

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
VOL. VII. No. 3.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 1862.

WHOLE SERIES.
VOL. XXVI. No. 3.

Poetry.

Living well.

"He liveth long who liveth well!
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain.

"He liveth long who liveth well!
All else is being flung away;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of true things truly done each day.

"Waste not thy being; back to Him
Who freely gave it, freely give;
Else is that being but a dream,
'Tis but to be, and not to live.

"Be wise, and use thy wisdom well;
Who wisdom speaks must live it too;
He is the wisest who can tell
How first he lived, then spoke, the true."
HORATIO BONAR.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VI.

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

LETTER XLIV.

FORMATION OF THE NICTAUX CHURCH.—THOMAS HANDLEY CHIPMAN'S LABOURS THERE. HIS LAST ILLNESS, DEATH, AND CHARACTER.

My Young Friend,

In my 14th letter I furnished some information respecting the early labours of Thomas Handley Chipman.

He was about thirty years pastor of the church in Annapolis and Upper Granville. In the year 1809 he removed to Nictaux, where he became pastor of the church then called the "Nictaux and Upper Wilnot" church. An account of the formation of that church is given in the first page of the church book. The entry is in Mr. Chipman's writing. A copy of it is subjoined:—

"A number of the old church of Annapolis and Granville living in this vicinity, when the old church concluded to give up the old articles and adopt the new ones, and such as could agree to sign the new (being in good standing), those in Nictaux and upper part of the county, with the advice of their brethren, thought it advisable to form themselves into a church by themselves. Brother Chipman had now moved to Nictaux, and brother Ansley was expected to come and take charge of the church below. Accordingly, June 9th 1810, at a meeting for that purpose, twenty-seven came forward and signed the new articles. They then proceeded to the choice of officers. Brother Chipman was chosen pastor, and brethren Joseph Morton, David Randall, and Isaac Whitman were chosen to the office of deacons." The names are then given, after which the entry proceeds thus;—"We now gave notice that we were ready to receive such as came according to God's appointment. Mary Whitman and Daniel Whitman came forward, and were approved of the church. Lord's day the 10th they were baptized by Mr. Chipman—then with the church came to the Lord's table. We believe the Lord smiled upon us in both the ordinances."

The mention of "new articles" refers to the communion question. Congregationalists and Baptists had been for many years united in fellowship in the church of Annapolis and Granville, but Mr. Chipman concurred with other brethren in discontinuing that practice. "On re-examining the subject of admission to church fellowship," says the author of his "Memoir," in the Magazine, "and finding that no proof could be adduced to show that the apostles ever admitted any to the Lord's supper who had not been previously immersed upon a profession of their faith, he relinquished his former opinion and practice, and adopted the principle of unmingled communion." The Nictaux church joined the Association in 1811.

Although Mr. Chipman did not travel quite so extensively as some of his brethren, his itinerating efforts, especially in the first years of his ministry, were much blessed. He vis-

ited most parts of this Province and of New Brunswick, and shared in the hardships which then fell to the lot of gospel preachers. The church at Yarmouth, in particular, owed much to his zealous endeavours and judicious advice. On several occasions he journeyed in the New England States, and the churches there were greatly edified by his preaching.

In the latter years of his life Mr. Chipman's labours were necessarily confined to his own district. As infirmities grew upon him the burden of the pastoral office became too heavy for him to bear alone. During the great revival which commenced in the autumn of 1828, the ministry of brother I. E. Bill, whose assistance had been obtained, was signally blessed, and he was chosen co-pastor, to which office he was set apart, March 4th, 1829, "having been previously called by the unanimous voice of the church."

