

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.  
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WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXV....No. 11.

## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Sabbath evening Prayer Meeting.

No place—no season can unfitting be,  
To raise our hearts to Him who reigns above,  
A never-slumbering, changeless God is He:  
His ear is ever open.—God is Love.

And He has promised He will ever bend  
To hear His weakest children's feeblest cry:  
Thus, whereso'er we seek our Heavenly Friend,  
We know His gracious presence will be nigh.

But oh; if one sweet time, most sweet can be,  
To meet with those who love the Lord—and these  
Lift up the heart and bend the willing knee,—  
To join in songs of praise and earnest prayer,—

It is the Sabbath eve—that holy hour  
When the heart swells with gratitude and love  
Feels true religion's sanctifying power,  
And e'en foretastes, by faith, the joys above.

When the sweet sacred duties of the day  
Have left the mind in holy calm and peace,  
And the rapt soul would gladly wing away,  
To that bright world, where sin and sorrow cease,—

Oh! it is purest pleasure thus to meet,  
And heart and voice in supplication raise,  
To bow adoring at Immanuel's feet,  
Tell of His wondrous Love, and sing His praise.

Lower Steviacke, February, 1861. J. B.

## Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD IV.

From A. D. 1869 to A. D. 1821.

LETTER XXIX.

JAMES MANNING'S LABOURS IN NEW BRUNSWICK.—EXTRACT FROM HIS JOURNAL. HIS DEATH AND CHARACTER.—STRICTURES ON CERTAIN PRESBYTERIAN MISREPRESENTATIONS.

#### My Young Friend,

James Manning's history down to his ordination, in the year 1799, was given you in my thirteenth letter. He was pastor of the church in Lower Granville from that time till his death, not confining his labours, however, to that church, but visiting other districts, sometimes for weeks or even months, as their spiritual necessities seemed to require. Those excursions were greatly blessed. A journal of one of his tours in New Brunswick, in the year 1801, is now before me. He preached frequently in the city of St. John, and then went up as far as Woodstock, stopping at suitable places on both sides of the river, and labouring among the people with unremitting diligence and ardour. No time was lost, no opportunity neglected. In the day-time he went from house to house, conversing with the inmates on the truths of religion and the state of their souls, and in the evenings the people assembled for public worship, which sometimes continued till a late hour, and was succeeded by christian conference and prayer in the houses where he lodged. The affection, earnestness, and solemnity which marked all his engagements produced powerful impressions on the minds of his hearers. Numerous conversions took place, and many were gathered into church fellowship. One extract from the journal will suffice as a specimen.

"Sept. 10th 1801. At night got to my friend Dow's, where gladness appeared in every countenance. There was a meeting given out for next day about three o'clock. I went in the fore part of the day. I went among the people and found some engagement in their minds, but a good deal of prejudice in many. How it did make me feel for the cause of God! How to proceed I did not know. I thought within myself that God could work in his good time. The people flocked to meeting, and the Lord stood by me, and gave me liberty to preach his own gospel. The people seemed very much affected. After meeting I went home with Mr. H.—who was in a backslidden state. We sat up very late. We prayed and went to bed. Next morning I felt great freedom to pray for the family. After that I felt distressed in my mind. Called at several houses as I went to the place

where I was to have meeting, and the Lord stood by me. I felt a spirit to pray and preach to the people as perishing [sinners]. The young people were alive, like a beehive just ready to swarm. I staid after meeting at the house, and while they were getting tea a young man came in and told me that Mr. Gates was to set out next morning for Nova Scotia. I sat down and wrote to Mr. Manning, and after supper I wrote these minutes."

In the letter to Mrs. Manning, referred to above, he says—"I have a great deal to write, but I must cut short, and only tell you that I feel the divine presence. I have meeting almost every day. Squire Easty has ridden with me as my companion seventy-five miles up the river, and found me a horse, bridle and saddle, and stays with me till I return. Last Sabbath I baptized eight persons, and administered the Lord's supper to nigh a hundred communicants, and oh I can assure you it had a semblance of heaven. And I expect to have a conference meeting to-morrow in this place, and the sacrament on Sabbath for the first time. You must give my love to all friends, and tell them I often think of them, for they are a people that lie near my heart, more so than any other people under heaven. I don't know how well I love them till I am away. But important [duty] calls me in these parts, for they are without help, like sheep without a shepherd."

