

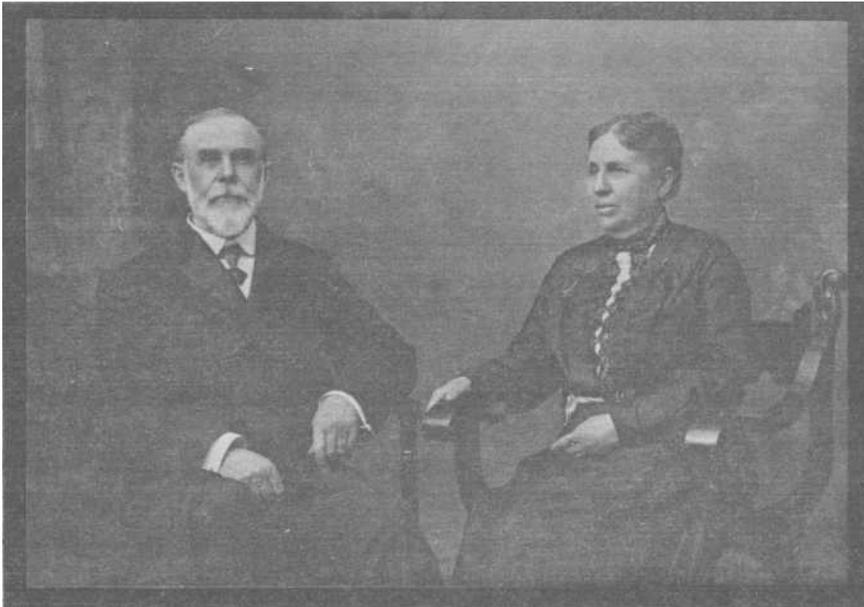
THE HISTORICAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANVILLE, OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume III Number 3

Summer 1989

AN OLD-SCHOOL MINISTER



Charles J. Baldwin was the minister of the Granville Baptist Church from 1886 to 1913. These excerpts are from a reminiscence by his son, Arthur C. Baldwin, published in the Crozer Quarterly in April 1937.

Dr. and Mrs. Baldwin

I call him an old-school minister because he made the pulpit the center of his ministry. He was not interested in questions of administration or organization. Instead of an office he had a study. Where we moderns work close to a telephone with a busy secretary, frequent callers and a full calendar of appointments, his working companions were books in a quiet that was rarely disturbed.

For the Doctor, as we called him, sermon-making was a high art. Instead of extemporaneous address, an animated conversation with a congregation in a more or less colloquial form, he

brought into his pulpit a carefully written manuscript that had been rehearsed more than a dozen times. His illustrations were from nature and history rather than from current events. His doctrine, save for premillennialism which he definitely rejected, was of the conservative order and taken from a Bible which was his full authority in matters of faith and practice. Proof texts if used in conformity to the full weight of Scripture were his final reference. His ministry was in the Victorian age, the last twenty-seven years being spent in Granville, a small college town in Ohio.

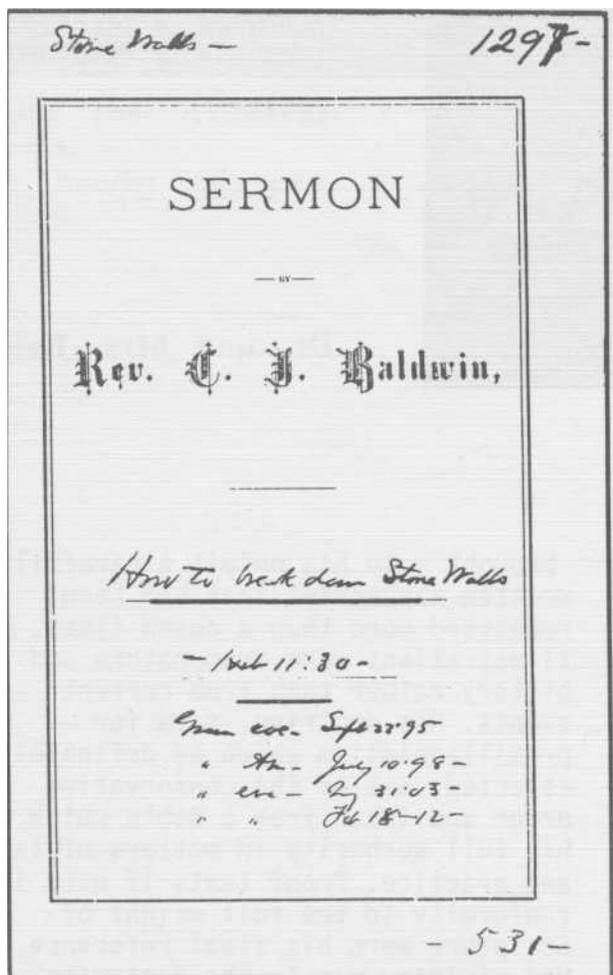
I can see the Doctor now as he came to us to begin this challenging ministry. Six feet tall, broad-shouldered but spare of frame, black-bearded, with an erect military carriage that he had kept from army days, he bore a distinguished look. He was a man's man, an officer, adjutant in the Civil War, athletic in his younger days, a traveler who had seen deeply and richly in his single trip abroad, dignified and reserved. He wore no clerical costume but no one could miss the fact of his calling. Courtly in manner, immaculate in dress, precise, almost stately in his walk, anything he wore became ministerial. Even the bicycle that he mastered in the early nineties seemed conscious of its burden and carried him along the village streets in a reverent, ecclesiastical manner.

