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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.

For the Christian Messenger.

Welcome to Winter.

Thrice welcome Winter, with thy leafless trees
Short, cheerless days, and bleak benumbing breeze
I bid thee heartfelt welcome, for I love
Thy cheerful evening fireside joys to prove.

How sweet when grovelling care and toil are o'er
In pure home pleasures to unite once more
In converse sweet the evening hours prolong
Or pour the melody of sacred song.

To talk of Jesus and his boundless love,
In prospect view our glorious home above,
And lit our heart to God in fervent prayer,
That others may his ceaseless goodness share.

These holy joys, exalted and refined,
Expand the soul and elevate the mind,
And fit us for those brighter scenes above,
Where all is purity and peace and love.

Though early fades the sun's faint, feeble light,
Though frequent storms disturb the peaceful night,
Tho' the gay summer's brighter hues have flown,
Yet Winter thou hast beauties all thine own.

The unfading evergreens, which midst the pride,
Of summer foliage have been scarce deserted,
Now claim our admiration—and assume,
Their real beauty midst surrounding gloom.

The pure white mantle of new-fallen snow,
Concealing all unrighteousness below,
Emblem of Jesus' spotless Righteousness,
Which forms the ransomed sinner's glorious dress.

The beautiful hoar-frost, when each twig and tree,
Regemmed with countless diamonds seems to be;
That sparkle brightly in the moon's faint ray,
Then gently, slowly yield and melt away.

The little hardy birds that dare to stay,
And brave the terrors of the winter's day,—
A lovely lesson to us mortals give,
And teach us how in humble faith to live.

No stores have they laid up for future need,
No piles of gathered crumbs, or heaps of seed;
Yet daily find their every want supplied,
By Him whose bounty does for all provide.

Fearless they venture forth—secure to find,
An adequate supply of dainty kind,—
And every simple chirrup seems to give,
Praise to His name by whose kind care they live.

And then the promise of the glorious Spring,
When flowers shall bloom again and birds shall sing,
Stands changeless as our Father's word and sure,
While earth, and sun, and stars, and time endure.

Sweet Spring bright type of that blest rising day,
Whose prospect cheers the pilgrim's weary way,
While journeying through this wilderness of gloom
To you bright world of bliss beyond the tomb.

reported at the meeting of the Association in 1834: Doubtless the aged servant of God was greatly comforted by these tokens of divine goodness. He could adopt the words of Simeon—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace—for my eyes have seen thy salvation." And he did "depart in peace." After a gentle decline, the natural effect of old age, during which he enjoyed in an eminent degree the consolations of the gospel, "the weary wheels of life stood still" on the 13th of December, 1837. He was in the eighty-eight year of his age.

Shortly afterwards another veteran received his discharge. JOHN BURTON died February 6th, 1838.

In my fourteenth letter a brief account was given of Mr. Burton's settlement at Halifax. The church of which he was pastor joined the Association in 1811. It consisted at that time of thirty-three members. His labours were so blessed that upwards of three hundred persons were added to the church during the next sixteen years. The majority of them were coloured people, some resident in Halifax, and others in Preston, Hammonds Plains, and other places within a few miles of the city. There was a great revival among them in the years 1818 and 1819, in which years two hundred were baptized. On one occasion brother Nutter was present. In his "Reminiscences of the past" (*Christian Visitor*, July 16, 1856) he says—

"About the time of which I treated in my last, there was a powerful revival amongst the coloured people in Preston, Hammonds Plains and Windsor road; a great multitude believed and were added to the church. I loved in those days to be in reformations. Brother Burton of Halifax, had the whole supervision of these people. But I went down to these places, to help our good brother, if I should find assistance necessary; I found he had his hands full, and with a hearty good will, I rendered him what aid I could. I preached at these several places, and attended other meetings with this worthy servant of the Lord. Father Burton had appointed a baptizing season, it was at a lake just back from the Windsor road; a large number told their experience that day, who with others, that had been received on some previous occasions, were baptized, in all, I believe, about forty. I assisted Mr. B. in this work."

