

Sunday Reading.

For the Christian Messenger. Call Them In.

BY THE REV. J. CLARK, NICTAUX.

Call them in! Call them in! from the world's broadway; The poorest, the greatest, the least; Call them in! Call them in! from the by ways of sin; Call them in! to the Gospel Feast. Call them in! Call them in! They have wandered far; No excuse can be made for delay; They are tempted without; they are trembling in doubt; Call them in! Call them in! while you may. Call them in! Call them in! for the night drawn near; And the storm will be fearful and wild; With souls all aflame, in the dear Lord's name, Call the father, the mother, the child. Call them in! Call them in! ere in justice supreme, The Master shall shut to the gate; And to all who shall cry, there will come the reply: FOR EVER, FOR EVER TOO LATE!

Centennial Sermon.

PREACHED IN THE FALMOUTH BAPTIST CHURCH, ON THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE REV. HENRY ALLINE, FORMERLY OF FALMOUTH, ON SUNDAY, FEB. 3, 1884.

BY REV. JOSEPH MURRAY.

"Write blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."—Rev. xiv. 13.

If there be one fact more clearly stamped upon the pages of inspiration than another, it is, that God has not only purposed and planned, but has appointed special agents to fulfill his designs. Pharaoh—was raised up that all the earth might behold the power of God upon him. And Moses was summoned from Midian to be the executor of the terrible retribution. Daniel was dragged into captivity to cleanse the disolute court of Babylon. A Saul of Tarsus to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the Gentiles; and the lowly mod-st maiden of Nazareth to be the hallowed mother of Jesus. Just as assuredly also was the now sainted Henry Alline called of God to preach Christ and him crucified throughout these lower provinces. It was a time of dense spiritual darkness, and deadly formalism; but he who flashed the divine light into the heart of the poor monk o Germany, and commissioned him to break the papal yoke from the neck of Europe, laid his hand upon the proud heart of Henry Alline, and made him the instrument of salvation to many souls.

We will now consider our subject under two leading thoughts, dying in the Lord; and the blessedness arising therefrom:

Ist. What is it to die in the Lord?

The text and context are in vivid contrast. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb."—"Write blessed are the dead from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them." The one is Mount Gerizim shouting its blessings to the obedient; the other Mount Ebal hurling back anathemas upon the disobedient. The former is the cross and the expiring Saviour breathing to Heaven his dying orison, "Father forgive them they know not what they do," the latter the cowering priests and darkened heavens and darker hearts of his murderers. Oh, death is a terrible curse! Do you need proof? Go look upon that dying man, with emaciated cheek and palled lips, Hear him moan: "Must I die? I want to see the green fields and fruitful earth again, I want to stay longer with my family and friends." What are these words but the voicing of an instinctive desire to live? An inherent dread of the changes and separations of the dying hour! Death does violence to all these longings of our nature. It is thrust among our earth joys, like a rude hand among the delicate strings of the harp, snapping them asunder. Earth's sweetest harmony ends in a wailing dirge at its approach. It was intended to be a curse. An awful penalty at-

tached to a law, to force men to walk in the way of obedience. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." It is your disobedience which causes your death. "I have sinned! I have sinned," cries the guilty soul. "O death where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin." Ah my friends do not flatter yourselves that you can live in utter disobedience of God's commands and enjoy a happy death. Blessedness is for those only who die in the Lord. Hope is so strong and is so affected by feelings that it often acts without reliable foundation. When our friends die, we cast a veil over the darker phases of their character, and paint the opposite side in rose colors. Whether they left any proofs of genuine repentance or not, we would fain have them "Safe in the arms of Jesus." In our efforts to comfort the bereaved we may speak unadvisedly. There is danger of leading the ungodly to believe that no matter how they live, death will conduct them safely to heaven. I greatly fear that many are prevented from consecrating their lives to God, by the false charity which pronounces the unconverted dead safe in heaven. I beseech you, do not offer the sinner a premium for procrastination. Do not help him down to the pit.

