

HISTORICAL SERMON
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
WARREN, PENN'A.



BY THE PASTOR
REV. H. I. STEWART



EIGHTIETH ANNIVERSARY
SUNDAY, MAY 3, 1914

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By The Pastor, Rev. H. I. Stewart.

Text—Isaiah 51-1—"Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn".

Michael Angelo chiseled his David from a bit of marble that an amateur artist had cast aside and it became at once the despair and glory of all rival artists.

The poet Gray sings in his optimistic vein,
"Perhaps in this rude neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire.
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed
Or waked to life the living lyre."

In the text the brilliant Isaiah portrays Israel as having been hewn out of a rock. The allusion is to Abraham, the Father of the tribe. They had sprung from one as good as dead. (Heb. 11-12). They had been as rough as hewn stone, when God took them in hand for the moulding.

We may apply the words in a general sense, for God "Is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." From the rudest material God can fashion masterpieces of grace. Times without number the "stone cut without hands from the mountain" has gone on to greatness, to glory and to grandeur, fulfilling God's ancient oracle. Full often "The stone that the builders refused has become the head of the corner."

1834 A. D. was indeed a year of great events. Andrew Jackson was President of these United States. The Seminole War was about to break out. At that time Warren was a borough just two years of age and boasted a population of 358 souls. This year 1834 was twenty-five years before the snort of the iron horse was heard, as it rushed through the town, yea, at that time the whole county was innocent of such a convenience as a Railroad. Four years later a splendid line of stage coaches was started between this place and Buffalo and Pittsburgh—One could leave Warren in the evening and be in Buffalo the next evening and Pittsburgh in a correspondingly short time(?). In the year 1834, the Presbyterian people had dedicated a meeting house. In that year the first bank, "The Lumberman's Bank" was started, which proved to be, however, a "shdrt horse soon curried." That year witnessed the building of the Academy. That year was just four years previous to the time when the first and only steamboat made a trip up the Allegheny as far as Olean, this trip was accomplished amid much difficulty. As the struggling steamboat passed the Cornplanter Indi-

an Tribe's Territory the old chief, who was an expert canoe man, paddled his canoe completely around the steamer and proudly expressed his prowess with a mighty warhoop.

At this time there were but three buildings in the town. Then and for many years after the principal industry was lumbering, for this was long before the days when "Hle" was struck. Great rafts were floated down the Conewango and the upper Allegheny and were here formed into fleets and floated down the river to Pittsburgh and points beyond. This year was five years before the first bridge spanned the Allegheny River. Up the Conewango the site of Indian wigwams was not an infrequent one.

It was on Friday, May 2nd, of this eventful year, 1834, that 16 men and women gathered at the new courthouse, which at that time had been built just seven years, and with the help of delegations from Pine Grove, Ashville and Carrol and a Missionary from New York State, proceeded to organize the First Baptist Church in Warren. After an examination of the articles of Faith and circumstances, it was voted unanimously that "It was for the honor and glory of God to erect a standard of the Cross in this place, where the ordinances of Christ may be administered as they were delivered to the saints."

On Saturday, the next day, the first Covenant Meeting was held at which a Mr. and Mrs. Jones were received and in a remarkably short time Browns and Smiths were received, so that the coterie of familiar names was complete. It has been suggested that no church can ever hope to survive, unless it has Smiths, Jones and Browns in its midst. The Mr. Brown who was received seems to have been a licensed preacher for the church, hearing that he has preached some, authorized him to "Improve his gift."

During the first eight years of its history the church had no settled Pastor, being served by traveling ministers and missionaries.

During the first twenty-five years of its history the church had no building and worshipped in the Court House and the Academy.

Nov. 1, 1842 the church finds itself with a membership of 29 persons, having made a net gain of 13 since its organization eight years before.

This date is also memorable as the time when the first regular Pastor settled with the church.

During this month the church suffered its first loss by death in the passing of Polly Doty, she being one of the charter members of the flock.

July 21st, 1844 the church becomes a chartered organization. About this time the church decides to have two deacons instead of one, as formerly. July 5th, 1845 is the first mention of a Sunday School Superintendent.

The first mention of a Pastor's salary is November, 1845, at which time the Church calls a Pastor for six months at a salary of \$70. At the end of the six months, both Church and Pastor were mutually so well pleased, that

the Pastor was called for a year, the salary was fixed at \$215. The minister to find his own manse and furnish wood for the same. One is almost inclined to think that this good brother was kept very busy. These were evidently perilous times, for in a contemporaneous account I find recorded the fact that in 1847 the neighboring Presbyterian Sunday School died out for the lack of wood and Superintendents. Evidently not only we but others but others have had a struggle to arrive at so happy a conclusion.

