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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

SPRING

BY RICHARD C. TRENCH.

Who was that so lately said,
All pulses in thy heart were dead—
Old earth, that now in festal robes
Appears as a bride new wed?

Oh, wrapped so late in winding sheet,
Thy winding sheet, oh, where is fled?
Lo! 'tis an emerald carpet snow,
Where the young monarch, Spring, may tread.

He comes—and a defeated king,
Old Winter to the hills is fled?
The warm wind broke his frosty spear,
And loosed the helmet from his head;

And the weak shower of arrowy sleet
From his strongholds has vainly sped,
All that was sleeping is awake,
And all is living that was dead.

Who listens now can hear the streams
Leap tinkling down their pebbly bed—
Or see them from their fatters free,
Like silver snakes the meadows thread.

The joy, the life, the hope of earth,
They sleep awhile, they were not dead;
O thou who say'st thy sore heart ne'er
With verdure can again be spread—

O thou who mournest them that sleep,
Low lying in an earthly bed—
Look out on this reviving world,
And be new hopes within thee bred.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD II.

From A. D. 1784 to A. D. 1800.

LETTER IX.

JOSEPH DIMOCK'S EARLY HISTORY AND CONVERSION.—HIS FIRST VISIT TO CHESTER.—BEGINS TO PREACH.—REVIVAL AT ONSLOW.—INTERESTING LETTERS.—REVIVAL IN GRANVILLE.—FIRST PREACHING IN DIGBY.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

JOSEPH DIMOCK was the son of Daniel Dimock, whose name has been repeatedly mentioned. He was born at Newport, Dec. 11th 1768. He gives the following account of his early history and conversion:—

"My honoured father was a Baptist preacher. He gave me a common education. Though my attainments were small, they were beyond any of my age in the village where I lived; and before I knew the value of learning or had a spark of love to the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, a thirst to excel in education was implanted in my nature, so that I do not remember ever to have been so taken up with any exercise or pastime but I would willingly leave it for a book of instruction. This was from God, for which I desire to be thankful. My parents taught me to read my bible daily as soon as I was able, and instructed me in the doctrines of the bible, though I understood not their import. Every week, if not oftener, I was taught to repeat the Assembly's Catechism, except one answer, the last half of which my father blotted out, so that it read thus—'Baptism is not to be administered to any till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him.'"

The entire answer, as given in the shorter Catechism, is as follows:—"Baptism is not to be administered to any [that are out of the visible church,] tell they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; [but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.]" Mr. Dimock's father omitted the parts included within brackets, in order to make the Catechism agree with the New Testament. A nearly similar practice is adopted in some public schools in England, in which the Assembly's Catechism is still recited. The children of Baptist parents are not required to learn the questions and answers respecting baptism.

I resume the narrative. "My parents, my father in particular, and ministers and christian friends who frequented my father's house, often addressed me affectionately on the great and all-important concerns of my soul; but though I was frequently moved to tears,

their exhortations were soon forgotten. When in my seventeenth year, God the Spirit was pleased to strike my soul with terrors and amazement, so that I could find no rest until I was by the Spirit presented with the Saviour, his freeness and all-sufficiency to save all that come to him. There I found peace in believing."

In another paper he speaks of his mental struggles, and of his "making and breaking covenants," which, as he at length saw, involved "a tacit rejection of the covenant of grace."

His son, Rev. D. W. C. Dimock of Truro, has favoured me with some additional particulars. Speaking of his father, he says—"Under his distress he wondered why he could not enjoy comfort as well as others whom he knew to entertain hope. While thus labouring, filled with painful apprehensions and inquiries how he was to have peace, a christian friend said to him, 'Joseph, you can never have peace until you make a full surrender of yourself to God, and that you cannot do of yourself.' This awakened anew both his fears and his hatred to the government of God. Often has he said, 'at that movement, if I could, I would have dethroned the Deity. The thought that I must be judged by an impartial and just God filled me with dread and hatred.' The sovereignty of God seemed to be an awful thought to him, to which it seemed he could never be reconciled. The depravity of his heart, he has said, seemed to himself from this fact, more than from any other thing, deeply rooted. The irreconcilable of his heart to God, its utter aversion to his rule, when he came to reflect thereon, filled him with shame and humiliation before God. Human depravity became in his view not a mere theological doctrine but an awful fact."

