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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

Life.

Strangely, upon the ears of angels, must fall that prayer for prolonged life which so often goes up from the redeemed on earth.

Life with its sorrows—life with its snares,
Life with its wearying round of cares—
Life with its rapid and ceaseless din—
Life with its weakness, temptation, and sin—
Life with its moanings of want and pain—
Life with its struggles for earthly gain—
Life with its jarring clamor and strife—
The angry passions of mortal life—
Its heart-strings touched by fingers rude
Jarring the soul in the solitude,
Which it vain would keep o'er some secret care
That hath never been breathed to mortal ear;
But water'd in secret with bitter tears,
That often have mingled with earnest prayers,
Till curious eye and ready tongue
Have the secret doors of the soul unflung,
And many press for an eager gaze
To that saddened chamber of mysteries.

And, life again with its wasted powers
Its bitter memories of misspent hours—
Life's precious hours, that are kindly given
To prepare the soul for the bliss of heaven—
They come not back while life may last.
They have fled to the shore of the shadowing Past—
That phantom shore, with its spirit band,
Where the ghosts of neglected duties stand,
And, with strange and sad solemn power,
They haunt the soul in a lonely hour,
And darken the light of the spirit's dream,
With mournful thoughts of what might have been.

But life should be a thing-sublime,
Not wasted and bound with the things of time;
But with trust in God and a willing heart,
Strong in His strength to do our part,
With an earnest purpose and heavenward aim
Should life flow back from whence it came—
With a heart unstained amid mortal strife,
What a noble thing may be human life,
Horton Academy, Female Department.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD IV.

From A. D. 1809 to A. D. 1821.

LETTER XXVIII.

IMPERFECT STATISTICS—MARRIAGE LICENSE ACT—ITS DEFEAT.—INFLUENCE OF E. MANNING AND J. DIMOCK—A MEETING-HOUSE ILLUMINATED.—EDWARD MANNING'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.—EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL.

My Young Friend,

You will probably discover sundry errors and discrepancies in the statistics given in my last. The total number of members reported does not always tally with preceding returns. These variations arise from different methods of making up the annual reports, and particularly, from neglecting to insert alterations in the appropriate columns. I apprehend there was some guess-work. All I can say is that I have given you a faithful abstract of the numerical statements in the Minutes, and that these were furnished, year by year, by the officers of the churches.

That great deficiencies and irregularities existed in those days in reference to statistics appears from a letter written by Edward Manning to E. J. Reis, (then at Baltimore) compared with the Minutes of the Association. Mr. Manning says, under date Dec. 5th, 1816—"It has been a time of refreshing in this town for one year and a half, and truly much good has been done; but much remains to be done yet. The number added by baptism and otherwise since the commencement of the stir is fifty. But there seems to be a cessation now. Whether the shower is over or not, I do not know; but may be the gracious Lord will cause the sacred drops to fall again. I pray that he may, and that his name may have all the praise."—according to this statement the "stir" commenced in the summer of 1815, and we should naturally expect that the results would be reported at the meetings of the Association in 1816 and 1817. But in 1816 the church at Cornwallis reported no additions at all, the number of members being then seventy-two; while in 1817 there was a return of seventeen members "added" and three "deceased," and the number of members one hundred and seven. Comparing the returns of the two years, the total number should have been eighty six; but Mr. Manning's account in the letter would bring it up to one hundred and twenty. I do not suppose that the records of

the church at Cornwallis were more loosely kept than those of other churches. The inference is, however, that the numerical statements can only be regarded as approximations to the reality. It is probable that some of the churches were considerably more numerous than the Minutes declare. The column for "added," I may further observe, includes additions by baptism, dismission from other churches, and restoration, leaving us in uncertainty as to the actual number of converts from the world. This defect was not remedied for several years.

Among the miscellaneous transactions of this period may be mentioned the ill success of an attempt to procure for dissenting ministers (as it was the fashion then to call them) the privilege of marrying by license, which was then enjoyed by Ministers of the Church of England only. Petitions having been presented to both Houses, a Bill was passed, granting the privilege. The Bill met with no opposition in the lower House, but there was some difficulty in getting it through the Council. Several amendments were made in it, and more than one conference held with the Assembly on the subject. At length all obstacles were overcome, and success seemed certain, when the Lieutenant Governor (Lord Dalhousie) sent a message to the Legislature, stating that he could not, "consistently with the royal instructions, assent to the Bill, without a clause being inserted therein, suspending its operation till the royal pleasure shall be known thereon." The clause was added, and both Houses united in an Address to the Lieutenant-Governor, requesting him to give such information to His Majesty's Ministers as might induce them to advise the royal assent to the Act. Having adverted to the fact that ministers of all denominations celebrated the marriage ceremony after the publication of banns, but that the privilege of marrying by license had been confined to ministers of the Church of England, the House proceeded to assign their reasons for soliciting the royal assent to the Act.

