

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

When my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the  
Rock that is higher than I.—PSALM lxi.

When I wake to the danger my spirit is in,  
And see how my prospects are blighted by sin;  
In humble contrition to thee I'll draw nigh,  
And fall on the Rock that is higher than I.

When by works I've been building a home in the skies,  
And see that my structure in deep ruin lies,—  
That lasting foundation no hand can supply:  
Let me build on the Rock that is higher than I.

When the mantle of sorrow around me is spread,  
And the waves of affliction beat high o'er my head,  
I sink in the waters—no helpers are nigh:  
Let me climb to the Rock that is higher than I.

When faint in the desert and water there's none,  
O give me the fountain that flows from thy throne,—  
The Rock that was smitten for Israel's supply:  
Let me drink from the Rock that is higher than I.

When loved ones are torn from my tender embrace,  
And nought in the wide world can fill up their place;  
The tide of bereavement my bosom heaves high:  
Let me cling to the Rock that is higher than I.

When thy vials of wrath are poured out on the world,  
And Thy foes from thy presence in anger are hurled;  
In dread conflagration all nature shall lie;  
I'll be safe in the Rock that is higher than I.

And when all thy triumphs of grace are complete,  
And saints cast their crowns of reward at thy feet,  
And the sunshine of heaven all sorrow shall dry,  
I will sing from the Rock that is higher than I.

Digby N. S.

SIGMA.

\*Matthew xxi. 42. †Isaiah lxiii. 11.

## Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VI.

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

LETTER LIII.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THOMAS ANSLEY, CONTINUED.

My Young Friend,

It was stated in my last that Mr. Ansley was baptized in the year 1802, and that soon afterwards he began to preach the gospel. His first visit to Charlotte County, N. B. took place in the year 1804. The occasion of the visit is thus related by brother Thomson:—"Mr. Ansley was at Eastport, Maine. A Christian man, named John Scott, from Macadavy, made his acquaintance there, and described the state of society among them. Elder Manning had previously preached through that territory with much success, but the cause was then in a very low condition. When Mr. Ansley heard Mr. Scott's statement he at once decided to go, believing that God had directed him to do so. He added, that he had been shewn the region in a vision, and that he expected to be arrested by the civil authority—which was the case. He accompanied brother Scott to the shore, and on leaving him raised his voice and said, 'Farewell brother Scott; till the resurrection.' As soon as he had fulfilled his appointments he journeyed to Macadavy, and arrived just in time to attend brother Scott's funeral, who was unfortunately drowned in the river shortly after reaching home. Mr. Ansley's labours were abundantly blessed in the country."

Brother Robinson of St. John has kindly furnished a narrative of Mr. Ansley's last visits to that part of the country. He introduces the account by a brief statement of the results of his earlier ministrations at the time alluded to above. It is as follows:—

"Thomas Ansley visited Charlotte Co., N. B. in 1804 for the first time. He preached the gospel there with great effect, and powerful revivals took place in St. George, St. Andrews, and St. David's. Great excitement marked these revivals. Sinners were convinced and converted. Some were in the greatest anguish, and almost in despair. These after a time would come out rejoicing in heavenly raptures. Sometimes the groans and cries of convinced sinners seemed to resemble the wailing of lost spirits in the world

of despair. Then again the raptures, joys, and singing of young converts would remind you of the joys of heaven. From what I can learn, the physical phenomena in these revivals resembled very much the striking down in the late Irish revivals. And from the information of old christians in that county it may be gathered that a degree of wild enthusiastic excitement was manifest. But that it was the work of God none can doubt who were acquainted with the old professors of religion in that county. Some of them were so well established in the truth and so clear in their views of the doctrines of grace, that when their minds and feelings were moved they spoke and prayed with power supernatural.

"Edward and James Manning had previously visited the Eastern parts of the country, and a great revival followed their labours. Their names are venerated in that country, not only by the old but by the young who never saw nor heard them preach, but have heard their parents speak of their mission and work.

"Father's Ansley's labours extended over about eighty miles of country, and so extensive was the revival and so peculiar its manifestations, that the magistrates and men in power thought he was deluding the people. A warrant was got out against him in St. Stephen, where he was arrested and kept in custody for a night. He was discharged the next morning, after receiving instruction to cease deluding the people. But he preached the more the gospel of the grace of God—none hindering."

