

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.

Christian Usefulness.

The low-tuft grass is not a stately tree,
Nor yet a lovely and all-fragrant rose;
It yields no nectar to the grateful bee,
Nor fashions, for their transit o'er the sea,
The hearts of oak revered by friends and foes.
But think of it as lightly as you will,
Passing it over in your careless tread,
It has its own peculiar place to fill;
And, humble as its work appeareth, still
Nor oak nor rose could do that work instead.

So, youthful Christian, through life's transient day
There is a special work marked out for you;
It may be of the lowliest kind; it may
Be such as shall the loftiest powers display,
But none beside yourself your work can do.

Then bend in meekness at your Saviour's throne,
And seek to learn the purpose of his grace;
Ask him who has so oft your duty shown,
To point you out the work that is your own,
And tell you where to find your proper place.

"What wilt thou have me do?" With single eye
To your Redeemer's glory, work for him;
Illumed every moment from on high,
Strive in each action God to glorify,
Nor let one thought of self life's radiance dim.

Work, work, nor covet an ignoble rest;
Allow no sloth thy spirit to beguile;
Those love the Saviour most who serve him best;
And he who blesses others, shall be blessed
With the full sunshine of his Saviour's smile.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VI.

From A. D. 1828 to A. D. 1838.

LETTER XLII.

R. McLEARN'S MISSION EASTWARD.—ASSOCIATION IN 1833, 1834.—REVIVAL AT CANARD—AT CHESTER.—LETTER FROM J. DIMOCK.—REVIVAL AT LIVERPOOL.

My Young Friend,

Our late brother McLearn travelled extensively in the Eastern part of the province, in 1832, and was much encouraged in the work. An extract from his narrative will be read with pleasure.

"I returned to Manchester on Thursday [June 7], and visited the people until Saturday, on which day we held a conference meeting at the house of Mr. Simpson, who is a valuable friend to the church of God. The congregation was large and solemn. The conference began before three o'clock, and continued until dark, and for the want of more time many were prevented from speaking. It was truly interesting to hear young converts rise in succession, and declare what God had done for their souls. Some rejoiced aloud in the God of their salvation; some were constrained to cry to God for mercy; and the silent penitential tear fell from the eyes of many precious youths. Nine persons were approved by the church as worthy candidates for baptism. On the Lord's day the congregation was the greatest which had ever assembled in that place. I preached on baptism, and immersed the candidates in the presence of that numerous assembly. It was a day which I believe will be held in everlasting remembrance.

"On Wednesday following I crossed over to the Cove, and laboured amongst the people until Saturday, when I took my departure for Canso. A Christian brother volunteered to take me down the bay in a sail-boat. We had an unfavourable time; the wind was ahead, and it rained hard the most of the day. To add to the uncomfortableness of my situation, I was seasick. Through the merciful providence of God we reached Canso at dark, and I found the next day that I had received no great injury from my thirty miles voyage.

"During the past winter there has been a blessed revival of religion at Canso. Old professors have been greatly comforted—backsliders reclaimed—and a considerable number have been converted to God. Mr. Whitman (for

many years an inhabitant of Canso) has, in the hand of God, been an instrument of incalculable good, in that place. In times of prosperity and adversity he has persevered in holding public worship every Lord's day, in the absence of a minister. These meetings have kept people from wandering abroad in violation of the sacred sabbath; and I cannot doubt that his labours have been profitable in the conversion of sinners. He built a meeting-house on his land, principally at his own expense, which, though intended for Congregationalists, is free for ministers of Christ, of every denomination. I spent nearly a week in visiting and preaching, without enjoying any great degree of comfort; nor did I see much of the power of God on the assemblies. On Friday the 22nd, my mind became more happy, especially in conversing with the young converts. On Saturday evening we held a conference meeting, which was a solemn and joyful season. Young converts rose in succession, and related their experience, until ten or twelve had spoken. All who spoke were exceedingly happy, yet there was no undue excitement. The meeting commenced at eight in the evening, and continued until one o'clock in the morning, and one-half of the professors present had not an opportunity to speak. Seven persons desired to be baptized, and as there was no Baptist church with which I could counsel, I admitted them on my own judgment, having previously made inquiry respecting their religious character.

