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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

"As God will."

FROM THE GERMAN OF STURM.

PAIN'S furnace heat within me quivers,
God's breath upon the flame doth blow,
And all my heart in anguish shivers,
And trembles at the fiery glow:
And yet I whisper, "as God will!"
And in its hottest fire hold still.

He comes and lays my heart all heated,
On the hard anvil, minded so
Into His own fair shape to beat it
With his great hammer, blow on blow,
And yet I whisper, "as God will!"
And at His heaviest blows hold still.

He takes my softened heart and beats it;
The sparks fly off at every blow;
He turns it o'er and o'er, and heats it,
And lets it cool and makes it glow:
And yet I whisper, "as God will!"
And in His mighty hand hold still.

Why should I murmur? for the sorrow
Thus only longer lived would be;
Its end may come, and will to-morrow,
When God has done His work in me;
So I say, trusting, "as God will!"
And trusting to the end, hold still.

He kindles for my profit, purely,
Affliction's glowing, fiery brand,
And all His heaviest blows are surely
Inflicted by a Master hand:
So I say, praying, "as God will!"
And hope in Him, and suffer still.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD II.

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

LETTER XI.

MISSIONARY LABOURS OF THE OLD MINISTERS.—AN-
ECDOTES OF JOSEPH DIMOCK.—ACCOUNT OF HIS
TOUR IN THE UNITED STATES.—OBSERVATIONS.—
EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

The old ministers were both pastors and missionaries. Their churches had the first and principal claim upon them, but they felt at liberty to visit destitute parts of the province, and were sometimes absent from their homes on such errands for weeks or even months. It might be an improvement if our missionary work were now undertaken by the pastors, the younger brethren supplying their pulpits during their absence, and all the gifted in the churches contributing their respective quotas of help. Much benefit would accrue to all the parties concerned.

And here I may remark, by the way, that our home missionary labour involves now but little self-denial and privation. God has so blessed us that we can remunerate our brethren while they are thus employed, and a considerable portion of the necessary funds is gathered in the districts allotted to them. It was not so in the last century. When Harris Harding first visited Yarmouth, he "carried his provisions on his back." When Joseph Dimock left home to preach in Cumberland County, he had "his little bundle of clothes, and one old shilling in his pocket." He was absent three months, as my informant states, and "carried the shilling in his pocket without adding a farthing to it. At last he lost it. Yet God provided for him."

The people had very little money. Hospitality, however, was freely dispensed. The good woman of the house could offer the preacher no delicacies; provision of the coarsest kind was often set before him. But our fathers had no desire to "fare sumptuously." When Mr. Dimock had one day sat down to dinner in the house of a pious female who began to apologise for the plainness of the fare, he replied, "Dear sister, don't say a word. If I am a christian, it is good enough for me; if I am not, it is too good."

I have mentioned his preaching at Lunenburg. That was in his own county. He frequently travelled great distances, preaching as he went along. Argyle and Yarmouth in particular, were visited repeatedly.

He was at the latter place in June, 1795. Writing to the Mannings, he says:—"Some sinners can neither eat, drink, nor sleep, with

satisfaction. People flock in abundance to hear the gospel of Christ; some with impatience, to hear if there is any thing there for them; others, for novelty; others, to watch for halting. But so it is;—many come to hear, and God enables me to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, and to know nothing else." He adds in a postscript,—"If you write to Chester (as I cannot) tell them I am about their Master's business; they sent me on an errand that is likely to detain me longer than I thought for."

Three years after his settlement at Chester he went to the United States. Several members of the Dimock family were living at Fort Edward and its neighbourhood (in the State of New York, bordering on Vermont), and he had probably been in correspondence with them. There was an impression on his mind that he was called to preach the gospel in that country, and it appeared to him that it would be sinful to resist it. So he tore himself away from his friends at Chester and proceeded to Boston. His feelings on the occasion are thus described in his journal:—"October 13th 1796. This day set out by the country to Halifax, expecting thence to go to the States of America, if the Lord will. But O how hard to part with a people so near my heart! Here have I seen the state-ly goings of the great God. With this people have I been despised, and with this people have I rejoiced; and were it not that I verily believed God called me away, I could not go against the importunity and tears of so many that I dearly love; but Jesus calls, and I must go against the calls of nature.