I do not think the Doctor was altogether happy in those first years in Granville. He was a city man, born and bred. He had had two city pastorates that covered seventeen years in the environs of Boston and in Rochester. The life of the city was like breath to his nostrils. He loved the crowded streets, the great stores, well-appointed libraries, the stimulating intercourse with alert business men. Now at the age of forty-five he had been compelled to turn his back on the seaboard and come to a little community that was buried away and almost unknown. He felt lost and homesick.

The Granville he came to was beautiful but primitive. There were few pavements and no gas or electricity. The telephone which he had recently installed in the Rochester home had not appeared. At night the streets were lighted by flickering oil lamps, which were not lighted on nights the moon was supposed to shine, whether that luminary was on the job or not. A lumbering, herdic bus went twice a day to the county seat where most rail connections were made. Even the daily newspaper from Columbus or Cincinnati, which the Doctor read as he read his Bible, did not arrive until late in the morning.

Even such a simple commodity as compressed yeast could not be obtained at the store. The mistress of the manse faced this information with consternation. She had to learn to make bread all over again. Potato yeast, the kind that all the housewives had on their shelves, was a novelty demanding a different technique.

"No kerosene." The Doctor came home one morning to make this announcement. No kerosene, only coal oil. What should be done? The family faced this astonishing fact in real alarm while the Doctor waited mischievously. Then he informed his alarmed household that he had just learned that coal oil and kerosene were the same!



The cover for Dr. Baldwin's sermon numbered 1297, "How To Break Down Stone Walls"

More serious was the paucity of choice and even the supply of garments in the local stores. Once or twice a year the Doctor would rent a surrey and in this two-seated conveyance drive his family seven miles to Newark where the children, overwhelmed with the novelty, enjoyed a hotel dinner, and the stores provided something that was all wool.

It would be easy to smile over such inconsequential things but they are symbols of what amounted to revolutionary changes in the manner of living and of little privations that in the aggregate could become a major source of annoyance. In the course of the next thirty years the Doctor was to see Granville discovered and leavened with city ways. The [college] student body became coeducational and more than quadrupled. The faculty grew to a hundred. Thirty buildings dotted the hillsides. None of that could appear at this early day, however, and the Doctor must have chafed under the limitations. The truth was that he was not where he wanted to be nor where his talents fitted him to be. Ill health had driven him from the city and the conditions were no more pleasant on that account.

The condition of ill health that had originally brought him to Granville did not grow less. A spinal weakness and a respiratory difficulty were with him as a thorn in the flesh. More and more as the years passed, pain became his constant companion. Preaching that was the joy of his life was none the less an ordeal. We heard how on Sunday morning he would lie on his couch for an hour gathering his strength. A horse and buggy would carry him, his face muffled in a woolen scarf in cold weather, the three blocks to the church. In his pulpit he would sit relaxed, wrapped in his cape, while the choir and congregations did their part. Then, when the great moment came, we would see him cast off his cape, square his shoulders as though shaking something off and stride to the pulpit desk. There he was

transformed. No weakness now but authority, confidence. His voice was ringing. His introductions, unusual, felicitous, caught the attention. His graceful English came to the ear like music. Word-pictures of other lands, historical events, poetry fancy caught the imagination. Before him was a manuscript that he knew by heart and rarely referred to although he turned its pages. His black, piercing eyes, were on his people; his thought was illustrated by gestures that were full-armed and free; his voice even in its gentlest cadences carried to the remotest corner. For thirty minutes he would hold the great congregation in an atmosphere of breathless attention that might culminate in tears for the sheer beauty of the thought. Then, the service over, the Doctor would disappear, not waiting to greet the people, get into his buggy and return to his couch.

