

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. VIII....No. 12.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 1863.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXVII....No. 12.

## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

### "Let there be Light."

Let there be Light,—when worldly care  
Assail this weary heart;  
To save me from the tempter's snare,  
Thy grace, and truth impart.  
When to thy word I turn my eyes,  
With ever fresh delight,  
And look upon thy promises,  
O Lord! let there be Light.

Let there be Light, when round my head,  
The angry breakers roar,  
And all is wrapt in gloom and dread,  
On life's tempestuous shore.  
When in the fiery furnace, guide,  
My fainting steps aright;  
Let not thy presence be denied,  
My God! let there be Light.

Let there be light, when death's dark shade,  
Thy messenger, shall come,  
And when I, through his friendly aid,  
Shall safe arrive at home,  
When piercing through the darkest gloom,  
To eye of Faith, seems bright,  
The very terrors of the tomb,  
O! then, let there be Light.

Halifax, March 12, 1863. J. S.

### The Need of Jesus.

"Unto you who believe he is precious." 1 Pet. 2: 7.

I need thee, precious Jesus, for I am full of sin;  
My soul is dark and guilty, my heart is dead within;  
I need the cleansing fountain, where I can always flee,  
The blood of Christ most precious, the sinner's perfect plea.

I need thee, precious Jesus, for I am very poor;  
A stranger and a pilgrim, I have no earthly store;  
I need the love of Jesus to cheer me on my way,  
To guide my doubting footsteps, to be my strength and stay.

I need thee, precious Jesus, I need a Friend like thee—  
A friend to soothe and sympathize, a friend to care  
for me.

I need the heart of Jesus, to feel each anxious care,  
To tell my every want, and all my sorrows share.

I need thee, precious Jesus, for I am very blind;  
A weak and foolish wanderer, with a dark and evil  
mind:

I need the light of Jesus to tread the thorny road,  
To guide me safe to glory, where I shall see my God.

I need thee, precious Jesus, I need thee day by day,  
To fill me with thy fulness, to lead me on my way:  
I need thy Holy Spirit, to teach me what I am,  
To show me more of Jesus, to point me to the Lamb.

I need thee, precious Jesus, and hope to see thee soon,  
Seated with a rainbow, and seated on thy throne;  
There with thy blood-bought children, my joy shall  
ever be

To sing thy praises, Jesus; to gaze, my Lord, on thee.

## Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

### The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VIII.

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

LETTER LXVI.

SUBJECTS OF THE CIRCULAR LETTERS.—VARIOUS  
QUESTIONS PROPOSED TO THE ASSOCIATION.—  
REMARKS ON THEM. A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION.

My Young Friend,

It will be advisable, I think, to place on  
record the subjects discussed in the Circular  
Letters of the Associations during this  
period.

#### WESTERN ASSOCIATION.

- 1851. JAMES REID. Encouragements and Expectations.
- 1852. JAMES PARKER. Uncompromising adherence to the truth of God as revealed in his holy word.
- 1853. R. W. CUNNINGHAM. The Christian war with error and sin.
- 1854. J. C. MORSE. Love, faith, and humility.

- 1855. N. VIDITO. [Subject unknown, as the Letter, owing to some mismanagement, was not printed].
- 1856. S. N. BENTLEY. Revival of religion.
- 1857. A. MARTELL. Missions.
- 1858. C. TUPPER. The reciprocal duties of parents and children.
- 1859. T. A. HIGGINS. Church discipline.
- 1860. A. H. MUNRO. How can our Churches be made more efficient for the accomplishment of the divine purpose?

#### CENTRAL ASSOCIATION.

- 1851. G. ARMSTRONG. The times, and our duties in relation to them.
- 1852. A. S. HUNT. The low state of religion in our Churches, with hints for its revival.
- 1853. J. BANCROFT. Importance of entire obedience to the authority of the Great Head of the Church.
- 1854. J. M. CRAMP. Church discipline.
- 1855. S. W. DEBLOIS. Special duties arising out of revivals.
- 1856. D. FREEMAN. The need of the aid of the Holy Spirit in promoting the spread of the Gospel.
- 1857. J. M. CRAMP. The obligations connected with church fellowship.
- 1858. W. CHIPMAN. The importance of inculcating pure Baptist principles, and of unity of sentiment in our denomination.
- 1859. W. BURTON. The duty of a regular attendance on the public worship of God.
- 1860. R. McLEARN. Holiness.

