

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. VII. No. 11.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1862.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVI. No. 11.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

The People who "waited for the Book."

Long had they roamed o'er Burmah's hills,
A people rude and wild,
Lone wanderers in the pleasant land,
That but for them had smiled;
Ere stranger feet had sought its shores,
And trod its jungles wild.

They waited long with weary heart,
They waited long, sad years,
For light to shine from distant lands,
And shed its beams on theirs;
Dreaming that when the white man came
His words would soothe their cares.

And when a white sail gleamed from far,
They watched with anxious gaze,
While hope breathed softly to their hearts,
And told of happier days,
When counsels from the Book Divine
Should guide them through life's maze.

But many a ship had reached their shores,
And many a pale face came,
But still their earnest asking look
Met no kind answering beam;
And hope's faint light above their path
Had almost ceased to gleam.

But He who watcheth o'er His works,
And ordereth all aright,
For those poor weary, waiting ones,
Was working in his might;
And when the appointed time had come,
He sent the glorious light.

He sent at last His chosen ones,
The Gospel seed to bear,
That Burman and Karen alike,
Its priceless joys might share;
And those who "waited for the Book,"
Now read its counsels rare.

From hill and vale, from jungle wild,
From forest depths arise,
The morning and the evening prayer,
The humble sacrifice
Of grateful hearts who love the way
That leads them to the skies.

MAUDE.

Charlotte Town, P. E. I.,
March, 1862.

*As the Karens, with beautiful propriety, are often called.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VI.

From A. D. 1828 to A. D. 1838.

LETTER LIII.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THOMAS ANSLEY—CONTINUED.

My Young Friend,

Mr. Ansley visited New Brunswick in the autumn of 1830. Brother Robinson's account of the visit is as follows:—

"After an absence of twenty-six years Father Ansley again visited Charlotte County. It was then the writer first saw him; and he heard him relate how he was induced to visit it at that time. He stated that he was out in his field in the month of September when a letter was handed to him. It was from an aged brother in the above place, describing the low, scattered state of the people of God there, and urging him to come once more to the field where God had so abundantly blessed him. 'When I had read the letter,' father Ansley observed, 'I felt a power and influence from God on my heart, so that I had to sit down and weep for a length of time.' He said, 'I felt at once the hand of God was upon me, to go again to the field of my former labours, to look after the stray sheep, and build up the tabernacle of David which had fallen down. I returned to my house, and meeting my wife at the door I said in tears, 'My dear, I must go to New Brunswick: the hand of God is upon me, and woe is me if I disobey.'—Mrs. Ansley, when on a visit to this province after her husband's death, told me that at this time for some nights she awoke and heard his groans and prayers. She saw that he must go, although it was late in

the fall; for she observed that he seldom went on his missions without having such exercises of mind.

"He proceeded to St. Andrews, and commenced visiting and preaching in the various preaching stations he had occupied twenty-six years before, and at that time there was only one Baptist church, and no Baptist minister in all Charlotte County. Soon after father Ansley's first visit, in 1804, churches were formed at St. David's, St. Andrew's Bay Side, and St. George, by elders Case and Hale, from the United States. But these churches had all lost their visibility, for want of stated ministers. The church in St. George, however, had been revived by elder Duncan Dunbar, who remained its pastor for some years. Elder Dunbar is now, and has been for many years pastor of the McDougal St. Baptist Church, New York.

"Not one Baptist meeting was regularly kept up in all the county when Elder Ansley commenced his labors in 1830. All was a moral waste and the people of God were scattered like sheep without a shepherd. But many had been praying to God that he would remember his cause, and turn again the captivity of his people. Few men in modern times are better prepared to enter on such a field as that zealous servant of Christ was.

"The news of his arrival soon spread through all that extensive country. Every one when he met his neighbour spoke about the minister he had seen or heard of. He preached almost every day to numbers of attentive hearers. A few months previous to this time I had come from New York to visit friends and old acquaintances who had emigrated from the North of Ireland and formed a large settlement.

