

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Baptist Biddings in Nova Scotia.

No. 4.

Dear Editor,—

Allow me in this number to direct the attention of the reader to the County of Antigonishe and to recount some of the leadings of Providence in producing Baptist Biddings in that neighborhood. We have spoken of Mr. Payzant's labors at Guysborough and the happy results that followed. I might observe that his love for God and the salvation of his fellow-man prompted him to visit any neighborhood that came in his way, and of proclaiming to all "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." And thus many places in the Eastern part of the Province were visited by this servant of God. On one occasion in passing through Antigonishe he had the privilege of addressing a few persons, on which occasion he portrayed the exceeding sinfulness of sin and God's abhorrence of the workers of iniquity, and at the same time the loving compassion of a sin-pardoning God to the repenting sinner. In this assembly there was one person in whose heart the words of the preacher found a lodgement, and who went from the place in great distress of mind. That individual was the late Rev. John Whidden. I will here relate the circumstance in substance as he gave it to me about 43 years ago. He said "in speaking of this discourse" that day after day his mind was overwhelmed with a sense of his sins and that God was truly angry with him so that only the brittle thread of life was keeping him out of hell. While in this distress he thought there was no one to whom he could unbosom the anguish of his troubled mind. At last he resolved to go to the Preacher under whose ministry he had been sitting. But his minister told him that he should not give way to such melancholy thoughts, that they would unhinge his mind for the performance of his worldly avocations, and that he was only writing bitter things against himself, that he had better mix with young company or read some entertaining book and thus drive these thoughts from his mind. He said he told him that he had served the devil long enough, but now he wished to become reconciled to God and to find peace of mind. He therefore retired to a secret chamber and spent his time in earnest prayer and in the study of the Scriptures.

At last light broke into his mind and his soul was filled with joy and peace. He then felt that truly God had pardoned his sins, and in the ecstasy of his soul he thought he would go and tell his minister what a dear Saviour he had found. His minister seemed pleased and advised him to come forward and partake of the Sacrament. But our brother told him that before he partook of the Sacrament he ought to be baptised. But he replied he had already been baptised in his infancy, and that there was but one Baptism. Our brother reminded him that faith should precede, "he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." But he replied he was baptised upon the faith of his believing parents and therefore it would be wrong to repeat it. Our brother said faith was a personal act, "if thou believest," and he was not sure that his parents had any saving faith in the Lord Jesus, and also the mode adopted was not in harmony with Scripture teaching. His minister seeing the ground on which he stood inquired what he intended to do. He told him that he believed it to be his duty to walk in the footsteps of his Saviour by being buried with him in baptism. His minister told him it would be wrong to leave the church of his fathers to unite with another people. But if he wanted to be immersed he himself would do it.

But our brother told him he could not conscientiously receive the ordinance at his hands, that he would be sinning against his own conscience in doing that which he had condemned as being wrong and that it would be wrong on his part to unite with a people who would set at naught his views of Scripture truth, and that such a union would not be for his own spiritual growth. Our brother told the writer that he received the ordinance from one whose views harmonized with

his own. But I do not remember that he named the person. Mr. Weeks in the Christian Messenger of July 3rd, 1878, tells us that it was by Mr. Payzant in May, 1822. Now Mr. Payzant was not at any time in the Baptist Ministry, yet at Guysborough he had immersed those who wished, and they remained in open communion. But the little church at Antigonishe was organised by Mr. Nutter and was never on the open communion order. Brother Whidden, with his wife, thus became the first baptists in this place, and being almost alone had much opposition to contend with. It might be said of Baptists in those days, "As concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against," Acts xxviii. 22. Yet brother Whidden as a man, a gentleman and a christian, won the respect and reverence of all he came in contact with.