Bridgetown, as has been stated, was his home in Nova Scotia. But the whole province was his field of labour. Many a time did he leave his church and family and travel great distances to preach the gospel where "Christ was not named," or nothing but formalism prevailed, and everywhere abundant success attended him. During one of his journeys he wrote thus to his wife:—

"La Have, Oct. 11th, 1813.

"This evening, after preaching, a man and his wife said they could not part with me until I returned with them to Malagash and baptized them. I feel this obvious duty to be a great cross; but when I think of the work of God my heart is bound to the cross of the blessed Jesus. Every night since I have been in these parts, I have preached. The people appear amazingly solemn, but there is not so much crying for mercy as in other places. Last Saturday we had a Conference meeting, and I think it was a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. Eleven related their experiences, ten of whom were baptized on the Sabbath. You cannot form an idea of the exercises of the day. After we had retired some distance from the shore, where we had been baptizing, we were called back again, for a woman was there who said she would not leave the water till she obeyed her Lord. She told her experience on the shore, and I immediately baptized her. When we returned, Mr. Dimock preached. I preached in the afternoon and assisted to administer the Lord's supper. I never saw such a meeting in my life. In every part of the house were poor sinners mourning like wounded men in the field of battle. A reformation has commenced in Malagash, and the same blessed work has reached this place. I preach no where in these parts where there are not more or less crying for mercy.

"You are seldom from my thoughts, except when I am preaching, and now I am at a loss to say when I shall be home. Oh! my dear Mary, I know that your trials are many, and sometimes it seems that they are more than you can bear; but the strong arms of Jesus, I know, are able to support you.

"You must meet me often at a throne of grace;—meet me at sunset, and at nine in the morning, and, though distant, let us mingle our cries to God. I know that they have gone up for a memorial before his throne when we have been kneeling together; and the blessed seasons we have unitedly enjoyed will never be erased from my mind. I often think your lot in this world is hard; but this life's a dream—an empty show. The bright world to which we go has joys that will more than pay us for all our pain. I am still distressed in my head, and think that it is likely the Lord is about to take my hearing from me—

but I must say, his will be done. I shall write every opportunity, and you must tell my dear children that I think of them in all my prayers, and that I hope they will repent and believe the gospel. Tell my christian brethren and sisters that I want all their prayers as sickles in this great harvest field, and I believe I have them."

He visited the United States in 1817. At the meeting of the Association, held that year at Fredericton, he had been appointed one of the messengers to corresponding Associations, but had declined the appointment. His heart misgave him for it, as we learn from his journal:—"About the last of August, 1817, after I had relinquished going as a messenger to the United States Associations, with which our Association corresponded, I felt much oppressed in spirit, and was convinced I had done wrong in not going. I thought that the door was now so closed that I could not possibly leave my family and the church, over which the Lord had made me overseer; but such was the burthen of my mind that duty impelled me to relate the exercises of my soul to the church, and I could see no opening any way but by leaving all and pursuing my journey. On the 18th of October I gave public notice that I should preach my farewell sermon the next Sabbath. I accordingly did so, from Phil. i. 27. The gracious Lord was pleased to make it a solemn and an affecting season, not only to the dear people of God but also to a large assembly. In the evening I preached at brother William Bent's to a numerous congregation, from Acts xx. 37. This season seemed in some measure like Paul's farewell."

Having preached extensively in the States of New York and New Jersey, and baptized many, he returned home in April, 1818. In August following he entered on a tour in the Eastern part of the province, under the direction of the Domestic Missionary Board, which occupied him rather more than two months. Some extracts from his journal have been preserved.

"Aug. 13th, 1818. After taking an affectionate farewell of my family, I set out on a tour to the Eastern part of Nova Scotia, for the purpose of serving the missionary society. I found my mind much impressed with various trials. I looked back and thought of those whom I was leaving behind as sheep in the wilderness without a shepherd. The bad health of my family gave additional pungency to the other trials of my mind.

"Friday, 14th. I had a gracious season in sweet prayer. Oh! how gracious is Jesus to his believing people! Oh! glorious gospel! I felt willing to suffer all the trials which the good shepherd might call me to pass through, if I might only do his will and bear his name to poor sinners.