Assisted by others I had been holding meetings, and was beginning to be known among the people, when father Ansley came in the neighbourhood. My prejudice was strong against the Baptists, and of course I did not go to his meetings. But he came to see me, accompanied by brother DeWolf, formerly from Nova Scotia, but then living in that country. On their way they called at a house to rest when father Ansley burst into tears. The woman of the house a pious person, on hearing he was a minister, was overjoyed, and also wept aloud. In her native country travelling ministers frequently stopped at her house and preached the Gospel, and now, at her home in the new world, this was like an angel's visit. Neither the aged minister nor the woman knew each others history or creed. When speaking of the circumstance he said, 'I felt that God was in the place, and these words came to my mind—

'Here will I raise my gracious throne,
And reign for ever, saith the Lord.'

"On visiting my house he told me who he was and how he came to be in the place, and asked me to relate my experience, and how I came to preach, and also my views of the doctrines of the gospel—which I did. He preached to the people, and left, not expecting to see me again, as he remarked that he would return to Nova Scotia in a few weeks. But a few days after he came back. I was surprised and glad to see him. It was evening, and I asked him to stop the night. He would not sit down, he said, until he had delivered his message. I had been troubling him. When he prayed or preached he was thinking about me, and about the destitution of that people; and God, he believed, designed me to be a Baptist minister, and preach the gospel, through that country. 'And,' continued he, 'I went twenty-nine miles on my way home, but felt that I must return and deliver this message to you.' He preached the following morning and left, after telling me that when I was ready he would come from Nova Scotia, to baptize me. My change of sentiments and connection with the Baptists have so much to do with these last visits of Mr. Ansley that I am obliged in this account to speak of myself more frequently than is desirable. The effect of his faithfulness on my mind together with the spirit in which he labored and spoke, (he did not argue points) subsequent events explain.

"He returned home, but came the next year to make a last visit, to finish his work on earth and go to his reward. After a lapse of thirty years, I look back upon this man, the men of those times, and the work they did, with the conviction that the world for

ages past has seldom seen men of more consecration to God, more self-denial, love of souls and faithfulness to Christ, than the old Nova Scotia ministers—who are properly called the fathers of our churches.

"At the time of father Ansley's last visit a blessed revival commenced all over the country. On the second Sabbath spent with the people he baptized the writer and a number more. The Sabbath following, about ten were baptized. The work spread. Numbers professed religion in the parishes of Penfield, St. George, and the Bay Side St. Andrews. At the latter place I witnessed an occurrence of much interest. It was the last time I saw father Ansley perform the ordinance of baptism. After baptizing a number of persons, he looked attentively among the crowd along the banks, and then called aloud 'Is brother Thompson present?' A response was heard among the people, 'I am coming'; and a man pale and supported by crutches, approached the administrator.

Father Ansley said to me, 'you will have to come in the water and assist me.' 'No,' said the candidate, 'I am able to go myself.' And so they proceeded into the water—the aged man finishing his work on earth—and his companion, not yet recovered from a lengthened illness. The person whose baptism I am describing was the Rev. A. D. Thomson, who is known to all the churches as a minister of Christ, honoured of God in winning souls."

Brother Thomson has given me some additional particulars. "My own case," he observes, "was somewhat peculiar. I had experienced faith in God's mercy a few years before brother Ansley's two latter visits, and had exercised in prayer and exhortation, and God was pleased to own the means employed to the salvation of precious souls. A number of my scholars were converted, and some of those were the first to obey the commands of the Lord.

"Brother Ansley was passing my school-house on horseback. I went out, and in conversation related my previous religious exercises. Coming to a close, he in a manner peculiar to himself raised his hands lifted his eyes towards heaven, saying, 'Brother Thomson, the Lord has raised you up to go in and out before this people.' Thirty years have now passed away, and the facts or results have fully borne testimony to the declaration.

"I needed much humbling to submit fully to the Saviour's easy yoke. My heavenly Father laid me on a sick bed for three months, where my sufferings had reduced me almost to a skeleton. In these humiliating circumstances I was put in a waggon, conveyed to the water, led down to the liquid grave on crutches, and there immersed in the name of the Holy Trinity. My doctor pronounced me a dead man; but I yet survive and he is no more in this world. Moreover, my baptism under those peculiar circumstances so affected the minds of the spectators that some were stricken as with an arrow from Jehovah, and I have baptized one since who dated her awakening from that event."

