

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.  
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## Poetry.

### The Cross.

Blest they who seek,  
While in their youth,  
With spirits meek,  
The way of Truth.  
To them the sacred volume doth display  
Christ as the only true and living way;  
His precious blood on Calvary given,  
To make them heirs of endless bliss in heaven.  
And e'en on earth the child of God can trace  
The glorious blessings of His sovereign grace.  
For them he bore  
His Father's frown,  
For them he wore  
The thorny crown,  
Nailed to the cross,  
Endured its pain,  
That His life's loss  
Might be their gain.  
Then haste to choose  
The BETTER part,  
Nor DARE refuse  
The Lord your heart,  
Lest He declare:  
"I know you not."  
Then deep despair  
Will be your lot!

### REFLECTION.

The past—where is it? It has fled.  
The future? It may never come.  
Our friends departed? With the dead;  
Ourselves? Fast hastening to the tomb.  
What are earth's joys? The dews of morn.  
Its honors? Ocean's writhing foam.  
Where's peace? In trials meekly borne.  
And joy? In heaven the Christian's home.

## Biographical.

For the Christian Messenger.

### Memoir of the Rev. Samuel N. Bentley, A. M.

BY THE REV. HENRY ANGELL.

(Concluded.)

Brother Bentley's ministry in Liverpool was a very successful one. His earnestness and vigor in the pulpit had drawn around him a numerous congregation. The church had greatly increased in numbers and influence. Over 180 persons had joined its fellowship. He had done much to increase the intelligence of the community by the circulation of Good books, and the prosperity of the Temperance cause, was largely connected with his untiring efforts for its advancement. He was not only beloved by his own people, but was highly esteemed by all classes in the community. Besides this, a large number of young persons had been gathered into the church during the recent revival, and were in much need of judicious pastoral training. Just at this juncture, when it was most needful for him to remain, he resigned the pastorate. We are well persuaded that our dear Brother acted conscientiously, yet we have always viewed the step with the deepest regret. It is true, declension had followed the recent revival, yet the church needed his help to sustain wholesome discipline, and to preserve its union and stability. As it was, however, they were left for some time destitute, and the cause greatly suffered.

We have reason to know that our brother afterwards looked back upon his resignation as premature, and we think that all who sustain the pastoral office may learn this lesson from the incident, that the pastor of a church should only leave one field for another, when there is an adequate cause.

Brother Bentley retained his ardent attachment to the church at Liverpool until death, and his visit to them a year or two since was a season of deep satisfaction to both.

The testimony of a brother in Liverpool in a letter addressed to the writer, we believe expresses the views of all the church. "Mr. Bentley was much beloved by us, and it was with extreme regret we were obliged to part with him. His preaching, and other ministrations were always acceptable, and from his earnest sincere piety, calculated to do good, though his humility was such, that he was always fearing that he was in the way of a better man."

The North Baptist Church in Halifax had been for some time destitute of a pastor. Brother Bentley had occasionally preached for them with much acceptance, and as soon as his intention of leaving Liverpool became known to them they invited him to labor among them. He accepted their invitation,

and commenced his labors on Sabbath, August 10th, 1856. At first he regarded his stay with them as only an experiment. In a note to the writer dated August 26th he says, "I regard myself as only a missionary here, to-morrow is all unknown to me. The people receive me kindly, and I find plenty of work. I trust I may be divinely directed." The congregation began to increase and several young persons united with the church. Brother Bentley became much encouraged, and went to work with renewed energy to revive the drooping cause. In the spring of 1857 the church was visited with a precious revival. Brother Bentley thus graphically describes it in the *Christian Messenger* April 15th 1857. "My connexion with this church commenced some eight months ago. Though during this period, discouragements have pressed around us, the people have been visited with unexpected mercies. I feel that I have reason to thank God and take courage." Long lingering doubts hung over my departure from a dearly beloved people for the sake of laboring here. It may have been that the painful parting was meant for good.

Under the favoring smile of heaven it has been my privilege to witness an increase of prayerfulness and union in the church. . . . The hearty and able co-operation of the brethren to a degree almost unanticipated, has given me much cause for gratitude.

For a number of weeks past we have met more frequently than usual for prayer, preaching, and exhortation. Brotherly love has been evinced, wanderers have returned to the fold, sinners have found pardon and grace through the precious blood of Christ. For five successive Lord's days we have been at the baptismal waters, with first nine, then fourteen, six, four, and three, who professing faith in Jesus, were baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. May they all walk in newness of life, and keep their plighted faith and vows to the Redeemer till their dying day!