But our text leads us to consider the blessedness of dying in the Lord. And as a first step towards this desirable issue, Christ says: "Ye must be born again." You cannot enter the christian's grave without first having the christian birth: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Dignity—fortitude—beautiful words and willingness to die, are vain in the dying hour, unless "Christ be in the soul the hope of glory." "I am the resurrection and the life" says Christ, "he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live." Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you are safe. There will be no death for you. You may be smitten down suddenly. What matters? A few sharp pangs, then eternal glory. Oh weary-fainting christian, battling with doubts—difficulties and fears, lay your aching head and heart upon this pillow of God and be at rest.

Now let us observe how our text applies to the subject of this Centenary Sermon.

Henry Alline, the son of William and Rebecca Alline, was born at Newport, Rhode Island, U. S., June, 14th 1748, and came with his parents to Falmouth, Nova Scotia in 1760; and settled on the place now owned by Mr. Lewis Messenger. We gather from his writings that he never attended a public school after his twelfth year, consequently his education was quite limited. But possessing a retentive memory and a fondness for reading he became better educated in the direction of his life work than many who enjoyed higher literary advantages.

At a very early age he began to be anxious about his soul's salvation. Sometimes so wrought upon that he was on the verge of despair. He says: "Oh! the distressing days, and unhappy nights that I have waded through. Nothing but darkness. Nothing but distress and slavish fear. Sometimes when I was wandering in the fields, I would throw myself down on the grass and lament as if I should go into despair and it is a wonder of wonders that I did not embrace my hands in my own blood." So he continued for some years. Sometimes mingling in gay company and scenes of folly, and then retiring to weep and pray a greater part of the night. But the Holy Spirit led him—so long undecided—to give himself up to Christ. The light and joy which succeeded his spiritual darkness was unspeakable and full of glory. Being of an ardent impulsive temperament, he threw open his soul to the full reception of God's love. He says of that moment: "O, the astonishing wonders of his grace, and the boundless ocean of redeeming love. Millions and millions of praises belong to his name! O how shall I make even the least return? O what a wretch I have been to stand out against such love. I have long and often wondered that God did not have mercy upon me and convert me; but now I saw it was my own fault, and wondered why he waited so long upon such miserable rejectors

of his grace. O, how black appeared all my righteousness which I saw I had hugged so long. And O, the unspeakable wisdom and beauty of the glorious plan of life and salvation. O free grace! free grace."

Almost instantaneously with his conversion came the desire to preach Jesus to his fellow men. He wrote in his journal. "In the midst of all my joys, in less than half an hour after my soul was set at liberty, the Lord discovered to me my labor in the ministry and call to preach the gospel. I cried out, Amen! Lord I'll go, I'll go. Send me, send me." So he went "not disobedient to the heavenly vision."

His first sermon was preached in a private house in Falmouth in the year 1776, from Prov. 9:12. "If thou art wise thou art wise for thyself; but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it."

From this time he continued to warn sinners so affectionally, and preached with so much zeal and unction that his enemies in derision called him a "New Light." So dim had become the fine gold, so obscured by rituals and ceremonies was the Light of Life, that this burning bush, so suddenly set a flame in their midst seemed altogether new. But no, it was as old as the altar fire of heaven. Abraham saw it like a smoking lamp moving between the joints of his sacrifice. The Israelites beheld it in the glorious Shekinah which illuminated Solomon's Temple, and Saul of Tarsus in its eternal brightness saw and acknowledged his divine Master. Henry Alline was not a New Light, but a lamp of grace specially burnished and enflamed to show the world and torpid christians the power and beauty of the gospel. He possessed great moral courage, as seen in the bold stand he took. The morning after his conversion he rose early to tell his parents the joyful news. He then took a Bible, read and prayed before the whole family, publicly thanking God for his deliverance.

