

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. VII....No. 1.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1862.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVI....No. 1.



For the Christian Messenger.

The Three Angels.

"And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity; but the greatest of these is Charity."

The great Creator placed man pure and blest,
In Eden bright; with matchless beauty drest.
There, there, he saw the heaven-born angel, Love,
Breathing in all beneath, around, above,
And smiling, in the thousand stars of night,
So sweetly shedding their soft, silvery light.
In the pale moon, as through the azure sky
That beaming orb went slowly sailing by.
When she and her attendant train were gone,
Then rose in glory the majestic sun;
Like a strong man rejoicing in his race,
And beautifying that delightful place.
By day, by night, Love tarried by his side,
As the fond bridegroom, by his cherished bride,
She breathed upon him in each fragrant breeze,
Which stirred the branches of the lowering trees;
Looked up, and smiled in every scented flower,
That grew and blossomed in each sunny bower.
She smiled without, she breathed and burned within
The lofty soul of man, unstained by sin.
But ah! how soon the scene was changed! he fell
By disobedience, to the depths of hell!
Was driven an exile from that blissful spot,
Yet the blest seraph Love, forsook him not.
With pitying tears his miser deplor'd,
And promised Eden's bliss should be restored;
Would robe him: godlike form in felon's dress,
And dying, to stern Justice make redress;
That he and Mercy might in concord meet,
And by a pardon at the rebel's feet;
Would ever walk with him the chequered way
On which his weary feet would have to stray.
The guilty eyes, cast down with fear and shame,
Were lifted at the kind, familiar strain;
And lo! he saw two white-robed angels stand,
On either side of Love, all hand in hand.
From each he saw bright beams of radiance dart,
Which stole within, and cheered his burdened heart,
One held a cross within her outstretched hand,
With light surrounded from the better land;
The other stood with crown-enrich'd brow,
And cried, "I his on conquerors bestow."
One bade the death-doomed love's flowing blood;
The other taught him to delight in God,
Celestial Faith, triumphant Hope, their names;
They wait on those Love frees from single steps.
Attend thus, man, oft those garden bowers,
Its luscious fruits and dewy fragrant flowers.
Yet, oft the weeping exiles looked behind
On beams they no more on earth would find;
Lo! angels and a flaming sword they see,
Placed there to guard the emerald gate;
To watch the closed, the golden gates with care,
That fallen man no more might enter there.
They give one last, sad look, then turn away,
With Faith, Hope, Love, to cheer them on their way.
A sin-cursed world, with thorns and thistles strewn,
They see, where'er their weary foot-steps roam,
That thro' blest tread smooth beneath their feet,
The thorny way, and make us suffer sweet:
The ages, passing by on rapid wing,
Their train of high and holy memories bring;
In ever wondrous messages divine,
Are flying on the telegraph of time.
On Pagan's top, on Padannan's plain,
On Judah's hills, that rapture-waking strain,
Where glorious visions passed by Chebar's flood,
Before a captive-prophet of the Lord,
Deep inspirations, fraught with holy fire,
Which woke Isaiah's thrilling, heaven-tuned lyre.
Before his view, in lonely Fatmos' cast,
A high mysterious panorama past,
In lone Gethsemane, an angel stood
To help and cheer the suffering Son of God,
And glorious thousands, aye, and myriads more,
Have paid glad visits to earth's darkened shore.
From Gabriel, brightest of the glorious throng,
Down to the faintest star around the throne;
They come; they teach hearts heavenward to aspire.
Attend the "martyr's" chariot of fire,
As faithful in mistering spirits wait
On those who press to the celestial gate;
Smiles, heavenly smiles around the Christians bed;
Make soft the pillow for his dying head;
Where'er are found those watchers pure and fair,
The sisters Love, Faith, Hope, are always there.
Their glad, inspiring presence will be given,
Till the last ransomed soul has entered heaven.
Of all the visitants from realms above,
The great and glorious pioneer was Love;
And she will shine through heaven's eternal day,
When Faith and Hope with earth have passed away.
The centre and the sun in worlds above;
The Alpha, and Omega too, for God is Love.

Onslow, Dec. 23th.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VI.

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

LETTER XLVIII.

MR. FERGUSON'S ACCOUNT OF THE CHOLERA IN HALIFAX, IN 1834.—REMARKS.—DEATHS IN THIS PERIOD.

My Young Friend,

In the year 1834 the city of Halifax was visited with the cholera, and many hundreds were hurried into eternity in the space of a few weeks. An account of this awful visitation was given by Mr. Ferguson to Elder Manning, in a letter dated Sep. 17, 1834, from which I take the following passages.

