

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Stanzas.

"For none might enter into the King's Court clothed in sackcloth."—ESTHER iv.

Yes, at the gate of Heaven we shall drop
The sackcloth raiment that on earth we wear;
No mourning robe, no funeral badge of woe,
May in the court of Heaven's King appear.

No long dark funeral train shall ever cast
Its shadows on those walls of burnished gold;
They catch no shadow of a dark hued thing,
No image that lacks brightness can they hold.

No storms shall blow upon life's river there,
No weary feet shall wander on its shores;
No sad eyes watch for sails that never come,
No waiting for a ship that never moors.

No clank of slave-chains grate upon the ear,
No piteous moan, no vain appeal is made,
No Christian there can bind his fellow man,
Nor buy and sell the soul Christ died to save.

No lonely heart, no taste of hope deferred,
No weary watching by a couch of pain;
No sad heart turning from a new-made grave,
Back to the busy cares of life again.

No dread of man, no tyrant's heartless power,
Binding man's soul with an iron rod;
But all is free and full felicity,
Within the courts of our Creator, God.

Then Brother fasten not too closely on
The robe of sackcloth that on earth you wear;
Remember it will all be laid aside,
When at the court of Heaven we appear.
Hillside. S. I. E.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD I.

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

LETTER III.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

I propose now to give you some account of the life and labours of Henry Alline, who, although he was not only not a Baptist, but held very lax views respecting Christian ordinances, originated that religious movement which ultimately issued in the extension of our denomination in this province.

Henry Alline was born at Newport, Rhode Island, June 14, 1748. His parents belonged to the Congregational order. In 1760 they came over to Nova Scotia, and settled in Falmouth. Henry had many serious impressions in his childhood, which wore away as he grew older, yet occasionally revived, and troubled him exceedingly. His youthful days were spent in vanity. He was excessively fond of frolicking and carnal mirth, and was a ringleader in revelling, often spending great part of the night at dancing parties. So wild was he, that his parents justly feared he was rushing straight to ruin. But all the time a strife was going on within him. Deep convictions repeatedly pressed him down, and drove him to outward reformation and religious exercises, from which he vainly sought relief. At the beginning of the year 1775 the struggle became more violent, and his soul was torn with agony. Deliverance came at last. On the 26th of March in the above-mentioned year he was enabled to give himself to Christ, and then the burden fell off. The result is thus described in his own words:—

"At that instant of time when I gave up all to him, to do with me as he pleased, and was willing that God should reign in me and rule over me at his pleasure, redeeming love broke into my soul with repeated scriptures with such power, that my whole soul seemed to be melted down with love; the burden of guilt and condemnation was gone, darkness was expelled, my heart humbled and filled with gratitude, and my will turned of choice after the infinite God, whom I saw I had rebelled against and been deserting from all my days. * * * O the unspeakable wisdom and beauty of the glorious plan of life and salvation! I have often wanted some things in the world; and some plans to be altered, and wished this thing and that thing was not so, because it seemed hard, and not agreeable

to my carnal mind and human reasonings; but I would not now have any alteration for ten thousand worlds. Every thing that God did was right, and nothing wanting; I did not want then God should alter any thing for me, but I was willing, yea chose (for it was the food and joy of my soul) to bow to him, to be ruled by him, to submit to him and to depend wholly upon him both for time and eternity; and it was the joy of my soul that he would be God alone for ever."

Simultaneous with his conversion was a conviction that he was called to preach. It followed him continually. He longed to tell others of the salvation and invite them to a participation of its blessings. But his education had been scanty, and neither he nor his friends deemed it proper for any one to engage in the work of the ministry who had not been regularly trained for it. It was, indeed, sufficiently evident that his mind needed discipline, and that the instructions of a judicious theologian would have rendered important service. But there were difficulties in the way which could not be removed. The religious necessities of the township in which he lived deeply affected him. "A small number of people did meet in the town every sabbath day, and I with them, and no minister, nor any one to give a word of exhortation." It seemed sinful to hold his peace. Accordingly, on the 18th of April, 1776, which was a day of fasting and prayer, he ventured to give an exhortation, and "had some liberty."