Oh, that more would follow his example. Alas, that the question must be so often repeated, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" For three years Mr. Alline preached almost daily in Falmouth, Newport, Horton, Cornwallis, Wilmot and Annapolis. Wherever he spoke divine power followed the word and many were hopefully converted. He was eminently adapted to the work of an evangelist. Of a frank open countenance, great fluency of language a voice of remarkable sweetness and power. His singing, especially of his own hymns, was peculiarly attractive. Add to all these an intense longing to save sinners, with a strong faith that God would bless his own word, and you have a combination which few could withstand. However hopeless seemed the prospect upon entering a new field he scarcely ever retired without bearing with him "the God bless you" of new-born souls and the almost despairing cry of sinners: "What shall I do to be saved." The flames of converting grace broke out wherever he went. The secret of his success we learn from his journal—a constant prayer for the presence and blessing of his Master.

On the 5th of April 1779, delegates from Cornwallis, Horton and Newport, met the brethren of Falmouth, to consider the advisability of ordaining Mr. Alline to the work of the gospel ministry. After due and satisfactory examination of the candidate, it was decided to proceed in the ordination on the following day. They met in a large barn on the place now owned by Mr. John Aylward, and after a sermon (we are not informed by whom) he received the imposition of hands. It was simple yet solemnly grand. His Master had commenced his life-work in a stable, and had laid his consecrating power up on Mr. Alline clothing him with the ensigns of his ambassadors! And from this stable bade him go preach his gospel to all people.

Shortly after this he crossed over to St. John and went up the river preaching and exhorting wherever he came. He did not stay long in one place. His soul seemed to be so on fire with Christ's love that he could not rest, but with an indomitable will overcame all obstacles. I am amazed and bumbled when I discover what difficulties he conquered. Much of the time he travelled on horseback owing to the rough roads. But where neither a

horse or boat could proceed he walked, often on snowshoes through the trackless forest, sometimes so weary and far from settlement that he and his guide would sleep in the woods.

Thus he continued to preach, for about five years from the date of his ordination, in many portions of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. His almost superhuman efforts, now began to break down his health, and having a great desire to visit and preach Jesus in the land of his birth, he left Windsor August 27th 1783, for New England. But just before embarking, while standing on the wharf he offered a most touchingly fervent prayer that God would never cease to bless Windsor, Falmouth, and the regions round about. His parting with his aged parents and friends was especially painful, being persuaded that he should see them no more in the flesh. But he was determined to preach Christ as long as strength permitted. Accordingly he travelled and held public services daily until he arrived at the home of the Rev. David McClure of Northhampton, New Hampshire on the 22nd of January, 1784.

On the 25th he preached his last sermon in Mr. McClure's meeting house from Luke xix. 5. From that he took his bed, and, eight days after, he went to meet the dear Master for whom he had so faithfully labored.

When spoken to about his rapidly approaching end, he said "O I long for it, I long for it." Mr. McClure then spoke about the divine support of the promises. "O yes" said he "but the Promiser is greater than the promises, and he is with me." He wished those going to meeting to say for him, "that the blessed gospel which I have preached to them is true: in which they must believe and on the lively belief of which they will be safe in death. O, I long that poor sinners should have such views of the Lord Jesus as I have." His last words were "Now I rejoice in the Lord Jesus"

Such is, so far as we can know without the actual experience the blessedness of dying in the Lord. Contrast such a departure with that of a noted infidel who at the last moment exclaimed "I am taking a leap in the dark." But how little can we know of this blessedness; we have only a few evidences gleaned outside the gate, a few joys that the dying ones behold from a distance. A faint description from human tongues. But what must it be when thoroughly initiated into the pleasures of the heavenly mansions! When the prayer of Christ will be answered, and his people shall behold his glory! Ah! that will be your portion, O faithful child of God. To see Jesus in his kingly robes of salvation,—to be his bride decked in his brightest splendors, sit with him at that royal marriage supper; not till then shall we comprehend the blessedness of dying in the Lord.

