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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.
In Memoriam.

B. P. SHAFNER, DIED JULY, 1878.

Thy steps, Oh God! are on mysterious seas;
Thy ways are higher than the ways of men;
And yet, by faith, we know that all of these
Deep providences, hid from mortal ken,
Shape human life, and carve the complete time
Which shall disclose thy purposes sublime.

Thy steps, Oh God! are on the unscanned heights
Of Thy pure heavens of wisdom and of Love,
Where through mid-glooms of shal-low, gleam the lights,
Seen by prophetic eye far, far above
These brooding mists, these sadly sobbing waves,
Which roll and flow above love's silent graves.

I mourn thee, friend and comrade of the fight!
My soul is weary for thee! Who can tell,
If ever shall come forth again to light,
From grief the hearts that loved thee passing well;
Hearts that burned with thy dying spirit's fire,
And looked from ashes, on that light expire.

Soldier, well done! At thy laborious post,
With the day-star of duty in thy gaze
Thou'rt fallen in the forefront of the host
In the beginning of heroic days,
For thee let the strong song of triumph swell
Since thou hast won thy crown and reignest well.

No more, no more our feet shall press the green
Where oft we strayed in lightsome, by-gone hours;
No more we wander by Castalia's stream;
By Hellas' streams to reap immortal flowers,
No more for thee shall Homer strike his lyre;
For thee in vain burns the Promethean fire.

Be thou for aye remembered, year of years,
That in thy course two lives hast stricken low!
Acadia and her son; for whom our tears
Are due, for whom our votive tears still flow!
Lay them to rest—the mother and the son!
Lay them to rest! their days are but begun.

For even now springs from the dust of death
The mighty mother to renew her youth;
Breathes from her lips divine the vital breath,
Breaks from her radiant eyes the light of truth.
He too hath put eternal glory on,
He too is crowned with an immortal crown.

Methinks I see thee still, as thou wert wont
To move and shine, a light to other lives;
The moral prowess, strong to bear the brunt
Of clangorous warfare; the firm will that strives
With Error; the chivalric, loyal grace
Which yields to death, but never to disgrace.

Thou had'st a soul as pure as are the stars
Through which gleams luminous the mind of God,
And all unscarred by passion's fatal wars.
The "Peace that passeth knowledge" streamed abroad
Throughout thy being with song of deep-toned seas
Whose depths profound move with rich harmonies.

Thy Conscience was thy king,—no despot sway:
Duty and Love, one constellation shone;

And like the hoary Monarch of the day,
Gave laws and life from their imperial throne.
Thelawless Impulse and the sightless Will
Bowed down before a force invincible.

The heights thou aim'dst at were the hills of heaven.
What loftier height for warrior or for bard;
What are the bays to fond ambition given?
What wreath can Pallas offer in reward
For gift of toiling soul and throbbing brain,
Which blooms beneath the energy of pain?

Alas! they fade, they fade and pass away!
The music hushes; all the guests depart!
The hollow silence thrills not to the lay;
No triumph-pean sings above the heart
Stricken and bleeding by the dart of death!
Alas! for death Time weaves no laurel wreath.

Not in the brackish pools of lower earth
Didst thou drink death in many a feverish draught;
But wise to estimate essential worth,
Thy soul the wine of the immortals quaffed.
Haply to-day that soul expands in gleams
More excellent than glories of our dreams.

Hushed is the voice for which my strains lament—
The voice that spoke for God on Zion's walls:
Hushed be these chords, with joy and mourning blent;
And hushed the voice that vainly, vainly calls
On the closed grave to render up its dead.
That grave, where lies too deep a darling head.

Hail spirit triumphant! thou hast pierced the gloam
That hovers o'er this twilight realm of fears;
Thou, with earth's kings and heroes, from the tomb
Hast riven the secret hidden from the years:
The veiled Eternities before thy gaze
Stand litten by the Ancient of Days.

Thy steps, Oh God! are in the pathless deep,
Thy purposes too vast for human mind
To trace through present, past, and future sweep
From grief, the hearts that loved the passing well;
Of Time. And now with tears our eyes are blind,
Unseal the vision of our faith, we pray
And shine into our souls with light of day.