"On the morning of the Lord's day I visited the sabbath school, which is in a very prosperous state, containing upwards of thirty scholars; it is well conducted by Miss Whitman and other pious persons. Public worship commenced at eleven o'clock. I preached a funeral sermon on the occasion of the loss of Mr. Isaac Whitman last sailed from Newfoundland for Canso, and has not been heard of since. He was a man of true piety, and has left a widow and three children to mourn their loss. I preached again in the afternoon, and baptized the candidates. One of the persons baptized was an aged infirm woman, who required two persons to assist her to walk down to the water and return; another, a young man who had lost a leg, and went down into the water with the assistance of a crutch. I thought the scripture was fulfilled which saith, 'The lame man shall leap as an hart.'

"Another circumstance rendered this baptism interesting;—there were five of one family—a mother, two sons, and two daughters. In the evening we had a blessed prayer meeting; fourteen persons in a most fervent manner addressed the throne of grace. I was happy to find in Canso a warm interest in favour of the Burman Mission. The ladies formed a society while I was there, to raise funds for the purpose of publishing the holy scriptures in the Burman language.

"When the Association met in 1833, gratifying intelligence was communicated from many of the churches. The whole number baptized was 432. Seventy-three were added to Lower Granville church; sixty-one to 1st Clements; twenty-four to Nictaux; twenty-four to Digby Neck; twenty-eight to Sissiboo [now Weymouth]; twenty-five to Falmouth.

The reports of the next year were still more encouraging. The 1st Cornwallis church took the lead. One hundred and fifty-one persons were baptized during a powerful revival—the most powerful of any that had been enjoyed in that district. Writing to the Editors of the Magazine Mr. Manning says:—"Dec. 29, 1833. The principal scene of this display of divine mercy is in and about Billtown. It has made its appearance in almost every house. There is no noise or confusion. The great thronging to the house of God, and places appointed for meetings—the deep attention—the tearful eye—the heaving bosom, and a lingering about the ministers and people of God, characterise the work as it respects the newly awakened.

"Jan. 12, 1834. The work progresses so rapidly that the brethren thought it needful to appoint the church meeting for the first Saturday in this month at eleven o'clock—the number of candidates was so great. We met accordingly at the time appointed, and the house was soon

filled. The weather was very unpleasant, or there would have been many more. An awful solemnity pervaded the congregation. Twenty-five persons told their experiences and were received with joy. I was nine hours in the meeting house. Circumstances seemed to require this sacrifice.

"On Lord's day morning, the 4th, we repaired to the water (a beautiful lake). The ice was cut, and twenty candidates, with brother Porter and myself surrounded the baptismal waters in the presence of a large concourse of spectators. It was a solemn sight. We sang, prayed, and addressed the people very briefly on account of the coldness of the day, and in a little over twenty minutes the whole number were buried with Christ in baptism.

"The reformation advances gloriously, on the mountain and in the valley. The number of hopeful converts is so great that we have thought it expedient to appoint another experience meeting next Saturday, to meet at one o'clock. There are some bitter opposers to the work, and some out of tenderness do not consent that their children should go forward in baptism, on account of the cold."

Next in order came the church at Chester, to which one hundred converts were added by baptism. "It has been," said Mr. Dimock, in a letter to the Editors of the Magazine, "the most solemn season we have ever seen at Chester. On the first Lord's day in October we baptized three; on the first Lord's day in November, three more; and three again on the first Lord's day in December. Since then, we have baptized eight, ten, or fifteen at different times, until, by baptism, by letter, or restored, the number added to the church has amounted to one hundred and twelve. Besides this, old disciples have been much quickened; many backsliders are recovered; parties of pleasure, the gaming table, and haunts of folly, are exchanged for meetings for prayer, for preaching, or for conference.

"The features of this work are different in many respects from what we have formerly known. There has been great solemnity; great freedom on the part of the converts in telling what the Lord has done for them. There has been no confusion; they have spoken one at a time; no preacher or private Christian has been interrupted in prayer or in speaking. Our conference meetings have been very solemn and frequent; the time usually taken up in renewing covenant has been occupied in examining candidates for baptism. Many families recently prayerless have now an altar to God in their houses. We cannot but exclaim, 'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.'

"At one communion season there were forty-four new candidates for the Lord's supper, to receive the usual address and welcome, who had never before communed at His table. Such a sight was never witnessed among us before. There was a glow of affection, both on the part of the candidates received, and of the church, such as is seldom experienced.