"Lodged in the woods this night, with a young man who is to return to Chester. But O how often doth the starting tear witness to the dear affection I bear to the saints of God in Chester. But oh! the prospect of seeing the God of salvation revealing his glory among the sons of men! The language of my heart is, 'Here am I, Lord, send me.' I may observe that he travelled by way of Windsor, there was no direct road from Chester to Halifax at that time.

He intended to return the following Spring, but the successful results of his labours interposed a difficulty which he could not overcome. Believing himself divinely detained, he continued in the United States two years. He returned to Chester Nov. 26th, 1798.

A brief account of this excursion to the states will not be unacceptable to you.

Mr. Dimock landed at Boston Nov. 21. He mentions having called on Dr. Stillman. His first Lord's day in the United States was spent at Rehoboth, Mass., near the borders of Rhode Island, at which place he afterwards laboured for a lengthened period. Proceeding thence westward he embraced every opportunity to preach, in which he found little difficulty, as the number of ministers was small in proportion to the population. At Cheshire, he visited John Leland, a minister celebrated for originality and eloquence. "I heard the elder preach one night," he observes. "I listened with astonishment, till he preached all my preaching away, and then preached so much of Jesus that I wanted to preach the same Christ before he had done. I must say this, I never saw such a man, I think, before—possessing a great mind, with great improvements—with bright grace, sweet accent, and easy elocution." Passing through Vermont, he reached Fort Edward about the middle of January, 1797. There and in its neighbourhood he ministered for six months, during which time he made excursions to Hartford, Saratoga, Mapleton and other places. In the beginning of 1798 he went into Connecticut, and preached in that State and in Vermont during the first quarter of the year. In April he went to Providence, Rhode Island, where, and at Newport, he preached repeatedly. Rehoboth became then the centre of his labours for several months, God blessed him there, and many souls were converted.

"Truly God hath been here by his sovereign power in an evident manner, and notwithstanding the inveteracy of men and devils has wrought wonderously for his own name's sake. More than twenty persons have been powerfully awakened, and there is almost a universal attention among the hundreds that attend our meeting in this place. Some show public contempt, by coming into meeting, sitting down, and then, after a little

while, rising up and going out. Others are sorely grieved that such an impression has been made on the minds of the people. Some husbands debar their wives as much as possible from going to meeting, and bitterly oppose them when they go. Some young people are threatened, and one young woman and a little orphan child were locked out of doors for going to meeting.

"But notwithstanding, the work goes on and increases. It began first among young women. One was baptized that was converted some time before. One or two were awakened at almost every meeting, and it seemed to me as though all the opposition only helped on the work. People were loth to leave our place of public worship. I mostly conversed freely after the meeting with those that were under conviction, and others that gave me opportunity, and I have found freedom in thus conversing. When I take persons by the hand and speak to them they know that I mean them, while preaching in public may be turned on others; and I have thought that God blessed this particular addressing of individuals more than all the preaching. Sometimes, after dismissing the meeting, so that those that wished might go home, a great part of congregation have stayed for one, two, or three hours."

In the course of the summer Mr. Dimock revisited many of the places where he had preached the year before. On the 21st of August he was married, and immediately afterwards commenced his journey towards Nova Scotia. He embarked at Salem on the 27th of October, and on that day week landed at Liverpool, the length of the voyage having been occasioned by an error in the Captain's reckoning. They had got as far as Halifax before the mistake was discovered.

After spending some time with christian friends at Liverpool, and endeavouring to rouse them from the state of dulness and apathy into which they had fallen, Mr. Dimock proceeded to Chester, where he and his wife received a hearty welcome.

Numerous entries in his journal indicate the rising and falling of his hopes of success during this tour, in proportion to the freedom, or the want of it, experienced in preaching. If he felt a lively frame of mind, or an unusually solemn impression, he expected favourable results, and thought that God was about to appear for the place. If, on the contrary, he was dull, and found it difficult to rouse himself or the people, he indulged in gloomy anticipations. This was characteristic of all the New Light preachers. Their views of duty were often influenced by feeling, and sometimes unduly so; for unquestionably our obligations remain the same, whatever may be the state of our feeling. But the manifestation of the will of God does not always run parallel with those feelings. Paul and his companions "assayed to go into Bithynia," doubtless under the impression that they were called to preach there; but "the Spirit suffered them not." On another occasion Paul himself was commanded to take a course directly opposed to his feelings and wishes. He was deeply impressed with a sense of duty to remain at Jerusalem, that he might preach where he had persecuted; yet he was not allowed to follow the impulse. "Depart"—the Lord said—"for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts xvi. 6, 7: xxi. 17-21.