Mr. Chipman's health had been failing for some time. After Mr. Bill's ordination he was able to undertake but a small portion of ministerial labour, and at length relinquished it altogether. In the summer of 1830 he rapidly declined. About the middle of August he became so ill that his dissolution was almost hourly expected. Mr. Manning and other friends were sent for in haste; but before they arrived a singular change took place. He had previously sunk into such a state of extreme weakness and nervous irritability that he could not bear the slightest noise. The attendants in the room were obliged to put off their shoes. Talking was a trial and singing could not be endured. Connected with this was a distressing melancholy. Every thing looked dark to him—all comfort had fled. Suddenly, however, the burden was removed. Light from heaven seemed to burst upon his soul. He was filled with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Before, he had been so feeble and helpless that it required five men to remove him from one bed to another; now, he sat up in his bed without assistance, conversed cheerfully and in so loud a tone that his voice was heard all over the house, and even joined in singing the praises of God, with the members of the Church, numbers of whom, hearing of the remarkable change that had taken place, repaired to his residence, to witness the mercy and to rejoice with him. During this interval, too, he addressed appropriate words of admonition or comfort to his sorrowing relatives. Mr. Bill, the "Memoir" states, "was with him at the time in which all supposed he was about to leave the world, and preserved the following sentences that he uttered on the occasion:—To his son Samuel he said, 'I am almost home. Whatever you do, get Jesus for your friend. Do not turn Jesus and his worship out of this house.' He then addressed Samuel's wife, and said, 'You have been a good friend to me since you came here; let it be your great concern to have Jesus for your friend and portion! He then said to his son Thomas, 'I shall soon be with Jesus. You have got a good Saviour; that will bear you safe through all your trials.' To his granddaughter he said, 'Emmeline, get Jesus for your friend, and you will meet me above. He then turned to his daughter, Mrs. Morse, and said, 'Jane, you have been a good friend to me. The widow's God is your God. Trust in him—cleave to him. You and your daughter must keep up family worship, and let your light shine before the world.'"

Mr. Bill's own account of the scene is as follows:—"The night he was supposed by himself and his friends to be dying was a season which I shall never forget. I had been watching around his sick bed much of the time, both day and night, for a number of months previous to this period. He had suffered much pain of body, and although from the first of his illness he had manifested much composure and resignation to the divine will, at times he had complained of the state of his mind. But whenever I mentioned the name of Jesus to him, and assured him that he would soon behold him in glory, his heart would seem much affected, and he would exclaim, 'My sufferings will then be at an end.' But the night he was first supposed to be dying he enjoyed more than ordinary fellowship and communion with his God. He appeared to drink full draughts from the celestial well of everlasting love. He called his family and friends around his bed, (brother William Chipman and myself among the num-

ber) and addressed them in language truly affecting. He told them he was near home, and that he would soon behold the Saviour, whom he had for many years been endeavouring to recommend to others, and join with a number of God's ministers and children, with whom he had sweet communion on earth, in celebrating his praises for ever and ever. He spoke of the gospel which he had preached in strains of holy exultation; and he said he felt it buoying up his soul in the prospect of death; and that if he had a thousand souls in that trying moment he could venture them all upon it. His memory, which had hitherto been much scattered, now appeared lively and strong. He made several appropriate quotations, with much feeling and interest, from different authors which he had read. He requested us to sing some of Watts's hymns; and although until now he seemed so extremely debilitated that the least noise affected him, and he could with difficulty speak above a breath, yet he not only wished to hear others sing, but he raised his feeble voice with ours, and sang aloud the praise of God. He exhorted those around him (suitably to their several characters) in language that was truly sublime and pathetic, as one addressing them from the threshold of the eternal world. His countenance was very expressive of the happy state of his mind:—indeed, I shall never forget the glow of soul which then animated Elder Chipman."

Death was not quite so near as was then supposed. Mr. Chipman relapsed into bodily helplessness, though he continued to enjoy much peace and comfort in the prospect of heaven. He lingered on for two months more, and entered into rest on the 11th of October. His funeral sermon was preached, at his own request, by his old friend Edward Manning, to whom he had assigned Psalm lxxiii. 26, for a text.

Mr. Chipman's natural talents were rather solid than shining. He possessed sound judgment and clear conceptions. Had he been favoured with educational advantages his ministrations would doubtless have been more attractive. But though logical method and order might be in a great measure wanting, his discourses were eminently instructive. He had a special adaptation to the work of building up believers in the faith. He carefully distinguished between genuine and false experience, and knew how to comfort the feeble-minded, reprove the forward, encourage the timid, and guide the perplexed. He was a skillful shepherd, and gave good heed to the Saviour's commands to Peter, to "feed his sheep"—to "feed his lambs"—and thus to care for the whole flock.

