

Christian Messenger.

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.

The Resurrection of Nature.

I looked! and the trees were all leafless and bare,
And thought, as I gazed, that no life could be there;
I heard wind and rain through the dark branches
blend,
Like the wild wail of grief o'er the grave of a friend.

I looked! and the streams could no longer be seen,
All faded and dead, were their margins of green;
Lee-locke'd, and o'erspread with a mantle of snow,
No more could my ear catch their musical flow.

I looked for some bird of the bright Summer time
They had hasten'd for life to a sunnier clime;
No song could I hear, silence round me was spread,
Like that which broods over the tombs of the dead.

I looked forth again! there was hope in each sound,
Mild breezes blew softly, and sweetly around;
From the vales and the mountains, the snows passed
away,
And my heart newly thrilled with fresh gladness,
that day.

I looked! in her glory the young Spring was here,
Her melodies sweet, softly fell on my ear;
They pass'd through the vales! white re-echo'd the
hills,
I heard her sweet notes in the murmuring rills.

Oh! yes, she was out, in the life giving breeze,
Her emerald robes decked the whispering trees;
Sweet Spring was abroad! and all Nature look'd gay,
And the red-breast had come with his musical lay.

I looked! and the meek little violet blue,
From the bosom of earth, first peep'd timidly
through;
In beauty refined, like the delicate form,
Which lives, when the mighty are crushed by the
storm.

I looked! and the maidens were out in the wild,
Where Acadia's Mayflower in loveliness smiled;
Midst the soft moss they search'd, 'neath the
shadowing pine,
As man does for gems in the depths of the mine.

New Spring in her beauty, has pass'd from the
bowers,
And Summer is here, with her music and flowers;
Her odoriferous breath loads each whispering gale,
Even now, I her rich mingled incense inhale.

Yes! earth is in all her bright jewels array'd,
Her diamonds and rubies, around are display'd;
She smiles in her beauty, she gladdens our eyes,
And hymns to her mighty Creator arise.

To me all these beauties are blended with gloom,
They are all deeply tinged, with the shade of the
tomb;
When scented laden zephyrs diffuse their sweet store,
My thoughts are with one who inhales them no more.

With one from whose eyes the life-lustre has fled,
All sunk and closed, in the sleep of the dead;
The flowers which last year, were a crown for that
brow,
Are blooming above her dark dwelling place now.

The breezes that played with her beautiful hair,
Which fanned the white brow of the youthful and
fair;
Now make the young grass springing over her, wave,
And sigh through the branches that shadow her
grave.

The birds sweetly trill, but she hears not their song,
All Nature has wak'd, but Death's slumber is long;
Alas! she is wrapp'd in a silence so deep,
Earth's music may never awake her from sleep.

Will radiance revisit those eyelids no more?
And is there no power can that ruin restore?
Must death the dread spectre, these active limbs
chain,
And o'er her forever a conqueror reign?

Thank God! for the hope which the gospel inspires,
Of a life everlasting when Nature expires,
Of a future when Death shall no longer enchain,
And life's mystic lamp be rekindled again.
Onslow, August 7th.

HOME.—A modern writer has designated
home as 'Heaven's fallen sister,' and a delight-
ful truth is shrouded in the title. A Christian
home should be a heaven begun on earth; the
happy abode of warm and loving hearts, think-
ing, working and sorrowing together; all melted
down by grace, and uniting together in love.
Our duties are like the circles of a whirlpool,
and the innermost circle is home.

In weighing ourselves in the balances, we must
not go to our neighbor's scales, but to the king's
standard.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VIII.

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

LETTER LXXIV.

HARRIS HARDING.—SILAS VIDITO.—JOHN FERGU-
SON.—THEODORE S. HARDING.—REMARKS.

My Young Friend.

HARRIS HARDING died March 7th, 1854.
His early career has been sketched at considera-
ble length in former letters. Converted at the
age of twenty-two, he served God on earth dur-
ing the long space of seventy years, and preached
Christ nearly as long, having entered on the
work almost immediately after his conversion.
He laboured steadily in Yarmouth fifty-seven
years, and may be considered as the founder of
the Baptist interest in that town and county.
"In these immediate parts," the Rev. J. Davis
observed, in his funeral sermon for father Hard-
ing, "where there did not exist a single Baptist
church, there have now been organised nine
churches. These were reported at our last Asso-
ciation as containing upwards of twelve hun-
dred members. Such are the results which con-
nect themselves with the pioneering labours of
the departed."

It is unnecessary to furnish any lengthened
view of father Harding's life and character, as a
Memoir, by the Rev. J. Davis, is shortly to be
published, which will no doubt contain a large
amount of valuable information.