The writer in travelling through these Eastern Counties has conversed with men of all modes of thinking who readily admitted that Mr. Whidden's religion made him a good man and one that was beloved in society, but O that deep water baptism of his that is the trouble. Allow me to relate a little circumstance that took place in this village. In those days Bishop Fraser was living, and the writer had the pleasure of an introduction to him and found him very affable and courteous with much of the plain speech of the Scotchman. One day a few persons meeting at a shop, the conversation turned upon the ordinance of Baptism, and our Presbyterian friends thinking that the Bishop would be on their side, agreed to leave the decision to him, but his remarks were a death blow to their expectations, for he said, "If I took the Scriptures as my guide on baptism, I would be a Baptist. But you profess to take the Bible as your guide, but have to come to our church for your Infant Baptism. We hold that the church has the authority to introduce or alter any ordinance that is for the benefit of the church. You follow our example but refuse to acknowledge your indebtedness to us for the instruction." But to return to brother Whidden, as a farmer, mechanic and mill owner he was prosperous, yet it may be said of him he was fervent in spirit serving the Lord. A good share of his time was given to the study of God's word and directing sinners to the Lamb of God. Through his instrumentality the church at Antigonishe was built up, and even the little place of worship in which they met was principally built by his own means and hands, and yet with it all he found time to visit destitute settlements to preach Christ and him crucified. Brother Whidden was ordained to the christian ministry on Nov. 4th, 1833, by J. S. Harding, E. Manning and R. McLearn. Father Harding preached the ordination sermon and the whole service was solemn and instructive, and it may be said that from this time until his death he was always found with his harness on ready to labor in his Master's cause. He proved to be the honored instrument of leading many souls to Christ. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Windsor. L.

For the Christian Messenger. YARMOUTH, Dec. 4, 1879.

Mr. Editor,—

DEAR SIR.—On reading your Temperance Notes in the last issue of the Messenger, I am led to think that you advocate the supporting of the Inebriate Asylum by the Temperance portion of the public.

I as one of the Temperance ratepayers object to being taxed in any manner to support this Institution. If the Dominion Parliament thinks it a remunerative business to import liquors into the country let the Government provide the Asylums for the victims. If the city of Halifax think the business of selling liquors a profitable one, let the city fathers provide for the maintenance of the poor victims of the traffic from the License fund. Is it not enough to ask the industrious mechanic in your city who has to toil all day at his work to provide the comforts of a home for his wife and family, to educate the children (and often to clothe and feed them as well) of the poor Inebriate, who ought to be a producer and a help to the State instead of a Town charge? Is it not enough I ask that Temperance men and women should do this and much more without having to feed and care for the father, who, but for the soul destroying

The Living Christ.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE LOVE WE LIVE BY."

How many of us realise in our hearts a living Christ, a present Saviour? Are we happy? Are we at peace?—not for to day only; not for one favored hour—but, is the peace of God, and the love of God always beaming in our hearts, quiet as yonder sunshine yet just as fresh and beautiful? God wants just such Christians. He desires us to become such; and by His grace we can, every one of us.

There is some power we have not yet discovered, some secret as yet unknown; but, oh, what a marvellous power! what a blessed secret! that can make the Christian life a life of love, and trust, and bright serenity; something different from the duty life, which though real does not satisfy; having all the activity and earnestness of the duty-life, but having with it the peace and joy which many and many a soul is craving. For we speak not to those who know nothing of gladness, those who have no desire to serve our blessed Saviour, but to such as have come to Him and taken up His service. Yet down in their inmost heart still feel a want never as yet supplied. This want comes to us oftenest when we open our Bibles and read the words of the Martyrs and Apostles. Ah, the life of a Paul was not unsatisfying! He had no lack of happiness, no distracting doubts, no weariness in well-doing. If to die was gain, yet to live was Christ. He counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, yet all the while rejoiced "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And his was not a solitary experience. Saint after saint in those ages of the faith, testified to the same blessings. Why is there such a contrast between our life and theirs? Why is there a secret consciousness that even when we take such words upon our lips, our hearts do not respond to them like the hearts of Paul and John? Why is our Christian life such an effort, and often so beclouded that though we would not change it, even in its trials, for any earthly hope, we must sigh and struggle instead of smile; and catch but now and then a little gleam of that sunshine which God meant should light us always? Is there not many an earnest soul to ask these questions? Let us see if we can find no answer.