In 1859-1860 the present building is moved here from New York State and re-erected and dedicated.

The first ordination of a minister occurs October 21, 1865. In the spring of 1866 following the Big Flood of '65 the lumbermen were marooned in town for over a month and the local opera house, then located on Pennsylvania Avenue, above the Carver House, had a troupe here that gave a different show very night for a month. Of course this is not a part of our history, but is a part of the local history.

In 1869 the Bell was placed in the tower of the Church. However, the present Pastor has never heard the accents of the "Clear Toned Baptist Bell."

March 6, 1870 we find the population of Warren to be 2,001 and that the Baptist Church has a membership of 34 persons. The Church has now been organized 36 years and has gained 18 new members or one new member every two years. Later on we may find a reason for this slow growth of the membership.

The Baptistry is installed and used for the first time April 17, 1870, hitherto all the baptismal ceremonies had been performed in either the Conewango or the Allegheny.

The year 1873 seems to have been not only a low period for the church but for the town as well. We find that the church has been without a Pastor for over two years. We find that during this time a street car track was laid from the Pennsylvania depot to the Glade Run and that the rolling stock consists of two one horse cars, which proves to be just two too many--for the project is a complete failure and in a short time the tracks are taken up and sent away.

December 20, 1873, however, is a Red Letter day for the Church. It was then that the Church secured E. F. Crane, M. D., as Pastor. His first work was that of placing a crescent or horseshoe gallery in the church. The present seats were instaled at that time. The Re-opening Services were quite pretentious. Among the eminent ministers present were Dr. Fred Evans, the brilliant Welsh preacher, then located at Franklin. The eloquent Dr. Gunning, then at Titusville, the poetical Dr. George Whitman, then of Oil City and later of Buffalo.

February 23, 1890 was another Red Letter Day. It was the time of the Dedication of the Sunday School Rooms in the rear of the Auditorium. The Preacher on that day was Dr. P. S. Henson of Chicago. Dr. Henson has with-

in the last week passed to his reward. His visit to Warren was an event. "His vivid imagination, his picturesque style, his passionate earnestness, and his torrential eloquence made him a remarkable preacher, a preacher who once heard was never forgotten."

January 11, 1891, the Church voted to recognize the Swedish Mission as a regular Baptist Church. The result of this action is the present virile, vital First Swedish Baptist Church of Warren. A daughter of whom any spiritual mother might be proud.

During the pastorate of Rev. A. J. Ireby the Church made some extensive repairs, including a ventilating system, electric lights and new heating system, etc.

During the pastorate of Rev. Alfred Cookman Drummond, my very worthy successor, the Church installed the handsome pipe organ, whose charming music is always a noble tribute of praise to our Heavenly Father.

Such is a brief outline of the history of the Church.

I now desire to mention the Pastors. It will be only a passing mention. The course of a river is a general direction. One does not think in speaking of its direction of the many little winds and curves and twists and eddies. I know not the struggles, heartaches, triumphs, victories of these early men of God, but one may imagine much.

ALFRED HANDY WAS THE FIRST PASTOR—A Consecrated man of God.

WILLIAM R. NORTHRUP—When I tell you that this was the brother who labored here at the magnificent salary of \$215 per annum, you will not doubt his sincerity of purpose at least.

WILLIAM M. EVERETT—A pastorate marked by frequent baptisms.

WILLIAM SMITH—This brother proved to be like the founder of the Mormon Religion, not only in name, but in very fact, for it turned out that he had been a Mormon Elder. He left the field in five months.

B. C. WILLOUGHBY—Here at last is a name to conjure with. However we are bereft of any record of his pastorate, for very early in his ministry it was found necessary to expel the erstwhile Clerk from the membership, whereupon he, the Clerk, purloined the books of the Church and kept same for a period of six years. However, from other sources comes the information that Pastor Willoughby was instrumental in having the present building moved here from Kiantone, N. Y., and rebuilt it. This Pastor was a Godsend to the struggling church. This man died at the remarkable age of 99 years and 6 months.

He resigned to accept a call to Meadville. Later in the history of the Church we shall find that Meadville Absalomized the heart of another of your Pastors in the person of **WILL C. KING**.

Nothing of importance is mentioned in the record during the pastorates of A. J. Hastings, Thomas Evans, Mr. Lockwood, I. Trowbridge.

