

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. V.....No. 30.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 1860.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXIV.....No. 30.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Religion.

JAMES I. 27.

Blest, holy, sacred and revered name,
Pure as the heavenly source from which it came;
How often scorned,—reviled and much abused,
Or as a cloak by hypocrites, but used;
Yields not to forms or to some secret test;
Lives in that breast, that open stands confest,
A living fire that's kindled in the soul,
Is subject only to its Lord's control;
Shines forth alike in monarch and in clown,
In poor and peer, who its dominion own.
Not in yon zealot's haughtiness and pride,
But in yon humbled publican aside;
Who feels and knows the plague of inbred sin,
And asks and prays to be made pure within.
Not in the highest seat the Temple gives,
But in the contrite heart it breathes and lives;
Asks not for wealth, or honors of the state,—
In virtue only seeking to be great;
Not in the sacerdotal robe of pomp arrayed,
Nor yet in plainer dress of friends so staid;
Rests not in man's applause, or fawning smile,
Which only fools or madmen can beguile;
Npt only in the hermit's cave or monkish cell,
It finds its home or lowly place to dwell;
But mingling in the crowd or busy mart,
Still holds its empire o'er the obedient heart.
To feasts and fasts it yields their proper dues,
But 'mid these all, its sacred cause pursues:
Not in the tortur'd body, scourged form,
Or outward penance seeking to perform
Aright; some ritual, priestly power decreed,
Thus to gain heaven,—hoping to succeed.
True to its creed, "it seeketh not its own,"
But can earth's motives and its views disown.
And hies in secret to some child of pain,
The sunk in woe and misery to sustain:
Removes the cup of sorrow,—in its stead
Gives joy, and lifts the stricken sufferer's head;
Wipes with a kindly hand the orphan's tear,
And bids the widow'd heart no longer fear:
Points to that Ear that hears our every cry,
That throne of mercy listening to each sigh:
That holy dwelling, where the soul in peace,
From all its trials soon shall find release:
Fears not the martyr's stake, the bigot's frown,
The flame, the scourge, to these the dread unknown.
The storms may rage without, still calm within;
Nor fears the attacks of Satan or of sin.
Religion's votaries to its source will turn,
Where angel's worship, and where seraph's burn;
To yon bright world where all the saints now share
The bliss we wot of, never can compare!

December 31, 1859.

same time, and from the same place, he says:—"I have seen the going of our God in his sanctuary. The power of God falls on the assemblies, and many times I can but say. This is no less than the gate of heaven. I found in this place a number who were thirsting for the waters of life, who received me with joy, and could rejoice in soul to see the things which we see. Never was I more convinced of God's sending me to any place than here. * * * O that he that dwells in the bush may send his angel before you and prosper your way! There seems a great attention given to the word here at present, and a number seem concerned what they must do to be saved. O that he would give them quick relief, before they land beyond recovery. If you feel the cloud move to come to this place I think it would be for the salvation of souls; and I trust you can't but come, remembering the lambs of the flock who are near your soul in that covenant which is stronger than death."

PETER MARTIN was a member of the church at Horton. At a meeting of that church, held June 1st, 1793, it was agreed "that brother Peter Martin is blessed with a gift that he ought to improve as the Lord shall call him." He went to Chester and preached to the church there for a short time. Afterwards he settled in the neighborhood of Canseau, where he died.

There were some others who laboured in the gospel, though they did not engage wholly in the work. The names of Thomas Dexter, Daniel Shaw, and Benjamin Kinsman occur in the records of the times as occasional preachers. I shall be thankful for any further information respecting them.

JOHN BURTON was a native of the county of Durham, England, was born in the year 1760, and was originally a member of the established church. When and by what means he was converted is not known. He seceded from the Church of England and obtained a license, according to the requirements of the law then in force, as a dissenting minister. In the year 1792 he left England, intending to settle in the United States. Having landed at Halifax he was unexpectedly engaged as a preacher. A Mr. Marchington had built a meeting-house for the Wesleyan Methodists, but in consequence of some disagreement between him and them it had not been used. On Mr. Burton's arrival he was invited to occupy the pulpit and did so for a year and a half. Mr. Marchington behaved very liberally to him.

