

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. VIII....No. 22.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1863.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVII....No. 22.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VIII.

From A. D. 1850 to A. D. 1860.

LETTER LXX.

REMARKS ON FATHER MANNING'S TALENTS AND CHARACTER. NOTICE OF SAMUEL ELDER.

My Young Friend.

The testimonials to Father Manning's excellencies, contained in the documents which have been placed before you, might be regarded as sufficient illustration of his character. Considering, however, the prominent position which he held, and the influence which he exerted over the denomination for many years, it seems desirable to add a few particulars which may serve to complete the portraiture.

Although Mr. Manning was not an educated man, in the technical sense of the word, he was well-informed on many subjects, and had read extensively. He occupied a respectable place among the self-taught. Hence he succeeded well as a school teacher, when, in the early years of his public labour, it was necessary to engage in that employment on account of the scantiness of his ministerial income. In addition to the ordinary instruction given in the Common schools he taught surveying and navigation, which of course indicates some acquaintance with mathematics. His historical knowledge was accurate.

By reading, observation, and reflection he attained clear and comprehensive views of truth. Accepting, generally, the statements given in the "Declaration of Faith and Practice," as comprising a brief summary of the distinguishing tenets held by our denomination, he thought out the whole for himself, and claimed the liberty to adopt such modes of expression as appeared best suited to set forth scriptural verities. They were not unfrequently remarkable for originality, point, and force. Without entangling himself in the meshes of metaphysical theology he contemplated with deep interest and delight the various aspects of the divine character, presented in the scriptures, and expatiated on them in strains of pathos and sublimity which would have been listened to with admiration by men of the highest culture. And yet his was the language of emotion as well as of intellect. The heart was as fully engaged as the understanding. What he explained so clearly and so well he felt in all its power. The daily entries in his Journal showed that he was one of those who had received the truth "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

No one who knew him, however brief the acquaintance, could doubt that he was a man of independent mind and sound judgment—one who would be careful in forming his opinions and fearless in uttering them. His advice was often sought in difficulties. In his pastoral administration he was conservative of order and regularity, and unremitting in kind attentions to the afflicted. All saw and felt that he was a faithful friend, a wise counsellor, and wihal apt at command. And there was a union of the tender with the stern, of humility with firmness. It casual observers thought him rough and unyielding, those who were favoured with his friendship bore testimony that his seeming hardness was chastened by christian graces, and that he esteemed others better than himself, and walked humbly with God.

The impression produced by an interview with him in 1846 was thus described in the *Montreal Register*:—"Father Manning has been a tall, strong man, capable of great exertion. He has been a strong-minded man, too, familiar with massive thoughts, and accustomed to enunciate weighty truths in a clear and forcible style. It is sufficiently manifest that he has never sought the aid of ornament. It was enough for him to embody his conceptions in plain and impressive words, looking for the result to that Great Being whose almightiness he regarded with profoundest reverence, and on whose faithful

promises he could confidently rely. The fulfilment of those promises has now been realised by him during more than fifty years' labour, and is still enjoyed. * * At first sight there is an apparent sternness in Father Manning's countenance and manner, which may induce some to think him deficient in the gentler graces. This, however, is a mistake. I had frequent opportunities of observing the kindness of his disposition. The last interview was very pleasing. 'Have you a family?' he asked. On my replying in the affirmative, he added, 'May the Lord bless you,—personally—domestically—ministerially—and eternally!' So we parted.

Mr. Manning's labours were excessive. For more than thirty years his ministerial field embraced the whole Township of Cornwallis, thirty miles in length. The work was exceedingly arduous, and the facilities for performing it were very different from those of the present day. Dwellings were more scattered, the roads were worse, and the accommodations sometimes very plain and primitive. Lord's day-services—prayer meetings and lectures on week-day evenings—weddings—funerals—and constant visitation of the sick, in such an extensive district, involved exhausting toil, which only a man of iron constitution could long endure. Referring to these efforts he penned the following statements in his Journal, Oct. 7, 1833:—

