

# Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES  
Vol. XIV. No. 19.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, May 12, 1869.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXXIII. No. 19.

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### REVIEW.

*John Newton, of Olney and St. Mary Woolnoth. An Autobiography and Narrative, compiled chiefly from his Diary and other unpublished documents. By the Rev. Josiah Bull, M. A. pp. 378.—Religious Tract Society.*

The Life of the venerable John Newton, written by Rev. R. Cecil, and published in 1808, has long been a favorite with Christian readers. It is certainly one of the most interesting and profitable volumes comprised in modern biographical catalogues. John Newton was a remarkable instance of the sovereignty and power of divine grace. Raised from the lowest depths of depravity to high eminence in the Great Master's service, he never lost sight of the "rock whence he was hewn," and his walk with God was as humble and holy as can well be imagined. A frequent perusal of his history cannot fail to be profitable.

The editor of the volume before us, whose grandfather (the Rev. William Bull) was one of Mr. Newton's intimate friends, came into possession of important documents, hitherto unpublished, especially a diary kept by Mr. Newton for many years, and containing much valuable information.—These materials have been made good use of, and the Religious Tract Society has wisely adopted the new Life, which will doubtless have a very wide circulation.—Every Baptist minister should procure a copy. Many a deacon, we hope, will enjoy the pleasure of presenting one to his pastor.

One peculiarity in Mr. Newton's course of life deserves to be particularly mentioned. We refer to his unrestrained intercourse with good men of all denominations. The Episcopal clergyman and the dissenting minister were equally welcome at his table. He frequently attended dissenting places of worship, that he might have the opportunity of listening to the sermons of his Independent or Baptist brethren. Sometimes he was found at their Associations; whether he was invited to take a seat as a "visiting brother," does not appear; but it would not have been at all surprising. He was a man of a large heart and fearless independence.

Some notices relative to the Baptists and other Dissenters with whom he was associated will illustrate these remarks.

"Friday, February 22nd, [1765.] Set out this morning at ten,—walked with three or four friends to Mr. James's, near Denton, to meet Mr. Ryland of Northampton, by appointment. Our first interview was an agreeable one. After dinner we had a little congregation. I began with prayer. He preached from Matt. vi. 16; and Mr. Smith of Barton concluded with prayer.—Had a pleasant walk both ways." Page 138. The reference here is to "the Rev. John Ryland, Baptist minister, father of Dr. Ryland,

"Omitted our prayer-meeting to-night, and attended Mr. Bradbury, who preached a very good sermon at Mr. Drake's. I am glad of such opportunities at times, to discountenance bigotry and party spirit, and to set our dissenting brethren an example, which I think ought to be our practice towards all who love the Lord Jesus Christ and preach his gospel without respect to forms or denominations."

"Mr. Bradbury came to me about eleven, and stayed to dinner. I like his spirit well." Page 142. Mr. Bradbury was an Independent minister, resident in London.

"Met Mr. West at Mr. Ryland's, by appointment. Had the pleasure of conversing with many of the deacons, particularly Mr. Hextal, the Independent minister. Mr. Ryland would have had me preach at his house, and the people had been prepared to expect that I should do so; but I thought it better to decline it. The next day (it was Thursday) returned, and brought Mr. West and Mr. Ryland with us.

"Friday. The day spent mostly in conversation. In the evening Mr. Ryland

preached at Mr. Walker's (Baptist) from 1 Thess. iv. 3; a good and seasonable discourse. May the Lord bless it to the hearers!" Page 140.

"Tuesday, Oct. 14, [1766.] Instead of meeting at the Great House, we attended Mr. Hall of Arnsby. He called on me twice, and seems a man of a right spirit." Page 152. Mr. Hall was Father of the Rev. Robert Hall. The "Great House" was a mansion belonging to Lord Dartmouth, and then unoccupied. Mr. Newton was allowed to use it for prayer-meetings.

"Wednesday, Dec. 30th, Mr. Newton went to the Baptist Meeting-House, to hear the sermon to the young people; and on Thursday, 31st, he put off his lecture, not to interfere with Mr. Drake's sermon, addressed to the same class, which Mr. Newton also attended. [Mr. Drake was the Independent minister at Olney.] The sermon at the church was preached on the first day of the next year.

"This custom of preaching to the young at each of the places of worship at Olney continues to the present time, and in the same spirit of accommodation." Page 160.