"Tuesday, 25th. I rode to the foot of Antigonish Mountain, and was kindly received by a family, with whom I conversed freely. The mistress of the house said she would have been hurt had I passed them without calling like all the ministers (taking me for a Presbyterian preacher); but when I told them I was a Baptist, they were very anxious to know whether we had any written articles of our faith, or any order among us or not. I showed them the copy which I had with me, and a person present was so much pleased with our creed that he asked my leave to permit him to transcribe it. I read, lectured, and prayed (morning and evening) with the family, and left them in tears."

"Monday, 31st. A violent rain storm this day. I preached, however, according to appointment, to the few who came in. This was a precious season; the Lord be praised for his goodness to the children of men."

"Monday, Sept. 7th. Took passage with a Mr. Hearty, to Canso. I arrived about sunset at the house of Mr. A. Whitman. The Lord be praised for bringing me to this house! The family were at tea when I came in, and in returning thanks I could not but say, 'Peace be to this house!' A number of the neighbours were in, and stopped till after prayers. I read, lectured on the chapter, and prayed; and it was a most solemn, affecting time."

"Sabbath-day, Sept. 20th. I preached at the Court House to a solemn congregation. I hope this day will be remembered by many. Oh! how precious to me did the souls of

men appear! I felt as though I could spend my life in the cause of the dear Redeemer!

"Monday, 21st. I attended a Conference meeting, to hear the exercises related of those who were desirous of going forward in the ordinance of baptism. Five gave good satisfaction of a saving work of grace in their souls, and were received as proper candidates. They are to be baptized next sabbath.

"Friday, Oct. 2nd. I visited a young man who had been much exercised in the meeting, which he would not leave till I promised to visit him. He came from Scotland in the spring of last year. He told me that he could find no young person in the neighbourhood to converse with on the subject of religion. I was informed by him that he found comfort and peace in believing about four years ago. He stated that he was a Burgher in his own country, but that he was afraid the Bible would make him a Baptist, in spite of all his former prepossessions. He appeared exceedingly tender in his mind."

"Saturday, Oct. 17th. I arrived home, found all well, for which I desired to be thankful to God. In my tour I travelled about 700 miles, preached thirty-four sermons, baptized six believers, and organized one church."

Mr. Ansley was encouraged in his work at home in the year 1820. Twenty-two persons were added to his church that year. But his frequent absences were somewhat detrimental to its prosperity.

In 1824 he visited the United States for the last time. No records of the visit remain. We are only told that "this town was blessed to the churches in many places."

He was accustomed to regard impressions and impulses as intimations of the divine will, and directions to duty, which required to be promptly obeyed. The results did not always justify the inference, yet sometimes they appeared to be truly remarkable. An instance of this kind is related by brother William Chipman. "He was impressed that duty called him to go to Yarmouth, and there to induce the Baptist church and pastor to relinquish open and adopt close communion. He rebelled; but the impression so increased that he begged of the Lord to take his life, for he felt himself inadequate, and apprehended, if not a failure, great opposition from father H. Harding and the church. Hence he was reluctant to proceed in the matter; but he could get no rest until he left home to go. When on his way, I fell in with him at Annapolis, and he unbosomed his feelings to me. His countenance denoted great mental agony—but I could not discourage him. He went—and in the course of three months (with the exception of about three weeks, spent in a visit home to his family) the enterprise proved successful; and it was generally allowed that not less than four hundred were truly converted, many of whom made public profession at the time." This was in the fall of 1826. The Yarmouth church rejoined the Association in 1828.

There was a great revival among the churches, an account of which has been given in former letters, in 1828 and 1829. The commencement of it is thus narrated by brother Chipman:—"In September, 1828, there was a general meeting appointed at Upper Aylesford, which was numerously attended. An early morning prayer meeting was held in the meeting-house, which was then in an unfinished state. But few were present, and no revival influence had yet appeared. Brother Ansley, Brother Bill and myself were there. Brother Anthony Dimock, who was then quite young, and was of small stature, engaged in prayer. While he was praying, Father Ansley left his position, evidently labouring under deep feeling—his chin quivering, and the tear rolling down his cheeks. He walked over the seats, the whole width of the meeting-house, till he came where brother Anthony was praying. He bowed over him, with his hands on the floor, and with a trembling but powerful voice blessed God that another of his servants was called to preach the everlasting gospel to his fellow men. The circumstance—the manner—the powerful voice—electrified spiritually, all in the house. The effect was indescribable; and the savor that was left seemed to sanctify, solemnise, and quicken all the powers of the soul. Many present acknowledged that God was there of a truth. This was the beginning of a most