"I am now in the 68th year of my age. Have been forty-four years endeavouring to recommend the Saviour to my fellow-creatures;—have travelled, by land and water, on foot and otherwise, more than 50,000 miles: have preached about 9252 sermons;—have attended about 457 conference or church meetings:—have baptized about 500 persons;—have attended more than forty Councils;—have assisted in the ordination of about twenty-five ministers;—have preached fourteen or fifteen ordination sermons;—have preached about 176 funeral sermons, and married about 450 couples;—and have expended more than £1500, private property, for the support of myself and family, that I had before and since I engaged in the ministry. Have seen much trouble, but have experienced much comfort, and many friends; and many that I took to be friends I have found to be enemies; and the greatest enemies that I ever had have been professors of religion. I have been much indulged in witnessing the revivals of religion in different places, which I have had some share in—in not far from fifty towns or districts. And now, glory to God in the highest! there is a reformation in this church, which makes nine quite considerable revivals in this place since I first visited it. Seven ministers have been sent out by this church, and there are four or five more now that are coming forward in the ministry."

The numbers given in this extract would be greatly enlarged if we were able to continue the record to the time of the venerable man's withdrawal from public labour. We can do it in one particular: to the five hundred baptisms may be added two hundred more, previous to the association of Mr. Hunt with him in the pastoral office. The entire results of his work in Cornwallis were of the most gratifying nature. The Baptist church, as we have seen, was formed in 1807. Its beginning was small, but before the first pastor died he had the satisfaction to see three other churches spring from it, and at the Association held in 1850 the four churches contained 955 members. Thus the "latter end" did "greatly increase."

Mr. Manning's journal furnishes abundant proof of the strong attachment which he bore to the church. He could fully adopt the Apostle's language—"Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." He loved to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." The sick experienced his peculiar sympathy, and were soothed by his prayers and consolations. His tender regard for them led to the following remarks on the want of consideration sometimes manifested on such occasions:—"March 11, 1828. There is an evil in this place, I could wish was remedied—that is, people showing their friendship by visiting the sick. A number, perhaps, will go to visit the sick—perhaps in the forenoon. The family where the sickness is, already worn out by continual attention to the sick, and other duties, have a double task upon them—to get dinner, take care of

horses, &c, together with waiting upon them in various ways—and the poor sufferer is almost killed by their unwise and impertinent loquacity. I am so much disgusted with such a show of friendship, in such a cruel manner, that I am much displeased with it. I wish that some skillful nurse, or medical gentleman in the name of a nurse, would write a treatise upon the best method of treating sick people by their kind friends." This was thirty-five years ago. Matters have greatly improved since that time.

Identified with the Baptist cause in this province for so long a period, Mr. Manning was frequently consulted on occasions of perplexity or peril, and was expected to take part in all transactions effecting the welfare of the denomination. He engaged in the educational scheme with all his heart, as did all the old ministers. He was well-informed on the subject of missions, and cheerfully co-operated with members of other denominations in promoting the circulation of the Scriptures. His exertions in the Temperance cause have been noticed at length in a former letter.

His ministering brethren always received a cordial welcome, and many hours were profitably spent with him in conversation on various religious topics, or on the state of the churches. Such interviews he greatly enjoyed. While much deference was paid to his decision, and he was treated with uniform respect and veneration, there was on his part a considerate kindness which endeared him to his brethren. And he was a very candid hearer. His observations on sermons preached by other ministers, contained in his Journal, evinced a just estimate of their talents, and a desire to encourage his fellow-labourers.

The young sometimes stood in awe of him. But he generally succeeded in gaining their confidence, for they saw that he took delight in administering instruction, removing difficulties, and dispelling their doubts and fears. Earnest inquirers after truth and humble seekers were wisely and tenderly dealt with, and were glad to repeat their applications for advice and help. "I am much pleased," he said, "to have young converts modestly inquisitive."

Mr. Manning abhorred all manifestations of the artful—the self-seeking—the conceited—the hypocritical. Men of such temperaments found in him, something like a "discerning of spirits," and they quailed before him. They could not withstand the piercing glance of his eye. They trembled at his rebukes. Some thought him severe at such times. But they knew not how he struggled with himself—how deeply conscious he was of his own imperfections—how he prayed and strove against his besetting sins. "Have thought much," he observes, "of the manner of reproving. Think that great care ought to be observed in reproving a culprit; let them be ever so atrocious—that an undue severity should not be mingled with the reproof. I fear I never reproved with that meekness of wisdom that I ought to. O Lord, I beseech thee, make me meek and humble, that while I live I may reprove sin and pity the sinner. O for this grace! Amen."