#### EASTERN ASSOCIATION.

- 1851. D. W. C. DIMOCK. The possession and manifestation of true christian character, as a means for promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom.
- 1852. M. ROSS. Christian union.
- 1853. J. FRANCIS. Differences of opinion in regard to measures not incompatible with Christian union.
- 1854. J. SHAW. The Personality, Deity, and work of the Holy Spirit.
- 1855. [Writer's name not given]. United prayer for the increase of gospel ministers.
- 1856. D. LAWSON. Christian benevolence.
- 1857. D. McKEEN. Earnest piety the need of the Church.
- 1858. E. F. FOSHAY. Church discipline.
- 1859. D. W. C. DIMOCK. Our educational interests.
- 1860. J. REID. Christian consistency, zeal, and activity.

These Letters, you will observe, were chiefly of a practical character, and were adapted to promote intelligent piety and usefulness in our churches. There is reason to fear, however, that the Circular Letters are read by very few persons. It would be a preferable arrangement if they were printed in the tract form, and a copy furnished to every member of the churches comprised in the Associations respectively. There would be no objection, I presume, to a small payment; a cent apiece would be amply sufficient for the purpose.

Questions are sometimes asked by the Churches in their letters to the Associations, the answers to which embody general principles, define the usages of the denomination, or recommend measures, which, if the recommendations are adopted, may become denominational. It will be proper to notice some which engaged the attention of the Associations in this period.

At the meeting of the Central Association in 1852 the "Committee on Questions in letters" suggested to the churches "the desirableness of periodical revision of their list of members, in order that all cases of removal, as well as of irregular conduct, may be duly dealt with from time to time, and that the statistical returns may be confined in as faithful records:"—and a resolution was passed, recommending the churches "to give testimonials to those who leave the country, or the district where they reside, and to urge them to join other churches as soon as possible."

These were efforts to cure evils of long standing. The returns from some of the churches were glaringly erroneous, the numbers reported being far in excess of those who were actually in fellowship. Persons

who had left the country long ago and had not applied for dismission were still retained on the church list, and thus an incorrect view of our numerical strength was given. There has been considerable amendment in this particular, and our statistics may now be regarded as generally reliable; but the attention of church officers should be frequently called to the subject, to prevent a relapse into old faults.

In the following year a similar Committee gave utterance to this opinion:—"That whilst the commission to minister is broad, embracing the whole world, still we think it is a want of christian courtesy, which must produce alienation and discord, for one brother to establish preaching stations in districts under the ministerial charge of another brother, unless invited by the pastor and church to do so."

There is a due regard, in most instances, to brotherly obligation in this matter, and cases of wilful infringement must be very rare, perhaps never occurring among us. But if any part of a district presents openings for ministerial labour, and the pastor of the church situated in the district is unable to supply the need, or fails to do so, a neighbouring pastor may, if he thinks fit, ask the consent of his brother to his occupancy of the field, and so far manifest "christian courtesy." It might be too much to expect that he should be "invited" to fill up the lack of service, and it would be certainly unreasonable to require him to wait for such invitation or to refrain from labour if he does not obtain it; for a dog-in-the-manger policy is possible, even in the nineteenth century.

The Western and Central Associations passed resolutions, in 1854, in reference to a subject which always requires to be delicately handled,—the reception of members who have been excluded by other churches. Circumstances may occasionally occur, in our present state of imperfection, leading to undesired or hasty church censure; and party feelings or personal prejudice may occasionally influence the decision of a church, so that a member may possibly be excluded in the heat of passion, who is still worthy of christian fellowship, and may honourably enjoy it in another community. In such cases reconciliation is sometimes impossible, or it may be inexpedient, for various reasons, to attempt the restoration of the excluded one to the church which expelled him. It may be better, both for himself and the church, that he should seek communion with another body. It would be preferable, indeed, that he should be first restored, if it were only that he might be immediately dismissed, in a regular way, to the other church; but if that cannot be peaceably accomplished, and the case involve no moral criminality, for which due reparation has not been made, the reception of the individual by the second church should not be complained of. I will transcribe the resolutions of the Associations.

