's labor, he resigned his charge over the First church and gave all his time for two years longer to the spiritual development of the Second. Rev. D. McKeen, meanwhile, supplied the pulpit of the First for about two years. During Bro. Good's labors the cause at Wood Point made some progress and a commodious place of worship was erected and opened for regular services.

Early in July, 1882, Rev. D. G. McDonald came to Sackville on a visit. His preaching made a very favorable impression, and a cordial call was extended to him by both churches to become their pastor. Soon after entering upon his labors in the new field, he made an earnest effort to bring about an organic union of the divided churches. The undertaking was felt to be one of great difficulty, but for a time there seemed to be encouraging prospects of success. In January, 1883, a meeting of the members of both bodies was held at Salem meeting house, and a resolution passed by a large majority of all present agreeing to unite henceforth as one church. A respectable minority, however, claiming to represent the Second church, declined to accept the resolution, and for two years longer these brethren continued to worship separately under the pastoral care of Revs. E C. Corey and D. McKeen. In April, 1885, after much discussion and disagreement, the union was finally effected, with the condition that all the pastors on the field should retire and permit a new man to be placed over the church, which was henceforth to be known as the Sackville Baptist church. This arrangement was duly carried into effect, and the division which for nearly half a century had existed in the community, came to an end, and a united, vigorous and promising church started forward under more cordial and pleasing auspices.

After the union was fully effected the Beulah meeting house was given up and sold for secular uses. The united congregation of Middle Sackville have since continued to worship at Bethel, and a good degree of harmony prevails throughout the entire field.

Rev. W. E. Hall, of Nova Scotia, was chosen as the new pastor of the united church. He entered upon his duties late in the fall of 1885. Bro. Hall did excellent service in removing as far as possible any asperities that remained in connection with the old feud. His genial disposition and kindly words greatly aided in removing the discordant elements which naturally linger after any prolonged dissension. Rich blessings followed his efforts and many converts were welcomed into the fellowship of the church. The erection of the handsome and commodious place of worship which adorns the later Salem was due very largely to the untiring efforts of our esteemed Bro. Hall. After a successful pastorate of upwards of five years, he tendered his resignation in the spring of 1891, and removed to Halifax.

Little need be said regarding the present pastor and his work. He came to the field in response to a cordial invitation in the spring of 1891, and found a united and harmonious church. The old questions which had caused so much discord had become almost forgotten, especially by the rising generation. A quiet work of grace has for some time been in progress, and there are many encouraging indications of spiritual prosperity. The field is an exceedingly large one, rendering it difficult for one man to perform the duties naturally resting upon the pastor of so extensive a church.

The three principal sections of the church are Sackville, Middle Sackville and Wood Point. Good congregations meet in these sections regularly for worship, and they all enjoy the benefits of regular prayer meetings and active Sunday-schools. With the blessing of the Master resting upon the efforts of our brethren in this important field, there seems to be no good reason why the Sackville Baptist church should not be one of the largest and most prosperous in the Maritime Provinces.

A more detailed sketch of the history of this church has been neatly printed in pamphlet form. A remittance of ten cents will secure a copy by mail to any person who desires to become more fully informed in relation to this pioneer Baptist church.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS IN INDIA.

For Boys and Girls in Canada.

Dear Girls and Boys,—This is Saturday morning. The rain has been pouring down in floods all night. It roared so loud upon the roof, and gurgled so loud, splashing into the pools beneath the eaves, that you would have to speak loud to hear yourself talk.

This morning the water is gushing out of the sky in sheets. On the southeast gale it is dashing under the front verandah, and was spattering into the house, but we have shut all the front doors and windows and closed the venetian blinds. The matting on the platform is as wet as the moss on an old log in the brook.