These are very instructive statements. All his difficulties were at length overcome, and his soul submitted to God in Christ. The date of this event is recorded by himself in the briefest possible way, thus;—"Born, Dec. 11th 1768—born again, July 17th 1785."

Mr. Dimock was baptized at Horton May 6th, 1787, and joined the church there. He did not begin to preach till nearly three years afterwards, though he frequently exhorted at conference and prayer meetings.

In December, 1789, he accompanied one of his uncles, who preached occasionally, on a visit to Chester. They travelled, as was then customary, on snow-shoes. They spent two Lord's days at Chester, and their labours were much blessed. "The last meeting," he says, "was long remembered. My uncle's text was somewhat curious. It was Amos 3. 12: 'Thus saith the Lord, as the shepherd taketh out of the month of the lion two legs or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch.' Without any reference to the context he preached a gospel sermon, but misapplied his text. He spake of the salvation of the sinner by Christ as saving the sinner from the jaws of the devouring lion; that it was a narrow escape, like the 'two legs or a piece of an ear.' He urged the sinner's escape from the consideration that they were like the devoured lamb, that the last hope was just ready to expire. The meeting closed with bitter lamentation from some and songs of deliverance from others. One female, who had been long troubled with doubt respecting her personal interest in Christ, now obtained such an evidence of union to him, and of her fellowship being with the Father and the Son, and with the saints of God, that she spoke most marvelously. * * * She lived to establish the truth of what she then professed."

Mr. Dimock began to preach in the Spring of 1790. He visited Chester in April, and again in August. His acceptableness as a preacher was soon manifest. The Onslow people heard of him, and invited him to that place. A great work was in progress there, and it was his privilege to participate for a time in the labour and in the joy. After his departure he received a letter from "Susy Lynds," who is described as "a girl about twelve years old." She says—"my dear brothers and sisters are yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. O pray for their conversion, and not for them only, but for the whole world."

O come, poor sinners, share a part,
Give this blessed Christ your heart;
We will take you by the hand,
Go with us to Canaan's land."

"O poor sinners, take no rest until the Lord appears for your souls! O be encouraged, my dear brothers; we have but a few moments more to stand the storms of this world."

Then we shall with Jesus dwell,
In joys beyond what tongue can tell."

In December of the same year he was again at Onslow. The revival still continued. He speaks of it in the following manner, in a letter to Thomas Bennett;—"My heart is full, and I must write to tell you that our glorious Master is carrying on his work in this place. Sometimes I feel my stammering tongue in some measure loosed to speak in the name of Jesus. And O I can say I am more and more determined to stand in his cause, to live and die in his gospel. And blessed be God, I know he will stand by me, though the powers of darkness rage against me."

"I sometimes stand and look on the young christians, particularly children that cry, Hosanna to the son of David, till it melts my heart and eyes into tears of joy. O dear brother, rejoice with me. Methinks you are ready to join with me and say, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent,—and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.' O dear brother, pray for me, that utterance may be given me, and that I may be kept at the feet of Jesus."

A letter written to the same brother about three weeks afterwards, contains these passages;—"The Lord is working wonders in this place. Many poor sinners are brought to the arms of Jesus. Saints are rejoicing in their dear Lord. Several of the brethren stand as public ministers for God. O dear brothers and sisters, stand in the cause of your God. O witness by your lives and conversation that you have been with Jesus. O let your light so shine before men that they seeing your good works may glorify your Heavenly Father. O keep near, keep near to your dying, agonising Lord. * * * Stand the storm a little longer, and you will fly beyond all your sorrows, and with joy awake in Abraham's bosom. There, my dear brothers and sisters, (if I never meet you again in time) I expect to meet you on the happy shore, joined heart and soul in the eternal Jehovah. I feel something of that union that is stronger than death. Even while I write my soul is united to you by ties divine. Soon, soon, certainly, I shall meet you on the immortal fields of Canaan."—Is not this the language of one who was eminently "fervent in spirit.?"

