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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### Nearer Home.

"Heaven is my Father-land,  
Heaven is my home."

O'er the hills the sun is setting,  
And the eve is drawing on:  
Slowly droops the gentle twilight,  
For another day is gone;  
Gone for aye—its race is over,  
Soon the darker shades will come;  
Still, 'tis sweet to know at even,  
We are one day nearer home.

"One day nearer," sings the mariner,  
As he glides the waters o'er,  
While the light is softly dying  
On his distant native shore.  
Thus the Christian on life's ocean,  
As his light boat cuts the foam,  
In the evening cries with rapture—  
"I am one day nearer home."

Worn and weary oft the pilgrim  
Hails the setting of the sun;  
For his goal is one day nearer,  
And his journey nearly done.  
Thus we feel, when o'er life's desert,  
Heart and sad soul sore we roam;  
As the twilight gathers o'er us,  
We are one day nearer home.

Nearer home! Yes, one day nearer  
To our Father's house on high—  
To the green fields and the fountains  
Of the land beyond the sky;  
For the heavens grow brighter o'er us,  
And the lamps hang in the dome,  
And our tents are pitched still closer,  
For we're one day nearer home.

## Nova Scotia Church History

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD V.

From A. D. 1821 to A. D. 1823.

LETTER XXXV.

JOSEPH DIMOCK'S FIRST MISSION TO CAPE BRETON.—  
THE ASSOCIATION OF 1825.—IMPERFECT STATISTICS.  
—JOSEPH DIMOCK'S SECOND MISSION TO CAPE BRETON.  
—OCCURRENCES AT GUYSBOROUGH.—THE COMMUNION QUESTION.

#### My Young Friend,

Immediately after the meeting of the Association in 1825, the home mission committee requested Joseph Dimock to undertake a mission to the Eastward. He willingly complied, and spent sixteen weeks in labouring among the destitute. Encouraging results followed, at Antigonish, Guysborough, and other places. Crossing over to Cape Breton, he found John Hull and a number of his friends prepared to receive baptism. An account of Mr. Hull's baptism has been given in a former letter. Eight others joined him in the act of obedience to the Saviour. Mr. Dimock visited Baddeck and Margaree, and preached frequently at both places. Four were baptized at Baddeck and three at Margaree. He then returned to Sydney, formed the newly baptized into a church, located at the "North-West Arm," and continued there several weeks, "Confirming the souls of the disciples." I am informed that on this second visit Mr. D. baptized several more. If my informant is correct in his report these last-mentioned persons did not join the church, for when it was admitted into the Association, in 1826, it was stated to consist of only nine members.

The Association met in 1826 with the church in Wilmot. James Munro preached the introductory sermon, from 1 Cor. iii. 6. Joseph Dimock was Moderator; William Elder, Clerk; and James Munro, Assistant Clerk.

The Churches at Sydney, Parrsborough, and Antigonish were received. The church at Parrsborough was formed by Robert Davis, while on a missionary tour in that district. Mr. Tupper had laboured there a considerable part of the years 1817 and 1818, and baptized a number of converts. Others were baptized by Mr. Davis. Eleven of them were formed into a church. The organization of the church at Antigonish, by Mr. Nutter, has been narrated in a former letter.

The statistics shewed a net increase of seventy-six. But the actual state of the churches was not fully given. The Digby Neck church had experienced a revival, in which twenty-seven persons were added. They had lost ten members, giving a clear increase of seventeen, which, added to the total number reported in 1825, would have raised the total in 1826 to one hundred and thirty-seven, whereas the Minutes state that the church then contained only sixty-three members! The fact was that seventy-three members had been dismissed, to form a new church at Brier Island, and as the organization of that church had not yet taken place, it seemed as if there had been a great loss, no mention being made of the dismissal in the letter of the church. This was an irregularity. They were not so careful in those days as we are now.

Shortly after the Association, Mr. Dimock revisited the Eastern district. The following account is taken from his journal, as published in the "Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Missionary Magazine" for October, 1827:—

"Aug. 19th, 1826. Attended conference meeting at Antigonish. It was a sweet and solemn season. Great union prevailed in the church. Four persons came forward and related their experiences, which were very satisfactory.