The journal proceeds—"Staid all night. Next morning went to breakfast to brother Moses. Paid two or three visits before dinner, and in the afternoon had a church-meeting. The meeting was opened by singing and prayer according to their order. They chose me as moderator. The church opened their minds very freely to my satisfaction. There were some small differences, but they forgave and made up. Thirteen came forward and told their experiences to the church; and I think some of them told as clear experience as any I ever heard. My heart was like a cup flowing over. Oh that I might always feel as I [then] did! \* \* I went home with a young married couple who loved the Lord, who had not been baptized. We spent a very good evening. I felt a heart to pray that God would give them strength to come forward and join the church, and got my answer, that they would obey the Lord. Went to meeting, where a large company came to hear, and see the ordinance administered. I preached in the forenoon, and after meeting repaired to the water, where the Lord appeared by his Holy Spirit. I baptized thirteen, not only in the name but in the spirit. Sang up from the water—then gave the Supper, after I had prayed with the candidates and given them the right hand of fellowship and a charge as to their duty. Oh, blessed be the name of God, it was a glorious day! I took my leave of the people. Oh what an affecting sight it was, to see the dear lambs of God all in tears, bidding me farewell! Many a tear was shed that evening. I went to see three families. Returned to my lodgings, where a number had collected, as I was going away next morning. We sung several hymns, and a young convert went to prayer. Oh how it affected my heart to hear the young lad confess his faults to Almighty God, and promise to be for the Lord and none else. Next morning we rose with the sun, and several of the neighbours came in to hear prayers. They sang the farewell hymn, and it seemed as though the angels came down to men. I prayed for the blessing of God to rest with them."

James Manning was a regular attendant at the meetings of the Association. I find his name in the list every year from 1810 till his death, 1817 excepted. But he was of so modest and retiring a disposition that he seldom took part in the public exercises. The only duty discharged by him, recorded in the minutes, was the preparation of the Corresponding Letter in 1812. It was not that he was destitute of the needful qualifications, or that his brethren slighted him; but his nervous system, was very excitable, and he was constitutionally of a melancholy temperament, so that he shrank from publicity, and was always ready to give way to others.

In December, 1816 he crossed the Bay and spent the winter partly in New Brunswick and partly at Eastport, Maine. It was a severe winter, and travelling was laborious. A cold caught in crossing the Bay laid the foundation of the disorder which ultimately brought him to the grave. After much suffering from pain and weakness, aggravated by the want of the comfortable accommodations of home, he returned in the spring, in a very shattered state, and then sunk into despondency. All his prospects, temporal and spiritual, seemed gloomy, and despairing thoughts took possession of him. One day he was missed. He had gone into the fields for

a walk, and did not return. Search was made for him, but in vain. The second and third days were spent by anxious friends in exploring the neighbouring country in every direction, but without success. The most distressing fears began to be entertained, when on the morning of the fourth day he made his appearance at a house on the mountain, about five miles from his own residence, in a very exhausted condition. How the intervening time had been spent he knew not, having been suddenly attacked by severe pain in his head, which was followed by unconsciousness. He gradually recovered his mental power, but bodily disease increased in strength, and it soon became evident that his work was done.

In the fall of that year he visited Cornwallis. Brother William Chipman says:—"He was uncommonly solemn, and deeply impressed with eternal things. I shall never forget his looks at that time, nor one remark, especially, which he made to me. "Dear Brother Chipman, I have learned one lesson, especially, in the furnace through which I have been called to pass, and that is, to exercise more charity towards other denominations of Christians. I have no doubt that these were the feelings of his heart; but I never knew him to be censorious in his public exhibitions." He was evidently growing in humility as he drew nearer to heaven. Every body is humble there.

He lingered through the winter and the following spring. At length "the weary wheels of life stood still." On the 27th of May, 1818, he departed from earth, peacefully resting on the Saviour. "This is painful," his brother Edward wrote, when he heard of it, "but at the same time glorious, as he died in sure and certain hope of a glorious immortality. \* \* Now he is done with sin—done with sorrow—and rests with his God. Bless the Lord, Oh my soul. Oh Lord, give me grace to improve this bereavement! and may it be sanctified to all his friends, especially the dear widow and fatherless children. Amen, and Amen."

"In the arrangement and composition of a sermon," says the writer of a Memoir of James Manning, inserted in the *Baptist Missionary Magazine of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick* for 1835, "Mr. M. was less methodical than any of his brethren; but in public exhortations, with fervent and pathetic appeals to the consciences of his hearers, he was surpassed by none. While his views of doctrine were strictly evangelical, in preaching he usually confined himself to practical and experimental subjects. His greatest excellence in his public ministry was in the fervency—the simplicity—and the copiousness of his prayers. One of his surviving fellow-labourers has made the following remarks on his public prayers:—"He took such a copious view of the glories of the Deity, that he seemed to sink himself into nothing before the Eternal All;—then he would appear to be swallowed up in the boundless treasures of grace; then would he bring before the throne the cause of all saints and sinners in their varied circumstances. His chief excellency in prayer consisted in that holy intimacy and fervour he evinced before the Almighty, as though he were speaking face to face. The effect of his prayers on the congregation was so great that sometimes many were melted into tears. To the faithfulness of his prayers, and to the fervency of his preaching, must be ascribed his eminent usefulness as a minister of Jesus Christ."