While Mr. Dimock was fully convinced that he was called to a mission in the United States, he cherished no desire to enter into the labours of his brethren, or to disturb existing connections. He preferred to preach to destitute churches, and in districts where there was no stated ministry. As he wrote in his journal, he "wanted to get out of the way of other preachers."

His candour shewed itself remarkably on one occasion. Accustomed to extempore preaching, and expecting the assistance of the Holy Spirit whenever he stood up to deliver his message, it was not surprising that he felt strong objections to the preparation of written sermons and the reading of them in the pulpit. But when he was at Mansfield, Vermont, where he heard the minister of the place, who read his discourse, according to the usual custom, he was so interested in the service that his prejudices gave way. I copy from his Journal:—

"Here I lost my prejudice against the

reading of sermons, in some measure, although I think that it is not the apostolic method, nor warranted by any of the commissions given by Christ to his ministers. Yet God is not confined to any mode of worship. * * * Reading did not that day hinder the most serious impression attending the word. I saw a number weep freely in meeting-time, and after meeting some were so deeply wounded that they could not converse. I preached in the same meeting-house in the evening to a very solemn assembly. Although I felt somewhat embarrassed at first, thinking how strange my preaching must seem to them, who were accustomed to reading, and that without such a noise as mine, I got pretty clear of those shackles, and could tell them that God had sent me there, and that he himself was there, although too few of them knew him; and I do really believe that God hath a glorious work to do in this place. I see that God can work and none can let it. Reading sermons he can bless as well as extempore preaching."

He was called to encounter some opposition, probably arising from the earnestness with which he pleaded for the necessity of regeneration in order to scriptural church-membership. It broke out rather violently at Rehoboth, where a number of the people were disinclined to hear him, though the majority were in favor of granting him the use of the pulpit. But his gentleness overcame objectors, and they parted in friendship at last.

Upon the whole, he had much reason to be thankful. He was generally received with pleasure, especially on a second visit. The good that was effected by his instrumentality abundantly encouraged and comforted him.

I will close this letter with a few extracts from his Journal, which you will read, I am sure, with pleasure and profit.

Jan. 16th 1797. "Set off for Fort Edward. I regaled myself a considerable time with meditating on the dealings of God with me since I came into the States. It is pleasant to remember some opportunities with God's people in this place. From thence my mind turned to my native land, and the many glorious interviews I have had with the saints of God there. O how near I feel them to my heart! I find the same God here as there—the same religion; but still I find none that seem to have the life of God so pure in their souls as in Nova Scotia. Much of the life and power of religion here seems to withdraw, and forms are substituted in the room thereof.

Feb.—"Set out to go to Clarendon, in Vermont * * * As I went, and had just crossed the top of a mountain, and began to descend the other side, and had obtained a fair prospect of the place, I burst into a flood of tears before I was aware of it. It seemed as though God was so near to my soul—yea, all around me—that I could see him in every thing I beheld—and I longed to preach him to that people. My enthusiasm rose to that degree that I could scarcely keep from preaching as I went along the road to all I saw."

Referring to the baptism of a man and his wife, he says—"After the man had declared how his soul relinquished the world and all its vanities, and exhorted saints and sinners to watch over him, and was baptized, the woman turned to the people, saying—'Well, sinners, I must bid you farewell, if you will not go with me; I am willing to leave you all, to follow after Jesus Christ.' Then, turning from them she went down into the water, and I believe her soul was sweetly overwhelmed with sacred influence from on high."

March 9th, 1798. "When I got a little on the road, after parting with Captain Dimock, I began to look at the work of God in Fort Edward. I saw the wisdom of God very conspicuous in his manner of working. The first of my preaching there was applied to the reasoning faculties of the soul, and made them say, 'How reasonable is religion! Next, the general necessity was enforced—and, to a number, the present necessity—as though the last trumpet was just sounding an eternal alarm to their souls. Some souls were converted to God. Prejudices fell. Partyisms were much forgotten or abhorred. Some of those whom it pleased God to convert came out and owned it; but most of