

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
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HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1860.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXIV.....No. 3.

Poetry.

Cheerfulness.

Nothing upon the earth forever grieves;
No bird forever sad and songless lives!
Even the poor small worm,
Puts on, before he dies, his glorious form,
And, for a little space,
Chases the sunbeams round the mountain's face,
The rose that has been ruffled by the storm
Droops not for aye her leaves;
After the rain,
She lifts her tearful head, radiant again.
Yea! not forever bow the autumn sheaves—
Though weighted from above,
As hearts are with their love,
With all the riches that the heaven gives;
Sometimes, on sunny days,
A gentle wind will raise
Their golden ears, ripe for the garner's eaves.
The chilly frost before the warm sun yields,
When the cloud shadows hang over the fields,
They linger not—
Look once again—sunlight is on the spot
—Chambers Journal.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD I.

From A. D. 1760 to A. D. 1784.

LETTER I.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

You are naturally anxious to obtain information respecting the rise and progress of our Denomination in this Province. I shall endeavour to gratify your desire.

I take it for granted that you are acquainted with the civil history of Nova Scotia. You are aware that though it came finally into the possession of the English in 1713, very little was done towards the settlement of the country till 1749, when the City of Halifax was founded. Lunenburg was settled in 1753. Two years after, in 1755, the Acadian French were expelled, and the extensive districts which they had occupied and brought into a high state of cultivation lay desolate. They began to be re-peopled in 1759. Communications were sent that year to the New England Colonies, inviting attention to Nova Scotia, and offering very liberal terms to emigrants. They soon came in considerable numbers, chiefly from Massachusetts and Connecticut. A body of Presbyterians from the North of Ireland located themselves in the Township of Londonderry. Pictou received its inhabitants mostly from the Highlands of Scotland. A number of Acadians were allowed to settle in the County of Digby. The whole may be comprised, as far as regards the present period, in the following chronological statements:—

- A. D.
- 1749—Halifax founded.
- 1753—Lunenburg settled principally by French and Germans.
- 1759—Township of Falmouth by emigrants from New England.
- 760—Horton, Cornwallis, Chester, and New Dublin, from Connecticut.
- Liverpool, from Massachusetts.
- 1761—Londonderry, from the North of Ireland. Newport, from Connecticut. Yarmouth, from Massachusetts.
- 1762—Onslow, from Massachusetts. Truro, from New Hampshire.
- 1764—Granville and Annapolis, from New England.
- 1765—Pictou, from Maryland.
- 1767—Barrington, from Massachusetts.
- 1768—Clare, by Acadians.
- 1771—Argyle, by Acadians, and New Englanders.
- 1773—Highland emigrants to Pictou.
- 1783—Wilmot and Shelburne. Disbanded soldiers and U. S. Loyalists.
- 1784—Preston, Clements, Aylesford, and Rawdon. The same class of settlers.

A large portion of the emigrants who founded Halifax, were members of the Church of England. The attention of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" was therefore early called to the wants of the infant colony, and missionaries were sent to minister to its inhabitants, the first of whom, Rev. William Tutty, "seems to have arrived at Halifax, in the month of July, A. D. 1749." (See the Rev. G. W. Hill's Sermon on the Rise and Progress of the Church of England in Nova Scotia, pp. 7-13.) But among the settlers at Lunenburg were many Lutherans; Presbyterians occupied Londonderry, Truro, and Pictou; and the emigration from New England was chiefly composed of persons belonging to the

Congregational, or "Standing Order," as it was called there. It was obvious that these parties would not submit to the rule of the English Church; they would demand unqualified independence. Provision was made for it in an Act passed by the first House of Assembly, A. D. 1758, which, while it recognized the Church of England as the Established Church, and its Liturgy as the form of worship prescribed by law, secured full liberty of conscience to all other Denominations. The following is a copy of the clause:—

"Provided nevertheless, and it is the true intent and meaning of this Act, That Protestants, dissenting from the Church of England, whether they be Calvinists, Lutherans or Quakers, or under what Denomination soever, shall have free liberty of conscience, and may erect and build Meeting-houses for public worship, and may choose and elect ministers for the carrying on divine service and administration of the sacraments, according to their several opinions; and all contracts made between their ministers and their Congregations for the support of the ministry are hereby declared valid, and shall have their full force and effect, according to the tenor and conditions thereof; and all such Dissenters shall be excused from any rates or taxes to be made and levied for the support of the Established Church of England."