J. HARRINGTON was the next minister. This brother came as stated supply and was succeeded by

E. F. CRANE, M. D.—This brother being a veteran and used to smelling powder was the man for the time and the place. This was one of the banner pastorates of the Church. Dr. Crane left his impress not only on Warren, but other towns in this vicinity.

H. H. LEAMY—A graduate of the First Class of Crozer and a classmate of Rev. George W. Snyder was the next Pastor. He left here to assume the pastorate of the Church at Cambridge, later Cambridge Springs, where your present Pastor lived and ministered for four years.

JAMES REA was a man blessed with an excellent education, fresh from the Theological Seminary at Rochester was he when he came to Warren. The Church had the pleasure of ordaining him to the work of the ministry. There was an era of good feeling during his pastorate and many of the best workers of today united during his stay. It was in the neighboring city of Tidouate that Rev. Rea found a young lady possessed with such a spirit of courage that she was willing to share the adventures of a minister's career. All honor to Rev. Rea and his Warren pastorate.

E. D. HAMMOND—During this Pastor's stay in Warren he had the misfortune to lose his good wife. Mr. Hammond went from here to the Penn. Avenue Church at Pittsburgh.

WILLIAM J. COULSTON—Just out of the seminary one year when he came to Warren. Big, brilliant, beloved and busy was Coulston. He was not content to be the Bishop of Warren alone, but organized missions at Kinzua, which has had a decent burial after a brief career and also at Kane. This latter has developed into a fine church, having a building far superior to the mother church.

WILL C. KING—During this pastorate the Sunday School Rooms were added. The Church was also able to make a steady growth during this pastorate. Mr. King has within the last few days passed to his reward. He left Warren to assume the pastorate at Meadville, where he was eminently successful in a pastorate lasting through a period of ten years.

C. BARNABAS SMITH—During this pastorate the Church observed its 60th anniversary. Mr. Smith was a good preacher and the second Smith who ministered to the Baptist Congregation.

A. J. IREY, D. D., held the longest pastorate in the history of the Church, in fact, twice as long as any other. Almost ten years this good brother labored in Warren, his good wife seconding his every effort. He also had the pleasure of leading the Church to make some valuable repairs. I am unable to find the record of Mr. Ireys pastorate, but I shall not misinterpret the record, I am sure, when I declare that under Rev. Ireys the

Church enjoyed great spiritual and temporal prosperity. May the good life of this Christian gentleman be long spared to bless the earth.

PAUL J. LUX—An eloquent preacher, a profound sermonizer, a master financier was my good friend, Paul J. Lux. The elements so combine in him that "nature may stand up and say to all this world "This is a man." Paul J. Lux is today one of the best Baptists outside the Baptist Denomination that there is to be found anywhere, search where you will. And if he feels that the only thing that separates him from the Baptist Denomination is a little water, we are so generous that we will meet him half way in that.

ALFRED COOKMAN DRUMMOND was the next incumbent. Young, alert, alive, filled with zeal for the Master and enthusiasm for the cause, was and is my good friend, Rev. Mr. Drummond. He stands today as among one of the most brilliant of the younger ministers of our state and we predict a fine future for him. The Church was exceedingly fortunate in having him as their pastor. The crowning glory of his service and the thing for which he will always be held in grateful remembrance is his enthusiasm in helping to place the pipe organ in the church.

The present Pastor is my wife's first husband, Howard I. Stewart.

From time to time the Church has secured the aid of Evangelists, some of them being among the most eminent of the denomination and land. Such men as Rev. Hurlbut, during his stay the Church doubled its membership—Rev. Brown, Thomas Needham and N. B. Randall.

From time to time the Church has edited a Church paper. It has appeared under the title of "The Call," "The Chronicle," "The Remembrancer" and lest we forget "The Baptist Bulletin."

Besides ordaining several of its own Pastors the Church has ordained the first Pastor of the Swedish Baptist Church and the first Pastor of the Kinzua Church.

Like a fragrance of immortal flowers there rises before me several names of prominent ones who were once a tower of strength, but who are now "Lovelier far in heaven's own sweet clime yet the same." Those whom some of us have never had the pleasure of knowing and will not know "till the morn when those angels' faces shall rise that we have loved and lost long since awhile."