Feb 11:30 - "By faith a wall of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."

It is a familiar maxim that men shd not run the heads against stone walls. But this saying, like many other proverbs, is found on experience to be limited in its applicability. The truth is that stone walls have often yielded to the impact of human heads. In other words, ideas have proven to be stronger than physical opposition. In a long run matter yields to mind. History abounds in illustrations of this - our battering ram was ever more effective in breaking down and conquering.

The first page of
"How To Break Down Stone Walls"

Behind these sermons was the study. It used to be a treat for us to be admitted into this sanctum sanctorum where we looked with awe at the resources which were at the Doctor's command. The books were in open cases made of plain boards, the prototype of the modern sectional bookcase. These were piled high to the ceiling, tier on tier, filling one end of the largest room in his home. Everywhere else that space could be wangled were more books, no end of books, overflowing all available spaces. Here in his big chair with a board across the arms for a desk those wonderful sermons were written with ink, word for word, on heavy, ruled paper which had been stitched into printed covers. In a long row of cardboard boxes that later was doubled these sermons were then filed in an impressive, breathtaking array, a record of tireless industry that staggered the young visitors. These sermons, the Doctor told us, were filed under three headings, the number, the text, the time and place. In a small Bible the number of the sermon was written with the text. In a record book, in chronological order each sermon was recorded as preached with number, text, remarks. With any data at all, he would boast, he could instantly lay his hand on any sermon.

Gradually, because of insomnia the Doctor became a night-hawk. Neighbors who waked in the small hours saw the study light burning. In slippers and dressing-gown, the Doctor had descended to his study, lighted his fire, and was writing in unbroken peace.

An acute observer has divided sermons into two classes, those that leave one annoyed, resentful, resistant, and those that sooth the spirit and reenforce its powers. Probably both types have their place; but without question the Doctor's sermons remain in the minds of many hundreds because they belonged to the second type. Their purpose was to bring vision, inspire faith, and leave his hearers in a mood of peace and even rapture.

Strangely enough, the Doctor was not an evangelistic preacher. He had little success in "winning souls". In the day when Dwight L. Moody was in the ascendent and great revivals had given their thought-pattern to the churches, this was a serious matter. This failure was due in part, perhaps, to his unwillingness to invade the rights of personality.

And yet it would be unfair to say that the Doctor was not evangelistic. Like most of his contemporaries he believed heart and soul in the new birth. He believed, too, in the revival method, the contagion of common feeling under the Spirit's influence, and the value of the protracted meeting. The limitations in himself that were temperamental led him to invite evangelists and brother pastors to hold meetings in his church. He always shared in such meetings, meeting the inquirers and joyfully receiving them into membership.

Following such methods, the average number of new members received by the Doctor each year compared well with others. His strength, however, was in the teaching ministry. To take such babes in Christ, interest them, nurture them, direct their steps, build them up in reverence and usefulness that was the work in which he delighted. How many of the young men instructed by him went into the ministry I do not know. One hundred would be a low estimate.

All ministers face criticism and the Doctor had his share. Darwinism was in the air. Drummond's Natural Law in the Spiritual world had popularized the new thought. Higher Criticism had shaken faith in the Bible. Soon there appeared the moderns who considered the Doctor as old-school. Said one disciple of Darwin after a textual sermon "How long have we got to stand this sort of thing?"

Next to his religion, patriotism and Abraham Lincoln called out his greatest eloquence. Indeed, I think

they were a part of his religion. The flag, the union indissoluble, the vision of the forefathers, the great memorial days--all these were bedded deep in his heart. For him the Republican Party was literally the Grand Old Party. He had passed through the dark days of the Reconstruction, the Credit Mobilier scandal, and a hundred other excesses of that bitter period without wavering in his loyalty to the G.O.P. While he lamented the wrongs, the party was above them. That other party which had fired on the flag and with Copperhead plottings attacked President Lincoln could never to the end of time receive his vote.

It was fortunate for this preacher that ill health forced him from a great city church and drove him to a rural and highly intellectual center. Here they could appreciate his strength and refrain from asking him to dissipate his energies on what he could not do so well. They could understand the dignity and reserve which made it difficult for him to unbend in happy camaraderie. They were amused by the growing absent-mindedness which had its roots, perhaps, in a concentration on next Sunday's sermon. What did it matter? Said old Doctor Shepardson, whose name was given to Shepardson College, He walks the street like a dead man but he stands in that pulpit like a king." Yes, what did it matter? The king could do no wrong.

