

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### All is well with the Christian.

BY HENRY ALLINE.

Written in his sickness.

Ye pilgrims, bound to perfect bliss,  
Your Saviour's goodness tell;  
If he is yours, and you are his,  
Rejoice, for all is well.

You've found the only stream of joy,  
Where solid pleasures dwell;  
Though hell may rage, and earth annoy,  
Christ lives, and all is well.

When foes invade, you mount above  
To joys unspeakable,  
Your trials sweetened all with love;  
Then surely all is well.

Sinners may lose their greatest joy,  
And find their Dagon fell;  
But nothing can your lives destroy,  
Then sing, for all is well.

Christ is your joy, and life, and peace,  
There all your treasures dwell;  
Let every other helper cease,  
He lives, and all is well.

Mount, my triumphant soul, above  
This cold, this gloomy cell;  
Long as I feel immortal love,  
I must say, all is well.

I'd ever live where Jesus reigns,  
And never more rebel;  
And soon on heaven's immortal plains  
I'd shout, ah! all is well.

## Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD I.

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

LETTER V.

#### MY YOUNG FRIEND,

On the thirtieth of September, 1782, Mr. Alline set out for Annapolis. It was his last visit to that county. He "preached through all the county," and then left for Yarmouth, accompanied by Thomas Handley Chipman. Between St. Mary's Bay and Yarmouth they were obliged to lie one night in the woods, "where it rained all night." Arriving at the Settlements, they "preached every day, and saw a work of God among the people." Mr. Chipman departed for New Brunswick on the 13th of October, and Mr. Alline proceeded to Argyle. There, "the people were so engaged, that almost all in the place, both old and young, attended night and day, and the Spirit of the Lord wrought with such power, that many were constrained to cry out in the meeting, some with joy, and others in the deepest distress of soul." Barrington, Cape Negro, Ragged Islands and Sable River were next visited. These labours occupied him nearly a month. On the twentieth of November (I quote his Journal) he "went to Liverpool in an open boat; the wind was fair, but being considerably high, we had like to have filled in the midst of the breakers at some distance from the land. Both the irons of the rudder broke, and the rudder was gone in a moment, but the hand of God was with us, and the boat did not turn till we got out an oar, and then continued to run before it till we reached the harbour.

Lord, may such favours of thine hand  
Awake my heart to love,  
And lead me still o'er sea or land,  
While through this world I rove.

"When I came to Liverpool, I had the happiness to meet a number of my friends on the wharf, who informed me of the glorious work of God, that had appeared ever since I left them, and was still going on in the place. The minister, whom they had tried often to get removed on account of his hard drinking, was so enraged against his people for their holding up separate meetings, that he desired a dismission, rather expecting that it would be the means of their returning to him, and that when the trial came they would not dismiss him. But the people embraced the opportunity, and gave him his dismission, which seemed to open the way still more for the work of God, as he was a great opposer. Almost all the town assembled together, and

some that were lively christians prayed and exhorted, and God was there with a truth. I preached every day, and sometimes twice a day, and the houses where I went were crowded almost all the time. Many were brought out of darkness and rejoiced, and exhorted in public. And O how affecting it was to see some young people not only exhort their companions, but also take their parents by the hand, and entreat them for their soul's sake to rest no longer in their sins, but fly to Jesus Christ while there was hope."

He remained at Liverpool ten or twelve days, visited Petite Riviere, Port Medway, and other places, and returned to Liverpool on the 24th of December, where he "found the waters troubled and sculs stepping in."

On the first of January, 1783, he sailed for Halifax. While there he preached several times, and "had reason to believe that there were two or three souls that received the Lord Jesus Christ. But the people in general are almost as dark and as vile as in Sodom." He returned to Liverpool about the middle of the month, and remained there four or five weeks. He sums up the history of his visit (it was his last) in these words:—"O the happy days which I there enjoyed, not only in my own soul, but to see the kingdom of God flourishing. When I went to preach at the meeting-house, at the hour appointed, the people were crowding to hear; and when the sermon was over, I was obliged to stop many hours in the broad-alley, to discourse with the people; for it seemed as if they could not go away. While I was there this last time, the christians gathered together in fellowship, by telling their experience and getting fellowship one for another, and so joined in a body, separating themselves from the world."

On leaving Liverpool he re-visited Port Medway and other places in the neighbourhood, and then went again to Halifax, whence he proceeded homewards, preaching as he went along, wherever he could find opportunity.

