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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Shepherd's Vision.

'Take wing my thought, take wing, and fly
Far from thy native clime;
To Oriental lands, where bloom
The olive and vine.
Fly backward o'er the tide of time,
Till scenes long past expand
Before thy view; and sweetly wrapped—
In hallowed musings stand.

Let Palestine's sacred land,
Historic hills and plains
Arrest thy flight; there shepherds once
Heard more than mortal strains,
While round them as they sat, a more
Than noonday brightness fell;
Thrilling their inmost souls with joy
Such as no tongue can tell.

While sounds of heavenly vision stole
Upon their raptured ear;
Which such a sacred influence shed
As quelled each rising fear;
And looking upward, lo! they saw
With rapt and wondering eye,
A multitude of heaven's bright host;
All swiftly passing by.

They bore not justice's flaming word,
To punish rebel men;
But of eternal, matchless love
In hallowed strains, they sang,
And this, their soul transporting theme,
"Glory to God most high;
Peace on this sin-cursed earth; good will
To all below the sky."

To light your darkened world, this day
Has Bethlehem's star arisen;
And, till time's latest hour expires,
Will point the way to heaven,
Its glorious beams of life and love
Will bright and brighter shine,
Till all earth's myriad tribes and tongues,
Walk in the light divine."

With wondrous power, our guiding Star,
Will shed its radiant gleam
Around us, when our weary feet
Shall enter death's dark stream.
Oh! let us then unwavering tread
The blest, illumined road;
Onward and upward till we stand
Before the throne of God.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD II.

From A. D. 1784 to A. D. 1860.

LETTER XIII.

EDWARD MANNING'S TROUBLES IN NEW BRUNSWICK.—BECOMES A BAPTIST.—JAMES MANNING'S CONVERSION.—HIS VARIOUS LABOURS.—BECOMES A BAPTIST.—HIS ORDINATION.—T. S. HARDING'S EARLY HISTORY.—HIS PREACHING AMONG THE METHODISTS.—EMBRACES CALVINISM AND BAPTIST PRINCIPLES.—HIS ORDINATION.

MY YOUNG FRIEND.

Mr. Manning's visits to New Brunswick were much blessed to the people. Speaking of the last mentioned visit, in a letter written in 1845, he says, "If ever my poor services were owned of God they were at that time, in the salvation of undying souls. Many gave evidence of their adoption, and have gone to their rest; others have removed to other parts of the vineyard, and a goodly number remain as living witnesses to the infinite merits of the atoning blood shed on Calvary being applied to the soul by the sovereign agency of God the Holy Ghost. In some of those places I was the first that ever blew the gospel trumpet among the people, so that I did not enter into other men's labours."

But ministers of the gospel were not always secure from annoyance in those days. Mr. Manning was repeatedly prosecuted for preaching in New Brunswick, in which province intolerance was much more prevalent than in Nova Scotia, and would have been hardly used had not some influential persons befriended him. They not only shielded him from the malice of his enemies, but endeavoured to persuade the Lieutenant Governor to license him to preach. Though that was beyond his power he could grant protection and prevent violence, and so the evil intentions of the wicked were frustrated.

Soon after his return to Nova Scotia a change took place in Mr. Manning's sentiments. His brother James, of whom I shall speak presently, was a Baptist. Thomas Handy Chipman and Joseph Dimock were also Baptists. But up to this time Harris Harding and Edward Manning were Pædo-baptists, in practice as well as in principle. They sprinkled infants, and called it baptism. "During my stay in the district of Maine," Mr. Manning writes, "I was called to administer the ordinance of baptism, I had sprinkled, but never baptized, and I had never seen a person immersed. It became a question of great moment to me,—Was I a proper administrator?—However, I went forward and baptized as I was required to do."