"There was frequent intercourse and correspondence between the younger Mr. Ryland (afterwards Dr. Ryland) and Mr. Newton. The former had written to Olney in a very desponding tone as to the state of things in the religious world. He speaks of error abounding on the one hand and lukewarmness on the other. He is staggered sometimes, and knows not what to think of things—either Satan or unbelief, or both, say, Christ is asleep, and cares not that the ship is going to the bottom.—To these complaints Mr. Newton thus pertinently replies: 'The ship was safe when Christ was in her, though he was really asleep. At present I can tell you good news, though you know it; He is wide awake, and his eyes are in every place.—You and I, if we could be pounded together, might perhaps make two tolerable ones. You are too anxious, and I am too easy in some respects. Indeed, I cannot be too easy when I have a right thought that all is safe in his hands; but if your anxiety makes you pray, and my composure makes me careless, you have certainly the best of it. However, the ark is fixed upon an immovable foundation, and if we think we see it totter, it is owing to a swimming in our heads. Seriously, the times look dark and stormy, and call for much circumspection and prayer; but let us not forget that we have an infallible Pilot, and that the power, wisdom, and honour of God are embarked with us.'" Page 194.

"Tuesday, June 20th, [1775.] Mr. Newton speaks of a meeting of the Baptist Association at Olney. Of one of the sermons he heard on that occasion he says: 'It was an excellent discourse indeed, and the Lord was pleased to give me some softening and relentings of heart. It is long since I had such an opportunity. O Lord, soften me yet more, and enable me to rejoice in thy peace.' Four of the Baptist ministers dined with him the same day."—Page 211.

"On the 29th [May, 1776], he speaks of the Baptist Association, and of his great interest in the services. Mr. Newton's house was full of company. He preached himself on the following evening, when five or six of the ministers who remained in town came to church. The next morning they breakfasted with him, and, as he says, 'We seemed all mutually pleased.'" Page 220.

"In many ways Mr. Newton endeavoured to fulfil the work given him to do. 'Young ministers,' says Mr. Cecil, 'were peculiarly the objects of his attention; he instructed them, he encouraged them, he warned them, and might truly be said to be a Father in Christ, spending and being spent for the interest of his church.' The case of the Rev. W. Jay of Bath, well illustrates this feature of Mr. Newton's character. Mr. Jay first visited London about this time [1788]. It was customary to hold a Friday morning service at Surrey Chapel. Thither Mr. Newton sometimes went. 'After hearing me,' says Mr. Jay (then quite a young man) 'introduced himself, and spoke

to me in the most kind and encouraging way, and invited me to his house.' He adds, 'On subsequent visits, whenever I could, I went to Mr. Newton's breakfasts, when his conversation was very delightful and edifying. Nothing dull about him, but a good deal of pleasantry and wit, or rather humour.' It may be added here that Mr. Newton was in the habit of receiving ministers and other Christian friends at his house to breakfast once a week, for prayer and the discussion of religious subjects.—To the reminiscences of friends in connection with these meetings we are indebted for the preservation of many of the striking sayings of Mr. Newton.

"We are enabled through the kindness of a friend to give the following characteristic illustration:—'I was present,' says the late Rev. John Clayton, 'at one of Mr. Newton's Thursday breakfasts, and observing that our host had been for some time silent, I challenged him to give his opinion on something or other. "Well," said he, "I will tell you my dreams if you like. I dreamed that I was crossing a sea. It was narrow, but very rough. After long struggling with winds and waves I entered a still and beautiful harbour. I landed, and meeting a grave and affable person I said, "Pray, sir, what is the name of this port?" He replied, "The Harbour of Comfort." "And what is that stormy sea which I have just crossed?" "The Bay of Care." "I suppose this beautiful port can be reached sometimes without such trouble as I have had." "Oh no; it is the will of the Master of the port that it shall be reached in no other way. Through much tribulation you must enter the kingdom." "Surely, Mr. Newton," said I, "you were making this beautiful comparison while you were silent." "No; it came to me in a dream the night before last, and when you rallied me I was thanking God for it." "I wish," said Mr. Cecil, "that we could do awake what you do asleep.'" Pages 295, 296.

Speaking of Andrew Fuller's 'Calvinistic and Socinian Systems compared,' Mr. Newton said—"The author is a Baptist minister, a plain man, unlearned, and even illiterate when he first set out, but of a strong capacity and application. It is an answer indeed: I think strictly unanswerable; nor have any of the party (I think) attempted a reply. It is at once a beautiful summary of Christian doctrine, and the best conducted book of controversy that I ever met with." And in a letter to Mr. Campbell: 'The great and learned doctors dodged Dr. Priestley about in Greek and Latin to little purpose: it was reserved to Mr. Fuller to cut off this great Goliath's head.'" Page 329.

