

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. VIII. No. 8.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1863.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVII. No. 8.

Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

Gone!

Where are the friends I loved in child-hood?
Faded away!
Like the flowers in the wild-wood,
Bloomed but a day;
Hopes that long ago so brightly
Shed their glad ray;
Happy hours I spent so lightly,
All passed away!

Down life's rapid stream we're sweeping
Swiftly along,
And the tide is faster deepening,
Roughly and strong;
All our earthly joys we're leaving
Back in the light;
Soon the cloud-hid oceans heaving,
Bears us from sight.

Hearts I loved in life's glad morning,
Parted from me;
Angry tempests without warning,
Sweep o'er the sea;
Our frail barks were wildly driven,
Wildly away—
Far from friendly shore or heaven,
Parted for aye!

Still my heart to memory ever
Is fond and true;
Happy scenes forgetting never,
Oft rise to view:
Then I see those blooming meadows
Shining so plain,
And I know beyond the shadows,
Friends meet again.

HATTIE.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD VII.

From A. D. 1838 to A. D. 1850.

LETTER LXIV.

DEATH OF JOSEPH DIMOCK.—HIS LABOURS.—HIS HUMILITY.—EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL.—HIS MEANS AND HOLY LOVE.—HARD-SHIP FOR THE CAUSE.—HIS SUCCESS.—HIS VIEWS ON EDUCATION.—THE FUNERAL, AND SERMON.—RESOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION IN 1847.

My Young Friend,

On the 28th, of June 1846, the venerable Joseph Dimock was summoned to his rest. He had attended the Association, which was held that year at Bridgetown, but was evidently in feeble health, and scarcely strong enough to engage in the bustling exercises of a great public gathering. In fact, he was "excused from further attendance, on account of indisposition," on the second day of the session. The last duty he performed for the churches was an attempt, in connection with other brethren, to unravel one of those tangled ecclesiastical skeins which sometimes so sorely try the charity and patience of God's servants. It was a peculiarly appropriate effort, thoroughly characteristic of the gentleness of spirit and evangelical prudence which distinguished him; for he was one of those to whom the inspired description would apply—"the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."

Accounts were given in former letters of Mr. Dimock's conversion and of his various and abundant labours, in the United States, and in almost every part of this province. Chester was his home, and well did he provide for the wants of his spiritual family there; yet he loved to become, at proper times, "a gospel ranger," as Whitefield used to style himself, and to publish the good news in the length and breadth of Nova Scotia. Frequently employed in this manner by the Home Missionary Board, he preferred to go to remote settlements and desolate regions—to carry the glad tidings to those who were most scantily furnished with christian ordinances—and to build up decayed churches. His visits were always welcome, and the blessing of God attended them. Scarcely a year passed away without some mission of this kind. In the very last year of his life he performed a missionary journey, which was doubtless long remembered by the people of Hallowell; perhaps some of them have not yet forgotten it—will never forget it.

The ardent love and zeal of the good man were attested by deep humility. He lived a life of lowliness. Wondering at the grace which saved him, and filled with gratitude for the constant manifestations of divine mercy, he walked humbly with God. These remarks may be illustrated by a few extracts from his journal:

"Oct. 8, 1839. God has seen fit to visit us and make our house a Bochim (Judges ii. 4, 5.) on the 29th of September the Lord was pleased to take from me the partner of my youth. She had been an inconceivable sufferer from a pulmonary complaint and other disorders; but now, in full prospect of a rest, happy, glorious, complete and eternal, she fell asleep in Jesus in hope of a resurrection to eternal life. * * * But oh! my Lord, hast thou only left me a cup of mourning and woe? No, Lord. . . a cup of joy that overbalances the sorrow. He has, I trust, appointed us a meeting, to part no more. I will, then, endeavour to wait with patience till my change come, hoping and praying that my span left me may be filled up with usefulness. Oh how useless has the former been! Oh for grace for the future to be more devoted to the Redeemer's service!"

"I desire, as to this dispensation, to be reconciled. I do not wish to be unfeeling on such a subject. I believe the most High intended I should feel my loss—the loss to my children—the loss to society, to the poor, and to the church of God. But I desire to believe that the Lord saw it needful, as He is too wise to err. I ought to submit,—1. Because it is his will;—2. Because it is her gain—a release from all that could burden or grieve her, and possession of all that blessedness which dying in the Lord secures;—and 3. The hope of meeting her again where we shall see the propriety of this separation, and shall part no more for ever and ever."

