

Christian Messenger.

A DEPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. V. No. 52.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1860.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXIV. No. 52.

Poetry.

If we knew.

If we knew, when walking thoughtless
Through the crowded, dusty way,
That some pearl of wondrous whiteness
Close beside our pathway lay,
We would pause where now we hasten,
We would often look around,
Lest our careless feet should trample
Some rare jewel in the ground.

If we knew what forms were fainting
For the shade which we should fling,
If we knew what lips were parching
For the water we should bring,
We would haste with eager footsteps,
We would work with willing hands,
Beating cooling cups of water,
Planting rows of shading palms.

If we knew where genius struggled
Through the weary nights and days,
Never cheered amid their toiling
By some word of hope and praise,
Buds of balm and leaves of laurel
We would place within their hands—
Little deeds with pleasant meanings
Hungry hearts can understand.

If we knew what feet were weary
Climbing up the hills of pain,
By the world cast out as evil—
Poor repentant Magdalenes—
We no more would dare to scorn them
With our Pharisaic pride,
Wrapping close our robes around us,
Passing on the other side.

If we knew, when friends around us
Closely press to say "Good bye,"
Which among the lips that kiss us
First ben-ah the flowers should lie,
While like rain upon their faces
Fell our bitter, blinding tears,
Tender words of love eternal
We would whisper in their ears.

If we knew what hands were rearing
Massive struc ures on the sand,
Planting Uvas, that its branches
Might overshadow their palace grand,
We would point to glorious ventures
Once as stately as their own,
Shining fragments—domes and turrets
Which the winds had overblown.

Holy Father in the heavens!
Nearer to thy p rfect day,
Through the shining track of duty,
Wilt thou guide us on our way;
And when these clay walls shall crumble,
When this mortal breath shall cease,
Wilt thou crown us in thy kingdom
With thy own "exceeding peace" Ex.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD IV.

From A. D. 1809 to A. D. 1821.

LETTER XXIV.

CHURCH AT WINDSOR.—MR. NUTTER'S MISSIONARY LABOURS.—CHURCHES AT CANSO, GUYSBOROUGH, TRACADIE, AND ANTIGONISH. REVIVALS AT RAGGED ISLANDS AND LIVERPOOL. CHURCHES FORMED.—OBSERVATIONS.—ANNAPOLIS.

Mr YOUNG FRIEND,

The church at Windsor was organised in the Fall of 1819. Brother David Nutter had visited the place some time before, and his preaching had been blessed to many. The meetings were generally held in the Court-house, kindly granted for that purpose by the sheriff. Mr. Nutter mentions (in his "Reminiscences of the past," which appeared in the *Christian Visitor* during the year 1856) that on one occasion, as he was going to the place of meeting, a gentleman accosted him, and hinted that as Windsor was distinguished for its loyalty it would be taken well if he would say something favourable about the king. "This curious proposal," says Mr. N., "set me musing, somewhat on this wise:—preach about the King. But, what king? There is King George the Third; I respect him; I owe him allegiance, as a subject; yea, more, I believe him to be a godly man, and a good king; (notwithstanding all the lying slanders the Americans have stuffed into their Declaration of Independence,) and as such I love and honor him." But then I thought, there is another King. A most exalted, heavenly, con-

descending, and triumphant King. He is King of righteousness; King of peace; king of glory; his kingdom is an everlasting one; yea, He is King of Kings; and Lord of Lords; and shall reign for ever. Yes, I will say something about the King. And so I took for my text, the words, *We have another King; one Jesus.*—[I know not where our good brother found those words. His text was probably Acts xvii. 7.] It was a good time. I had large liberty in explaining the character of our King—the nature of his government—and the loyalty of his subjects, and enquired, in conclusion, who, in this congregation, owned allegiance to him. And I trust the appeal, that night, by his blessing, gained to him some subjects."

There were considerable difficulties in the way of forming a church at Windsor, arising from the diversity of opinion prevalent on the subject of communion. "We had three classes of christians," Mr. Nutter observes, "connected with us. First those who belonged to Baptist churches in other places, and whose view of course, were in accordance with the regular Baptists in the Province. But there were also several persons who had been baptized, but had no standing in any church; and could not unite on the principles of what they called, close communion. A few others, old followers of the famous Henry Alline, had not been baptized at all and did not think it was their duty to be. They held that baptism was not obligatory on a disciple of Christ; but like their old teacher, if any person was troubled in their minds on that subject, they had better go and do it; not as obeying the command of God; but as a relief to their own consciences!"

