

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVII....No. 20.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

All's for the best.

Rejoice not thou when dark days come,
For come they surely must,
Nor let misfortune's raging storm,
Prostrate thee in the dust.

Confide in God and freely tell,
The sorrows in thy breast,
Hope and be happy in the thought
That all is for the best.

Have courage in the darkest hour,
And fears and moans despise,
For oft thy sorrows and thy woes
Are angels in disguise.

Let hope and faith within thy soul
Be each a welcome guest,
To whisper to thee, Cheer, cheer up!
For all is for the best.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VIII.

From A. D. 1850 to A. D. 1860.

LETTER LXIX.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JAMES LENT.—DEATH OF EDWARD MANNING. TRIALS OF HIS LATTER DAYS.—REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH.—HIS SERMON AT NICTAUX.—HIS LAST ILLNESS.—RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY PUBLIC BODIES ON OCCASION OF HIS DEATH.

My Young Friend,

Nothing now remains but to bring this history to a close by furnishing brief biographical notices of brethren whom the master summoned home during the last period.

JAMES LENT, pastor of the church at Tusket, died November 13, 1850, after a long and painful illness, in which he enjoyed the support which the gospel affords, and exemplified the power of christian principle in an eminent degree. Mr. Lent had been long known and esteemed in the denomination. He was a man of intelligent piety—humble and unassuming in his deportment—hospitable—kind-hearted—and devotedly attached to our distinctive views. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Education Society from the beginning. Though he had aided the cause in various ways for many years he did not enter the stated ministry till somewhat late in life, being forty-three years old when he was ordained. After fourteen years of useful ministry, during which the church enjoyed several revival seasons, and upwards of one hundred persons were added by baptism, it pleased God to dismiss him from labour. He had lived fifty-seven years when he was called to his rest.

EDWARD MANNING died January 12, 1851. The early history of this venerable servant of God has been given in previous letters; and sundry extracts from his journal have furnished illustrations of his fervent piety and deep religious experience. So he continued—neither swerving from his principles nor faltering in his course. He was a living exemplification of the doctrine of final perseverance, for he "held on his way," and "endured unto the end." The truths which he taught were the food of his own soul. He walked in the paths in which he directed others to go. And "the Lord of the way" was with him.

The life of a christian pastor exhibits little variety. It is a continuous course of effort—always laborious—sometimes distressing—yet never unmixed with encouragement, comfort, and joy. Though it is by no means barren of incident, the incidents are rarely such as could be prudently placed before the public eye. Hence the biographies of some of the greatest and best of men might be comprised in a few pages. But there is a "record on high," which will one day be unfolded, to the infinite gratification of all concerned. There will be no complaint of sameness, then; for so much is involved in the salvation of a soul, and the history of successful conflict with evil, that the narrative will never be wearisome.

The story of the church will be listened to in heaven with far greater interest than it could ever command on earth; and the quiet, modest labourer, whose praises were never heard here beyond a very narrow circle, will be celebrated there among the Lord's mighty ones.

Mr. Manning was called to endure many trials in his church during some of the latter years of his ministry. They are continually referred to in his journal, and in a manner which indicates that his soul was sorely pained. Alienations and divisions—the prevalence of violent party-spirit—and various attempts to thwart his plans and lessen his influence, stung him to the quick. Under God, the church owed every thing to him. It was perhaps thought by some that he was very tenacious of authority and more stern and unbending than could be desired; but they should have remembered that he was their father in the gospel, and had a special claim on them for considerate kindness and respect.

The storm subsided. The good man had weathered it manfully, notwithstanding the poignancy of his grief, and he came out of the trouble "purified, and made white, and tried." As the infirmities of age grew upon him the cares of the church became too burdensome. Help was imperatively required. Brother A. S. Hunt, who had been some time pastor of the church at Dartmouth, went to the assistance of the aged minister in 1847, and was associated with him in labour during the remainder of his life. This arrangement was peculiarly acceptable. Mr. Manning repeatedly expressed his satisfaction with it, and rejoiced that the question of a successor was settled before his death.