"It has pleased the Almighty disposer of the lives of men to visit us with that scourge

that has desolated so many countries, wasted so many families, and hurried so many of the human race to the judgment to come. We have heard of it in the distance, and many have quailed for fear; but oh! I assure you, dear brother, it is another thing to witness, as we have done, its awful presence. The disease here has far exceeded, both in malignity and in the number of its victims, proportioned to the population, what was known either in the Canadas or in New York. The deaths, brother James Hume just tells me, exceed five hundred within three weeks. He is Secretary to the Board, and he every day finds the reports he makes up for the public to be greatly deficient, as none but the reports of medical practitioners are received, and many, many never get medical aid. Yesterday and to-day the disease is somewhat, we hope, abated; the last report for twenty-four hours was twenty-two new cases, fourteen deaths. I cannot now attempt anything like a regular and full account of the rise and progress of the disease among us. It is supposed that it was introduced in a vessel of Matthew Richardson's from Quebec. A sailor boy was taken from her on her arrival, and carried to the poor-house, who complained of bowel affection, and soon died. The man whose bed was next his was seized in a few days with something like Asiatic cholera, and suddenly died; and within ten days the cases were so numerous and the disease shaped itself so distinctly that the medical men pronounced cholera in its worst form to be among us. Hospitals were prepared, health-officers appointed, yards and houses fumigated, fires-lighted up, &c. &c. For a time the abodes of the wretched were the only places from which this fell destroyer of our race selected his victims; but soon the temperate, the young, and some of the better ranks, were marked as his prey. Then it was that men's hearts failed for fear, and you might see the stoutest made to tremble.

"The suddenness with which death often followed the first attack was truly appalling. Brother Checker, of the Rifle band, a member of the second church, was at evening meeting—prayed and exhorted—dwelt, from the consideration of the uncertainty of life, on the duty of christians to love one another and labour together for the glory of God:—on returning home, at nine o'clock, he felt unwell—at eleven o'clock, called up the people of the house—at one o'clock was taken to the hospital—and died at ten o'clock. His sufferings were intense. When asked, an hour before his death, by a christian of the same regiment—"Do you suffer much?" he answered, "No tongue can express the torture I have undergone." "Do you feel the Lord near to you?" "Oh yes! I have a present God! Can you submit?" "Oh yes! his will be done; he is righteous, and just; and holy; say to Elizabeth," (his wife, who was not allowed to see him—such being the doctors' orders) "farewell—tell her the spasms are not so violent—tell her I am happy."—I never, never shall forget the shock my mind felt on the morning of his death when James Hume ran down to say, "Checker is gone." Oh how the christian people looked on each other! One and all felt that the servant who most resembled his Master had first fallen. When I ran up to his house—for they lived out of barracks—I found the people preparing to quit their lodgings, from fear of infection, and his poor wife desolate and alone. To my attempts to comfort her she replied, "I dare not murmur, or wish him back again; he is gone up to his Father and his God; he was too much like the Saviour to be left here."

I have few, if any, christian deaths like the foregoing, to record—but many equally sudden. Fraser, one of our most respectable tradesmen, opened his shop, last Saturday at eight o'clock—went to the market at nine—sickened at ten—died at three in the afternoon, and was buried at six.—Miss Johnson, a fine young woman, next door to us, I had a long conversation with at one o'clock in the day, in perfect health and spirits. At eleven o'clock the same night, as I passed on my way to the Cholera Hospital, to get a cab to take a poor woman from a house above us, her friends were calling the neighbours to go for a coffin—and at seven in the morning I followed her to her grave.—A young man named McDonald, one of our pewholders, and

of late very serious, took ill at ten o'clock at night, and died at six in the morning.—Another of our congregation, a promising young man, died in four hours. Brother Crawley was with him most of the time:—his agony was beyond endurance.

"You may well suppose that even to those who have not witnessed the disease itself it must be a fearful time among us. The cholera-carts travelling day and night, carrying the sick to the hospital and the dead to the grave-yards—coffins in piles ready for use—the hearse moving at daylight, and through the day, with the bodies of the better sort of the people, those, I mean, who are able to pay—the bells constantly tolling—the town deserted—every other house, almost shut up—volumes of smoke rising from tar-barrels, as soon as the night shuts in—business suspended—not a coaster at the wharves, where, at this season, they are found in fleets—all all, is gloom, and fear, and despair.

"I shall not soon forget the first case I witnessed. A young woman ran after me in the street as I passed above the Parade one day, and with breathless anxiety asked me to go with her and pray for her sister, who was sick. I followed her up a narrow stair into a small back-room, and there her poor sister lay under the grasp of cholera—her bosom heaving—her knees drawn up—her mouth parched—her skin blue, a state of collapse having come on—and her eyes—oh! with unspeakable agony did she roll them about, imploring as it were help from any source, either in heaven or earth. I fear that God was not her portion. She begged me to pray—but what was the prayer of such a poor sinner as I am? I sent Brother Crawley in the afternoon part of the day—but she died and left no token for good.

"It was one day at the poor-house ground, just before sunset, and Dr. Willis was reading the church service over twenty-three bodies, laid in a long deep trench through the day. One of the most impressive sights is that you seldom see more than two or three persons following the dead. The fear of infection is so great that persons decline exposing themselves near the body even of a dear friend.