The reasons were, 1. Because full religious liberty had been guaranteed at the settlement of the province. 2. Because in many parts of the province, no clergyman of the Church of England was to be found. There was no such clergyman "from the settlement of Sackville, within twelve miles of Halifax, to the Township of Manchester, at the Eastern extremity of the province, a distance of nearly two hundred miles," nor in Queens County, nor in the County of Cumberland. 3. Because many of the ministers of other denominations were "men of education and respectable characters," and their congregations generally more numerous than those of the Church of England, and "equal to them in point of wealth and respectability of character."

The Address further stated, "confining Marriage Licenses to the clergy of the Church of England" created "an invidious distinction," which could not but be "grating to the feelings of a large and respectable majority of His Majesty's subjects in the province."

The following are the concluding paragraphs of the Address:—"His Majesty's Council and the House of Assembly beg leave to assure your Excellency, that they proceeded to the consideration of this Bill with mature deliberation; that it originated at an early period of the Session in the House of Assembly, where it passed unanimously, and was revised and amended in His Majesty's Council, who passed it by a majority of two to one; that it was generally known throughout the province that this Bill was under the consideration of the Legislature, yet no petitions have been presented against it, and His Majesty's Council and the House of Assembly think that they may venture to assure your Excellency, that the principle of it is approved by the majority of the members of the Church, as a measure calculated to remove jealousies and to introduce and preserve that harmony among persons of different religious persuasions, so essential to the peace and happiness of the province."

"His Majesty's Council and the House of Assembly feel themselves warranted in making the above assertion, as many of the warmest supporters of this Bill, in both Houses, are members

of the Established Church and profess an ardent attachment to that venerable institution. The purity of its doctrines, the pious sentiments and sublime language of its excellent liturgy, the mild and tolerating spirit of the majority of its professors, will ever command the attachment of its members, and the respect even of those who dissent from it; and it can only be injured in the province of Nova Scotia by the misguided zeal of its intemperate friends."

But all was of no avail. The Royal assent was refused by the Prince Regent, or rather by the ministers then in power. Lord Liverpool was prime minister at the time. It was generally supposed that Dr. John Inglis, Ecclesiastical Commissary, afterwards Bishop of Nova Scotia, interfered in the matter, and that the ungracious refusal was the result of his intrigues; nor is it at all unlikely. Religious freedom was not so well understood forty years ago, even in England, as it is now. It is now universally conceded that all denominations are on a footing of equality in this province. The attempt of any one of them to lord it over the rest would be promptly and indignantly put down.

Edward Manning and Joseph Dimock possessed greater influence in our denomination than any of their brethren, and took the lead in all its movements. I regret exceedingly that it is out of my power to furnish the particulars of Joseph Dimock's labours during this period any further than as contained in the Minutes of the Association. Possibly, fuller information may be procured in reference to the subsequent stages of the history.

Edward Manning repeatedly visited the United States. He was the messenger of the Association to Corresponding Associations in Maine, in the year 1810, 1812, and 1819. His ministerial labours were very acceptable, and efforts were frequently made to induce him to settle in that country. It would not have been surprising if he had complied, for he had a hard struggle to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." At one time he found it necessary to keep school. How repugant it was to his feelings, chiefly, no doubt, because of its interference with ministerial and pastoral duties, is sufficiently manifest from various entries in his journal. Thus he writes, March 12, 1814:—"O Lord, if it be not thy will that I should continue in the habit of teaching school, let me me not continue it to thy dishonour—that I may never, never dishonour thee by any means whatever, but live to thy glory, through Jesus Christ."—There are churches in our province which have yet to learn their duty in this respect; or if they know it, require to be seriously admonished on account of their want of punctuality. We are reminded of the apostle Paul's direction to Titus—"Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." To be "sound in the faith," as the expression is there used, means to be in a state of spiritual health. Neglect of duty is a symptom of disease. The medicine of sharp rebuke was prescribed, in order to restore soundness.