"Many of the persons baptized have entertained a hope in Christ for years. Some have come to the baptismal water, exclaiming, in a low but distinct tone, 'here is where I have longed to come these twenty years'; while the sentiment would be echoed by another voice, crying, 'thirty years my soul has longed for this place'; while others again would name ten or five years; and with many more a shorter time had elapsed, since the date of their hopes."

The pastor's heart was deeply affected by these manifestations of divine mercy. Writing to Mr. Manning on the occasion he says—"I am lost in wonder at the goodness of God to so thankless a wretch as I am;—

"Oh to grace how great a debtor
DAILY I'm constrained to be;
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee."

Another letter, written a few months afterwards, contains expressions so characteristic of the humble hearty piety of the good man, that I must find room for an extract;—"If you wish to know how J. D. is getting along among us, I would say, I have the most complaint against him of any one in the church. My complaint

of him is—want of faithfulness, zeal, heavenly-mindedness, and an entire, humble resignation to the will of God. My tribulation is light, but I seldom rejoice in it. I have sometimes of late thought that it was well for the people of God to be tried, and in my judgement I would not wish to have the choosing of any path. I feel I have need to beg for patience and wisdom, as for my life. I find my enemies too quick in the foot for me; but one thing I glory in—my Shepherd is as quick as they. If my foes are mighty, he is almighty. * * I love the work as well as ever I did; but oh the deficiency! My faculties are failing—my memory is rapidly going—and the more I try to stop it in its flight or its decay, it only speeds the faster. I sometimes exclaim, 'O my Lord! and shall I become a useless drone?'—Farewell, my brother. I think it will all be well bye and bye."

Seventy were baptized in the 2nd Cornwallis church; thirty-eight at Lunenburg; twenty-six at Digby Neck; thirty at Weymouth; twenty-six at Yarmouth; forty at Liverpool; fifty-two at Ragged Islands. The whole number baptized was 621.

The revival at Liverpool took place under the ministry of brother I. E. Bill, who visited the church during the temporary absence of the pastor. The following extracts are taken from his letter, published in the Magazine, giving an account of the revival:—

"Lord's day, April 6. Some time before the meeting commenced the house was crowded to overflowing, and many came that could not get in. When I attempted to pray at the opening of the meeting, the momentous concern of an endless eternity overwhelmed my soul and it was with some difficulty that I could suppress my feelings sufficiently to proceed with the meeting. I preached from the words of the Saviour, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' There was no outcry—no confusion;—but O the weight of eternal realities that rested upon the congregation! Almost every eye was fastened upon the speaker, except when prevented by weeping. After the meeting closed we repaired to the water side. It was supposed that not less than 800 persons were present. All ages, all classes, and all sects were there; and perhaps it would not be exaggerating to say that there never was a more interesting baptism in Liverpool. There has been on those occasions formerly more or less confusion, but now all was perfect stillness. Every one seemed to feel how awful and solemn was the place, on account of the manifested presence of the Lord our God. Some of those in the higher walks of life stopped to see the right hand of fellowship given, and were much affected."

"April 20. Six persons, five male and one female, were buried with Christ by baptism in the presence of a large concourse of people, composed of all classes and denominations. The solemn heavens bowed on the occasion, while Jehovah came down and sanctioned his own ordinance, and rendered the season peculiarly delightful. After baptism we had preaching in a new house belonging to brother George Starrat, one of the first that I baptized. The people were well accommodated, and a more interesting congregation I never beheld. Numbers were mourning over their sins in every part of the house, and occasionally uttering sighs and groans of anguish under a deep sense of their ruined state, and their exposure to the miseries of eternal torments; but what added to the interest of the meeting greatly were the exclamations of praise from a respectable female, who for some weeks had been bowed down under the burthen of a guilty conscience, and a sense of impending danger. God appeared for her help in the midst of the assembly, and enabled her to praise redeeming love. It was to me a striking evidence of the divinity of the Christian religion; to see one in her situation in life humbled in the very dust by its omnipotent and all-conquering influence, and made willing to mingle her praises with those whom she once despised."

"April 27. Again assembled for baptism; a large number collected. Four persons were baptized, one of whom was a very respectable female who had for many years been a member