One who met him in 1846, at Bridgetown,
when the Association was held there, wrote
thus:—"One scene will not be soon forgotten.
At the close of the introductory sermon father
Harding rose to address the congregation. He
was evidently labouring under strong emotion.
His exhortation was chiefly addressed to the un-
converted portion of the audience, and was
founded on the parable of the marriage of the
king's son. He told his hearers that in all proba-
bility he was addressing them for the last time.
His bowels yearned over them with strong com-
passion. He feared that many of them were
not only destitute of religion but opposed to it,
and that they would enter into eternity without
the 'wedding garment'; and he solemnly warned
them to flee from the wrath to come. While he
was speaking, 'the fire burned'—his whole soul
was enkindled—words followed each other so
rapidly that distinctness of utterance was almost
lost—his voice faltered—tears ran down his
cheeks; and when he sat down, exhausted by
the effort, agonising concern was depicted on his
countenance. I think I see him now."

Mr. Davis's account of the venerable man's
death-bed experience is very interesting.

"He complained, at the commencement of his
fatal illness, that 'he could not see Jesus;' was
not favoured, that is, with so much of spiritual
enjoyment as he could have wished. Subse-
quently, as the 'outward man perished. . . the
inward man was renewed day by day.' His
body had lost its force—his mind its tone—he
was the wreck of his former self; but, as the
needle still trembles towards the pole, so his
heart still trembled towards his God. How often,
when we have gone to see him, has he magnified
the grace of God in choosing him, making him
all that he had become, and assuring him of sup-
port and deliverance to the end. 'I know not
why God has chosen me,' he would constantly
repeat. 'I am sure I never chose him. Noth-
ing was ever farther from my heart. And
never, never did I dream of becoming a New
Light preacher. I should have thought of flying
to the moon first. But he has chosen me—cho-
sen me for his own name's sake—for reasons ta-
ken out of the depths of his own heart. Yes! he
loved me because he would love me; and that
is all that I know about it. And for that reason
he called me by his grace, and taught me to
tell his love to others and blessed my poor la-
bours, and kept me to this day, and will not let
me go. No! he will never leave me, and never,
never, NEVER forsake me. Blessed be his pre-
cious name for ever!' And then, overcome by
his utterance and his emotion, he would fall back
on his pillow, and pant for breath, and shed
tears of holy gratitude and joy. Of en, too,
would he speak of Christ as the only foundation
for a sinner's hope; true to his prevailing idea

of "the Lord our righteousness." Then, again,
he would speak of the necessity of an interest
in Christ. "Oh! what should I do without
Christ now? was an expression frequently
upon his lips. Among the last utterances that
we heard from him, he spoke of "God over all
—God all in all—blessed for evermore." Of
the same kind were almost his last words, so
far as they could be gathered. He breathed out
thus his parting spirit into the bosom of Christ;
for he it is of whom Paul speaks as "God over
all, blessed for evermore." Thus he died as he
had lived; and resting upon the arm of his Al-
mighty Friend, he has joined "the spirits of
just men made perfect" in the presence of God
and the Lamb.

Multitudes of all denominations attended his
funeral. Mr. Davis preached the sermon, from
Gen. xlix. 18.

The following inscription is engraved on the
monument erected to his memory:—

IN MEMORY OF

THE REV. HARRIS HARDING.

Born Oct. 10, 1761. Died March 7, 1854.

For nearly seventy years,—sixty of which were
spent in this neighbourhood,—he proclaimed the
gospel which he loved, with unwearied diligence and
extraordinary success. Mr. Harding first visited
Yarmouth in 1790. In 1797 he came hither to labour
steadily in the gospel. In 1827 he, and his church,
the members of which resided in all parts of the
county, united with the Nova Scotia Baptist Associa-
tion. At his death he was the senior Pastor of the
first and second Yarmouth Baptist Churches.

This monument is erected by the inhabitants of
Yarmouth and vicinity, and by members of the vari-
ous churches which participated in the labours of the
departed, as a testimony to the worth of the man, the
graces of the christian, and the usefulness of the
preacher.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the bright-
ness of the firmament, and they that turn many to
righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel
xii. 3.

SILAS VIDITO died April 3, 1854. His con-
version took place about the year 1836, when he
joined the church at Nietaux. He began to
preach in 1843, and was ordained at Maccan
Oct. 5, 1848. His ministrations there were much
blessed, afterwards he laboured for a short time
at Hammonds Plains. At the close of 1852 he
removed to Waterborough, N. B., where his
public engagements terminated. Symptoms of
pulmonary disease appeared, and he returned to
Nova Scotia, to endure a lingering illness and
then to die among his friends. As "flesh and
heart failed," he experienced the strong supports
of divine grace, and was enabled to possess his
soul in patience till "the weary wheels of life
stood still." He was forty-two years old when
he died. A funeral sermon was preached by
brother W. G. Parker, from 1 Cor. xv. 54.

Mr. Vidito was an acceptable preacher, and
met with encouraging success in his ministry.
He was eminently qualified for "parlour preach-
ing," as it has been sometimes called, embracing
opportunities for conversation with individuals
on the state of their souls; in many instances
he was singularly useful. This is an enviable
gift.