Referring to these meetings at Mr. Newton's house, the Rev. Robert Philip remarks, in his Life of John Campbell;—"It is a melancholy fact—is it not ominous too?—that at this time, 1841, there is no Newton in the church, around whose paternal chair ministers of different denominations meet for mutual edification. 'The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?' There are, indeed, Newtons, Venns, Scotts, and Romaines in the church still; but how changed in spirit! True, their posterity will not have to lament or explain their connexion with Dissenters and Methodists; but neither will history have to tell of their catholicity, except in a sense which will be no enviable distinction when the Millennium dawns." P. 100.

The case is not altered in 1869. On the contrary, the line of separation seems to become more and more distinct. We see sometimes a patronising air on this side, and a cringing attitude on that; and sometimes, a spirit of proud contempt on both sides. "These things ought not so to be." C.

For the Christian Messenger.

### THE GOSPEL IN SPAIN.

A REMINISCENCE, BY REV. S. T. RAND.

In the year 1838 the writer was stationed in Liverpool, N. S. The late Capt. Jacobs was following the sea at that time, and in one of his voyages visited the town of

Malaga, in Spain. While there, three strangers came on board his vessel one day who proved to be Englishmen, in search of an English vessel. They had arrived at this port from an inland journey on foot through a part of Spain; they were on their way home to England, and had expected to meet letters here and money, but were disappointed, and as the next resort they had enquired for an English vessel, and had been directed to Capt. Jacobs. As he and his crew spoke English they had naturally enough, been taken to be Englishmen.—One of the three gentlemen proved to be a Baptist minister from Barnstaple, named Robert Chapman, and the other two were deacons of his church, and the three had been on an exploring expedition in that land of darkness, to ascertain if there was any opening for missions. Capt. Jacobs, who had just recently been baptized, and had united with the Baptist church, gave them a cordial reception, and they were soon friends, and spent several days very agreeably together. On the Lord's day religious service was conducted on board the vessel, and the Lord's Supper administered, a few more fellow christians having been discovered, if memory serves me, but the company was small. But fervent and united prayer was offered up in behalf of Spain. Capt. Jacobs became, from what he saw of Mr. Chapman and from what he heard from him and of him, wonderfully interested in the man. One would have almost thought, to hear him speak of him after his return home, that he had seen an angel. His conversation was spiritual, and his whole tone, look, and manner so heavenly, that he seemed out of the range of ordinary mortals. He learned from the deacons that this was nothing uncommon, nothing assumed, nothing unusual, but the every day character of the man.

Some queer notions had this same Mr. Chapman. While dependant on his people for support he was very particular about the way this support was raised. If a man who was not a believer offered him money he would not accept it. He had a brother, a wealthy man, who had no sympathy with what he considered a wild fanatical notion in his brother about converting the Spaniards, and endeavored to argue him out of it. But finding that his arguments produced no effect, he sent his fanatical brother one hundred pounds to help him stave off starvation and other evils while on that wild expedition. The money was kindly but firmly refused, and politely returned. Assistance from Capt. Jacobs in an hour of real necessity was received as from his Heavenly Father's hand.

Mr. Chapman enquired about the cause of religion in Nova Scotia. He was told the names of two Baptist ministers, and requested to write them a letter. He did so. Here it is:

"To Brethren Crawley and Rand, at Halifax, and Liverpool, N. S.

MALAGA, Sept. 16, 1838.

"My Dear Brethren,—

Grace and peace be with you! It has cheered the hearts of myself and my companions to meet in Spain with beloved brother Jacobs who is one of you. He will inform you of our journey, and the Lord's favor towards us. Those whom God sends into Spain to preach Christ, will find an open door—but there is no room for those who seek themselves and not Christ.

I commend our mission to your prayers and love, and that of all the saints who commune with you. I now return to England, to the flock of which I am Pastor, at Barnstaple, Devonshire. A letter would find me there, and would cheer our hearts. Many churches are with us at Barnstaple, stirred up to seek the welfare of Spain, and glad shall we be to find that dear brethren in America will join us in prayer to God for this guilty and wretched land. Let us take heed that our own high privileges be not abused. It is written,—'Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked'—it's hard to carry a full cup with a steady hand.—The Lord grant us to take up our cross and deny ourselves, to run our race, looking to Jesus, who has entered into heaven itself by his own blood, and who shall soon ap-