Surely that answer is not to say that Apostolic times are past, and such faith and love are no more the Christian's privilege. We do say this practically, when we read the promises and mentally reply, "Ah, these are not for me! Ephesians or Colossians might know the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, but that knowledge is denied me. They might be filled with all the fullness of God, but I cannot expect it. Nothing could separate Paul from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, but there are a thousand things that could separate me!" I do not mean that we put this into words; but the thought is in our hearts, and when we do put it into words, though we are ashamed of it, we still feel it. But is there any objection on God's part to give us the grace He gave Paul? Is Christ less willing or less able to make us happy? Is he reluctant that our joy should be full? Common sense, as well as common piety, must tell us, No; yet under common sense rises up again the fact, we are not happy, our joy is not full; and if God is willing to give us these blessings, why do we not receive them? Neither is it a very satisfactory answer to say that the fault is in ourselves. This we are generally ready to admit, both from an inward feeling of condemnation, and the conviction that it would be extremely wicked to deny it. But after all, this is not so much answering the question as putting it in another shape. Why is it our own fault? Why are we unable to say with Paul, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus?"

It is the very object of all our Christian efforts to drive this sin from our hearts; why is its dominion yet unbroken? Christ has declared to us, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." We are trying to follow Him; then why is not that light always beaming on our pathway?

Let us take our Bibles and turn to God's promises. Here is one well known

to us, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." We have read it a hundred times, but—here is the question—have we believed it once? These yearnings of our souls after goodness, these earnest wishes to be conquerors of sin, these are the hungerings and thirstings of which Jesus speaks. Have we ever truly believed that the promise would be granted us? Have we ever actually expected to be filled? We have prayed for it, it is true; but did not a secret undercurrent in our prayer run very much after this fashion? "O God, I beseech Thee grant this blessing! I do need it very much; but I have very little hope Thou wilt ever give it to me. Thou hast promised it, indeed, but I doubt most painfully if I ever shall obtain it." Or perhaps you have taken the promise, "Ask and ye shall receive!" and the undercurrent of that prayer has been, "O Lord, I ask for very great blessings; but, Lord, I do not expect the blessings I pray for. I implore a great deal but I have no idea of receiving more than a little. I ask of Thee bread, and though I do not think Thou wilt be cruel enough to give me a stone, yet I know that I cannot reasonably look for more than a few crumbs."

Let us examine our own hearts, and see if this is not often the measure of our faith. And can we wonder then that only the few crumbs have been given us? Did Paul pray like this? If we offered our requests to an earthly friend, in such a strain, would he not turn from us in displeasure? Let us think of that wonderful rule, "According to thy faith, be it unto thee!" Have we not had a private version of the promises, something in this wise, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall go on hungering and thirsting?" "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you"—rest? No;—"I will give you strength to continue laboring and bearing burdens?"

And, when we look over our lives, can we not see that according to our faith so it has been unto us? We have gone on hungering and thirsting; we have had just enough strength to labor and bear burdens.

Why do we not believe these promises? First, because they are so great, so glorious, that we fear to take them to ourselves. It seems too good to be true, to think that they are meant for us. And then we go on to reason in this way: "Hundreds of people have prayed for these blessings, and have not obtained them; why should I be more fortunate than they?" True, hundreds of people have uttered such petitions; but how have they prayed? Was it not often the lazy wish?—like the poor idler who might say, "Oh, that I were rich and fortunate!" yet sit with folded hands; the desire for riches real, no doubt, but not strong enough to excite him to any action. Or was it not the faithless wish?—"Would God might give me peace, but I have no hope that He will!" Did we ever know of anyone who sincerely went to God with the prayer, "Lord, I beg Thee to help me! I trust not in my own strength, nor in anything but Thee; but Thou hast promised to help those who call upon Thee, and I believe from my heart Thou wilt." Did we ever know of anyone who prayed like this, and was unanswered? Never in the universe! Or, again we say, "I have prayed myself, and God has not heard me." Did we ever pray, trusting simply in God's promise, and He turn a deaf ear? Many a time we may have said,—

"Lord, I my vows to Thee renew; Scatter my sins like morning dew. Guard my first springs of thought and will, And with Thyself my spirit fill.