B. W. LOCKHART.
Lockeport, August 1st, 1878.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.
Daring Robbery!

"Will a man rob God?"
This world's redemption is God's purpose. The great work must be accomplished by human agency. In the hands of men, but under direction of God, are numerous enterprises which aim at the conversion of all people. There are Foreign and Home Missionary societies. There are city and state missions. Small and great organizations are laboring in their respective fields. But we are reminded again and again that these lack support. The foreign field is white for harvest. Reapers are eager to go out. They cannot. Why? Their is no money to send them!
But does poverty so abound?
Are men anxious, but unable, to furnish needed funds?
The whole Christian world contributes a little more than five million dollars, yearly, toward the conversion of the heathen.
American Christians alone spend five million dollars yearly for tobacco!
"Will a man rob God?" Yes.
A Christian (frequently a minister) will rob God, and take the money to buy cigars!
Benevolent societies, churches &c.,

lack money often. Ministers are frequently harassed, and most successful efforts rendered impossible, because they had not money enough to support their families. They are unable to buy needed books. When the brain is over worked and the vigor of the body spent, they cannot seek recuperation in rest or travel. They cannot afford it. The people say they cannot pay any higher salaries. Why? Is it because they are poor?
Let us consult statistics again. In the United States of America tobacco costs six hundred million dollars per annum.
In the United States of America the salaries of Ministers aggregate six million dollars per annum.
Whenever a dollar is given to a minister of the gospel, one hundred dollars are given to the tobaccoist.
"Will a man rob God?"
Yes, men will rob God and use the money worse than foolishly.
There are many startling facts. Men are defrauding men. The present is a dishonest age. But God is robbed most pitilessly and on the grandest scale. Shall such daring robbers escape blame? Having robbed him on earth shall they glorify Him in heaven?
SYMONDS.

Spencer, Mass., July, 1878.

Half a Century Ago.

The following letter sent by Mr. Angus M. Gidney to Rev. Dr. Tupper, contains some reminiscences of the past which will interest our more advanced readers especially in the West, and, as a page of the History of the Baptists in N. S. will be also acceptable to our younger readers generally:

BRIDGETOWN, July 30th, 1878.

DEAR AND VENERABLE DR. TUPPER,
With much satisfaction have I read your excellent and instructive sermon, preached recently at the Western Baptist Association, and published in the last number of the *Christian Messenger*. It has awakened in my own mind a train of pleasing reminiscences. Though you are several years my senior, the hoariness of seventy-five years is on my brow, and I now rank among the *old men* of the day. Like yourself, I remember something, very much, of the "long ago" struggles, activities and successes of our denomination in this Province. With the exception of Joseph Crandall, I personally knew, and indeed had the privilege of an agreeable acquaintance with them all. For more than twenty years the late Thomas Ansley resided within half a mile of my father's house. I was, therefore, personally cognizant of many of his movements and successes in his evangelical work. The few papers, having reference to his ministry, which he left behind him at his death, were placed in my hands, to aid me in preparing a brief memoir of his life and labours, which appeared in our *Magazine* in the latter part of 1832, or early in the year after.
Besides, the old Baptist Meeting House in this town stood on a corner of my parental homestead. Although our family were then Episcopalians, I, when a boy, more frequently resorted on Sunday to the Baptist house than to the church, which was three miles away. This probably was more attributable to the contiguity of the former than to a decided, conscientious preference. Before I was ten years of age, however, I was deeply impressed with the conviction that *heartless ceremonies*, and the stereotyped formality of ritualism were delusive, and that *vital goodness* alone would stand the test of the "Great Day." I heard much of the "new-birth," of "conviction and conversion," and I early believed that without a divinely wrought *change of heart* there could be no salvation.
As it is my present purpose to make a few remarks which your sermon, referred to, has prompted, I have given the foregoing sketch of my proclivities in early life respecting religious matters,

that you may apprehend the stand-point from which I viewed denominational doings and tendencies in the first two decades of the present century.
In your sermon you state that you were at the Association at Nictaux in 1816. I (then thirteen years of age) was also there; and strange to say, I do not remember to have seen you there; but a few interesting facts, which *then* and *there* occurred, are still unfaded in the green field of my memory; they seem indeed to be ineffably daguerreotyped on the tablet of my heart. I can never forget the devotional fervor, the stirring utterances, and the excitement which characterized that gathering. The spirit of old-time "*new-lightism*" was in the ascendant. The *Clergy* as well as the laity, were, more or less, under the influence of the prevailing enthusiasm. I believed then, and I still believe, that the Holy Ghost was as much moving on the hearts of many in that assemblage as He was on the people at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.
James Munroe, then a comparatively young man, (who afterwards labored so successfully in Colchester) was there, and deeply participated in the excitement. In memory's vision I see him now about half way up the pulpit steps singing with his strong, clear, musical voice, and Scotch accentuation of his words:
"This day my soul has caught new fire;
I feel that Heaven is drawing nigher."
I listened to his joyful strains in a half-entranced mental mood; and I loved the man.
There was a most interesting conversation at that time, of which perhaps you never heard. Mrs. Charlotte Ricketson was a young married woman, then living in what is now called Lower Clarence. She was much afflicted with epileptic fits, and had been on a sick-bed for several months previous to the Association, in a state of alarming prostration and weakness. The neighbors had no hope of her recovery. When she awoke on the Thursday morning immediately prior to the Association, she told her husband, and others around her, that she must get up and dress herself she was resolved to go to Nictaux on Saturday. Her friends remonstrated with her on what they deemed an insane determination. They told her she was too weak for such an undertaking; and that if she were seized with fits among strangers, she would be in a pitiable plight. But all their dissuasion availed nothing. She was firmly intent upon going—and she *did* go. While there she was converted. Body and soul were simultaneously healed. She has long been a widow, and is now over eighty years of age; and from the time of her conversion, she has been a healthy robust woman; and her life-long piety has proved the genuineness of her conversion, 62 years ago. For many years she has resided in the United States. I visited her at Lynn, Massachusetts, a year ago. She was still physically robust, and her mental vigor was apparently unimpaired. Although we had not met for forty years, she at once recognized me, calling me by my Christian name. We had a pleasant and protracted interview. The circumstances of her somewhat remarkable conversion were rehearsed.
I left the Nictaux Association in 1816 on Monday at noon; but I have an impression on my mind that James Munroe, of whom I have already spoken, was ordained by his brethren before that gathering dispersed. (He was C. T.)
The first time that I remember to have seen you was in the autumn following, when you preached in the old house here. My recollection of your youthful countenance, your glowing black eye, and your rapid enunciation, is clear and distinct. Old Mrs. Starratt came to her house just before the meeting, and said "a remarkable boy" was going to preach. I use her exact words. My father though blest with a small share of educational culture, was possessed of strong perceptive powers, and his mental tendencies were thoughtful. Of your preaching on that oc-