Now it is only drizzling, and the windows are open again. I hear the sound of heavy drops on the stones and leaves. The bay is muddy all along the shore. The terra-cotta colored billows resemble the tide at the mouth of the Avon river or the Shubenacadie; or the troubled, turbid waters at the mouth of the Cornwallis, the Petitcodiac or the Gaspereaux. The waves are unusually noisy on the beach; while, between us and the sea, the tall cocoanut palms are tossing their drenched tops in the wind, shaking from their dishevelled feathers another shower upon the town beneath. Far out upon the bay, beyond the muddy water, is the clear blue sea with here and there a cap of white. Soon it seems to join the misty sky, and looks as if all the world beyond were rain, cold rain, unceasing rain, drowning the rising sun.

The weather is getting cooler, delightfully cooler. Our punkahs are still, save when a monsoon breeze comes in through the door, rustles their fringe and swings their ropes. The coming of the cool season is putting new life into us, and we can learn more Telugu now in one day than we could three months ago in three days. The breath of the approaching November is like a drink from a mountain spring, an elysian bath, an evening breeze, "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

As soon as the present rice crop is reaped, the famine will be over—unless, indeed, the fury of this storm should destroy it. No man who has a heart could look out upon this parched country last May, without pang upon pang of sympathy for the hungry population. And he cannot look out upon the country now without thanking God for the rains, the grass, the flowers, the broad fields of grain already reaped, and for the boundless marshes of rice, like the boundless sea. Already, in prospect of such a crop, the poor man can get one quart more of rice for a rupee than he could get two weeks ago. Although there is all too much hunger still, and it is hard for the hungry to wait for food to grow; yet the rains have varnished the faces of half-starved children, smoothed out a few of the wrinkles from the face of wizened, wicked old age, and made "the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose."

In writing my last letter to you—from Bhimasinga—I thought of the girl at home, who sat under an apple tree with an apple in her hand, crying, because (she said) the apple was so big and her mouth was so small that she could not bite it. All the things we saw to tell you made such a big bunch, that I could hardly get hold of it to pull out a few sights and sounds to send to you.

Sometimes we would go off away from the road, walk along the narrow dikes of the rice swamps, one behind another, like ducks, or parade along the high bank of a tank that stretches out its arms into creeks and bays, like a lake whose glassy face is decked with white lilies. It would seem as if, surely, we should soon get into the backwoods, out of sight and sound of human habitations, when suddenly there would arise before us, beneath palms and banyan trees, the smoke and brown roofs of a village. As we drew near children would peep out around the corners of the mud walls of their mud houses, to see who were coming, and would then run in to hide or to tell their father or mother.

One hot afternoon, after we had walked over two miles along the the half-finished railroad and across the rice fields, we became very thirsty. Just as we jumped across a brook-like pool, into a village, there, with its high, round curb, made of stone and mortar, was a well of water. With a rope in her hand, a woman was drawing up a basket of water. The basket held about half a pail and was made out of one big, crinkled palmyra palm leaf. It was an old basket and there was a slit in the side of it. She had to pull it up as fast as she could or the water would all leak out before she could pour it into her big earthen water pot, which she was going to fill and carry home on her head. It is dangerous to drink from strange wells; but the native preachers said this was good water, and we were so thirsty that we asked the woman for a drink. Willingly, she poured water out of her basket into our hands. With the two palms folded together like a saucer, we drank, got our hands filled and drank again and again, while the abundance of the water spilled over under our thumbs, falling upon the curb-stone and scattering on the giver's bare feet. We felt very grateful to her, and tried to tell her of Him who would give her living water and eternal life.

How vividly this scene brought to our minds the picture of a man who one day had been walking a long distance in the heat and came at last to an old well. Very tired and thirsty after so long a tramp he sat on the well-curb. It was hot noon, and the very scent of the water must have been sweet to him as he sat there and rested for a moment his weary frame. But the cool breath from the well's mouth only made him the more anxious to wet his lips with a draught from the cold depths beneath. Yet, he had nothing to draw with and the well was deep; and the dark, gleaming fount at the bottom was out of reach. But he looked up and saw a woman coming to draw water, and he asked her for a drink.