In the year 1814 there were great rejoicings everywhere on account of Bonaparte's overthrow. Houses were illuminated, and the usual noisy modes of demonstration were adopted. In the exuberance of their joy the people of Cornwallis requested that even the meeting house should be lighted up on the occasion. Mr. Manning refers to it in his journal, under date May 27, 1814:—"Application being made to have the meeting-house illuminated this evening, as a token of joy and gladness on account of the victory of the combined armies of Great Britain and the other confederate powers of Europe over Bonaparte and the French nation—accordingly, the house was illuminated, and the neighbouring houses. The concourse that attended behaved discreetly in the meeting-house; and at the request of some of the reputable inhabitants of the Town, I sang an appropriate hymn or two, and publicly acknowledged the good hand of God to our nation. I then gave a short address and dismissed the people, who retired from the house. They continued firing till late, which of itself would have been well enough; but to spend the evening as some (I fear) did, is no honour to the God of peace, but manifest dis-

honour. O when will people be rational—be discreet—and be religious? Alas! not until men have done sinning. O that the Lord would hasten the time when the nations shall have done with sinning, and then wars will cease!"

There is a passage in the letter to Mr. Reis, quoted above, which may be read with profit in these days:—"Brother Reis, keep down—and if low enough, the devil cannot hit you, so as to hurt you; and then you can give him the most deadly wounds. A humble minister is a true Benjamite, that "can sling a stone at a hair's breadth and not miss, and David-like will hit the Goliaths of our day in the forehead."

In the Spring of 1818. Mr. Manning was attacked by severe illness, which confined him to the house several weeks, and brought him so low that a fatal termination was feared. His state of mind under those circumstances, and on similar occasions, when bodily weakness or indisposition led him to contemplate the future and brought eternity near, was in full harmony with the principles he had long held and professed. It is very refreshing to read the passages in his journal which were written at such times. Not that they contain any thing peculiar or extraordinary, different from the customary experience of christian men; but they unveil his interior history, and show that while he was a laborious workman in the vineyard, his energies were sustained by communion with the great realities of the gospel, and holy converse with God. An extract or two will illustrate and verify these statements.

March 23, 1821. "Uneasy in the night, and restless. Pain in my chest, though not violent. Somewhat feverish. * * * May be the uncommon exposure through this cold winter past have laid a foundation for consumption; but all this is conjecture. Feel rather nervous—low-spirited—a little thing disturbs me. I put my hope in God. The things of God are very pleasant. I never felt more clear in my mind to pray, or preach, or talk, or read, than of late. The thought of my dissolution is in my mind very often. * * * May the Lord be with my dear companion and child, and bear her mind above trials. Told her my feelings this morning, and fear that she feels alarmed. Wish I had not told her. * * * A train of meditations had stolen down in upon my mind, and the cloud hath dispersed. I can rejoice in the Lord. O how sweet the doctrines of Christ, the ways of God, and his blessed promises! Dying for Jesus, and to go to Jesus, appears glorious. I want the old ministers, the young, and all the christians to know how glorious the covenant of redemption appears, and how God-dishonouring the covenant appears that many people and preachers speak of. I want them to know that I am happy, happy, happy, in the blessed Jesus, the God-man, Mediator, God's eternal Son, and my eternal surety. I want all to know how much comfort I have found and do find in this blessed plan. But I do not depend on raptures, but on Christ; but this trust produces raptures sometimes; yet they are not so much an evidence of grace as holiness. O, for holiness of heart and life!"

April 2, 1821. "Much better night's rest. Feel composed this morning. Worldly thoughts and perplexities crowd in, but they are not welcome, and in their midst I feel a degree of satisfaction, nay, feel happy that the Lord reigns. Bless the Lord for ever! Prayer, precious prayer—what a privilege! I cannot live without it. The perplexities of life seem to distract me. O that I could live without them. I think if I was far from them, so that I could just give myself to meditation, reading, prayer, visiting the sick at proper times, and preaching, I could live a heaven upon earth. But my God knows best. It may be that I could not do without this furnace. Well, Lord, do thou be with me in it, and all will be for the best."

April 3, 1821. "Unwell last night. Cold chills, and a mind resembling chaos; but through mercy felt a heart to call upon the name of the Lord, and mourn for sin. In this I found some relief, and get some repose. Gloomy and disheartened this morning. The grasshopper seems a burden. Mrs. M. does not like to hear me say so,—therefore I say but little about it.