Thus the routine of the pastorate was established. The people honored him and let him alone. They flocked to his church, praised him as a prince of preachers, were proud of his talents, honored him as a citizen, and smiled over his idiosyncracies. They did not need nor ask for a fussy round of pastoral visitation. Others could serve tables while he gave himself to the ministry of the word.

Under these conditions of sympathy, indulgence, and admiration, this

The original handwritten copies of the more than 1300 sermons written by Dr. Baldwin are in the Society Archives.

ministry went on until at the age of seventy-two he laid it down in 1913. In the years that have passed we who were young people then have doubtless changed in many of our intellectual apprehensions of truth. What the Doctor said has become progressively inadequate. But after twenty and four years I can see that another message and ministry of his abides, his faith in God, his joy in the unseen, his consistent, holy life, his obedience to the light as it was given him to see the light. Through all that was said a great personality was pouring itself out upon us and mediating the eternal word.

For this, I who am his son render my grateful tribute. My father gave me more than a creed, he gave me a life. Never did I hear him say a word in his pulpit that I, a critical lad, did not know he was trying to realize in his every-day life. I wish I were as good a Christian as he was.



**Dr. Baldwin's Pulpit.
Interior of the Baptist
Church in 1890**



The Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Society was held on April 24 in the Old Academy Building. The following officers for 1989-1990 were elected:

President: Eric Jones
Vice-President: Richard Shiels
Secretary: Jeane Randolph
Treasurer: Carl Frazier

Elected to the Board of Management were:

Curtis W. Abbott
Daniel R. Freytag
David B. Neel
Andrew Sterrett

Museum Notes

The Museum of the Granville Historical Society opened for the 1989 season on April 15. During the first six weeks, more than 300 persons toured the museum and visitors from twelve states outside Ohio and three foreign countries signed the visitor's log. Several classes of school children visited. Museum hours are 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. each Saturday and Sunday or by appointment. If you have questions about the museum or would like to arrange a tour, contact Fanchion Lewis or a member of the Board of Management. We are indebted to Fanchion and to Mary Anderson, John Nairn and Ann Stout for serving as docents for the Museum.

Incoming President, Eric Jones, thanked the members for their confidence in him. Outgoing President Fanchion Lewis then summarized her written report on the events and accomplishments of the past year. A motion to raise the annual dues of the Society to \$5.00 per person, effective in April 1990, was passed unanimously by the members.

Following this brief business meeting, Mike Follin, who is on the staff of the Ohio Historical Society, presented a program: "Three Itinerants on the Ohio Frontier", which was both entertaining and educational. The audience greatly enjoyed his impersonation of an actor, stranded when his troupe had moved on; a medicine man selling his bottled remedies for any possible ailment; and a preacher exhorting his congregation to repent. The members became very involved in these presentations. Particularly memorable were the acting debuts of David Neel and Dick Shiels as Romeo and Juliet.

Granville Historical Society Board of Management

President: Eric Jones
Vice President: Richard Shiels
Secretary: Jeane Randolph
Treasurer: Carl Frazier

Curtis Abbott, Daniel Freytag
Florence Hoffman, Anthony Lisska,
Mary Ann Malcuit, David Neel,
John Rugg, Harold Sargent,
Andrew Sterrett



Maple Grove Records

The Granville Township Trustees presented to the Society a complete listing of burial records for Maple Grove Cemetery. Township Clerk Norm Kennedy presented the records, which have been entered into a computer data base and can be updated periodically, to the Society at the June meeting of the Board of Management. The Board acknowledges with gratitude this fine work to preserve these records for genealogists and historians.

Civil War Roundtable

The Granville Historical Society is discussing the possibility of sponsoring a Civil War Roundtable. This roundtable would provide the opportunity for students of the Civil War to talk over issues central to that conflict and also to learn from one another's discoveries and latest reading material. If you would like to participate in such a roundtable, please let Tony Lisska know, c/o The Granville Historical Society. Our present intention is to meet monthly during the academic year and in the Old Academy Building when possible.

Eric Evans Receives Historical Society Award

Granville High School senior Eric Evans received the William T. Utter Award this spring. This \$ 100. prize for fine historical work is given annually by the Granville Historical Society to a high school student.