You will observe that Nova Scotians are born to freedom. At a time when Dissenters in England were compelled to bear the heavy burden of an Ecclesiastical Establishment, and to pay tithes and church-rates for the support of a form of religion of which they disapproved (as they still do), and were subjected to many inconveniences and restrictions (among them, exclusion from office under Government), this favoured land received the guarantee of unrestrained liberty. The very law which recognized Church of Englandism as the religion of the country nullified itself by the proviso now quoted. There was no establishment, save for those who chose to submit to it.

Two exceptions to this liberality must, however, be noticed. One was, that the liberty of Conscience referred to was limited to Protestants, "Papists excepted"—are the ominous words employed by Governor Lawrence in his letter of invitation to the New Englanders. He was empowered by the statute to adopt that language; for immediately following the passage which I have extracted are these words:—"And be it further enacted, That every Popish person, exercising any ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and every Popish priest, or person exercising the function of a Popish priest, shall depart out of this Province on or before the twenty-fifth day of March, 1759. And if any such person or persons shall be found in this Province after the said day, he or they shall, upon conviction, be adjudged to suffer perpetual imprisonment; and if any person or persons so imprisoned, shall escape out of prison, he or they shall be deemed and adjudged to be guilty of Felony without benefit of clergy.—And be it further enacted, That any persons who shall knowingly harbour, relieve, conceal, or entertain any such clergyman of the Popish religion, or Popish priest, or persons exercising the functions of Popish priest, shall forfeit fifty-pounds, one moiety to his Majesty for the support of his Government in this Province, and the other moiety to the Informer, and shall be also adjudged to be set in the pillory, and to find sureties for his good behaviour at the discretion of the court."

No true Protestant will now defend this barbarous legislation. But the rulers of Nova Scotia in the eighteenth century had not learned the great truth, that as man has no dominion over his fellow-man in matters of religion, so he has no right to attach civil privileges to the profession of certain doctrines. They thought to preserve and exalt Protestantism by shutting out Papists; or, if they could not shut them out, by treating them as a degraded race. That narrow-mindedness has been long abjured in practice. Since 1830, religionists of all persuasions have enjoyed equal rights. I trust there will be no backward movement.

The other exception was the refusal to grant the right of celebrating marriage to any ministers but those of the Church of England. This was a meanness which they

ought to have been ashamed of. But the grievance was at length redressed, as I shall hereafter have occasion to note.

Having ascertained that their rights and privileges would be held sacred in Nova Scotia, the men of New England responded to Governor Lawrence's invitation, and hastened to settle on the deserted lands of the Acadians. In 1764, the population of the province was stated to be 18,000; in 1772 it had risen to 19,000. The failure of certain land jobbing speculations induced many to return to New England, so that in 1781 the number of inhabitants had fallen to 12,000; but so great an influx of United States Loyalists and disbanded soldiers took place within the next three years that the population may be safely estimated (there was no accurate census in those times) at 25,000, in the year 1784.

Congregationalism, as I have said, was the prevalent religious profession in the New England States. But it had greatly fallen from original purity. Personal godliness was not considered essential to church fellowship, if the outward department were correct: nor was piety regarded as an indispensable qualification for the ministry; morality, good education, and competent knowledge of christian doctrines were considered sufficient.

As the "Standing Order," Congregationalism was in fact an ecclesiastical establishment; civil rights depended on church membership, and all persons were rated and taxed for the support of the ministers. Yet here and there a few individuals saw truth more clearly, and protested against the above-mentioned abominations. Baptist principles, too were working their way. A mighty impetus was given to these movements by the "Great Awakening" in 1741 and following years, under the ministry of Whitefield and those who co-operated with him. Numbers withdrew and formed separate churches, maintaining the necessity of regeneration as a prerequisite for union with a church, and by consequence of a godly ministry. They were commonly designated "New Lights," and the "Great Awakening" was familiarly talked of as the "New Light Stir." You will readily perceive that these views tended also to the increase of Baptists, as the event everywhere showed.

The Separatists were bitterly persecuted by "Standing Order." Payment of the minister's tax was rigidly enforced by distraint of goods and imprisonment, and New England exhibited the unlovely spectacle of professing christians worrying and punishing one another on account of religious differences. It was the more indefensible, inasmuch as their forefathers had fled from the old country to avoid the tyranny which they themselves were now exercising.

