

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. 38.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

"Rest in the Lord."

PSALM XXXVII. 7.

Rest in the Lord, at morning,
For thy day of toil begins,
When at thy new life's dawning,
There appears a host of sins,
To meet, to fight, to conquer,
Till the last foe is slain;
Rest in the Lord, thy helper;
For thy own strength is vain.

Rest in the Lord, at noontide,
When the day is waxing hot,
When fierce foes on ev'ry side,
In the strife are resting not;
When weary of the warfare,
Thou fain would'st quit the field;
Think then who fighteth for thee,
Rest in the Lord, thy shield.

Rest in the Lord, at even,
When life is nearly done,
When many foes are vanquished,
And the victor's nearly won;
When passions hosts are conquered,
And of foes, there is but one,
Rest in the Lord, to finish,
The work, he hath begun.

Rest in the Lord, at night-fall,
When the last foe is met,
While Death, the king of terrors,
Assaileth fiercely yet;
Rest in the Lord, thy Saviour,
His arm, thy foe shall slay,
And bear thee from thy warfare
To rest with Him for aye.

H. J. G.

Cape Canso, 8th Sept. 1863.

Nova Scotia Church History

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VIII.

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

LETTER LXXVI.

RICHARD McLEARN.—E. F. HARDING, M. D.—
ALEXANDER McDONALD.

My Young Friend,

RICHARD McLEARN died Aug. 17, 1860, aged fifty-six, wanting a few days. He was a native of Rawdon. Converted at the age of sixteen, christian character was developed and matured in no ordinary degree in the first years of his religious history. The exercises through which he passed, and the events of his life, combined to prepare him for the work of the Lord. In the year 1826 he first began to address his fellow-men in public, and persevered in his efforts, notwithstanding painful convictions of unfitness for the work, and "distressing doubts" respecting his call. Those who heard him had no doubts on the subject but glorified God for the grace and the gifts bestowed on his servant. His thirst for knowledge was ardent. Conscious of his imperfections, he embraced every opportunity for improvement. Even after his ordination (which took place at Rawdon, March 10, 1828) he spent some time in Halifax, pursuing certain English studies, and receiving the assistance of the Rev. A. Caswell, then pastor of the Granville Street church, and other gentlemen. This arduous characterised him all through life. It was peculiarly displayed when he was obliged to discontinue public speaking, as will be presently mentioned.

To the pastorate of the church in Rawdon was added, in 1829, that of the Windsor church; and he ministered to both churches for several years. In 1834 he relinquished the charge of Rawdon, and confined his labours to Windsor. But he was frequently absent on itinerating excursions, chiefly in the Eastern part of the province, and he was engaged for some time as Agent for the Education Society. An account of his tour in the United States for that object has been given in former letters. His voice failed him in 1838, and after struggling on till 1841, hoping that a partial restoration might be effected, he found it necessary to resign his

office. He removed to Halifax, and engaged in mercantile business, residing in Dartmouth. When the Baptist church in that place was formed he connected himself with it, and on the removal of Brother Hunt, the pastor, to Cornwallis, he preached whenever he was able, and took such care as he could of the interests of the church. He identified himself also with many benevolent operations, especially with the Temperance cause, which was largely indebted to his energy and thoughtfulness. Our home missionary work was peculiarly dear to him. As chairman of the Board of the Home Missionary Society he rendered important service. Had his life been spared he would have probably succeeded Mr. Bentley as General Agent.

His last public labour was the preparation of the Circular Letter for the Central Association. He read it at the meeting of the Association at Windsor, June 13, 1860, less than a month before his death. The subject was "Holiness," and it was treated in a masterly manner. A profound impression was produced on the congregation when it was read. It seemed to some that the writer had unconsciously drawn his own likeness—for he "spoke what he knew, and testified that he had seen." Having shown that "the scriptures enjoin upon us absolute holiness," and that we ought to aim to "elevate the condition of christian people to the word of God," he proceeded thus:—

"To members of baptist churches the subject can be rationally and faithfully applied. In your baptism you professed to die to sin, and to the sinful maxims and practices of the ungodly. When you arose from the baptismal waters you professed to rise to newness of life. How beautifully significant the ordinance, and how desirable that the christian life should correspond with the profession! Our life should be a perfect, living comment on the baptismal confession. In our baptism we virtually died, and were buried with Christ by baptism into death—how forcible then the appeal. How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein? The significant rite of baptism as performed by us at the age of intelligence, with the profession of faith, affords additional reason with many others why we, Baptists, should be holy. The imperfections of christian people are deplorable. The imperfections of baptists are inexcusable, and the standard must be elevated before the world on a broad scale can be enlightened, and sinners saved. How imperfect at present the moral influence of the Church, because it is so deficient in holiness!"