Brother Nutter held firm to his purpose. Being a sound-hearted Baptist, he believed that the Apostolic order is—first, repentance and faith—next, baptism—and then communion with Christ and his people. He explained, and reasoned, and persuaded, till the obstacles were cleared away. At its formation the church consisted of "twelve or thirteen" members, and "brother Allen Young" was chosen deacon. The number had increased to nineteen when the church was admitted into the Association, in 1820.

Mr. Nutter became the minister of the church, and resided at Windsor; but he did not assume the pastoral office, nor did he confine his efforts to that place. He performed a large amount of missionary labour in various parts of the province, partly in the employ of the Association, and partly in the exercise of that voluntary benevolence and zeal which in those days shone with special brightness. The Minutes of the Association for 1821 record that he had undertaken during the previous year a mission of twelve weeks, had travelled 700 miles, preached seventy sermons, and baptized twenty-six persons. That journey was in the Eastern district of the province, and was marked by many highly encouraging circumstances. It was the second time that Mr. N. had visited that region. Four churches were the results of his labours there. They were located at Canso, Guysborough, Tracadie, and Antigonish. None of them joined the Association till some years afterwards. The church at Tracadie was mostly constituted of coloured people, the majority of the inhabitants of that settlement belonging to the African race. The gospel was received by them with great joy. One case of conversion is thus reported by Mr. N.:

"The relation of one man, who was afterward chosen a Deacon, left a lasting impression on my mind; but to which my rigid pen, and cold words, can hardly do justice. The evil nature of sin, and especially his own sin, as described when he related what God had done for him, was such as I had never heard from mortal lips. He stated that his great trouble and the burden on his soul was his sinful life, but more especially his desperately wicked heart! He said the more he looked at himself, and the more he prayed, the worse he appeared; and this feeling so increased from day to day, that he thought God would certainly destroy him; for he was not fit to live on the earth that God had made. As these impressions increased, he left his home to go and die away in the woods. He said he felt that he was not fit to die in his house and amongst his family; and when he reached the top of a hill, he looked back, and

said, Farewell wife, and farewell children, and farewell neighbours; for I shall never see you again."

"After wandering about in the woods sometime, not finding a place bad enough to die in, (for he thought God certainly would not suffer him to live another day,) he saw a very large tree turned up by the roots, and which had left a deep hole, full of mud and water. Here he concluded, was the place which God had prepared for him to die in. Into this mud hole he crept; and went down on his knees, and prayed to God, in something like the following strain: O God, I am not worthy to live on thy earth, I am such a sinner. If thou wilt not have mercy on my poor sinful soul, thou art just in thy condemnation, and my heart is so wicked and deceitful, that I can do nothing to please thee or to deserve thy mercy. Here, O Lord, I give myself up into thy hands, to do as thou please, even if thou send me to hell, which I justly deserve. The moment I spoke these words," said he, "the Lord Jesus did appear right before me hanging and bleeding on the cross, and it did seem that he speak almost my name, and say I forgive you all them sins, and die this shameful death for thy soul and its salvation. My burden of sin was all gone in a moment, and I was in a great hurry to come out of that dirty place, and when I got out, I did bless God, and all the trees of the woods did clap their hands, and praise him." Such were nearly the words he told in an experience meeting, in the presence of a hundred people. But the simplicity, sincerity, and humbly earnestness, was such as none could manifest but a converted African.

"It was a solemn and weeping season, while he and a dozen more related the dealings of God with their souls. The next day they were all buried with Christ in baptism."

In the winter of 1820-1 Mr. Nutter spent some weeks along the Western shore. It was a very laborious tour. The roads were bad, the weather often excessively severe; and the people so hungry for the word of life that the preacher was incessantly engaged. Numbers were converted and baptized, and three churches were organised—at Ragged Islands, Port Medway, and Liverpool.

It would be more proper to say, however, that the church at Ragged Islands was re-organised. The former church seems to have dwindled away. John Craig, the first pastor, was there but prosperity did not then attend his endeavours, and the feebleness of old age had incapacitated him for hard labour. Godliness was at a very low ebb; there had been no additions for a long time; the old members were scattered about, and had "left their first love." And order and discipline had fallen into neglect. A powerful revival signalized Mr. Nutter's visit, and the result was that the few Baptists who remained were brought together again, and the church re-constituted. It was admitted into the Association in 1822, at which time there were forty-four members in communion.