"Direct, control, suggest each day All I design, or do, or say; That all my powers, with all their might, In Thy sole glory may unite!"

Many a time we may have said this, and earnestly desired it. But did we ever confidently expect and believe that God would actually do those very things which we asked for? If we had believed it we must have rejoiced. Gratitude unspeakable would have thrilled our hearts to think that such blessings were positively to be ours. Our irrepressible song would instantly have been, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name!" Can we not see that such a faith has seldom been our own? Is not this sufficient explanation why we have prayed apparently in vain? God has never promised to answer anything but the prayer of faith. He may indeed hear other prayers, but He has never pledged Himself to do so. The condition is simply, "What things ye ask, believing, ye shall receive."

policy of our Government, both past and present, and your city laws, these same fathers might be sober and industrious, acquiring property to be taxed to help bear their fair share of all legitimate city burdens.

We in the country have our own battles to fight, and a hard fight it is to keep rum and its like out of our midst, so long as the law allows it to be brought into the country.

Yet we have some pity for your rum cursed city, and I hope the day is not far distant when this Province will elect a sufficient number of men, good and true, neither Grit nor Conservative, who will enact a law prohibiting the sale of alcoholic liquors throughout the Province. No exceptions for Halifax. This ought to be, and I hope is, the determined aim of every total abstainer.

As regards the action of the Brothers in Truro I am proud of them, and no Temperance man worthy of the name visits the rumseller in prison, those who do are in sympathy with the business, notwithstanding what they may profess. I have seen professing temperance men, and they as a class are more injurious to our work than rumsellers.

PROHIBITIONIST.

[We had no idea of support for the Inebriate Asylum coming from Temperance men, except in the way of voluntary contributions. We shall be glad when our city is free from the liquor curse, like some of our rural districts: The "professing temperance men" to whom our correspondent alludes are, we presume, those who make such profession, yet who do not abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks.—Ed. C. M.]

In Memoriam.

MRS. SOLOMON BOWLEY

died at Lakeville 10th inst., aged 39 years. When but nine years old, she gave evidence of a change of heart, and though at the first, her parents were in doubt as to the propriety of so young a person uniting with the church, fearing she could not understand the responsibility of such an act, yet the evidence of her love to the Saviour was so clear, that the pastor, Rev. Mr. Stronach, advised her parents not to object; and by him she was buried in baptism, and united with the church, of which she continued a member, giving evidence by her life of the reality of her trust in Christ, until her release from the sufferings of this life, to join the company of "the spirits of the just made perfect." Her sufferings, only about four days, were very severe, but her confidence in Christ never failed, her faith was triumphant over all fear, all that were dear to her in the flesh she commended to her Redeemer, and in triumph exclaimed, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day." She anticipated no long period of unconscious slumber in the grave, but exulted in the hope of an immediate union with the Lord. "Let me die the death of the righteous, let my last end be like hers."—Com.

Billtown, Nov. 22, 1879.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

GLENWOOD, YARMOUTH COUNTY.—Readers of the Messenger will be glad to learn that the Lord is visiting His people in this locality where Brother E. P. Coldwell, Licentiate, has been laboring with acceptance for some time past. In the month of November the Rev. H. N. Parry, of Chegoggin, preached on Tuesday evening, and as a deep interest was immediately awakened a series of meetings was commenced. On the second Sabbath the Rev. H. N. Parry baptised eight rejoicing converts, and on the Thursday following five more. The good work is still going on, and there is every prospect of others being added to the church. Brother Coldwell, who is deservedly esteemed in the community, is much encouraged in his work.

J. CLARK.

KINGS CO. MINISTERS' CONFERENCE.—The Baptist Ministers of Kings Co. held their monthly meeting at Canning, Cornwallis, Dec. 2nd. The attendance of Ministers was small. This was much regretted, as the friends in Canning were anticipating a large meeting, and made ample provision.

The morning session was devoted to prayer chiefly. Just before adjourning, the minutes of the Nov. meeting were read by the Secretary and approved.