II. Now let us consider wherein lies the blessedness of such a death. I That they may rest from their labors. The rest here spoken of, must be comparative. It will be according to labor performed. What can the criminal, pardoned on the cross know of the sweetness of rest compared with the Apostle Paul, who wore out his body in God's service? How can he, who comes into the church and is soothed, carried and fed on the tenderest promises all through life, appreciate or need rest in comparison with the subject of our sketch? Ah! to him rest was sweet indeed. There was no stain on his escutcheon. No rust gathered on his sword. Eight years of incessant toil then the promised rest.

But ceasing from a labor he so ardently loved is the smallest factor in the rest he enjoys. He rests from the opposition, hostility and slander which assailed him on every hand. His clear and pungent style of declaring the truth, and the burning love and zeal accompanying it, were so different from the common usages of the day, that Satan was thoroughly roused to malignant opposition. After Mr. Alline had preached a few times in Windsor, a mob of about twenty men, some of them with drawn swords, and using most profane language, surrounded the house where he was staying, and threatened to kill him. His friends advised him to slip out the back way and escape; but he refused saying, "I was called

here of God and I will stay here till duty calls me away." Afterwards contrary to all the persuasion of his friends, he went out among them? and when one of the ringleaders drew his hand to strike him, he took hold of his coat and entreated him to consider what he was doing, and so conquered them by love. It was not the rabble only that insulted him, but those who claimed to be the servants of Christ openly and privately denounced him. One of those so-called pastors of the flock—rode twenty miles to persuade the people that Mr. Alline was a vile impostor. Others endeavoring to crush him circulated some of the most malicious lies that could be invented. When advised to put the law in force against them, he refused, but carried his trial to a higher court—the court of Heaven! and invariably his character was clearly vindicated and the Redeemer's cause advanced.

What a sweet rest it will be, when God's servants are forever free from sin in themselves and others! Free from hard-wearing toil! Free from the opposition and slander of ungodly men! Some of you have been striving for a perfect service. Take heart my brethren, the time shall come when through Christ Jesus you shall love and serve God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. For the law is a barrier to sin only. In heaven sin is banished and the law lifts the soul to the heights of perfect and eternal freedom. Servant of God rest: rest!! Thy work was faithfully done. Thine enemies are gone. No more can they oppose thy work.

"Nor cause a wave of trouble roll Across thy peaceful breast."

But we cannot help comparing those stormy times with our own halcyon days. Why so great quietness. Because we do not labor hard enough to alarm Satan. I knew of a young man who struck an axe into his limb while in the lumber woods. His friends bound up the wound as best they could. In the night one of his comrades asked "are you easy?" He answered "I am afraid I'm too easy." And so it proved for unknown to them his lifeblood had been silently ebbing away through the night. So I say of our spiritual state. "I am afraid we are too easy." The world, the flesh and the devil—a monstrous triple vampire is slowly sucking away our lifeblood. Can we, O my brethren, claim or expect the rest for the weary? Oh that God would enflame our hearts with a holy enthusiasm.

The blessedness of dying in the Lord is also seen in the fact that death is the only opportunity for resting. It is sent to the laborer that he may rest. It becomes a friendly servant delivering the kindly message—"Come to the supper for all things are ready." The ghastly frown is stript from his face and a smile stamped in its place. We are so fearful that we can scarcely believe it. But faith in God and the weariness of the soul and body disarms our fears. A man may so need rest that he will lie down in the drifting snow, though assured it will be his winding sheet. The apostle scarcely knew whether to choose life or death. To die was indeed gain. The Master has many weary toilers in his vineyard. By and bye the home-call will come. A lingering disease, a fit, steamboat disaster, or a railway collision, and they are gone. The spectators with blanched faces cry: "Terrible! terrible!" But the time for rest had come, and they could not stop for it while they lived. "That they may rest from their labors." My brethren would you not enjoy being in the midst of some glorious hard work when the call comes? I think I would. Go like Stephen from the pulpit to the coronation. Mr. Alline enjoyed this privilege. Friends advised: "Henry, do not work so hard. Do rest and take better care of your health;" but his only answer was another sermon, another warning to sinners. He saw men in such danger of hell that he could not stop. He would not rest till death came.