This led to inquiry. He was uneasy and perplexed, and began to entertain strong doubts as to "the propriety of infant baptism." In June, 1797, a meeting of ministers was held in Cornwallis to take into consideration the desirableness of forming an Association. Mr. Payzant, Thomas Handy Chipman, and the two Mannings were there. They preached and held meetings. What followed is thus narrated by Mr. Manning—"There were two candidates for immersion, and some who desired to be sprinkled. On the Lord's day a large number attended at our baptizing, and Father Chipman, with his usual solemnity, administered the sacred rite. Sacred it was indeed to me. I was then and there brought to bow to the authority of the God-man, our Law-giver and King. I was quite overcome. I could trifle no longer with my convictions, but told brother James, on whose opinion I leaned, that those who had brought their children to be sprinkled must take them away, for that I should never sprinkle another, old or young, while I lived. I made my mind known to the brethren, and it was agreed by brother Chipman and brother James that I should visit Granville and there be baptized. I did so, and received the ordinance at the hands of brother Chipman. Upon mature deliberation I could not justify the measure, as I soon came to feel that I ought to have been baptized among my own people. The brethren were kind, and concluded to leave me to baptize in my own way, and still continue me as their pastor. "We may commend Mr. Manning's modesty and self-distrust, but I cannot help thinking that the course adopted was the preferable one, and calculated to prove less offensive to his people than if he had been baptized in Cornwallis. "If any unpleasant feelings arose, they soon subsided, and in a revival which almost immediately followed, love and joy filled all hearts. About seventy persons were converted, most of whom were immersed, after the example and command of the Saviour. They were buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in newness of life," Rom. 6. 4.

Having thus brought Edward Manning's history down to the time when he became a Baptist minister, I proceed to introduce to your notice his brother James.

JAMES MANNING was two years older than his brother Edward. Henry Alline's preaching was the means of his awakening, but the convictions he then experienced did not issue in conversion. Though he saw the evil and danger of a sinful state, and acknowledged the necessity of religion, the allurements of worldly pleasure were so powerful that he strove to stifle serious impressions in order that he might indulge himself without restraint. He succeeded for a time. It was not till the year 1789 that he gave himself wholly to the Lord. There was a great revival that year in Falmouth and the neighbouring Townships. Numbers received the truth, and were brought into the "glorious liberty of the children of God." Among them were James and Edward Manning.

James became a member of the Congregational church, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Payzant. He soon felt a long-ing desire to be engaged in the work of the Lord, and commenced a series of itinerating labours, after the manner of the other old ministers. This was in 1792. The following year he joined his brother Edward in New Brunswick, and remained a considerable time there, and in the State of Maine. In this province his labours were mostly confined to the Wes-

tern counties. In a letter dated, "Moose Island, July 9th 1795," he says—"The Lord is carrying on a glorious work in these parts. Brother Murphy has been blessed in a wonderful manner. * * I have been here two sabbaths, and the Lord has been present at every meeting. * * Some have been brought out since I came here. * * Next week I expect to go to Machias; and if our Divine Master does not order otherwise I shall go farther, not knowing what shall befall me; only this I know, that bands and afflictions await me wherever I go. But none of these things move me. * * I expect by this time you are on your return to visit our friends, to hold up the ensign in Windsor. The Lord prosper the work of your hands! May the angel of his presence be with you all the days you have to travel here. I expect that brother Harding will come with you. May the God of Gideon be with him—for I love him in my heart."

I am not able to give the precise date of James Manning's change of sentiment respecting baptism, and can only say that it took place, probably, in 1796. T. H. Chipman baptized him. He accompanied his brother a second time, as stated in my last letter, in an evangelical tour through New Brunswick and Maine. On his return he settled in Lower Granville, and became Pastor of the Baptist church there. Brother William Chipman informs me that he was present at his ordination, Sept. 10th 1798. His brother Edward preached the ordination sermon. Mr. C. says, "It was a time of great refreshing in the church. The spirit of the Lord in his consoling influences was generally felt, and much joy and peace were experienced." Farther particulars respecting the life and labours of this excellent man will be furnished on a subsequent occasion.

THEODORE SETH HARDING now claims attention. He was a native of Barrington, and was born March 14th 1773. When he was about eight years old Henry Alline visited that place, and under his solemn, pungent preaching the heart of the child was deeply moved. Those impressions were not lasting. Mr. Harding ascribed his conversion to the ministry of Mr. Free-born Garrison, a Methodist missionary from the United States, who was sent to Nova Scotia in the year 1787. There is no record of the spiritual exercises which accompanied the great change. Whether it was brought about by a gradual process of thought and inquiry, or otherwise—whether there were any soul piercings, such as those experienced on the day of Pentecost—or whether the case resembled Lydia's, "whose heart the Lord opened," I am unable to say. It is not necessary to know the method of a man's conversion; it is sufficient to be assured of the fact. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Mr. Harding's religious history after his conversion and before he commenced preaching is equally unknown. In the secluded spot where he lived all things moved on quietly, and stirring, striking incidents seldom occurred. Perhaps the arrival of a preacher occasioned a greater sensation than any thing else, for christian ordinances were at that time very scantily administered. "Sometimes," as Mr. Harding one day said to me, "a Methodist, sometimes a New Light came. We went to hear all, for preaching was very scarce. When a preacher came, I could not sleep all night, so anxious was I to hear the word." The good people did the best they could under the circumstances, and praying was commonly the substitute for preaching. We have more preaching now; but we want more prayer, too—heart prayer, believing prayer, such prayer as "lays hold of God's strength." So Jacob spake, in the boldness of holy fervour—"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." When such men become plentiful, the church will have "power with God."