The following Lord's day he delivered his first sermon. The text was Prov. ix. 12;—"If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself, but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it." So he commenced his public career. "I still continued improving," he states, "every Sabbath-day, being sometimes in the dark and sometimes in the light; and when I was in darkness, and did not find the Spirit of God with me, when speaking, I would be ready to sink, and thought I would preach no more; and when I got life and liberty again, my strength and my resolutions were renewed; and thus God dealt with me, and carried me through various scenes. * * It being reported at this time that Henry Alline was turned New Light preacher, many would come from other towns, even whole boat-loads. Some came to hear what the babblers had to say; some came with gladness of heart that God had raised up one to speak in his name; and some came to make a scoff; but it did not seem to trouble me much, for I trust God was with me, and supported me, and enabled me to face a frowning world."

In July he commenced preaching in Newport, and in September following a church was formed. It was "gathered both of Baptists and Congregationalists." The Dimocks joined it. Probably they were the "two elders" who were ordained by the church about a month after its establishment, and who "came forward to lead the church, as far as their gifts and graces extended."

On the third of November Mr. Alline preached his first sermon in Horton. "The Lord was there. It was a strange thing to see a young man, who had often been there a frolicking, now preaching the everlasting gospel. The people seemed to have hearing ears, and it left a solemn sense on some youths. I remained there," he adds, "till Tuesday evening, and preached again, when there was such a throng of hearers that the house could not contain them; and some of them were that evening convicted with power." On the 29th he went to Cornwallis, and preached several times. "Many people attended, hearing that there was a wild youth lately converted and turned preacher." Preaching in Horton on his return. "God was pleased to take hold of the hearts of some of the hearers, and never left them until they were brought to the knowledge of the Redeemer."

The early part of the year 1777 was spent in preaching alternately in Falmouth, Newport, Horton, and Cornwallis. The people of Cornwallis wished to engage him as their minister, but he declined, saying that he would not settle in any place, feeling it to be his duty to itinerate. Three times that year he visited Annapolis, preaching, as he went, through the whole county. The first journey was in June. Referring to the town of Annapolis, he says, "O the darkness of the land! (called christian, too!) The name of conversion, or the power of religion, was rarely mention-

ed. Their minister would only read over an old dry lesson of morals and forms which they had written down. Blind leaders of the blind! O that God would have mercy on them, and open their eyes before they and their hearers fall irrecoverably into eternal ruin!" on his second visit, in August, he "rode through all the County of Annapolis, preached night and day, and visiting the people found the work of God increasing." In November he went again "through the whole county," and "visited and preached to all the societies"—by which word he appears to designate certain associations of christians, accustomed to meet together for prayer and exhortation:—he does not call them "churches."—In the intervals he laboured in Cornwallis and the other Townships. His proceedings excited much discussion. On several occasions he was "closely questioned by ministers and others (two ministers "from Cobequid" are particularly mentioned) respecting his right to preach, not being regularly ordained, and strong efforts were employed to prevent the people from hearing him. "O, the damage that is done," he remarked, "by unconverted ministers and legal professors! I have found them in my travels more inveterate against the power of religion than the open profane. But blessed be God, although they left no stone unturned to obstruct what they called a delusion, yet the work still increased, and God gave me such a sense of divine things that I endeavoured to pass by all the reproaches as much as possible."

His history during the year 1778 was not marked by many striking incidents. It was the same course of preaching, praying, and striving to win souls. The greatest encouragement that year was at Falmouth. "A little while ago they were going on in all manner of wickedness, frolicking, sin, and vanity; and now, meeting to praise the Lord, the great Redeemer of mankind, and thirsting after the word of life. Some, who a few years ago were the ringleaders to vice, now singing Hosannas to the Son of David, and live so exemplary that they are an ornament to the gospel they profess." In the other districts religion was in a somewhat depressed state till towards the latter end of the year, when a pleasing change took place. At Horton he "enjoyed some happy hours," and "saw the work of God among his children." In Cornwallis, "nothing was scarcely talked of now among numbers where I preached but religion. Wherever they went their language was the language of Zion, and telling what they had enjoyed." Two visits were paid to Annapolis—the first in June, the second in September; and there also, "the Lord's work prospered under his hands."

There were some attempts to disturb him. Once, in Annapolis, he was "threatened to be abused by a number of ruffians, but they were not permitted to do it." On another occasion, in Cornwallis, "being desired to preach at a man's house, who would sometimes get drunk, a number of enemies contrived to get him drunk, and sent him home drumming (as he was a drummer) to disturb the meeting; but God frustrated their evil design. The man being out at work in the woods, was expected to go home about dark by a tavern, which was between him and his house, and the way he commonly went home from his work; but, directed by Providence, he went home by quite a different way; though he knew nothing of their design." When the devil wants men to do dirty work for him he often finds it necessary to ply them with liquor.