2. Another result of dying in the Lord is, their works do follow them. It is well to bear in mind that works as well as souls are immortal. An act may seem to be a trifle, and be quickly performed, but its influence may go ringing down the ages like a chime of heavenly bells. A poor widow wrap-

ped in her veil timidly passes through the Temple throng, and unobtrusively drops her two mites into the Lord's Treasury. It was a simple deed of righteousness; but our Saviour caught the act in the doing and stamped it with immortality. A word is spoken or a deed performed by which a Whitefield is saved. He in turn leads hundreds more to Christ, and they in turn carry forward the glorious work. How that first act multiplies itself. Surely "their works do follow them." Who can possibly estimate the works of Rev. Henry Alline sermons and prayers and tears? He was preeminently an Evangelist; and his burning words kindled anew in Falmouth a fire, that I trust will never be extinguished. Many have been encouraged and strengthened by reading his journal and hymns. One of which was composed and sang at the deathbed of Mrs. Benjamin Cleaveland. It shows that the author was no mean poet. One verse of it is to me particularly suggestive and beautiful:

"Let me feel the pleasing rapture, Rising in immortal birth; I shall have no grave to enter, Never feel expiring breath; Life eternal; life eternal, Swallows up the grave and death."

Another way in which a man's works follow him, is when those whom he has been the means of saving will follow him home to glory. Many of the redeemed after they have cast their palms of victory at the feet of Jesus; and join in the chorus of "crown him, crown him Lord of all," will turn to David and tell him how his psalms comforted them in the house of their pilgrimage; then to Isaiah and thank him for his evangelical prophecies; and the evangelists for their sublime pictures of Christ's character; and Paul for those letters of his, without which the churches of Christ could never have lived amid the gales and currents of false philosophy. And then, with souls filled with seraphic joy they would seek out the sainted ones who had brought them to Jesus. Oh, what a blissful meeting that will be. No wonder that Bunyan said: "When I had seen I wished myself among them." What a host will gather around Henry Alline and Whitefield and many others who have faithfully preached Jesus.

The old Roman conquerors suspended in the temple of Jupiter the pieces of armor which they had stript from their slain enemies. They were proud of their trophies. But I hold up before you grander deeds. See you those faces of supernal brightness in the heavenly mansion? They were lifted from the gulf of sin by tired trembling-human hands. Do you wish to win such trophies for the temple of your God? You may have them. They wait the conquering hand of Christ's love. Lay hold of them in your homes, fields, workshops and stores, and by God's grace, ere long, you shall see and hear them among the glorified.

There have been many severe things said and written about Mr. Alline because he applied the term "non-essential" to some of God's most precious doctrines and ordinances. But it must be remembered that his knowledge of the essential elements of a church of Christ was sadly deficient. That in his day great spiritual darkness and laxity prevailed; and that his burning desire to save souls caused him to neglect other matters, however important. We would not magnify his errors into mountains, nor extol them into angelic excellencies. A century has thrown much light upon the deep things of God's word. The churches were struggling through a transition period. Many heterogeneous elements were crowded into it. Some members had been poured upon, some sprinkled upon and others immersed. It is not to be wondered at that Mr. Alline met with divisions, breaches and heartburnings on every hand. It would have been strange indeed if these disorders did not grieve one so desirous of snatching men as brands from the burning. In vain he cried "peace, peace." There could be no peace till the gospel order was restored. To-day the sainted Henry Alline holds the truth in the face of Jesus; and we have come to the knowledge that all God's ordinances and commands are essential to our spiritual life, both as individuals and churches.

One hundred years ago to-day the Rev. Henry Alline was laid to rest in a quiet graveyard in New Hampshire. We will not take the place of hero worshipers and exalt him to the pinnacle of perfection; neither will we ever forget the debt of gratitude which through

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