However, the well that we came to was not so deep. I looked in and thought if nobody had come, I would have leaned over and dipped up my umbrella full. After we had the drink we went and sat down on the high roots of a tree. The people came out to see us. We sang a hymn and preached to them.

Behind the crowd, at his own door was a man at work,—not paying much attention to us. He had a wooden ox about as big as a cat, which he had made and painted up. He was just at work ornamenting him with stripes of red and gold, getting him ready to sell to somebody for a god. A carpenter making his maker! He said he was making it to sell and get money to buy food. If all the people of India should become Christians, it would ruin this man's business and the business of all other idol makers, as Demetrius, the silver-smith of Ephesus was afraid the preaching of Paul would spoil his business, and so made a great uproar. You can read about it in the nineteenth chapter of the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

At one village that we visited, across the river, we had a very interesting time with the children. After the large crowd, to which we had been preaching, was broken up, a small boy stepped on a thorny stick and began to cry. Another boy was just going to put his bare foot on one too; but I told him to look out and he stepped back. I picked up the stick, with its sharp prongs, and bent it around into a wreath, about large enough to go on the top of a man's head. Then I showed the children how bad men made a crown of thorns and put it on the head of Jesus and struck Him on the head with sticks and made the blood come out. Then as I sat down on my heels, these children sat down in a circle around me, and listened with all their eyes and ears while I tried to tell them how good this Jesus was to the children and let them come to Him and took them up in His arms and blessed them. I told them how, when I was eight years old, I found out that I was a bad sinner and cried myself to sleep; and how happy I was when it came over me that Jesus loved me and would save me; and how Jesus had made me so glad that I had come out here to tell all the boys and girls I could find; and how the tears rolled down my mother's cheeks as she stood in the door and watched her boy coming away from her, but she did not say "Come back," for she knew I was coming to tell them of Jesus.

Of course I could not tell all this very well in their language. But that makes it all the more interesting, that the little people should have listened so well to such broken Telugu. The older folks that were standing up behind them told the children more plainly what I had been trying to say. They seemed so happy and were not afraid at all. Pray that God may give them new hearts. Not far away Mr. Shaw was talking to another group of listening people. And the preachers were talking to other curious groups. We came away and left them explaining to one another the strange things they had heard that day.

So many kind letters have come to us to comfort our hearts in the pain which we feel because our darling boy could not stay with us. We have not yet been able to answer them all. We expect to answer them soon. Everyone brought us strong consolation, and we would fain grasp with gratitude and love each warm hand that has written.

Wishing you all a truly happy Christmas, I remain, yours heartily,

L. D. Morse.

Bimlipatam, India, Oct. 29.

P. S.—Monday morning. The neat little tank which Mr. Sanford built in the garden for a baptistry is nearly full of water, which has fallen straight from the heavens. I say nearly full—that is, it is twenty-two inches deep. There is a short spout about half a foot wide that runs into it, and that, perhaps, caught a ninth of the water, so that if it had not been there the baptistry alone would have caught nineteen and a half inches of water. If you will only come you can see it for yourselves, just over the garden wall, beneath the green, delicate leaves and graceful branches of the margosa tree—nearly full of rain. This will give you an idea of how much water has fallen, since the monsoon broke and burst upon us with its flood. L. D. M.

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All the right, title, interest, property, claim, and demand whatsoever, either at law or in equity, of Robert Love, of, in or to that Lot described in the Deed thereof from James Stackhouse as in the neighborhood of the Third Lock Lomond Lake, in the Parish of Simonds, known as the Stackhouse Farm, bounded by lands owned by Robert Stackhouse on the south, lands owned by Charles Stackhouse and late John Brawley on the west, lands owned by Wm. Hayward on the north, and lands owned by Hugh Ryan on the east, containing one hundred and ten acres, more or less, with the building and improvements thereon being

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Dated this twenty eighth day of October, A.D. 1892.

JAMES A. HARDING, Sheriff.

N. B.—For particulars apply to A. H. DeMill, Solicitor, Palmer's Building.

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