The writer further states that "in his church Mr. M. was highly respected; he was remarkably successful as a preacher [or pastor?] in reconciling difficulties which occasionally arose amongst brethren. At the close of his life, however, he regretted that he had not been more strict in enforcing gospel discipline. It was a necessary and unavoidable consequence, that while our aged preachers were frequently employed in missionary labours, their churches and congregations at home should be proportionally neglected." This will serve to explain the statistics of the church in Lower Granville. There were sixty members in 1810, but only forty in 1818. There had been no additions for four years. We cannot but admire the self-denying zeal of the fathers of our denomination; yet it must be confessed that they often spent so much more time in planting than in watering that great detriment ensued to the home-districts. Large fields were hastily ploughed and sown, and with good results, while the gardens ran to waste. No doubt the Lord's direction was much thought of and constantly obeyed: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the

harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

The account of James Manning may be fitly closed in the words of one of his brethren:—"He was a sincere christian, a faithful minister, an affectionate friend, a wise counsellor, and a peacemaker in the church of God."

In concluding the fourth period of our history I may remind you that our fathers scrupulously guarded against the assumption of ecclesiastical authority by the Association. The churches met by their representatives, not to enact laws, appoint ministers, receive and adjudicate on appeals, but to enjoy christian fellowship, and devise measures for the more general spread of the gospel. If any difficulties occurred, and it was deemed desirable to seek the opinion and advice of the assembled brethren, it was *opinion and advice*, and nothing more; and the parties might receive or reject the same, at their pleasure. It was a fundamental principle of the Association that "it pretends to no other powers than those of an advisory council, utterly disclaiming all superiority, jurisdiction, coercive right or infallibility."

I call your attention to this because our Presbyterian friends are wont to represent our Associations as analogous to their Synods or General Assemblies. The writer of an article on "the genius of Presbyterianism," in the January number of the "Home and Foreign Record of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia," says—"We cannot behold without profound satisfaction the gradual approximation to our own system that is observable in prelatic churches on the one hand and in Independent churches on the other. 'Diocesan Assemblies,' 'Conventions,' 'Associations,' 'District Meetings,' are but euphemisms for Presbyterian Church Courts. It is surprising that so gross a misapprehension should prevail. Our Associations, I repeat, give an opinion or offer advice. That is all. But the presbytery, the synod, and the general assembly claim to be obeyed. Their decisions are decrees, and submission is enforced on ministers and on congregations. The liberty of the people is clean taken away. Presbyterianism does not acknowledge it."

The misapprehension above referred to, and which has led to an incorrect representation of our Association policy, is connected with some astounding declarations. The writer of the article has discovered that the church-meeting at Jerusalem, of which an account is given in Acts 15; was a synod; and he finds in the New Testament (though he fails to give chapter and verse) "the Session, the Presbytery, the Synod or General Council." He tells us that during the middle ages "the Presbyterian polity was maintained in all its pristine purity" in the Alpine district; and that at the Reformation Presbyterianism extended far and wide, and wherever it went it proclaimed faithfully the glad tidings of salvation and sowed the seed of civil and religious liberty." Bible readers and students of ecclesiastical history well know how to deal with these assertions.

But here is the climax:—"More than two hundred years ago the Presbyterians of England promulgated that noble sentence—'GOD ALONE IS LORD OF THE CONSCIENCE.' Is this ignorance? or is it "fraud and forgery"? If the former, the gentleman should be sent to his books again. How near it approaches the latter, a glance at history will decide. The fact is, that instead of these "Presbyterians of England" being friends of liberty of conscience, or even willing that the said liberty should live at all, they obstinately refused to concede it. Liberty, with them, was liberty for Presbyterians to domineer and play the despot. The London ministers published a Treatise in 1647, entitled, "A Testimony to the truth of Jesus Christ, and to our solemn League and Covenant; as also, against the errors, heresies, and blasphemies of these times, and the toleration of them; to which is added, a catalogue of the said errors." In this treatise they declare their "detestation and abhorrence" of sundry "heresies and errors," the last-mentioned of which was "the error of Toleration, patronising and supporting all other errors, heresies, and blasphemies whatsoever under the grossly abused notion of liberty of