"Every attention has been shown to the wants of the poor—yet their distress and suffering are beyond description. The poor things have such a dread of the hospital that it is frequently necessary to get a police officer to remove them from their houses. They connect certain death in their minds with a removal to the hospital. About the Parade, where the hospital is, you see multitudes of women, some with infants in their arms and young children clinging to their sides, inquiring of those who come out after their husbands. Yesterday one of them begged the doctor to let her know—and when he came out, after ascertaining, interrupted him, saying, "Doctor, Doctor, oh don't say he is no better!";—but, poor thing, there was no hope, and she was obliged with a broken heart to give up the hope of ever seeing him, alive or dead, for no communication whatever is allowed between the sick and their friends.

"But I must not go further in giving you particulars, for I might fill sheets, and then feel that faint, after all, must be the impression your mind could take; it must be seen to be realised in any thing like its fearfulness and horror. It is hard indeed to convey to another what that state of mind is which is produced at such a time as this in this town. You visit a family in the morning, and find all well. At noon you hear that the father is ill—and you hurry to the house. There, the children are wringing their hands, and the mother with a fearful anxiety labouring to suppress her feelings as she hurries from room to room to prepare what he requires, knowing that all depends on the efforts of one hour, for in almost every case the turning point is within that time after the attack. In the evening you return to see how they are going on, and the very woman you beheld and talked with is groaning a way her own life—the neighbours flee!—and all around her one mass of agony and despair. I myself have witnessed this over and over again, in the Ward of which I have charge.

"You will naturally enquire now what religious influence is produced on the minds of the people by this severe visitation of God, and what are christian people about. I trust, my dear brother, that there is some prospect

of good. Oh may God indeed appear in the power of his gospel to rescue men from the death which shall never die! I trust the Baptists here are doing what in some measure is pleasing to God. So many of the brethren of our church are away, and others sick, that Crawley and myself are almost alone. We determined, early in the visitation, to invite the second church to unite with us for prayer, and we unitedly proposed to the different Protestant ministers to join us in observing a day for humiliation before God. Only the Methodists joined. We then proposed a united prayer-meeting—Tuesdays, at our Chapel and with the second church—and Mondays and Thursdays in the Methodist Chapels, for the whole. These meetings have been held once all round, and I trust the Lord has blessed.—Brother Crawley has been exceedingly anxious to do what he can. He has thrown himself fearlessly into the disease in every possible way, both by a regular attendance at the hospital, and in every dwelling where he could have access. He has been ready at all times; his mind is much stirred up, and his preaching and exhortations are urgent and faithful. There appears in some minds something like religion, and in more than one case, conversion. The alarm men feel is great, and at such a time we have more need than ordinarily is called for to examine and be faithful.

"My family is kept so far, blessed be God—although our neighbours have fallen all around—three in the next house to us—and last night one of Cassidy's men, at the opposite corner, sickened after six o'clock, and was buried at day-light.—You must pray for us. This indeed is the time of our visitation. Pray that mercy may be mixed with judgment—that the plague may be stayed—lives spared—the people of God quickened to activity and duty—and souls converted and saved from hell."

This is a melancholy episode in our history. Such a season of trial seldom occurs in the northern regions, which are rarely visited by pestilential diseases so virulent and so extensively fatal. It is very interesting to observe the union of christian brethren under these circumstances. And it is well that there are occasions when those who differ from each other in regard to certain matters of religious faith and practice, but who can mutually recognise the same spiritual life, feel themselves called on to act together for God, and thus to shew the world that there is a substantial unity in the true church.

The subject of this letter is referred to in the "Baptist Missionary Magazine" in the following terms:—"The second and Granville Street Baptist churches, together with the Wesleyan Methodist church, concurred in spending Friday, 19th July, as a day of humiliation and prayer, on account of this severe judgment; united prayer meetings between the two Baptist churches, and also between them and the Methodist church have been agreed on in relation to the same solemn occasion. We humbly trust that this christian harmony will be well-pleasing in the sight of God, and that the united prayers of his people will come up with acceptance before Him who does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." In the general deadness in religion which we have long deplored, as well as in the open profanity, wickedness, and worldliness that too much abound in Halifax, there is reason enough that the Lord should thus 'make bare' the arm of his power. We earnestly entreat our christian brethren of every name throughout the provinces to aid those in Halifax in imploring the gift of the Holy Spirit to sanctify their judgment to the churches and the people."

The prayers of God's servants were heard, and a merciful revival was enjoyed in Halifax. Thirty-five additions by baptism were reported by the Granville Street church at the next meeting of the Association.

Several ministering brethren died in the period now under review. Thomas Handley Chipman departed this life Oct. 11, 1830;—Thomas Ansley, Dec. 7, 1831;—Charles Lewis, March 24, and John Craig, Dec. 13, 1837;—and in 1838, John Burton, Feb. 6.—Peter Crandal, April 2.—and James Munro, July 3. Biographical sketches of these brethren will be commenced in our next.

Yours truly,
Dec. 23, 1861. MENSQ.