On the 28th of April 1857, our brother was united in marriage to Miss Emily, eldest daughter of the late Henry Dugwell Esq. The union was a happy one, but destined, alas! to be short. Our sister Mrs. Bentley, has been called to drink deeply of the cup of sorrow, in the removal to another world, not only of her beloved husband, but recently of a kind and estimable father. May God sustain the bereaved family. Two little boys have been left by our brother Bentley, who with their widowed mother have a large claim on the sympathies and prayers of the denomination.

The Nova Scotia Baptist Home Missionary Society was formed at the Central Association, held in Hantsport, in June, 1857. Its object was to carry on the Home Mission enterprise with greater efficiency, especially in the Eastern section of the Province. Brother Bentley was appointed Secretary, and threw himself into the work with wholehearted zeal. By repeated and fervid appeals to the churches through the pages of the *Christian Messenger*, he sought to awaken the sympathies of the people, and secure from them an increase of pecuniary aid. Chiefly through his indefatigable exertions, missionaries were stationed at several important points. In the deeply interesting report of the work performed by the Society, drawn up by himself, and presented during the sessions of the Central and Eastern Associations in 1859, it was stated that the sum of £701 3s. 11d. had been raised for missionary purposes during the year, that 22 missionaries had been employed, 219 persons had been baptized, and a very large amount of labor had been put forth to extend the cause of truth in the land. Brother Bentley had thoughts of devoting his whole time to the Society as its agent, but just when our hopes were raised, and the attention of the churches turned to him as especially adapted to carry on the work with great efficiency and success, the Master called him to his rest. Brother Bentley's health had for years been infirm, and at times it did appear as though the frail tabernacle would break down beneath the weight of his incessant toils in the cause of the Redeemer. He appeared determined to cease to labor only when he ceased to live. In the latter part of the year 1857 he was attacked with a violent fit of sickness, which greatly weakened him. In a letter to the

writer, dated Dec. 14th, he thus speaks of his illness.—"I have just narrowly escaped a heavy fever. Influenza set in, and I became very weak. I was not able to preach for four weeks. I have just spent three weeks with my friends at Stewiacke, to recruit my health, and exchange pulpits with Bro. T. H. Porter. A week ago I returned and tried my own pulpit again. I am still weak, but I hope gradually to regain my health in a measure. When I could not preach, I learned how great the privilege was, which I had too much undervalued before. The Savior still keep us, and dispose of us to his glory."

His health continued to fail. He was at times unable to preach, and was seldom sufficiently well to perform all his pastoral duties. The cause appeared to languish, and feeling that the church needed more pastoral labor than he was able to give, and that perhaps an itinerancy on behalf of the Home Mission cause might invigorate his health, he tendered his resignation of the pastorate on Sabbath, June 19th, 1859. Shortly after this he went on a journey eastward and visited Guysboro, Canso, and other places. At Guysboro he took part in the revival which was then progressing in the church, and for the last time, I believe, administered the ordinance of believers' baptism. After a fortnight's tour, he returned home. In September he set out again on his agency. He preached at Plaster Cove, Cape Breton, Oct. 9th, from John xiv. 27. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." It was his last sermon, and the subject was in keeping with his own calm and trustful repose upon the divine promises and grace. A severe cold brought on violent illness, and fears were entertained that he would die away from home. Amid the most severe suffering, his mind was stayed on his God. He rallied sufficiently to return to his family. His strength now gradually wasted away, and the frail tabernacle yielded to the rapid progress of disease. Yet his hope remained firm and unshaken by the storm.

For many years he had entertained the settled conviction that his race would be short, but he always alluded to the thought in the accents of one to whom death would be "gain." And now that the hour of his departure was come, he welcomed the stern messenger as a friend sent to call him to his heavenly rest. Not a cloud dimmed the closing scene, as he calmly yielded his ransomed spirit into the hands of his Saviour.

His deeply afflicted widow thus touchingly portrays the last moments of our brother.

"Perhaps you would like to hear something of your friend's triumphant victorious death. Had you seen the calm holy joy that beamed from his eye, and the heavenly rapture that shone in his countenance, as he waited for the welcome messenger, you would have said it was not death, it was but the passing of a saint to glory—a Christian to his home.