While Mr. Nutter was at Liverpool he was requested to visit Port Medway. He complied with the invitation and spent several days there, labouring for the salvation of souls. The word was blessed, and on a second visit seventeen persons were formed into a church.

Liverpool was at this time the scene of great religious interest. Not only was Mr. Nutter's preaching the means of conversion to many, but the revival spread through the town, and the Methodists and Congregationalists shared in the blessing. The following passage from Mr. N's narrative will show in what manner he proceeded both with regard to baptism and the organization of a church:—"I took no steps, nor used means to make proselytes to our peculiar order, or opinion, beyond what Providence threw in my way. I kept on preaching Christ, and salvation by the sovereign grace of God. Sometimes baptism was introduced in my discourses; but not beyond what was necessary to teach the disciples to 'observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded.' My labours were incessant. Sometimes I was quite exhausted; but though faint I yet persevered. There was no screaming for mercy, or shouting for joy. But there were very many sad countenances, and drooping heads, and inquiring souls. Our baptizing seasons, were great gatherings, and unusually solemn. It would do one's heart good to see

the floods of tears shed by the water side. Sometimes while talking, and leading the candidates out of the water, it seemed that half of the crowd were ready to rush into the water. I encouraged nothing of this kind; and yet there were several instances of men who came into the water, and asked me to baptize them! I always led them out, and proceeded to an examination, and to consult our friends, before proceeding to baptize them. I baptized many, in different places, who did not come there for that purpose. These were most blessed seasons; and many, I trust, will remember them even in heaven.

"I baptized a great many at Liverpool at three different places, as also at Herring Cove and the Falls, (now Milton.) The interest was so great in the town, that little business was done. Companies formed at various houses and other places, composed of old christians, young converts, and inquirers, to talk, and hear, and pray. One day, I remember Esquire Snow Parker's house was crowded in every part, not by appointment, but by the spontaneous gathering of young people who had obtained hope, or who were under conviction of sin. There we talked, and sung, and prayed. But as more persons gathered about, I went out into the street, to converse with those outside, when all left the house, and collected in the street. I gave an exhortation, and then this whole crowd knelt down on the bare ground and engaged in solemn prayer to God. Some thought there were a hundred and fifty persons present; two-thirds of them young females, who were not afraid or ashamed to soil their fine dresses by kneeling on the ground on that solemn occasion.

"We had many conversations on the subject of organizing a church in Liverpool. There were objections arising from two sources. On the one hand, many of those who had been baptized had friends in the other church and were desirous of uniting there. On the other hand, we knew that the members of that church were strongly opposed to such a measure, and our few Baptist brethren in the town and vicinity were intimately connected with them, and strongly attached to them and their minister. When, in addition to this, it was considered that the new body would be likely to be left without a minister to strengthen and feed them, we hesitated before taking this step. But, on the other hand, these Baptists were in close union and fellowship with one another, and would be a sort of speckled birds, if they joined the old body; and more than all this, did they not owe it to truth and consistency to set up their banners in the name of the Lord? After much thought and consultation, it was determined to organize a church of as many of these baptized believers as were desirous of walking together in gospel order.

"The old Baptists were, Isaac Dexter, Samuel Freeman, Mr. Verge, and a Mr. Pride, with a number of females. We prepared a set of Articles of Faith, similar to those adopted in other Baptist Churches in these Provinces. We appointed a day to meet for enquiry, as to who would join and subscribe to this Confession of Faith and Covenant, and at a subsequent day the church was embodied in proper form, and these brethren started on their pilgrimage together."

These details are very interesting. The only drawback arises from the consideration that in many instances the converts were left in a destitute state, no arrangement being made for their subsequent instruction and training. On the Eastern shore numbers were baptized—at Crow Harbour, Canso, Canso Harbour, and other places, who were not gathered into churches; and where churches were established there were no pastors. On the Western shore, too, from eighty to a hundred" were baptized, but a small number of whom were united in church fellowship, and they also were without pastors. True, it was unavoidable, for ministers were scarce than they are now; but looking at the fact that several of these churches became extinct, or nearly so, after a short time, one cannot but be impressed with the importance of endeavouring to secure permanence, if not progress, by the use of the church's own gifts. Such a reliance on the ministry as leads to a neglect of religious exercises when no minister is present, is fraught with evil. The gifts of prayer and exhortation