But Mr. Alline experienced the blessedness pronounced by the Saviour on those who should be reviled and persecuted for his sake. Thus he writes in his journal:—"O the happy days that we enjoyed, while antichrist was raging all around us, and said that we were all under a delusion. The Lord increase such a delusion over the whole earth, among all the inhabitants of it!"

It being judged by the brethren that Mr. Alline's preaching might be more generally acceptable if he were known as an ordained minister, arrangements were made for his ordination. On the sixth of April, 1779, he received the imposition of hands, at Cornwallis, from nine delegates, representing the three Congregational churches at Cornwallis, Horton, and Newport and Falmouth, three dele-

gates being appointed by each church. About three weeks afterwards he went to New Brunswick, at the invitation of a church at Maugerville. He found it in a divided and disorganised state, but succeeded in restoring harmony. "I went from place to place," he says, "preaching often and visiting the people, and God of his infinite mercy began a work of grace." Crossing over to Annapolis, he "found the work of God in some degree reviving. * * * The people thronged to hear the gospel." After preaching about two months in Cornwallis and the neighbouring townships, he was found again at Annapolis, and shortly afterwards at Maugerville, where he was "rejoiced to find many souls born to Christ" since his first visit, and what was something remarkable, and likewise uncommon, three or four were upwards of fifty years of age." The re-organization of the church was completed, by the choice of two elders and two deacons; "the number of christians increased," and there, as well as at other places where he preached, he "saw the power of God among sinners." In November he returned to Annapolis. The remainder of the year he preached in Cornwallis and the other townships.

His history during the year 1780 presents but little variety. There were seasons of refreshing in Horton and Cornwallis: "oftentimes after sermon the saints would arise, exhort, and witness for God." On the tenth of March he left for Annapolis. The snow was so deep that riding was impracticable. He had to travel forty miles on snow-shoes, and accomplished it in five days. A day of fasting and prayer was held in Granville and a church was formed. "Different opinions about water-baptism were not thought a sufficient bar; and therefore they joined congregations, and as to baptism each one enjoyed a liberty of conscience." Thomas Handly Chipman was connected with this church.

Having spent two months in New Brunswick he returned to Annapolis the latter end of June, laboured in Cornwallis and neighbourhood till September, and then re-visited Annapolis, where he found "the work still reviving," and "saw the greatest society he had ever seen" in that county—"more members joined the church, and many sinners under conviction." Similarly pleasing results attended his preaching in New Brunswick, in October and November.

Mr. Alline's journal for the years 1779 and 1780 contains numerous references to "disputes about water-baptism," especially in Cornwallis and Annapolis county. There were keen and violent discussions of the subject. It was agitated everywhere, and Mr. Alline found it extremely difficult to allay the excitement. The history of the Baptist church at Horton explains it: fifty-two persons were added to that church by baptism in the above-mentioned years; and it is curious enough that a baptism generally preceded or followed the notice of the debates in Mr. A.'s journal. Of the fifty-two baptisms, twenty-four were in Cornwallis, twelve in Wilmot, and sixteen in Horton. Inquiry, discussion, and baptism, travelled on together.

Yours truly,

Feb., 4th 1860.

MENNO.

Baptist Chronology.

In the Historical Introduction to his "Annals of American Baptist Pulpit," Dr. Sprague gives the following as the dates of the origin of the first churches of our denomination in the several States of the Union. Exceptions must be made in the cases of Mississippi, Texas and Florida; the dates affixed to these States referring to the origin of the first Associations in them:

Rhode Island, 1636. Massachusetts, 1663. New York, 1669. Maine, 1682. South Carolina, 1683. Pennsylvania, 1684. New Jersey, 1688. Delaware, 1703. Connecticut, 1705. Virginia, 1714. North Carolina, 1727. Maryland, 1742. New Hampshire, 1755. Georgia, 1757. Vermont, 1768. Tennessee, 1780. Kentucky, 1781. Ohio, 1790. Illinois, 1786. District of Columbia, 1802. Indiana, 1802. Missouri, 1804. Mississippi, 1807. Alabama, 1810. Louisiana, 1812. Michigan, 1822. Iowa, 1836. Wisconsin, 1837. Texas, 1840. Florida, 1842.