In the early part of the following year it pleased God to "give testimony to the word of his grace" by an abundant out-pouring of his Spirit on the church and congregation. So plentiful was the blessing that at the next meeting of the Association the addition of eighty-seven persons by baptism was reported. How profoundly Mr. Manning's mind was impressed by this mercy will appear from the following extract of a letter addressed by him to the Editor of the *Christian Messenger*:

"I had for some time past despaired of witnessing a revival of religion in this church during my life. I can now say, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name,' and with good old Simeon add, 'Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation—the glory of thy people Israel.'"

"A young but eminent minister in Great Britain, when on his death-bed, having just witnessed a revival before he breathed his last, repeated the following lines—

'I've seen thy sinking church arise,
And leave the world in peace.'

"I think I can enter into his feelings. I long to see sinners turning to God. I long to see backsliders returning home—with fasting, and weeping, and mourning, rending their hearts and not their garments. I am a dying man—this I feel daily. I have lived long, and seen much—both of good and evil. I love the Lord Jesus—I love his cause, I know I do—I love his church, and I love his servants, old and young—I love the saints of every name—I love poor sinners;—and I pray that I may love my enemies."

From that time Mr. Manning's health gradually declined, and he could only engage occasionally in the services of the church. He was present at the last meeting of the Nova Scotia Association, held at Nictaux, in June, 1850, and complied with the request of the assembled brethren by preaching on the Lord's day morning. "His sermon," said the *Christian Messenger*, "was not only rich in scriptural instruction, whether viewed doctrinally, experimentally, or practically but, as was remarked by several at its close, was characterized by all the fervour and vigour of conception, force of illustration and powerful appeals to conscience, which distinguished his public ministrations in his earlier and best days." His feebleness, however, was so great that he was unable to attend the business meetings. Joseph Crandall, who had been so often associated with him in the gospel enterprise, was present at the Association, and repaired to Mr. M's lodgings to

take leave of him. It was an affecting interview. I quote again from the *Christian Messenger*:—"Mr. Crandall read the chapter in which the words of the Apostle occur—'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.' He then knelt down and prayed, and when we arose father Manning said, 'Thank God for that prayer, and for his servant who offered it.' 'Father Crandall then took his hand, and in all human probability for the last time on earth bade him farewell. Emotion nearly suppressed his utterance when he said, 'My dear brother, you have fought a good fight.' The reply was characteristic of the humility of the aged saint to whom the remark was addressed—'Yes, I have fought a good fight, but I have fought it badly.' The adjoining rooms were crowded with ministers and others who witnessed the whole, and we feel assured there was not a dry eye among them."

During the few months of his life that remained he was mostly confined to the house, and his weakness constantly increased. About a fortnight before his death a general failure of power and an almost entire loss of appetite indicated that the end was near. He was fully conscious of it. "Since my acquaintance with Mr. Manning," said Mr. Hunt, in a letter to the *Christian Messenger*, "I never knew him more resigned and entirely submissive to God. On the 26th (Dec.) on going to his bed-side, he said in his own emphatic way, 'I think I am going home, and I feel that I would not lift my finger to interfere with the purpose of the great God; but all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.' On another occasion, when asked how he felt in view of death, he said, 'I feel no rapture, but a calm and firm reliance on the great atonement.' Again, when asked how he now viewed those great doctrines of the gospel which he had preached so many years, he replied, 'O I feel them in their power and truth. How limited have been my views of these things! But they comfort my soul. After lying quiet for a few moments he exclaimed, 'O the infinite greatness and grandeur of God! What a ground, of support for a poor dying sinner!' * * After the first week's illness his speech very much failed. He however could make known his thoughts. They were those of an entire resignation to the divine will. He said that he desired to depart and to be with Christ. There was no doubt—no fear—no anxiety—but a quiet waiting for the appointed time. He greatly enjoyed the privilege of prayer, and the emphatic 'Amen, Amen,' declared the intensity of his mental exercises."