"Lord's day, 20. Preached at nine o'clock, A. M. from Ephes. v. 1, 'Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.' Baptized the candidates, in the presence of a more solemn assembly than is usual on such an occasion in that place. Preached again at 3 o'clock, P. M., from Ephes. v. 2. "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us," &c. I then administered the Lord's supper. Many were in tears, and the appearance was glorious and truly encouraging.

"24. Attended conference meeting at Big Tracadie. The church excluded one, and received one, whom I baptized. He was never sensible of his wretched state till after he was sixty-nine years old. At that time he was visited with sickness, which was heavy on his body, and the words of Mr. Davis were, in the hand of the Spirit, made powerful on his soul. Some months after this afflictive, yet merciful visitation, he was brought to hope in the Saviour, since which time he has given evidence of a gracious change.

"Sept. 6. Came to Baddeck, where I had visited last year. My old friends appeared much rejoiced to see me. Mr. M's wife professed religion a few weeks after I left here last fall, as have also a few others since that time. It may truly be said of the pious few in this place, as of old, 'see how these christians love one another!'

"Sept. 17. Lord's day. Preached at Sydney Town, Cape Breton, from John i. 39, 'Behold the Lamb of God,' &c., and in the evening from Rev. xxii. 17. The dear Lord favoured us with his presence. One gentleman said, after the meetings, 'O Sir, I am astonished at myself, and all around me, that we are so little impressed under the sound of such solemn, impressive, and awful truths. Perhaps the picture never was drawn in the hearing of this assembly in so lively colours. I confess I never heard the sufferings of Christ and the miseries of the finally impenitent, coloured thus; nor had my mind been led into such a train of thinking. But it does not impress me as it ought; it floats too much on the surface of my mind.'—It was an interesting day. It is true, some persons behaved rudely, to their own disgrace; but the impression made, and the interest excited in the minds of many, among the most respectable as well as the poorer class, will, I trust, be long remembered.

"18. Crossed the Creek about half a mile from the town, and baptized two candidates. The assembly collected on the occasion was large; but their behaviour was the most decent and becoming that I ever witnessed in so public a place. Catholics, Churchmen, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists being present; much as they differed in forms of worship, all observed that decorum and propriety of conduct that ought to be remembered to the honour of Sydney. It was a pleasing sight to one, to see one of Paul's 'honourable women,' that moved in the higher circles of life, following the hum-

ble steps of the Redeemer, by being immersed in the liquid grave;—steps untrod in that place before.

"20. Crossed the Arm, six miles distant, and preached from Ephes. v. 1. 2.

"23. We enjoyed a delightful season in conference meeting at North-West Arm. Three persons gave very satisfactory accounts of a work of grace in their hearts.

"24. Lord's day. I baptized the three persons who had been approved by the Church on the preceding day (after having preached from Rev. xxii. 16), in the midst of despising mockers and solemn weepers."

Thus far the journal. A letter to Mr. Manning completes the narrative.

"On my return, at Margaree I preached twice and baptized one person, which I trust will prove a prelude to better days in that place. Preached at Mabou to a few very solemn persons. A person present said, 'This is the first Baptist preacher I ever heard; I should be willing to hear such every day.' As a proof of this assertion, he crossed a ferry and with a number more attended a meeting at Port Hood, six miles distant, on a very dark night.—At Cook's Cove, Guysborough, I had a precious season of reviving from the presence of the Lord. A young Congregational minister, Mr. W. Burton, was constrained in obedience to the command of Christ, to confess his faith publicly, and was baptized in the presence of a most interesting congregation. I also baptized one from Manchester at this place. Brother Burton having come on to Antigonish, joined the church there, and there I baptized one person, who had experienced the pardoning grace of God on the Lord's-day previous."

"Mr. W. Burton," referred to in this account, is our esteemed brother who was so long associated with Harris Harding, and is now settled at South Yarmouth. A communication received from him enables me to give you some additional particulars of Mr. Dimock's tour.

As he was travelling from Margaree, in a part of the country where there were no proper roads, and the few inhabitants could have little intercourse with each other, and were rarely visited by strangers, he was kindly received one night by a Protestant family. Learning that he was a minister (and he was the first Protestant minister who had passed that way, as far as they knew), though they did not know to what denomination he belonged, a desire was expressed that he would baptize the children. He replied, that with Protestants the bible was the only rule of faith and practice, and that if they would shew him from the scriptures that children were proper subjects for baptism, and also to what part of the body, more than another, the water was to be applied, he would administer the rite. The mother-in-law, who had been particularly anxious about the matter, took up her Gaelic bible and commenced an examination. The search proved fruitless, and she candidly confessed that she was unable to meet the minister's requirements; upon which Mr. D., quietly remarked that it would be better to defer the proposed baptism till authority for it could be found in the word of God.