He was only with us a fortnight after his return from Sydney. At times he seemed to think he might recover, but, he would say "the will of the Lord be done, it will all be right." No doubt ever appeared to mar his peace of mind for an instant. His last night on earth was almost free from suffering. He was perfectly sensible. I sat by his bed-side, and wiped the dampness from his brow. He often told me "to cast my burden on the Lord." At one time he said "I shall soon be amid a host of the glorified." About 2 o'clock I read to him the 23rd Psalm, and a chapter in Isaiah. I then kneeled, and with one hand on my head, he prayed for me, and his children. Oh how his words sunk in my heart as he said, "it was the last prayer together on earth, the next would be praise." At five o'clock he asked me to bring our little boy. He kissed him, committed him to my care. At six o'clock he gently fell asleep in Jesus." He expired on Saturday morning Nov. 26th 1859 aged 36 years. On the Sabbath following his interment an appropriate funeral sermon was preached in the North Baptist chapel, by Rev. Richard McLearn, who has since been called to join him "before the throne of God and the Lamb."

God be praised for a life so devoted, and a death so triumphant. Dearly beloved, departed friend, very pleasant hast thou been to us! We cherish thy memory with gratitude

and love, and would emulate thy devotion to thy Master's cause.

"Hopefully wait we God's holy time,  
That shall call us to share thy rest;  
Till then we must dwell in an alien clime,  
While thou art in Abraham's breast."

In closing this imperfect sketch of our departed friend we would glance at his excellencies as a Christian, a friend, and a minister of Jesus Christ.

His piety was more of the pensive, than of the cheerful cast. While at times he "rejoiced in hope," yet he oftener appeared to lie low at the footstool of sovereign mercy. "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible." His was every day religion. He did not rise very high or fall very low, but seemed every day to walk with God and rest on the atonement of Christ. In the discharge of Christian duty he was extremely conscientious. Only convince him as to what he ought to do, and no matter what difficulty stood in the way, or how great the sacrifice necessary, duty must be performed. While he esteemed all of every name who loved the Saviour, yet he was very firmly attached to our distinctive denominational principles. He was never ashamed of them, and when they were assailed, manfully and ably defended them. To every good work he gave his aid, but the cause of the Redeemer especially lay near his heart. His consecration to his Master's service was not a mere form, it was a power that ruled him in life, impelled him to work hard for God and souls, and was unquenched by decaying bodily vigor, and the approach of death.

He had "a passion for souls." He, more than any person I ever knew, seemed absorbed in the work of "saving souls from death." During his pastorate at Liverpool he kept a record of the families in his congregation, and of each member of the several families. He appeared to have a tolerably correct idea of their spiritual state. He once shewed the record to me. "That one" said he, pointing to a name, "is I think a Christian, this one is hopeful, and that one I fear is a stranger to grace." He would often write letters to absent members of the congregation concerning their eternal welfare. He once sought an interview with a young man who was about going to sea, and failed. He wrote a fervent and importunate letter urging the young man to seek the Saviour and entrusted it to his mother with the request that she would place it in his trunk, that when far away on the ocean, he might peruse it.

Nor did he labor in vain. There will be many stars in his crown in the great day. One evening he preached in a Wesleyan chapel in Shelburne Co. His text was, "great peace have they that love thy law." His appeals were very solemn. A young man was present who was a great opposer to religion, and a bitter enemy to the Baptists. The bow "drawn at a venture," smote the conscience of the young man, and he left the house of prayer under deep conviction. Going to his home, he leaned upon a gate and wept, saying to a companion "I never felt before as I feel to night. I am a great sinner." He afterwards found "peace in believing" and is now an active member of one of our churches.

I called to see Brother Bentley, on one occasion, and he met me with a joyful welcome. A young lady had just called to tell him she had found the Saviour, and that a sermon preached by him had been blessed as the means of her conversion. He asked me to kneel with him and return thanks to God. "Will you not promise me you will return to the Lord and his people?" he said once to a backslider. The appeal was uttered with so much tenderness and solemnity, that she found no rest until she sought the Lord and returned to the church. But eternity alone will reveal the whole result of his faithful efforts to bring souls to the Saviour.

In the pulpit our brother was an able preacher. His sermons were carefully prepared, and were often original, full of fine thoughts beautifully expressed. When his natural diffidence did not restrain and embarrass him, he would delight his auditory with manly thoughts, and touching appeals. If it was seldom that his hearers were carried away by the tide of eloquence, they were often awed to silent solemn attention. Sometimes a quiet sarcasm would provoke a smile, and