On Lord's day evening, January 12, 1851, the spirit was released. On the following Thursday the people gathered in immense crowds to the funeral. Eight ministers bore the pall. The sermon was preached, according to an agreement made years before, by the venerable T. S. Harding, who discoursed with his accustomed eloquence and unction from 1 Cor. 15: 57. Funeral sermons were also preached in many other places by brethren who had known and revered the departed servant of God. The whole denomination mourned the loss, for all had esteemed him as "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

The resolutions passed by public bodies on this occasion claim a record.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION SOCIETY, at a meeting held at Wolfville, Jan. 22, 1851. "Resolved, That the Executive Committee, Directors, and Friends of the Nova Scotia Baptist Education Society, now assembled, in noticing the very marked and impressive Providence of the Almighty which has removed from their head their revered and distinguished President, the late Rev. Edward Manning, feel themselves called upon to record, in the most significant manner, the high sense which they have ever entertained of his many superior excellencies as a man, a christian, and a christian minister; but especially, do they look with extreme satisfaction upon the enlarged comprehension of his spiritual conception, with which from a very early date in his ministerial career he held conjoined with the exertion of divine agency, and the cultivation and consecration of human powers, in the kingdom of grace. They behold in the retrospect of his long and elevated course of

usefulness much indeed to emulate. They will think long and intently of the power with which he was called by the one great purpose of his life to seek the souls of men—of the singularly evangelical character of his ministrations—of the giant grasp with which he conceived and held up to the gaze of men the mysteries of godliness—and of the deep and broad foundations which were laid by his hand in these provinces for the perpetuation of a pure and authoritative christian faith, a spiritual and energetic christian experience. This Society and meeting most sensibly and powerfully feel, that in the withdrawal of his voice and presence from the public support of the cause of education, preceded as it has been by that of nearly all his co-workers, they sustain a loss which to them appears irreparable. When they think of his noble form and manly brow—of the high impress of intelligence and benevolence which was boldly marked in all the lineaments of his face—of the massive pathos which moved in all his action and accents—when, above every thing else in his character, they bring back the memory of his approaches to Deity in words of prayer, they must indeed feel that his vacant seat is a large and solemn blank, to which they know not how to be reconciled, unless by catching the spirit of his Master—'Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.'"

WESTERN ASSOCIATION. "The demise of the late reverend and venerable Edward Manning during the past year has been an event of melancholy and painful interest, not only to the Baptists of this Province, but also to all who rightly appreciate distinguished piety, moral worth, intellectual elevation of character, and eminent usefulness in the evangelization of a new country; and it devolves upon us as a duty, in which our strongest affections are called into action, to express the high estimation in which we hold his long and effective labours in our own Province and elsewhere. The history of his toils, as a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, is not to be found in a biographical record of his ministerial career: but it is indelibly inscribed upon the hearts of those composing our denomination. In our memories of the past, it will long continue to be identified with the by-gone prosperity of the Baptists of Nova Scotia; and while we give expression to the distressing privation which is occasioned by the mournful fact that he can be no more with us, we rejoice to know that he has gone where 'they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever'."

CENTRAL ASSOCIATION. "The first session of the Central Association of Baptist Churches in Nova Scotia being marked by the absence from among the ministerial brethren of one whose life fills a distinguished page in the history of the Baptists of Nova Scotia, and whose works are inseparably interwoven with their rise and progress:—

"Resolved, That the following memorial of christian esteem and respect be entered on the Minutes of this Association.

"More than half a century has passed since Edward Manning, with a few others, the ancient worthies of our early churches, was prominent in the formation of the Nova Scotia Baptist Association; and during all that period the forecasting judgment, the sound and elevated views of doctrinal truth, and christian freedom, the ardent and unwavering piety, which had been distinguished elements on which the foundations of the association were laid, were unceasingly exercised in preserving its purity, animating its zeal, and extending its usefulness. The same sagacity that had aided in the formation and the effective and consistent operation of the Association through the infant and early stages of the denominational progress,—at a later period, when the number, intelligence, and influence of the body had by the blessing of God greatly increased, induced him to urge the division of the Association, as calculated to impart increased energy and power to the administration of the affairs of the denomination.

"He lived to see that change effected. His presence ratified the division of the body, and he who had entered Jordan almost alone then beheld three great bands that had come up from its banks. The last session of that