He arrived at Guysborough on Saturday evening, Nov. 11th. Mr. Burton had been preaching there some time to a Pædobaptist congregation. His mind had become disquieted on the subject of baptism; but when Mr. Dimock was in that neighbourhood the year before he had purposely gone out of the way, not caring to enter into discussion with him. In the interim he had carefully examined the scriptures, and was now fully convinced of the truth of Baptist sentiments, and prepared to avow them. On Lord's day morning a large congregation was assembled at the place of worship. "He took for his text," says Mr. Burton, "Acts ix. 20,—and straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." He commenced with a few appropriate remarks about Paul, but soon said,—"I am not going to preach Paul unto you. I have a very much more interesting subject to present to you at this time, and that is the glorious Jesus, Paul's divine Master. I shall first discourse to you about his real divinity and Godhead; secondly, his real manhood, his

suffering, and death on the cross; thirdly, his real atonement, offered to the justice of a holy God on the behalf of sinful and dying men; and fourthly, his glorious character and offices, as prophet, priest, and king of Zion—his laws, commandments, and ordinances, which are to be faithfully observed and obeyed by all his redeemed people." He spoke on these several points briefly, but with great clearness and warmth of feeling, and with happy effect on the audience. He seemed to be unusually assisted by the Spirit of the Lord. As I arose to speak after him, that passage was impressed on my mind with great force—"What think ye of Christ?" I offered a few remarks on it, and then gave a brief account of my conversion to God, and my views of christian baptism and communion. There being no particular church in that place, Father Dimock said he must change his customary practice in receiving persons to Christian fellowship. As there were pious persons then present, of different religious persuasions, who had good opportunity of judging of the moral and religious character of the brother proposed for baptism, he requested them to signify, in the usual manner, their approval of him as a fit candidate for the privileges of discipleship. "The vote was unanimous, and the baptism took place that afternoon, in the Cove hard by. A great concourse of people had gathered together. Some stood on the shore; others sat in boats; deep solemnity pervaded the assembly; and when they sung the hymn, 'Jesus, and shall it ever be,' &c., and the venerable administrator prayed, (his were no common prayers) for the candidate, for the audience, for all men—and the act of obedience was performed, few were unaffected. Christians gave thanks to God; careless sinners looked on with awe; the language of enquiring minds was—"What meaneth this service?"

I have reserved an extract from Mr. Dimock's journal for separate remark. Under date Sep. 20, he writes as follows:—"In reply to one who expressed a wish for union, though we differed in some points, and desired to know how far I wished the Baptist church in that place to separate from others, I observed, that I wished for them to serve the Saviour, and to live near to him, (strictly obeying his commands) and wanted them to separate no farther from others than near living and close walking with God would separate them."

This was at North-West Arm. It is evident that the question of communion was brought up for discussion, as might have been expected, the newly baptized having been members of a Pædobaptist church. Mr. Dimock's reply to the querist conveyed, in few words, a clear statement of the case. He desired the church to be no further separated from other servants of Christ than was rendered necessary by their "strictly obeying his commands." This is true Baptist teaching and policy, and it ought not to be offensive to other denominations.

Baptists refuse to commune at the Lord's with unbaptized persons. This is no freak or fancy of theirs. They are sustained in it by the practice of all Christendom, in all ages, the priority of baptism to the Lord's supper being universally admitted. They conceive that the order of procedure, according to Christ's institution, is—repentance and faith, baptism, and union with the church. The order has been changed in Pædobaptist communities, in which baptism stands first, being administered in infancy, and cannot therefore be a personal profession of faith, as it was in New Testament times; besides which, sprinkling has been substituted for it, except in the Greek church. Holding, therefore, that baptism is the immersion of the candidate in water, on profession of faith in Christ—and nothing less—and that it precedes the union of the believer with the church, we surely ought not to be charged with narrow-mindedness or bigotry because we decline communion with the unbaptized. However we may esteem them as christians, we cannot but regard them as wanting in this particular. They have not obeyed that commandment of the Lord which requires to be attended to in the first place; in other words, they have not been baptized in Christ's way. They believe, as we do, that