The conclusion was very impressive:—

"Finally, Brethren, if you would answer the purpose of your creation, and thereby glorify your Father who is in Heaven, you must be holy. If you would magnify the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for you, to redeem you from all iniquity, you must be holy. If you would cherish the hallowing influences of the Divine Comforter—if you would have him always near to comfort and to guide, you must be holy. If you would adorn the doctrines of our God and Savior, by holding forth the Word of life, you must be holy. If you would attract others to the Savior, and exert a highly beneficial influence during your earthly pilgrimage, you must be holy. If you would at last, when heart and flesh fail you, lie down on the bed of death, and repose your head on the breast of the Savior, as on a downy pillow, you must be holy. If in the day of judgement you would lift up your head high among the favored throng, who hail his second advent, you must be holy. If you would enter that peaceful and blissful abode with God and the Lamb, where are the spirits of the just made perfect, amongst whom are your dear departed friends who sleep in Jesus, and where seraphim and cherubim, with an innumerable company of angels, do continually cry 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, you too must be holy.'"

During his last illness he enjoyed peace and comfort. Death had no terrors, for he "knew whom he had believed." He gently glided away from earth, and doubtless had "an abundant entrance" into glory.

The late Dr. Harding of Windsor kindly favoured me with a communication respecting his friend and former pastor, from which I take some interesting extracts.

"Very early in his pulpit exercise I had

the pleasure of hearing him preach at Horton, and felt assured at once that he would fill no mean rank in the christian ministry.

"When I removed to Windsor in 1831 he was pastor of the churches of Rawdon and Windsor. Even then the care of all the churches weighed heavily on his heart, and he was often absent from us, sometimes for weeks together on missionary excursions or as an Agent of Horton Academy. When at home he was most assiduous in the discharge of his pastoral duties, both of a public and a private kind. At that time he had a very pleasant and commanding voice, well modulated. His discourses were highly practical, and concise, and the earnestness and sincere affection with which he delivered his thoughts seldom failed of reaching the heart and conscience of his hearers. As a public speaker, at that time, in my estimation, he was second to no one in our denomination.

"Excellent as were his endowments for public usefulness, they were equalled by his private influence. The Sunday School and the Bible Class received his early and untiring attention. But it was in his private intercourse with the members of his church and congregation, and at the bed of sickness, that he greatly excelled. Many who were untouched by all public ministrations could not resist the affectionate earnestness with which, in the most gentle and inoffensive way, he presented the claims of religion upon their attention. In whatever family circle he mingled for a time he became deeply interested in their spiritual welfare, and sometimes produced impressions which issued in conviction or conversion. On one occasion, as I am informed, he was conversing and praying with a woman in this town, in a house that had also another family under its roof. A woman in another room listened through a partition, and the words spoken were applied to her conscience by the Holy Spirit, and became the means of conversion.—When in New York, he enjoyed the hospitality of a good old deacon of a Baptist church. He was instrumental in the conversion of his daughter, who afterwards became the wife of the celebrated Dr. Williams, pastor of the Amity Street Church, New York. Could we follow in the track of his missionary journeys we should doubtless find many seals of his ministry."

This was a characteristic feature of Mr. McLearn's labours, all his life. It was noted in the commencement of his ministry by father Manning, whom he visited repeatedly about that time, and who recorded in his diary the very favourable impressions he had received. Writing April 12, 1827, he says of him—"The natural capacity—the sound principles—the solid experience—the deep impressions in his mind concerning the state of the world, and his inability to preach—his artless communications—and his thirst for the knowledge of God, and to be all, all given up to the Lord, is very impressive to my mind. May the Lord make his short visit among us a blessing to many, and to me and mine! I could wish such a youth to be stationed here, if it was the will of the Lord." On the 26th of May he writes of him as "that apostolical young man, Richard McLearn, from whom I anticipate more than I do from any other young man that I know of, or even that I ever knew, who contemplated the christian ministry." Again, Nov. 8, in the same year;—"Dear young brother McLearn is now here, and we are very much pleased with him. Even the servants like him. He is now in the kitchen, talking to the coloured woman. I hear his solemn voice talking to her. It is a blessing to have such a pious man come to the house."