casion he said: "That young man will be an orator yet."
Four years prior, to the period referred to, (in 1812) when I was only nine years of age, the Association was in Bridgetown. The Rev. Isaac Case of Maine, then in the prime of life (known afterwards as "Father Case") preached on Sunday morning. I still remember the text: "And Peter went out and wept bitterly." I remember, too, the opening hymn, as well as the tune, which I had heard in singing school the winter before:
"Oh! if my soul were formed for woe, &c." Tune, "Repentance." Taking into consideration my juvenility at the time, I now marvel that my recollection of circumstances on that day is so distinct.
At that Association there was another Baptist Minister from the State of Maine. His name was Hale. He remained in the country a few weeks, and while here, baptized Mrs. Ansley. The Association was held about the 20th of June. Meanwhile, on the 18th of that month, President Madison, at Washington, had declared war against Great Britain. Some *ultra loyal* people regarded Mr. Hale as a possible spy, disguised in the assumed character of a clergyman, threatened to arrest him, and make him a prisoner of war. He kept out of the way however for a short time, and Father Handley Chipman made interest in his behalf, through the members of Assembly for Annapolis and Kings, and from Sir John Sherbrooke, the Governor and military commander in this Province, he obtained a *pass* permitting Mr. Hale to return to his own country, unmolested. I remember clearly to have heard this matter talked of at the time. The facts, I have no doubt, are as I have stated them. I am the only living man, perhaps, who recollects this incident in our Baptist history. In the year 1827, I heard Mr. Ansley narrate it with all its circumstantial particularities.
I grew up into manhood, and having eager literary tendencies, I read almost every book that I could lay my hands on; and thus, unfortunately, I became somewhat familiar with the impious writings of some infidel scribes. My appetites and passions were strong and the aspirations of my depraved pride were so deceptive, that I, a mere ignorant boy, *imagined* that I was a philosopher—in other words, an *infidel*. But I could not be one in *reality*. My early religious convictions would rise up, and overthrow my *real* pride and my *false* philosophy. I struggled thus for years.
At length, about 1828, there was a "great awakening" a marvellous day of divine grace dawned upon the land. It was a day of spiritual light, and deliverance, and it continued for several years in all the western Counties of the Province. Everybody seemed solemnized, and even the most hardened in heart knew that God was in the land. Multitudes were converted, the old ministers in the exuberance of their joy, shouted *Alleluia!* and a number of young men entered the field of evangelical work, and went to and fro, announcing that the blood of Christ, in those who believe, "cleanseth from all sin." In that luminous day of God's power, I experienced something in my own soul entirely new. I felt the emancipating spirit of divine grace, and realized what it is to enjoy a consciousness of forgiven sin and that peace which "passeth all understanding." The spirit of adoption warmed my heart, and I was enabled with reverence to cry, "Abba, Father." In 1831 I joined the church at Nictaux. Oh, how I loved that people! Of all the sanctified host that at Nictaux were then covenanted with each other in church-fellowship, the only survivors now are, I. E. Bill (the pastor), Silas Gates, Daniel Morse and wife, Mrs. Thomas Baker, Harris Ward, the widow of John Dodge, and the widow of Wheelock Chipman. I can remember no more who still linger on "this side of the river." The rest are "all gone. And whither?"