But these were not hasty, indiscriminate admissions. Brother Nutter states that Mr. Burton "was very particular in receiving members. He examined them very closely, and investigated their conduct and character with great care. He was a great disciplinarian, and sought out every wrong, and inquired into every complaint against what he called his *coloured friends*. I remember one little thing in the Conference meeting I attended, and to which I have alluded in the beginning of this letter. One man was proceeding in relating what grace had done for him, when he said—"about this time I had a dream," and was proceeding to tell his dream, when Mr. B. stopped him and remarked, "I will come and see you one of these days, when I will hear all about your dream, but I wish you now to tell us how it was with you when you were awake." The man showed evident signs of disappointment, for he considered it a very important part of his experience. But he was not allowed to go on with it."

The brethren who left the Episcopal church in Halifax, and afterwards became Baptists, attended Mr. Burton's ministry for some time, and were much edified by his plain, substantial teachings. They rendered him assistance in various ways, temporally and spiritually. Their kind sympathy and aid soothed his sorrows and contributed materially to his comfort in his declining years.

A painful division occurred in 1828, by which the good man was sorely tried. Robert Davis, who had been some years pastor of the church at Lunenburg, removed to Halifax, and united with Mr. Burton, whose strength was then failing, in taking charge of his numerous flock. But contentions broke out among them. A large party, with Mr. Davis at their head, separated, and, not satisfied with setting up for themselves, claimed to be the church. Mr. Burton's friends asserted a similar claim. The matter was brought before the Association in 1828, and a Committee of investigation and advice was

appointed. The Committee stated that "after obtaining all the information in their power they were unanimously of opinion that Mr. Burton and those that adhered to him were the old or First Baptist Church, and that those who had left the church with Mr. Davis were to be considered as a disaffected and disorderly body who had separated themselves from the church."

This was a great affliction. In 1827, the number of members was 280. No returns were sent the next year, but in 1829 the Minutes report a reduction of more than one-half, the number then being 120. But the pastor's heart was relieved and comforted. During the two following years most of those who had ungratefully and unkindly deserted him returned to duty, acknowledged their offences, and were restored to fellowship. This happy event is thus referred to in the Minutes of the Association:—

"It is a matter of heartfelt joy to learn, from the letter of this long established church that the troubles and dissensions which have so long shaken it, have at length come to a happy close. A large number of the seceding members, whose minds had been unhappily misled and estranged from their pious and worthy Pastor, the Venerable Brother Burton, have lately returned to the bosom of the church and to their faithful and affectionate shepherd, who, we may truly say, is nearly worn out in his unceasing labours for the coloured brethren at Halifax. Such a reconciliation, among those who had long travelled together in harmony, as children of one Father, was necessarily attended with the most lively emotions of joy; and we trust and believe, that the consequences will be, a closer union to their Pastor and each other, as well as to the Lord of life and love."

Another storm burst upon the aged man's head in 1832. The church was again thrown into disorder "by the influence of designing men," and one hundred and forty-five members were separated from its communion. Next year some of them "returned with deep sorrow," but the church was "much diminished," and their pastor was "labouring under the infirmities of age, and unable regularly to officiate in the ministerial office."

Mr. Burton's personal afflictions were heavy and long-continued. His wife, who died in 1827, was blind for many years, and otherwise helpless. His straitened circumstances (for the church consisted almost entirely of poor persons, many of whom needed help for themselves) exposed him to much privation. But he endured all with exemplary meekness and patience. Mr. Nutter remarks:—"The people connected with him were generally very poor. He visited the United States, and collected money to build a meeting house and a pastor's dwelling house; both of which he occupied until he died. Brother Burton had but a small salary. When I knew him, he had nothing to depend upon, but collections taken on the Sabbath, after sermon. These were but a pittance to support a family, but the good man was a great economist, and as he knew every Monday morning, how much he had for his week's supply, as the old saw says, 'He cut his coat according to the cloth.'" Some benevolent friends, in Halifax, knowing his dependent circumstances, would give or send him a present of money, or other things. Of this number, and one of the most constant and liberal, was our beloved, but lately departed brother, Ferguson, although at that time not a Baptist."

During the last few years of his life Mr. Burton suffered from frequent attacks of illness. Many "wearisome nights" were appointed him. It was his privilege, however, to enjoy the blessedness of fellowship with God, and he was enabled to bear his trials with the submission which true faith inspires.