Among those who emigrated to Nova Scotia in 1760 was Shubael Dimock. He was a native of Mansfield, in Connecticut, and an active member of the Congregational church in that place. During the "Great Awakening" he was brought more fully under the power of religious truth, and thenceforward his sympathies were with the Separatists, whose meetings he attended, and frequently took part in them by praying and exhorting. This exposed him to persecuting malice. The collectors of the minister's tax seized his property repeatedly; at one time, his cow; at another, his best horse. His house would have been plundered of its furniture, had not his wife prevented it by paying the unrighteous demand. He was even dragged to jail and whipped, as were other Separatists, solely for preaching Christ and holding religious meetings apart from the "Standing Order." These troubles continued several years, and there appeared no hope of redress. At length a way of escape was offered, and Mr. Dimock gladly joined a number of friends who determined to settle in Nova Scotia.

Daniel, his son, who was then twenty-four years of age, was one of the party. He had followed his father's steps in attaching himself to the Separatists, but he had gone beyond him in one respect. Their spiritual views, he clearly saw, were incompatible with infant baptism, and the religious system of which it formed a part. If it were admitted that Christ's kingdom is spiritual in its nature, and that its blessings cannot be enjoyed nor its duties discharged except by spiritual, that is, regenerated persons, he inferred, and no doubt rightly, that the institution of infant baptism was a retrograde measure, a

going back to a carnal dispensation. Hence he declared his adhesion to Baptist sentiments before his removal from Connecticut. He would have been baptized, but in deference to his father, who was then strongly opposed to our views, he postponed it for a time.

The Rev. John Sutton, a Baptist minister from New Jersey, accompanied the emigrating body, and settled with them in the Township of Newport. He commenced preaching immediately, and his labours were blessed to the edification of believers and the conversion of sinners. Those who were converted under his ministry were generally baptized. Daniel Dimock gladly embraced the opportunity of avowing his long cherished convictions. He was baptized by Mr. Sutton in 1763.

How it was that the baptized were not formed into a Baptist church, does not appear. All that we know is that Mr. Sutton's return to New Jersey, shortly after 1763 (where he became pastor of the church at Salem in that State), the two Dimocks, father and son, took charge of the Congregation, and preached regularly, Shubael taking the morning service, and Daniel preaching in the evening. These exercises were conducted in private houses. Daniel was faithful to Baptist principles. When conversions took place he baptized the converts according to the New Testament. In 1775 he had the happiness of baptizing his father, who, after a long course of reflection and mental conflict, felt it necessary to abandon the Pædobaptist polity. Thus the Township of Newport was favoured with two Baptist ministers. But as yet there was no Baptist church.

There are some obscure notices of a visit to Newport by the Rev. James Sutton, brother of the first-named minister, himself also a Baptist. How long he remained, is not recorded.

In 1763, the Rev. Ebenezer Moulton visited Horton, and continued there some time, preaching the word in that district. Mr. Moulton was a man of eminence in the Denomination. He had been many years pastor of the church at South Brimfield, Mass., and was noted for zealous ardour which sometimes exposed him to suffering. When a large number of Pædobaptists, resident in Sturbridge, embraced Baptist sentiments, in 1749, and Mr. Moulton went from South Brimfield to assist in the organization of the church, he was apprehended, "by the authority of an old law, and dragged to prison as a stroller and vagabond, because he came from another town!" (Benedict's History, p. 415.) Such were the tender mercies of the "Standing Order."

Mr. Moulton came to Nova Scotia in 1761, with some emigrants who settled in Yarmouth. He remained there two years, preaching "publicly and from house to house." What results followed cannot now be ascertained. Father Harris Harding stated, in a brief record of his early labours, that a Mrs. Burgess of Yarmouth was baptized by Mr. Moulton. There were probably other fruits of his ministry. He was an earnest, solemn preacher. "I have a message from God to deliver," he said when he reached Horton, "and I am in haste to deliver it." Power attended the word. As he bore testimony to the truth and pleaded with souls, the Holy Spirit convinced many "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement." The hearts of the people were moved, and from Horton to Kentville, as Father Theodore Harding once remarked to me, "there was great excitement." But Mr. Moulton did not remain long in the province. From an observation made by Harris Harding's mother I infer that some altercation or dissension had occurred, which led to his departure. The good woman said that "the Lord sent Mr. Moulton here, but the devil sent away"; from which it may be gathered that the devil stirred up strife, which issued in the minister's removal.

Yours truly,

Jan., 7th 1860.

MENNO.

The character of the political organizations in the city of Baltimore could be surmised from the following names of some of the Clubs, without the necessity of such a practical exhibition of their nature as was given in the late election. Here they are: "The Blood Tubs, Red Necks, Spartans, Regulators, Black Snakes, Tigers, Enbolts, Gladiators, Rip Raps, Little Fellows, Plug Uglies." A bright galaxy,