Irresistibly there flashes before me the names of Deacon Norman Snyder and his good wife. This man was a member of the Church for 35 years and a Deacon thereof for 27 years. The greater part of his life he lived on Quaker Hill, but no day was too cold or too hot for him to be at Church. Of him this is the superb, yet simple record. "He sacrificed for the Church when it was weak; he stood firm when it needed friends and when enemies broke down the walls he knelt on the ruins thereof and prayed that Zion might be restored."

Standing shoulder to shoulder with him were Deacon A. Gerould and wife. Mr. Gerould held the office of Deacon for 34 years, served also as Clerk and Treasurer. Too fullsome praise cannot be uttered concerning these men. Here were men willing to take up the cause of a struggling organization and give it their help and prayers. "O who would not a soldier be, in this lordly, chivalry?"

Rev. George Snyder and Rev. J. B. Hutson were young men of the Church, both of whom achieved nobly as ministers of the gospel, the former being called up higher in the early summer of his life, but not before he had made full proof of his ministry. These were noble sons of whom the Church has ever been proud and glad that she was their spiritual mother.

In very recent years the Church suffered a great loss in the passing of Mr. H. E. Davis, a man whose life was full of good deeds and who was never happier than when serving his Church.

Of the ones who are living and are today members of the Church and who have had the exquisite joy of bearing the burdens and sharing the sorrows of the Church for many years, I shall not speak. I shall leave that to other spiritual bards who may in later years wake these dells in sweeter tones than any I can hope to aspire unto. But though I do not mention you by name let no one dare imagine that your Pastor does not deeply appreciate your every effort. However, this is often our crime. We fail to express our appreciation to the living.

Let me briefly touch upon some peculiar customs of discipline of the early Church. That steam engine in trousers of Evangelism, Billy Sunday, says: "That anything, from a humming bird to a turkey burzzard may hibernate in the camps of Israel today." It was not so in the early history of this Church. They often had a "Back Door Revival." Let me cite some early cases of discipline. One of the Constituent members is excluded for refusing to be in subjection to the church."

Another member has the hand of fellowship withdrawn from him for a "secret removal from this town, without paying his just debts."

Another member is excluded for "Unchristian conduct in his family."

Another brother for "telling falsehoods and also stating things incorrectly in court."

Another member—this time it is a sister—for "expressing a lack of confidence in the Church and imprudent conversation."

A charge is brought against one of the brethren for "attending a ball" and attempting to justify himself in it."

Another brother is "ousted" for calling some of the members of the Church fools and swine and that they needed guardians to take care of them. Do you wonder that this poor brother was turned out to the tender mercies of the world, the flesh and the devil?

Another brother is excluded for "gambling and for vain and vicious amusements."

The next to go is the Church Clerk. A brother brings a charge against him that he, the Clerk, had "misused him with his tongue in public capacity, that he had told him that he was not going to be brow-beaten or bluffed any more and that he had pointed toward the door and said: "If you do not wish to stay any longer there is the door."

Another is ejected for drinking "spirituous liquors at a logging bee to intoxication."

Another delinquent is reported as saying that "it made no difference to him whether he was excluded or not and as for his drinking, he drank when he was dry like other folks." Report accepted, committee discharged, subject postponed indefinitely.

The next case is that of a sister who is excluded for attending "balls and cotillion parties."

The above may account for the slow growth of the membership. If modern Churches were as zealous in that direction they would be in session longer than the Pennsylvania Legislature.

What does the history of this Church mean to you? "Look unto the rock from whence ye were hewn." "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." "Thou shalt remember all the way that the Lord thy God hath led thee."

The God of the past is still with us.

BE PROUD OF YOUR CHURCH. It was said that he who once dips his feet in the Allegheny will live forever at her shores. He who reverently dips his whole person in the crystal waters of baptism, following the glorious pathway of his Master, should be a Clansman of Cavalry forever.

BE LOYAL TO THE CHURCH. Loyalty to my church does not mean that I criticise every other Church; Loyalty to your children does not mean that you hit your neighbor's children over the head. Said the Psalmist: "If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning."

REMEMBER THAT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP MEANS HOLY LIVING. A prominent Methodist Bishop pays this tribute to the Baptist denomination "The Baptist denomination is the only popular denomination in the world to-day that is standing for an unpopular truth." This being the case our appeal is to the heroic. "Stand and having done all to stand"—"With malice toward none—with charity for all." "In essentials loyalty, in non-essentials liberty."

BE READY TO SHARE THE FINANCIAL BURDENS OF THE CHURCH.
"Owe no man anything save to love one another."

For her my tears shall fall
For her my prayers ascend
To her my toils and cares be given
Till tears and prayers shall end."