JOHN FERGUSON died February 10, 1855, in
the 65th year of his age. He was one of those
who left the communion of the Episcopal
church and assisted in forming the Baptist
church in Granville Street, Halifax, in 1827.
Ten years afterwards he engaged, with an-
other brother, still surviving, in the management
of the *Christian Messenger*, to which object the
remainder of his life was chiefly devoted. The
principal part of the burden fell upon him.
How well he conducted that periodical—what
tact and judgment he displayed—what union of
firmness with courtesy—what promptitude in
seizing occasions—what zeal for the denomina-
tion, coupled with true christian charity—and
how successfully he laboured, till at length the
Christian Messenger became a welcome visitor
to Baptist families generally, is known through-
out these provinces. By means of the paper,
Mr. F. exercised a powerful influence in all our
churches, and to a considerable extent moulded
their opinions and directed their movements.
His influence in the Granville Street church was
also great, though he held no office. He knew
how to govern without being seen in the go-
vernment. Undoubtedly he possessed a large
measure of administrative talent, and he en-
deavoured to employ it for those ends which he
judged to be most consonant with truth and
righteousness, and the welfare of the cause.

His colleague in editorial labour expressed his
own views and feelings on the occasion in the

following terms:—"Throughout his illness, and
until almost the moment of his departure, the in-
terests of the cause of God and the welfare of the
Baptist Denomination rested continually on his
mind, and we feel assured that among the deep
and fervent, though silent prayers, that he ap-
peared to be offering up during the last strug-
gles of dissolving nature, many ascended to the
throne of grace for the churches and people, to
the promotion of whose interests so large a por-
tion of his time and thoughts were devoted, and
perhaps we might say, his health and life in some
measure sacrificed. A close and intimate christi-
an friendship of more than thirty years, and a
joint participation in almost every important
matter connected with the general welfare and
progress of the Baptist Denomination during by
far the greatest portion of that time, entitle us,
we trust, to express ourselves thus plainly and
strongly on this distressing occasion; and under
the influence of such feelings we think we shall
not be blamed in saying, that as regards the
Baptists of Nova Scotia, there was 'no man
like-minded, who naturally cared for their state.'
Days and nights of unceasing toil were given to
their interests, in the firm and unwavering con-
viction that the cause of truth and of God was
deeply involved in their progress and success."

This event led to a change. The *Christian
Messenger* passed into the hands of the present
proprietor and editor, and enjoys, I believe,
an increasingly extensive circulation.

THEODORE S. HARDING died June 8th, 1855.
His conversion and early religious history were
recorded in my thirteenth letter. Further par-
ticulars respecting his public life, with a sketch
of his character, will be found in Dr. Cramp's
Introductory Sermon before the Central Asso-
ciation in June, 1855, printed in the *Christian
Messenger* for July 24. Should these letters re-
appear in another form, those statements will be
incorporated. It will only be necessary to notice
here are additional fact or two.

On the thirteenth of February, 1846, the
completion of father Harding's fiftieth year of
public labour at Horton was celebrated with
great demonstrations of joy and affection. It
was a jubilee season of high interest. The pro-
ceedings commenced with a donation visit
at the pastor's residence. This occupied the
morning. The great gathering was held in the
Academy Hall, which was densely crowded.
After partaking of refreshments, which were
amply supplied, the meeting was called to order,
and excellent addresses were delivered, by Pro-
fessor Crawley, the Revs. Messrs. Knight, C. De-
Wolfe, and Allison (Wesleyan Ministers), and
the Revs. D. Harris, I. E. Bill, and S. T. Rand.
A valuable historical paper on the rise and pro-
gress of our denomination in this province was
read by Professor Chipman. Professor Pryor
presented to father Harding, in the name of the
Church and Congregation, a large family bible,
accompanying the presentation by some appro-
priate remarks.

Seven years afterwards (1853) another dona-
tion visit was paid to the aged servant of God,
on his birth-day, March 14th, when he com-
pleted his eightieth year. His friends mustered
in great force, and gifts of various kinds were
presented, amounting in value to upwards of
£60. A congratulatory Address formed part of
the proceedings, which elicited a characteristic
reply. That day twelvemonth, the freewill-offer-
ings were repeated.

"The final decline" (I quote from the Intro-
ductory Sermon above mentioned) "began to
show itself early in 1854. He experienced a
serious illness in the spring of that year. Though
he recovered from that illness his strength was
manifestly failing. Another attack occurred in
September. In that month also his beloved com-
panion died. He was greatly supported un-
der the loss, but he felt it more than was com-
monly supposed. He was so far restored as to
be able now and then to take some part in pub-
lic exercises, and he preached two or three
times, but as winter approached, he was confin-
ed to his house. All saw that he was gradually
descending the valley, yet he himself cherished
a hope of recovery almost to the last. Perhaps
this prevented in some degree that conversation
with him as with one who was about to depart,
which would have elicited an expression of his
views and feelings in prospect of the future.—
Nevertheless, he was always prepared to converse
as far as his strength would allow, on the truths,