In the fall of 1793 Mr. Burton went to the United States, where he remained till the following June. While there he embraced Baptist sentiments, and was baptized at Knowlton, New Jersey. In January, 1794, he received ordination as a Baptist minister in the same place.

When he returned to Halifax there was much to discourage him. We was the only Baptist in the city. His change was unacceptable to those who had befriended him before. But he was allowed to occupy Mr. Marchington's meeting-house some time longer, and he came out boldly as a Baptist preacher. His endeavours were blessed. The first baptism in Halifax took place Aug. 24, 1794, on which day Margaret Adams, John Hinkle, and Elizabeth Hinkle were baptized. On the following Lord's day two more followed their example, one of whom was Mr. Burton's wife. Two others were baptized in December. Of the above mentioned seven, two are still living, one of them being a member of the church in Granville street, and the other of the North church. There were ten baptisms in 1795, in which year a church was formed, and Mr. Burton became its pastor. The beginning was small and the difficulties great, but the blessing of God was on the work, subsequent proceedings will be narrated in the next period of the history.

ENOCH TOWNER was born at Newbury, Connecticut, in the year 1755. Having espoused the British cause he found it necessary, at the close of the American war, to remove from the United States, and came to this province with the great body of Loyalists who settled here in 1783. He fixed his residence in the Township of Granville.

As a member of the Episcopal church he was evidently noted for activity and business habits, and was consequently appointed to the office of churchwarden. It is to be pre-

sumed that he was punctual in his attendance at divine worship and irreproachable in conduct. But he was destitute of real religion, having only the "form." There was no "power."

In 1790, as I have stated in a former letter, Joseph Dimock travelled through the counties of Annapolis and Digby, preaching the gospel, and was the instrument of numerous conversions. Mr. Towner removed to Lower Granville about the same time. The churchwarden thought that it might not be derogatory to his dignity to go for once to the non-episcopal service. He went, as he afterwards remarked, "without any concern for his soul." All he wanted was to hear for himself the "strange things" which the Baptist preacher was said to bring before the people, that he might be able to form an independent judgment respecting him. Strange indeed was the truth which he heard. He had all along indulged the persuasion that he was "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," as he had often affirmed when reciting the Church Catechism. But the preacher stripped him of his false hopes, and spoke so convincingly of the state of all men as sinners against God, justly deserving his anger, that Mr. Towner fell under conviction. The arrow pierced his heart and rankled there a long time. He was bowed down with sorrow, fearing that there was no hope, and that he was destined to the "everlasting burnings." At length the Lord had mercy on him. He was one day engaged in prayer, earnestly seeking pardon, when light suddenly burst upon his soul. He saw the suitableness and glory of the Saviour, and was enabled to commit himself to him.—The exercise of faith was followed by peace and joy, and "the love of God was shed abroad in his heart."

Having joined the church in Upper Granville, whose pastor, T. H. Chipman, baptized him, he quickly gave proof of sincerity and ardour, by uniting with other converts in establishing prayer-meetings. There his gifts were discovered and nurtured. Exhortation soon developed itself into preaching, and the preacher became an itinerant.

This continued several years. On the formation of the Church in Lower Granville, Mr. Towner joined it, and was duly recognized as a preacher. In the month of April, 1798, he crossed over to Digby Neck, preached at Trout Cove, in the house of Captain Titus, and in all that district, as far as Sissiboo, the word was blessed, and many "turned to the Lord." In the spring of 1799 seven men from the Township of Digby went to Stony Beach, Lower Granville, where they were baptized and organized into a Church, which bore the name of the "Digby" Church, and was the only one in that County for some time. "These seven men," brother Charles Randall of Weymouth observed, in a letter with which he favored me, "lived quite remote from each other. Three of them, viz. David Shook, Willoughby Sabean, and Benjamin Sabean, resided at Sissaboo River; one John Roop, at Digby Joggins, twenty miles from them; and three, Maurice Peters, Peter Harris, and Martin Blackford, on Digby Neck. They thought but little of distances in those days; the Word of the Lord was 'precious,' and many were obedient to the faith, in a short time a number were baptized and added to the Church."