I transcribe from the *Christian Messenger* of Feb. 16th, 1838 the following account of the closing scene:—"Often when questioned as to his health, he would answer, 'It is all well'; and no one approached him, even in his severest illness, that he did not seem to forget his pains, in his efforts to press upon them the great truths of the gospel. During the last few days of his life, when unable to utter more, he would say, as he pressed the hands of his christian friends at parting, 'Look to Jesus, look to Jesus.' Two nights before his death he called two of his grandchildren, who were attending him, to his bed-

side, and tenderly bade them farewell, adding, according to his invariable custom, an affectionate exhortation to seek the salvation of God. He then turned peacefully from them and said, 'I am going to my Heavenly Father, and to thousands and thousands of angels,' and then added, 'and to Mrs. Burton,' which was the manner in which he always spoke of his deceased partner, with whom he had sorrowed and rejoiced through a long life of toil and suffering, which for Christ's sake he had endured together; whom, for the last years of her life, when deprived of health and sight, he had nursed and cherished with more than a husband's care, and who, just eleven years before the day of his own death, had been taken to her heavenly rest. During the last few hours of his life he endured great pain and was unable to say much, and often even to speak, but his closing moments were those of perfect peace, and he expired without a groan at eight o'clock in the evening of the 6th inst."

His character was sketched by Mr. Manning nearly twelve years before his death. He had been then very ill for three weeks. On hearing of his sickness, Mr. Manning wrote thus in his Journal (April 16th, 1826):—"I dread to hear of the old man's departure, but rejoice in the belief that all will be well with him after death. I bless the Lord that I was ever acquainted with him. He has been a blessing to me in various ways and at different times. He was a man of piety of the first rate—of ministerial zeal and abilities—of a condescending disposition—an honest man himself, and unsuspecting, on which account he was often imposed upon; but still he hath maintained the character of the truly pious, humble, suffering minister of Jesus Christ to the present. This character will be given him by the Governor, and all who know him, and he will long live in the affections of the pious of all denominations, and especially among whom God hath made him eminently useful."

Mr. Nutter says,—"Brother Burton was just the man to have the care and management of this class of people. There is something peculiar in them, and there was something in the preacher which qualified him to deal with them. Brother B. was a king among them, and they rendered unto Caesar the things which were Caesar's. He reigned with undisputed sway amongst them. He said come, and they came, go and they went, do this, and they did it; but if he was a king, he was a fatherly king; for in his government, he united the mildness and condescension of a father with the severity of the sovereign. Father Burton used to exercise the office of the magistrate in connection with that of a pastor. He cited delinquent persons before him, heard the witnesses, and without any jury, he gave his judgment against the evil doer. This was done not only with the members of his church but with others, and all submitted to his decision. I heard it said in Halifax, that the justices and even the Governor of the Province acquiesced in Mr. Burton's decisions, and let him deal as he thought proper, with this class of her Majesty's subjects, and they were wise in so doing."

"Though our brother labored and associated with the lowly, he was, in his dress and general appearance, neat and respectable. In his intercourse with men, he was very polite; and was much respected by people of all classes and denominations.

"Brother Burton was a very temperate man. He was a Nazarite. He would neither drink wine nor strong drink, although the temperance cause had not at that time come into being. I attended a wedding in Halifax, where our respected friend officiated. After the ceremony, cakes and wine were handed round, to the guests. He took of the cake, but left the wine. The very smiling and smooth tongued young lady, who brought it, said, 'Mr. Burton do take a glass of wine.' But he objected, and said, 'Miss, please to excuse me, I have no occasion for wine.' But she still lingered and pressed him, 'Oh, Mr. B. do take it, it won't hurt you, I am sure.' He replied, 'perhaps not, Miss; nor do I think it will do me any good.' 'Oh,' said she, 'you know Paul recommended it to Timothy.' 'Yes,' said our friend, 'but it was a little, a very little wine, and a great deal of water. Besides, it was for his stom-

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VI.

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

LETTER L.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES OF JOHN CRAIG—JOHN BURTON—AND PETER CRANDAL.

My Young Friend,

Thomas Ansley's name is next in order, but I must postpone my account of him in order to avail myself of the assistance of an esteemed brother, from whom I expect some valuable information.

JOHN CRAIG's settlement at Ragged Islands, and his ordination there, in 1804, have been recorded in a former letter. He persevered in the faithful discharge of duty as long as strength remained. The last time he attended the Association was at Cornwallis in 1832. It is stated in the "Observations" appended to the minutes of 1833 that Mr. Craig was "very aged and infirm, and consequently almost unable to preach or administer ordinances, except at his own residence." But he was privileged to witness a revival in the church, under the ministry of Anthony V. Dimock, by whose instrumentality many souls were converted. Fifty-two baptisms were