"Dec 15, 1844. After a brief notice of his early history and his conversion, he proceeds thus:—"The same Spirit led me to see the lost state of sinners around me, until I could not rest without warning them of their danger, and recommending the Saviour. With all my deficiencies, he sent me to preach the gospel. Oh what a wonder! He has been with me and used me as an instrument in his hand to bring tens and hundreds to himself. He has never permitted the new religions or strange opinions of the day, to shake my confidence in the good old way—except that for a few years after I first professed religion my mind was not clear in the doctrine of election; but through mercy I found experience, and scripture, and all the best books I read were full in the doctrine—and that if there was no election there was no salvation.—He has sent me to feed the flock of God which he has purchased with the Saviour's blood; and he has preserved me by day and by night, by sea and by land, in storms and in calms. He has continued my health, so that (except for eight sabbaths at one time, when I had the pleurisy) I have not been prevented from attending worship more than four Lord's-days. I hope that most of my family are in heaven, or on the way thither. Oh to grace how great a debtor!"

"The other overwhelming wonder is my sinfulness and ingratitude. My sinfulness in so long rejecting the Saviour, so often quenching the spirit, grieving those that remonstrated with me, exhorted me, and prayed with me—and so often putting the Lord off with lip-service, and fair promises, and heartless duties, as though I could flatter the Most High, the most holy, and heart-searching God.—And Oh how much ingratitude! After so much patience, so many blessings bestowed on so worthless a creature—to be no more devoted to my Master's service, no more impressed with the importance of my work!"

"And now I am far advanced in age, and can do very little for the glory of God or the upbuilding of Zion. Disorders are coming in, or have come in among us, and the church is suffering, and perhaps knows not the cause. I grieve for the affliction of Zion, but I have no power to help her. The Lord has said that he will 'search Jerusalem with candles.' He has given us his word, by which light the true state of his church can be known;—both her wounds and cure are there. Perhaps some principal joints are out

of place, and so the church is crippled. Perhaps I am neglecting some of the lambs of the fold. They are dear to the Redeemer; how dear they ought to be to their unworthy pastor! O Lord, make me faithful, and make me wise to do thy will."

Holy love eminently characterised Joseph Dimock. His naturally affectionate disposition, sanctified by divine grace, made him one of the most amiable of men. He was "very meek." His brethren were accustomed to compare him to the Apostle John, for his loving temper and gentleness of deportment. There was no lordliness of spirit in him—no arrogant assumptions—no demand for servile attention and homage. He "humbled himself," and the Lord "exalted" him.

In the early years of his ministry Mr. Dimock "endured hardness" in the cause of the Saviour. Travelling was not so easily performed then as in these times. It required no small amount of zeal and courage to set out on a missionary tour in the winter months. The missionary generally had to walk through the woods on snow-shoes, and sometimes missed the right path, which exposed him to the inconvenience of passing the night in the open air, at imminent risk of health and life. Still more trying were the scenes of violence and uproar which were occasionally witnessed. Speaking of Lunenburg, Mr. Dimock said, "I have preached there in the midst of pikes, staves, swords, cutlasses, and the casting of small stones—have been hissed at and ridiculed while passing the streets, and assailed in various ways." But these things did not move him.

No estimate can be formed of the results of Mr. Dimock's labours. Wherever he preached the blessing of God attended his ministrations; but no account was kept of the number of professed converts. Nor indeed was it practicable, since in some instances the religious change did not appear till long after the preacher's departure, and in others, though saving benefit was experienced, it was not always traced to his instrumentality, the individuals having joined some other denomination.—The church at Chester numbered only forty-three members when it was reunited to the Association in 1811, after a short separation, occasioned by difference of views on the communion question. During the thirty-five years following Mr. Dimock had the pleasure of welcoming 463 persons into the church, which consisted of 276 members at the time of his death. Surely this was a very useful ministry.