His desire to be useful to souls showed itself continually. He was ever on the watch for opportunities to speak for the Lord. His speech was "with grace, seasoned with salt." "Stopped at several houses," he writes, to inquire after their spiritual welfare, but could not go in. A word spoken to them out of the carriage, while they are standing at the door, when one cannot go in, does good. O that God may enable me to work while it is day, for 'the night cometh, when no man can work.'"

Such was Edward Manning. He was "of note" among his brethren, and still "his praise is in the churches." He was in the eighty-fifth year of his age when he died.

SAMUEL ELDER died May 23, 1852. Although his ministerial life was spent in New Brunswick, yet, as a native of Nova Scotia, and one of the honoured alumni of Acadia College, a notice is due to him here. He was a son of the Rev. William Elder, and was brought up amidst religious influences of a high order. Early converted by divine grace, he consecrated himself to the Lord's service, and resolved, in order to the better performance of the work that might be assigned him, to secure the fullest possible

cultivation of his mental powers. He matriculated in Acadia College in June, 1840, and graduated in June, 1844. His College course was a distinguished success. He drank with avidity of the streams of knowledge, and so conducted himself, in all respects, as to be universally esteemed.

Mr. Elder was endowed with poetic talent, and would have gained no mean place among the bards of Nova Scotia if he had devoted himself to "the service of song," secular or sacred. His efforts in that line indicated genius, refined taste, and great skill in the selection of words and the use of appropriate imagery. Several of his compositions were much admired. At the Anniversary of 1843 he recited a poem entitled, "External nature coloured by the soul's own emotions," which won him great applause. His subject the next year, when he graduated, was, "The Exodus of Israel," and his verses on that occasion were said to contain striking passages, rather solid than sparkling, yet fully expressive of the emotions which the theme was calculated to excite.

His ordination took place in November, 1845, at Fredericton, N. B., where he became pastor of the Baptist church, and lived in the affections of his people. They highly prized his ministrations. His discourses were instructive, discriminating, and well adapted to promote the christian education of the church. His mild temper and loving deportment endeared him to all parties.

The work of this young brother was soon finished. His constitution, feeble from the first, sunk under repeated pulmonary attacks. At length he left Fredericton, to pass the winter in a warm climate, and took up his abode at Philadelphia, in which city he died, having received during his illness the kind attentions of ministering brethren and other friends. The Lord was with him as he crossed the river. His end was peace. He lived but thirty-five years.

Yours truly,

May 25, 1863.

MENNO.

"I don't like my business."

There is no greater fallacy in the world than that entertained by many young men that some pursuit in life can be found wholly suited to their tastes, whims, and fancies. This philosopher's stone can never be discovered, and every one who makes his life a search for it will be ruined. Much truth is contained in the Irishman's remark: "It is never easy to work hard." Let, therefore, the fact be always remembered by the young, that no life-work can be found, entirely agreeable to man. Success always lies at the top of a hill; if we would reach it, we can do so only by hard, persevering effort, while beset with difficulties of every kind. Genius counts nothing in the battle of life; determined, obstinate perseverance in one single channel is everything. Hence should any one of our young readers be debating in his mind a change of business, imagining he has a genius for some other, let him at once dismiss the thought as he would a temptation to do evil. If you think you make a mistake in choosing the pursuit or profession you did, don't make another by leaving it. Spend all your energies in working for and clinging to it, as you would to the life-boat that sustained you in the midst of the ocean. If you leave it, it is almost certain that you will go down; but if you cling to it, informing yourself about it till you are its master, bending your every energy to the work, success is certain. Good, hard, honest effort, steadily persevered in, will make your love for your business or profession grow; since no one should expect to reach a period when he can feel that his life-work is just the one he could have done best, and would have liked best. We are allowed to see and feel the roughnesses in our own pathway, but none in others; yet all have them.—*Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*.

If thou hast an angel's tongue, and a devil's heart, thou art no better than a post in the crossway, that rots itself to direct others; or a torch that having pleased others with the light, goes forth itself in smoke and stench. To speak well, and do ill, is to build up heaven with the voice and hell with the conversation.