The next notice of Mr. Dimock's labours is in connection with Granville. He went there in the summer of 1791, and found himself in the midst of a great revival. An account of it is given in one of his letters to Thomas Bennett, dated Aug. 20th 1791. "Want of time hath prevented my writing to you; and now, were I to write a volume I could not tell you the half of what I have seen; for I can tell you that all I ever saw before is small in comparison with what I have seen here. Surely the Lord hath triumphed gloriously! Grey-headed sinners shaken from their supineness, and brought to have their days renewed like an eagle;—many heads of young families, in full pursuit of the world, never turn back to bid houses, lands, wife, or children farewell, but, determined to have Christ or die, are soon brought to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb;—young men and women turn their backs on their companions, and against the rage of earth and hell (with parents also) are brought off eternal conquerors through the blood of Christ;—some children, fourteen to sixteen years old, brought to rejoice in him that is invisible. Thus, fathers 'have known him that is from the beginning'; young men have overcome the wicked one, and little children have 'known the Father.'"

"Many meetings continue till almost midnight—sinners crying aloud for mercy.—christians' bowels yearning over poor souls on the brink of eternal ruin. Some meetings have continued all night; and O, the heavy, heart-rending cries would answer each other, enough to pierce the stoutest heart? Nothing can I compare it to but that day when

the last trump shall sound. Saints rejoice, and sinners tremble; though saints rejoice not much, for their hearts bleed over poor sinners. If you go out here just after dark, you will hear some lamenting themselves, on account of their dreadful hardened state; others mourning for others, till tears interrupt them; then sob and cry; then begin again, and cry aloud for them, as though they would bring heaven down to men by groans unutterable."

Possibly there was some extravagance connected with these exercises, and prudential considerations, adverse to midnight meetings, might have been suggested; but how much better these deep feelings and tender experiences than the sloth and sleep of formality, or the rapid utterances of mere word-religion."

A fragment of Mr. Dimock's autobiography, preserved among his papers, evidently refers to this period. It is best that he should tell his tale in his own way.

"The work prospered. People thronged to meeting, sometimes from fifteen or twenty miles distant. Often have I known young females to come twelve miles on foot on Lord's day morning before we had had our breakfast."

"One very sultry day in July, about noon, I walked up to a door. The good lady standing in the door, I bid her the time. 'And here you come,' said she, 'trudging along, almost melted with heat! and what if after all you should be mistaken? What if you are spending your youthful and best days in those fatigues, and the Lord has not sent you or called you to it?' I replied, 'It is an important question, and one that I ought to have decided on long ago; but if I have, it is no harm to ask it over again, as to my call and my motives—whether my eye is single—whether it is my sole aim that God may be glorified and sinners saved.'

"I crossed to Digby and preached to some Scotch people, who appeared much gratified and wished me to come again. They had no preaching, but used to meet on Lord's days and read a sermon &c. I promised to come again in a fortnight. In the interim they had heard that I was not a Collegiate, and so had not come into the ministry at the door. They appointed a Committee to ask of me as to the truth of the statement. After the morning service I was asked into a private room to take some refreshment. Then the Committee of inquiry began, a Mr. Thompson being spokesman. 'Sir,' said he, 'there is a report in circulation which we could not believe, but we wished to be satisfied about it. We have been appointed to wait on you and respectfully to inquire as to the truth of the report, which is that you was not educated at the College.' I answered, 'The report is true.' He then said, 'We would then ask you, by what authority you do these things? that is by what authority do you preach?' I replied—'I will gladly tell you. When first I was brought to an experimental knowledge of the truth I felt much concerned for those around me that appeared thoughtless and ignorant of salvation, as I had formerly been myself; and I often made some attempt to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, both in private and publicly.' I then related the exercises of my mind on the subject, from the year 1785 unto the year 1790, when I began to preach. When I had done, he rose, took me by the hand, and bade me God-speed, saying, 'Sir, the state of the country calls loudly for teachers, which, with your exercises on the subject, is a sufficient warrant, in my opinion, for you to preach. I should be sorry to discourage you. And now we shall be glad to hear you again this afternoon. Our society is now waiting for our report; but as you have fifteen minutes more, and you began your narration by saying, 'When first I was brought to the knowledge of the truth'—will you give us a short account of it?'—Here I gave a short account of my experience, which was heard with much affection. They retired, made their report, and then requested me to proceed in the afternoon worship. I know of nothing that ever disturbed my harmony with those good folks afterwards."

"I suppose this was the first Baptist preaching in Digby (I am not sure that was the case). What was the fruit, or whether any, I know not but on the other side of the Gut there was a gracious work among coloured