He was taken ill at Windsor, and for a time his life was despaired of; but he recovered in the course of the summer sufficiently to re-commence preaching, although it was evident that the hand of death was upon him. "I remained very ill," he says, "and sometimes in the greatest rocks and anguish of body that could be endured; but I think I can say, God gave me so much strength to endure it, that I was never heard to groan under all my pain. And indeed I look on it not only a sin, to give way to groaning and repining under trials, sickness or pains, but it has a tendency likewise to increase the trials and augment the diseases; when on the contrary I firmly believe, that if the christians endeavour to throw their sickness and pain out of their minds, and keep their minds soaring above, fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and contemplating divine truths and the state of their souls, it would not only enable them in a great measure to triumph over the fear of death and the grave, but in some measure repulse the rage of the disorder. Yea, and when enjoying a present Christ, it even lifts them up above the sense of their pains."

He now determined to carry into execution a long-cherished purpose to visit New England. His friends remonstrated with him, on the imprudence of the step, and pointed out its danger, telling him plainly that he was thought to be in a consumption, and might therefore expect to die on the journey. "I told them," he writes, "that if I knew that to be my case, it would urge me the more on, for I never desired, nor intended, if God gave me strength, to yield up to sickness, or the bed, as long as I could possibly help it; and therefore, as I had preached almost all over this country, if I was in a consumption, I would go and proclaim my Master's name where I had never preached, as long as I could ride or stand, if it was even to the last expiring breath. Which determination I still feel, if God be with me, and give me strength."

"In this spirit he embarked at Windsor on the 27th of August. His aged parents cheerfully consented to his departure, and "seemed to get above the affections and weakness of nature," observing that "if he went and wore out his days in the cause of Christ, and was the means of bringing any poor souls into his kingdom, all was well."

The wind being contrary, he landed at "Jones's River," Maine, and resolved to commence his work immediately, and preach his way to Boston. His illness increased. "I endured vast pains and anguish of body," he says, "almost every day, and was many times scarcely able to preach; but I endured it without much complaining, for I enjoyed health of soul, and was very happy at times in the Lord Jesus Christ."

So he wearisomely pursued his course. But he was cheered by tokens of blessing, for his preaching was "attended with power to the consciences of sinners in almost all the Eastern shore."

On the 24th of November he wrote these words in his Journal;—"As for my bodily illness, it was still so great and heavy on me that I was scarcely an hour free from pain, excepting when asleep; but blessed be God, he was the supporter and Comforter of my mind." This was the last entry. But though unable to write any more he continued preaching till the 25th of January, 1784, on which day he delivered his last sermon. The text was Luke xix, 9, and the place was Northampton, New Hampshire. He had arrived there three days before, and was kindly received by the Rev. David McClure, minister of the place, at whose house he died. Mr. McClure observes, in a letter to his parents, that when he reached his house he was "very feeble, and appeared in the last stage of a hectic, and much oppressed with the asthma."

Mr. McClure's letter, just referred to, gives an account of Mr. Alline's last sickness and death. I will transcribe the concluding portion.

"February 1st Sabbath morning. No sleep the last night; his fever high; he has his reason well; distressed for breath, patient in his distress, and resigned to the will of God. I said, 'he was fast approaching to the end of his wearisome journey, and as I trusted, to an entrance in a glorious rest.' He said with great earnestness, 'O I long for it, I long for it! I observed to him that the promises of the gospel were a divine support to all who love our Lord Jesus. 'O yes,' said he, 'but the Promiser is greater than the promises, and he is with me.' Going to meeting he desired a remembrance in our prayers, and said, 'O tell all my friends that the blessed gospel which I have preached to them is true, in which they must believe in the lively belief of, and in which they will be safe in death. Sir—O preach that blessed gospel.'

"By reason of his great bodily pains and longing to be with Christ, he would sometimes check himself, fearing he was too impatient to be gone. 'I desire,' says he, 'to wait God's time! He said he had begged of God that he might not outlive his usefulness. 'O I long,' said he, 'that poor sinners should have such views of the Lord Jesus as I have.'

"He would frequently exhort spectators to get an interest in Christ, assuring them that none but Christ would answer for them when they came to die.

"In the afternoon he told me he was afraid he should lose his reason, but hoped that God would continue to him that blessing.