One theological peculiarity gave a tinge to his ministry, and perhaps contributed somewhat to lessen its usefulness. Boston's "Fourfold State," a work probably not much read in these days was his favourite book. In accordance with the views propounded by that writer, Mr. Chipman held that a long and trying "law-work," as it was then called, must in all cases precede conversion, and that therefore it might be extremely perilous to administer encouragement or comfort to souls, since the requisite amount of deep conviction might not have been experienced. One result of this theory was that many remained for a long time in a state of uncertainty and bondage, and christian character, if formed, was not outwardly developed till in some cases it was almost too late for the individual to be of much service to the cause of God. Whether there is not now a tendency to another extreme, scarcely less injurious—whether persons are not frequently hurried into our churches on the strength of some sudden gush of feeling; and on very slender evidence of conversion—are inquiries that deserve serious consideration.

Mr. Chipman excelled in devotional exercises. One who knew him well observes;—"He was a man of deep-toned piety—eminent and extraordinary in prayer. He seemed to hold sweet communion with God, and to 'have power' with Him. His sublimity of language—his deep and pungent feeling, in confession of sin and unworthiness, and in entreating pardon and likeness to the Lord—his earnest pleading for the church of God and the salvation of souls, were truly remarkable."

"Mr. Chipman" (I quote the "Memoir")

"was a man of a sympathising and liberal spirit. In one instance, particularly, this was the occasion of involving him in trouble. A member of his church, who was engaged in trade, had become much embarrassed. Elder Chipman, being himself a man of the strictest integrity, and of course not disposed to suspect the professions of others, assisted the man quite beyond what his limited resources would consistently admit, and induced several of his friends to afford similar assistance. The man, however, as we are informed, acted an ungenerous part, by which means Elder Chipman not only sustained material loss, but also incurred the displeasure of some of his friends. But the marked integrity of his motives, and the manifest uprightness of his conduct, subdued the prejudices that were unjustly excited against him, and he was deservedly held in universal esteem, his ministerial labours continued to be acceptable and useful.

"He was also 'given to hospitality.' Many that came from a distance to attend worship were accustomed to receive entertainment under his hospitable roof. He took manifest delight in receiving the people of God and providing refreshment for them. It has been suggested that some people were not sufficiently considerate, but by the frequency of their visits imposed a burden upon him and his family which their income was not adequate to support. He could not, however, even when straitened in his circumstances, endure to see any that were disposed to attend the public ordinances of religion, destitute of accommodation and comfortable entertainment.

"He possessed an excellent gift in private conversation. Redeeming love was his theme. He delighted greatly in the company and conversation of the children of God. Indeed the Editor has heard him complain of his propensity to idolize christians, so that in the satisfaction which he found in their company he was liable to lose sight of their Saviour, and thus, in the issue, to bring leanness into his own soul. There was, however, a savour of heavenly things in his conversation that could hardly fail to impart a salutary influence to those with whom he conversed."

Mr. Chipman was thrice married. He was first united to Miss Mary Huston, of Cornwallis, who died in 1784, when he was absent from home on a missionary tour, leaving four children. Some time afterwards, while on a visit to the United States, he married Miss Jane Harding, of Boston, who proved a true help-meet to him, and an excellent mother to his children. She died in 1813. After seven years of widowhood he entered into the marriage state once more, in the year 1820, when, being again on a visit to the United States, Mrs. Mary Briggs, of Portland, became his companion. She, too, was taken from him. In the year 1826, when he had reached his "threescore years and ten," he was again a widower.

"It was my honour and happiness," said Mr. Bill, "to be personally acquainted with him for some length of time previous to his death; and I can truly say, that if ever I saw one of Adam's race whose soul was imbued with the spirit of Christ, and who, until his latest breath, gave undeniable evidence of the reality and divinity of that religion which he for more than half a century professed and inculcated, it was Elder Chipman."

"We have been acquainted with him," said Mr. Manning, "more than forty years. If ever we have seen any of our race that gave marks of being raised from the ruins of the fall, it was Thomas Handley Chipman—a sinner saved by grace, and a great champion for the cause of God."

The Nictaux church bore testimony to the worth of the departed pastor. In a document forwarded to the Magazine, and "Signed on behalf of the Church, by William Randall, Clerk," the following passage occurs:—"We feel it to be our duty and privilege to express to the religious public the high estimation in which he was held by his brethren while he lived, and the kind remembrance we entertain of his virtues and ministerial labours since his death; believing that many years will roll away before he will be forgotten. The veneration we cherish for his character originated in a knowledge that his life was one of more than ordinary usefulness; for the promulgation, defence, and practice of vital