Community Groups Meet In The Old Academy Building

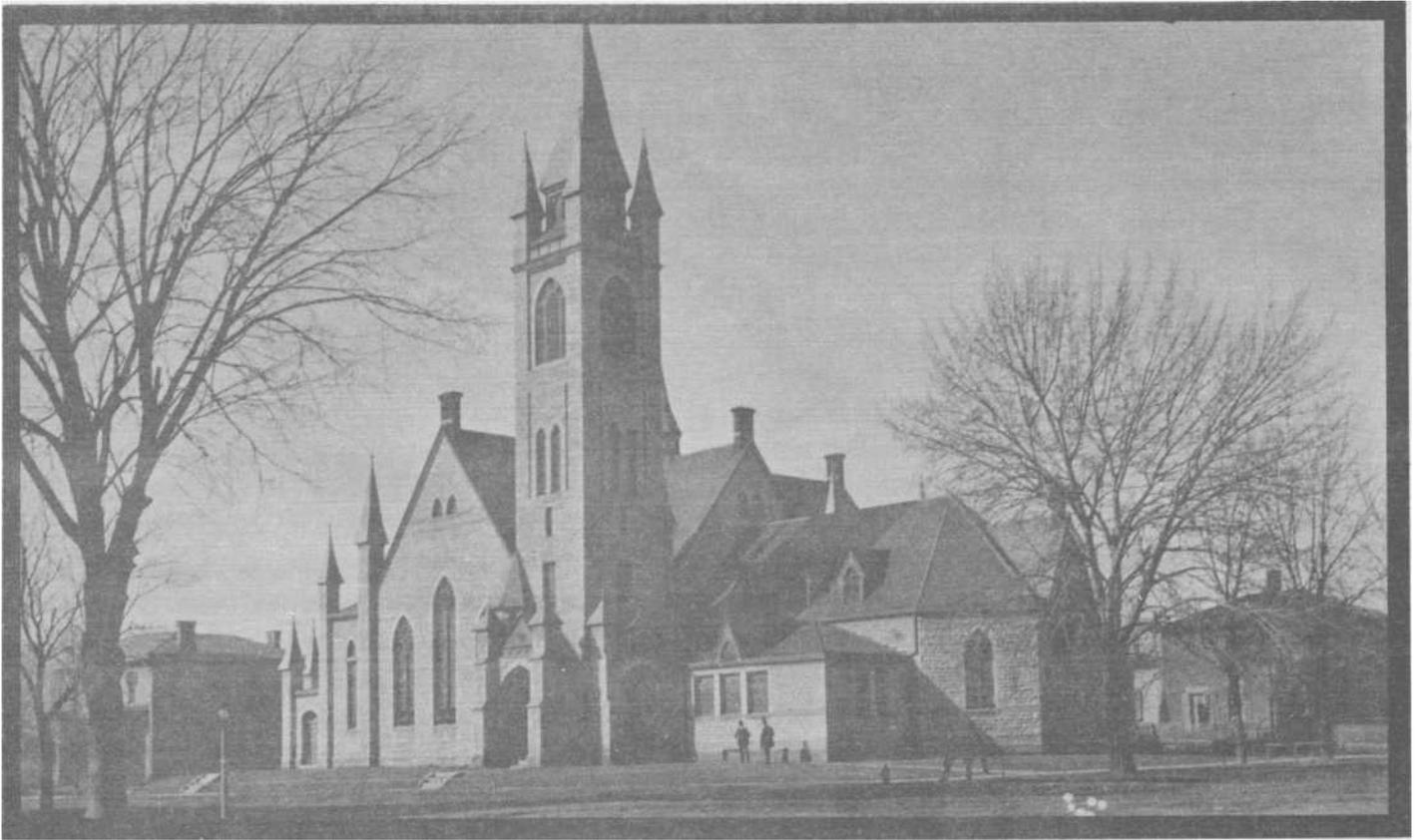
The Old Academy Building serves as a meeting place of several community groups. Wolpert Consultants met there with representatives of the Granville museums, and the Granville Land Trust Committee meets there regularly. The Society was pleased to make it available, this spring, to the Welsh Hills School as much needed rehearsal space for "Bye, Bye, Birdie". This show was presented on June 1 in Burke Hall.

The Historical Times is included with membership and is sent to all members of the Society. Questions or comments may be sent to:

Editors
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Granville, Ohio 43023

Editorial Board: Florence Hoffman,
Anthony Lisska, Mary Ann Malcuit

**Preserve our historic heritage
by making your voice heard
at every stage of the preparation
of the new Master Plan for Granville!**



From the Archives--

The Baptist Church as it appeared when Dr. Baldwin began his ministry.



The Granville Ohio Historical Society
Post Office Box 129
Granville, Ohio 43023