The blessing that had attended Mr. Towner's labours pointed him out as the fittest man for the pastorate. A Council was called by the Church in Lower Granville, and the result was that he was ordained. Besides, James Manning, pastor of the Church, there were present on that occasion, Thomas Handly Chipman, Edward Manning, Theodore S. Harding, Harris Harding, and Joseph Dimock. The ordination sermon was preached by Mr. Dimock. Doubtless there were many other sermons preached at the time. Those men did not often meet together. The old proverb was verified,—"As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the countenance of his friend." Surely that was a stirring season. Joseph Dimock thus refers to it in his journal:—"The Lord hath made bare his arm to the confusion of his foes and comfort of his chosen ones. At the ordination and the meetings preparatory thereto, God was among us of a truth."

These introductory sketches are now

brought to a close. Contemplating the labors and successes of the first Baptist preachers, and coupling therewith the fact that they were uneducated, in the usual acceptance of that word, some persons have gone so far as to inter the uselessness of education, and within these few months some young men have been heard to say, "If father Manning and the other fathers succeeded so well without education, why may not we also do without it?" For the benefit of such persons (I am sorry that the race is not extinct,) I transcribe the following remarks, extracted from a Memoir of James Manning, which appeared in the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Baptist Magazine for September, 1835:—

"But few if any of the first Baptist ministers of Nova Scotia were favored in youth with a liberal education. The facilities of improvement then were but few, and their means of defraying unavoidable charges in obtaining an education were very limited.—Had they at that time had the numerous advantages now proposed to our young men, they would doubtless have gladly embraced them. We have no doubt that in many places their usefulness was restricted through their deficiency in literary attainments, for slight defects in a speaker often produce an insurmountable barrier against the cordial reception of truth. We can, however, extricate those ministers from all blame on this ground. They improved the talents with which God endowed them, and all who know how to appreciate their worth will readily admit that by patient perseverance in the use of five talents they have made more than ten.

"Although our aged ministers had not in youth a liberal education, still their limited common-school attainments, joined with good sense, laid a foundation for much improvement. They studied their bible with diligence and care. They read attentively such books on divinity as they could obtain. They reflected deeply and advanced cautiously. By perseverance in this method of reading and meditation they more than kept pace with the most intelligent of their congregations, and at length gained a rich fund of the most useful practical knowledge. Although they were not systematically trained in philosophy and divinity, and never became acquainted with the technical terms of school learning, still, many of them have become able and sound theologians; we would imagine, not far below their contemporaries in the ministry who had in youth the greatest advantages. Notwithstanding their numerous attainments by unwearied and diligent application, they have regretted often and deeply the want of early advantages.

"We suspect that the great success attending the ministry of those aged men, who make no pretension to education, has produced an erroneous impression throughout our churches, and with many of our young men entering on the ministry. They imagine that as their predecessors succeeded in spreading abroad the principles of religion with astonishing success, their followers may hope for similar results, and thus justify themselves in the neglect of mental cultivation, which at this time is almost indispensable. Whatever be the opinion of others, we believe there was a combination of circumstances, under the providence of God, which established a character for faithfulness and ability for those aged and worthy men, which young men in these days will not easily secure to themselves. We believe that class of ministers possessed more strength of intellect than is possessed by an equal number of our young men. We are also persuaded that they had a higher standard of piety, which imparted a sacred unction to their religious exercises, than is possessed by our young ministers. It is evident to some of us at least, that they were more willing to "spend and be spent" in the service of Christ than the present class of youthful labourers; for while the latter are reluctant to venture abroad so far as to lose sight of our cultivated valleys, and rising villages, the former were itinerating abroad, instructing the ignorant in destitute settlements, and imparting consolation to mourners. In addition to all this, our aged ministers, by indefatigable zeal and unwearied perseverance, have established a character for faithfulness and piety, which young men will not gain under many years employed in faithful labour and with untarnished reputation. Let our church-