WESTERN:—"Resolved, That it is generally not expedient for one church to receive a member excluded from a sister church; yet there may be cases in which the interests of truth and righteousness may demand that a church should receive a member excluded from a sister church; but for the sake of peace and harmony, this, in our view, should not be done without investigating the causes of the exclusion, and making use of kind and christian endeavours to induce the church to renew its action, and reinstate their brother or sister, if it shall appear that the person was unjustly excluded. But if these efforts should fail, the enquiring church may properly, we think, in the exercise of its independence, receive into its fellowship the person so excluded."

CENTRAL:—"Resolved, That all churches are independent of each other in matters of discipline, and are not amenable to each other for its exercise; but that in order to preserve harmony, it is generally advisable that no church should receive a member excluded from a neighbouring church, without such communication with that church as will prevent the reception of the member from becoming the occasion of unfriendly feeling between the churches."

The Report of the Committee of the Western Association, in 1857, contained these suggestions, which were adopted, viz:—

"1. Your Committee recommend that any persons who may leave one of our churches

to join one of another faith and practice, be treated with kindness; but such persons cannot be consistently reported to the Association otherwise than as excluded.

"2. Your Committee are of opinion, that where a church generally agrees to raise the pastor's salary by assessment, it is strictly in accordance with the spirit of our Articles for them to appoint three or more of their members to apportion the sum required of each for his support; and that individuals, who refuse to bear their part are subject to discipline, and, if obstinate, to exclusion.

"3. It appears to your Committee that a church is not justified in retaining members on their record who, after having been repeatedly visited and faithfully admonished, totally absent themselves from the ordinances of the church for years together.

The second of these suggestions invites remark. It may be "in accordance with the spirit of our articles" to assess the members of a church for the support of its pastor; but the previous question is, whether it is accordant with the Christian statute-book—the New Testament? That cannot be proved, I think, unless there be an unanimous agreement to pay the pastor in the way indicated; otherwise, the minority will be taxed by the majority, and will pay "grudgingly, or of necessity," not with "a willing mind." The "willing mind" is essential in this case.

In the same year (1857) the Committee of the Central Association offered the following recommendation:—"We beg leave to suggest that after faithful labours of love having been promptly and patiently used, should the member referred to, still persist "in selling or drinking spirituous liquors freely as a beverage"—the church, after a reasonable time, if no satisfactory change in his conduct is apparent, should exclude him from its fellowship. Ephs. 5, 11-18. 2 Thess. 3, 6-15.

This introduces a debatable point. A vender of intoxicating liquor for beverage purposes would not be tolerated in our churches. Drunkards are excluded by the Christian law. The practice of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks as beverages is all but universal among us. But it is surely very questionable whether it should be made a term of communion. Is there scripture warrant for it? Would it not compel us to refuse fellowship to the members of churches (the English churches, for instance) which we cannot but recognise as churches of Christ? Is it not more agreeable to the principles and spirit of the New Testament to seek the accomplishment of the desired end by persuasion and example?

The Western Association adopted, in 1860, the following recommendations of its Committee:—

"1. If a member of a Church in regular standing, reside in the neighbourhood of another Church, and request a dismission to join the latter, we recommend that the request be at once granted; and in case of its continued refusal, that the latter receive him without such dismission.

"2. In cases of personal offense occurring between brethren belonging to different Churches, we recommend the offended brother to proceed as if both were in the same Church, according to the Saviour's direction, Matth. xviii. 15-17, taking with him Members of the Church to which the alleged offender belongs, and, if needful, bringing the matter before that Church."

The first of these recommendations contemplates a case which it is imagined will very seldom occur. The refusal of a church to dismiss a member who desires to leave it for reasonable cause, and who is "in good standing," must be (in political phraseology) "frivolous and vexatious." Yet, to receive "without dismission" is so obviously undesirable, on account of its tendency to disturb the harmony of churches, that every effort should be made to prevent the necessity of adopting such a course.

The Committee on Questions, in answer to an inquiry proposed to the Central Association by one of the Churches, in 1860, recorded this opinion:—"that unless there be something in the premises unknown to the Committee, it is not expedient on the principles of Baptist Churches to grant a dismission to a member whose only motive in asking it is to avoid communion with a brother with whom