The educational effort of the denomination received Mr. Dimock's hearty sympathy and aid. He was fully convinced that it is the christian's duty to serve God with his best; that whatever talents have been bestowed upon us ought to be diligently cultivated; and that christian ministers should seek varied and extensive knowledge in order to be better prepared for the great work in which they are engaged. He gave practical proof, in many ways, of the depth of his convictions. At the annual meeting of the Education Society, a week before his death, he remarked—"Grace implants the root of the matter in the soul of the minister, and education enables him to bring it out." These plain and pithy words present a comprehensive view of the whole subject. There has always been a tendency to dissociate religion and knowledge. Some would have godliness without knowledge; others, knowledge without godliness. Joseph Dimock saw that they should be united—that the minister should have, first, "the root of the matter," and then, education, "to bring it out." He acted accordingly, using all his life his best endeavours to acquire information, for his personal advantage (and with no small success,) and cheerfully co-operating with his brethren in founding and sustaining our educational institutions.

The venerable man, as I have stated, was compelled to leave the Association before its close. He repaired to the house of his son-in-law, Mr. Starratt of Wilmot, and died there. It was a calm and peaceful death—not distinguished by rapture, but by a quiet repose of the soul. The river was still and unruffled as he passed over. Spiritual enemies were not permitted to disturb him. The powers of nature gradually gave way, and he "breathed his life out gently"—having

served God with his spirit in the gospel of his Son more than fifty years. He was in the 79th year of his age.

There was a melancholy procession from Wilmot to Chester, a distance of a hundred miles. Weeping relations and friends attended the lifeless remains, travelling day and night at the funeral, and receiving accessions to their number as they went along. On the third of July, in the presence of an immense multitude, the body of Joseph Dimock was committed to its resting place. Theodore S. Harding preached on the occasion, from Isaiah xxv. 8. The Sermon was characteristic of that "old man eloquent," and worthy of him. In speaking of his departed brother he described him as "eminently and peculiarly a good man"—as "an active and able minister of the gospel"—as "a wise counselor," and one who was "skilful, too, in imparting his advice, speaking only when necessary, and shunning every inclination to dictate"—and as "a faithful pastor," who held the great doctrines of the gospel firmly, and preached them faithfully, and whose "excellent disposition, engaging manners, integrity of heart, humility, and deep-toned piety, peculiarly fitted him for the work for which alone he seemed to live, and in the prosecution of which he died."

At the Association in 1847, held at Yarmouth, a Committee was appointed "to prepare a resolution of respect to the memory of the Rev. J. Dimock." They reported as follows:—

"Resolved, That the death of our beloved brother Joseph Dimock, who at the close of the Association last year, after partaking in its duties, was called to his reward, in the neighbourhood of Bridgetown, at a distance from his home and people—calls upon the ministers and messengers of the churches, again assembled in the Association; to record their sense of his character, and of the loss the church and the country have sustained in his removal.

"The early missionary labours of this self-denying servant of the Lord Jesus Christ in the infancy of this country;—his fatherly oversight and christian care of the church of Chester, of which he died the pastor, after sustaining that endeared relation on the happiest terms for nearly fifty years;—the holy affection and living faith, the untiring energy and never failing benevolence which stimulated our departed brother in advancing the cause of his Master and promoting the eternal welfare and temporal happiness of his fellow-creatures, regardless of personal considerations—and the meekness and modesty of his deportment;—as they long endeared Joseph Dimock to his brethren—his church—his friends—and all capable of appreciating the excellencies of his character—now render his memory precious.—We mourn in him one of the fathers of our churches taken from us. We rejoice in the assurance of his removal from the conflicts of life to the bliss and triumphs of the redeemed. We pray that the example of his labours and his virtues may be sanctified to those who remain."

A Committee was also appointed to prepare a Memoir of the departed saint. It is much to be regretted that the duty entrusted to them was not discharged, as many interesting and important facts which might have been then collected have now fallen into oblivion.

Yours truly,
Feb. 17, 1863. MENNO.

Joining the Church.

"Mother," whispered a little girl, slipping her head through her mother's arm, and resting it on her mother's shoulder, "mother, may I join the church?"

"You, my child! you are too young," said the mother, surprised into a reply she would not otherwise have made perhaps. The child blushed, and a tear started in her eye.

"Did not my Saviour die for me, mother?" asked she presently. "Yes, Lucy." "I know it," said Lucy, "and I pray to him, and I love him, and I say to myself over and over again,

'Jesus, I would follow thee;
Thy little Lamb would be;
and, mother, he won't shoo me off, will he?'"