I resume brother Robinson's narrative. "Father Ansley, decided to spend the winter in this province. The first arrangement was, to go East two weeks, preaching, and making appointments for me. I was to go West, preaching and making appointments for him. And then we were again to meet, and make further arrangements. It was at the commencement of these labours that he received the summons to go to his reward. He preached at St. George on Sabbath, Nov. 20, and visited Mr. Stewart Seely's family, some of whom were ill of typhus fever. He talked and prayed with the sick—three of whom died. He was taken sick on his way to St. Andrews, but was able to continue the journey till he arrived at Mr. James Russell's, where he received unceasing care and attention from the family, as well as from the young converts in the place." He supposed that he had caught the fever at Mr. Seely's. It might have been so: this, however, is certain, that he had taken cold the day before he visited the family, through exposure to the wet, and was therefore more likely to fall under the influence of infection than he otherwise would have been.

A meeting had been appointed at Mr. Russell's, and the people assembled, not knowing of the preacher's illness. He was very un-

willing that they should be disappointed, and determined to preach, though unable to rise from his couch. It was an affecting scene. Resting his arm on the pillow, he addressed the congregation from Ruth i. 16, 17. He felt that it would be his last sermon, and he spoke with the solemnity and earnestness which that impression produced. The people were deeply moved.

During the greater part of his sickness Mr. Ansley was in a state of lethargy or de irium. In his lucid intervals he expressed his joy in the gospel, and said that it was the support of his soul in the prospect of death. Mr. Robinson says—"I visited him, and wished to remain for a time, but he would not consent, desiring me to go and fill the appointments he had made. When he took leave of me he sat up in his bed and gave me a solemn charge about preaching the gospel. He spoke of some of the great doctrines of grace, and said 'Preach them: man, will oppose, but God will approve.' I left, but a messenger soon followed, with tidings of his death."

His remains were deposited in the burying-ground on Mr. Russell's farm. Mr. Robinson preached on the occasion from Rev. xiv. 13.

When the news reached Bridgetown, it was resolved to request T. S. Harding to visit the church and preach their pastor's funeral sermon. He complied with the request. The sermon was preached on Lord's-day, Jan. 1, 1832. The text was Isaiah xxv. 8. The preacher was in one of his best frames, and was listened to with most solemn attention. Many tears were shed. Many holy resolutions were formed. Much sympathy with the bereaved widow and family was felt and expressed.

The Memoir of Mr. Ansley, in the Magazine, contains an interesting sketch of his character, opinions, and habits. I will give you some extracts.

"The place in which he appeared in the most interesting light was the pulpit. There, at times when his soul was under a divine influence, no person could behold him and hear the sound of his voice with apathy or indifference. Although his natural talents were not above mediocrity, and his education was limited, yet there were moments in his preaching when the lofty tone of his eloquence, the scriptural simplicity of his illustrations, and the style of his address, were apostolically sublime and powerful. His patriarchal form, the propriety of his gesture, and the peculiar expression of his countenance, gave more than ordinary weight to the heaven-born truths that dropped like manna from his lips. When he attempted to preach under a depression of spirit, or when his mind was not particularly quickened, there was nothing very pleasing or profitable in his discourses. This may be attributed to two causes—want of intellectual resources, and a constitutional proneness to melancholy. But when the dew of divine grace were watering his soul, his mind would overleap every impediment, and, as one has observed, 'take a flight beyond his contemporaries.' Perhaps his disposition and gifts did not so well adapt him to perform the duties of a pastor, as to be useful in the character of an itinerant evangelist. The success which attended his labours in the latter capacity incontestably proves that this was the sphere in which divine wisdom designed him to move.

"When he was in the midst of a revival, preaching the gospel of peace and administering the ordinances of the New Testament, he appeared to be in the element in which his soul took its highest and holiest delight. At such times his conversation, his exercises, and even his countenance, indicated the transporting joy that filled his soul, and clearly evinced the divine power that was resting upon his mind. It was his delight to lead true believers into the baptismal waters, thereby conducting them into the visible kingdom of the Redeemer. In the administration of this bible-ordinance, when hundreds were assembled by the margin of some suitable stream, it was delightfully interesting on a shining sabbath, to behold him descending into the water, and there addressing the multitude around him, quoting those scriptural passages which prove the manner in which Christ was baptized, and the mode practised by the apostles.

"In his doctrinal creed Mr. Ansley was