"In the evening I observed to him that Christ was now his only help; he said, 'I need not be told of that, he is now my only desire.' His distress increased, and he longed to depart. I observed to him, that I trusted he would soon obtain the gracious fulfilment of the promises. 'I have no doubt,' said he, 'not one, no more than if I was now there.' He lay in great distress, groaning and reaching for breath until, about midnight, he said his thoughts began to be confused; that he was not in a condition to pray; desired me to go to prayer, and at the close he repeated a loud and joyful 'Amen.' It was evident soon after that his reason was going, and his broken sentences were the breathings of a soul swallowed up in God.

"In this state he lay about two hours in great distress for breath, and the last intelligible sentence he spoke was in the strain of his general conversation, in these words—'Now I rejoice in the Lord Jesus!'

"And between three and four o'clock in the morning (Feb. 2.) he breathed out his soul into the arms of Jesus, with whom he longed to be. Such was his peaceful end."

The funeral took place the next day. Six ministers attended. Among them was the "Rev. Mr. Noble, St. John's River, Nova Scotia"—or, as we should now say, "New Brunswick."

Thus it pleased God to take his servant to himself, after a brief season of labour. Mr. Alline died in the thirty-sixth year of his age, and the eighth of his ministry. The hearts of the brethren were saddened by the event, and melancholy forebodings were indulged in. But our Heavenly Father always sends for his children at the proper time. If any murmur, he says, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Mr. Alline wrote as well as preached. His largest work, published in 1781, was entitled, "Two Mites, on some of the most important and much disputed points in divinity, cast into the Treasury, for the welfare of the poor and needy, and committed to the perusal of the unprejudiced and impartial reader; by Henry Alline, servant of the Lord, to his Churches." There was also a pamphlet, entitled, "The anti-Traditionist;" two sermons, both preached at Liverpool, in November, 1782; and a collection of original hymns and poems.

In these writings Mr. Alline propounded some sentiments of a highly objectionable and dangerous character. He denied the creation of the universe "out of nothing." He fancied that there was no such thing as "corporal hardness" before the fall of our first parents. He thought that the resurrection would be the restoration of "that spiritual body which man was made with at first." He wrote most mystically and strangely on the incarnation and atonement of Christ, and on Conversion, using expressions which must have been as unintelligible to himself as they appear in his books. He declaimed violently against the doctrine of election. And he treated the ordinances of Christianity, especially baptism, with the utmost indifference, telling the people that if they were "conscience-bound" to be baptized they might be, but that if they were "conscience-bound to omit" it, they were entirely at liberty.

These and other points were animadverted on with great severity by the Rev. "Jonathan Scott, pastor of a church in Yarmouth," in a volume of 334 pages, printed at Halifax in the year 1784, and not published till after Mr. Alline's death. The title was, "A brief view of the religious tenets and sentiments lately published and spread in the province of Nova Scotia," &c. Mr. Scott wrote feelingly, for many members of his church left him after hearing Mr. Alline, and established a separate interest.

If I thought that the errors alluded to above were so prominent in Mr. Alline's teaching as to neutralise the effect of the truths which he taught, I should be sorry to utter a word in "his vindication. But an examination of his Journal convinces me of the contrary. I see a man burning with love to God and his fellow-creatures, and intent on saving souls. I see a self-denying, devoted servant of the Lord, "Spending and being spent" that he may bring sinners to Jesus. I see a faithful witness against formality,—a denouncer of mere outside, word-religion,—a pleader for the new-birth, as essential to happiness here and hereafter,—a defender of that godliness which consists in life, and love, and "joy in the Holy Ghost." Above all, I see a successful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom hundreds were brought "out of darkness into marvellous light." That he held some unsound and even monstrous notions is freely admitted; the Baptist Church in Horton held a special meeting on the subject, April 11, 1781, and agreed to admonish "Brother Henry Alline," both for his laxity in the matter of baptism, and for "publishing erroneous principles in print." It cannot be denied, too, that he was very apt at "rebuking sharply," and that he seemed to assume a power like the "discerning of spirits." Nevertheless, to borrow the words of Mr. McClure, in the letter which has been already cited, he was "a burning and shining light in Nova Scotia"—and "his christian virtues, zeal, fortitude, faith, hope, patience and resignation shone bright as the lamp of life burnt down into the socket."

As an illustration of his ever-active zeal and his readiness to improve opportunities, I may mention the following fact, for which