Dr. Harding proceeds:—"When he first came to Windsor, the church was in a very low state, and the congregation small and poor. But at the time when, in the providence of God he was laid aside from the active duties of the ministry, both church and congregation were rapidly increasing, and we should have anticipated the building of our new chapel by many years, for the place had become too strait for us. When he could no longer preach to us he commenced a course of collegiate studies, and in order to be yet serviceable to us he generally, for perhaps a year, wrote two sermons a week, which I read to the congregation. And although the *vividi manus, vividi oculi*, and eloquent voice were absent, yet being prepared with earnest

prayer and knowledge of the spiritual wants of the church and congregation, accompanied also with his mute and serious presence, they were no doubt greatly useful in preserving the coherence and unity of the church."

Mr. McLearn entered King's College in 1839, and received the degree of B. A. in 1843.

There are few such men as brother McLearn. He was indeed "a faithful man, and feared God above many."

E. F. HARDING, M. D., of Windsor died April 29, 1861, a few months after the expiration of the period comprised in these letters. But it is desirable to place his name among those of his brethren with whom he was associated in christian effort. He was the eldest son of father T. S. Harding. Having chosen the medical profession, he attained eminence as a practitioner. Called by divine grace in early life, religion was a pervading power in his soul, and threw its influence over his whole character. I observe many references in father Manning's journal to Dr. Harding's mode of proceeding, as a christian man while practising, as he did for some time, in the Township of Cornwallis. Mr. Manning was charmed with the "pious physician," and repeatedly recorded his esteem and admiration. "Saw the good Dr. Harding," he writes one day—"who is the friend, the doctor, every thing that is good."

On removing to Windsor, Dr. Harding joined the church there, and heartily co-operated with Mr. McLearn, as he did with subsequent pastors. His counsels were highly valued. His sympathy and aid were never wanting.

He was very suddenly removed. There was no opportunity for religious intercourse after the fatal blow was struck. But his life had been an unvarying testimony. Dr. Harding was in his sixty-first year when he died.

Alexander McDonald's name should have been mentioned before, but information respecting him was not received in time for insertion in its proper place.

ALEXANDER McDONALD was a native of the Island of Skye, one of the Hebrides group. His family emigrated to Cape Breton in 1829, and settled in Margaree. There, in 1835, he was converted by divine grace, under the ministry of the Rev. W. Burton, who was then on a mission to Cape Breton. "For a considerable time," a friend states, "he groaned under a spirit of bondage. His mother, observing his dejection, placed in his hands a little tract entitled, 'The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.' On perusing this tract he broke out in strains of rapture, exclaiming: 'I have found the Lord.' He could then rely on God's testimony concerning his Son. He never afterwards lost sight of this blessed remedy, and though he was keenly susceptible of the depravity of his nature, such was his firm reliance on the promises of God and the blessed plan of salvation, that he always retained a persuasion of his being in a renovated state, and enjoyed the testimony of an enlightened conscience that he was 'accepted in the Beloved.'"

Having given himself to the Lord in the work of the ministry he repaired to Horton for instruction, and matriculated in Acadia College Dec. 19, 1838, becoming a member of the first class formed in that Institution. He continued his studies till June, 1841, when he revisited Cape Breton, and took part in a series of religious meetings in North Sydney, in which Dr. Crawley, and the brethren Armstrong, Elder, and M. Ross were also engaged. Thence he proceeded to Prince Edward Island, and became pastor of the church at Bealeque, at which place he received ordination. The date of that event, unfortunately, has not been recorded. After faithfully labouring there for several years he removed to New Brunswick, and presided over the church at Carleton, St. John, from 1846 to 1849. In the latter end of the last-mentioned year he undertook the charge of the church at Hampton, and afterwards gave part of his time to the church at Norton. Greatly beloved and honoured by his brethren, a lengthened course of labour was hoped for; but it was the will of the Master to call him home. He died at Hampton, Jan. 27, 1851, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. About an hour before his death a friend asked him