Mr. Harding began to preach in 1793. His mind had been exercised about it for some time previously. The spiritual destitution of the country powerfully affected him. The danger of sinners, perishing "for lack of knowledge," appeared in all its awfulness, and wrung his heart with anguish. He felt that "a necessity was laid upon him." Nevertheless, desirous of proceeding with due precaution, he sought the advice of friends. His

mother, a pious and intelligent Presbyterian woman, discouraged him. She thought that the liveliness of his temperament would prevent the manifestation of that gravity by which christian ministers should be distinguished. His brother-in-law, a Methodist class-leader, was disposed to think more favourably of his case, but wished him to spend some time in preparatory study, and advised him to go to Halifax and place himself under the care of the Rev. W. Black, at that time the principal minister among the Wesleyan Methodists of Nova Scotia. Thus the avenues of usefulness seemed to be closed.

But God opened them. There was a public day of fasting and prayer. The people met as usual, purposing to conduct the service among themselves, no minister being present. Theodore Harding was in his place, struggling with emotions which it was difficult to conceal. At length, the pent-up feeling burst the barriers. He could control himself no longer. He rose up in the midst of the congregation and told them that the word of the Lord was in his heart, and that he must preach. His utterances were earnest and powerful. The people were greatly moved, and on the following Lord's-day he was invited to occupy the pulpit. His mother was among the hearers, and listened with astonishment and joy. All her doubts and difficulties were dispelled; she saw that "the thing proceeded from the Lord," and willingly gave up her son to the work.

In the Fall of that year a Methodist minister who visited Barrington took him with him to Shelburne, where he preached in the presence of the leading persons of the Methodist body in that district, and was regularly licensed. He remained there some time, and a revival took place under his preaching. In the Spring of 1794 he visited Halifax, spent a fortnight with Mr. Black, and received an appointment to labour in Horton, Cornwallis, and Windsor. There, also, the Lord blessed him and souls were gathered in. Nine months were spent in this mission.

Meanwhile a change was going on which could not but affect his ministry. The Methodists saw that New Lights and Baptists flocked to hear, and observed a Calvinistic tendency in his discourses. In fact, he had been thinking and reading on the points of difference between Arminians and Calvinists, and was fast coming to the conclusion that the latter were in the right. Inquiry followed. He was requested to preach on some of the peculiarities of the Methodist system; that rendered further examination necessary, which resulted in a decision adverse to Methodism. Separation seemed unavoidable, but Mr. Black was very reluctant to lose him, and laboured hard to retain him in connection with the Methodists. He corresponded with him and advised a course of reading which he thought might tend to remove his difficulties. He then invited him to Halifax, hoping to be able to offer such statements and explanations as would afford satisfaction. But every effort failed. Mr. Harding's conscientious convictions were too strong to be shaken. He was attached to the brethren and happy in his work, but the claims of truth were all-powerful, and he withdrew from the Methodist connexion, though not without deep regret on account of the necessity for the step.

When he returned to Horton he was requested to preach a funeral sermon on the occasion of the death of a man who was killed by the falling of a tree. Deacon Peter Bishop, who was present, announced to the people the change which had taken place in Mr. Harding's sentiments. It was immediately resolved to ask him to preach to the Baptist Church, which was then in want of a minister. Mr. Pearson had left in 1791, and removed to New Brunswick, and they had not succeeded in obtaining another pastor. A day of fasting and prayer had just been held in reference to the subject. Mr. Harding accepted the invitation.

The question of baptism remained. Mr. Harding had thought but little of it before, having probably taken for granted that the theory in which he had been educated was the correct one. After due examination he was convinced that Infant baptism had no scripture warrant, and that sprinkling is not baptism. Obedience followed. He went to Halifax and was baptized by John Burton