

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

A Family Newspaper: devoted to Religious and General Intelligence.

REV. I. E. BILL,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

VOL. 7.

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, MAY 5, 1854.

NO. 16.

FRIENDSHIP.

The following lines breathe the spirit of pure affection, expressed in a style chaste and beautiful.—Ed.

My soul thy sacred image keeps,
My midnight dreams are all of thee;
For nature then in quiet sleeps,
And silence broods o'er land and sea;
Oh, in that still, mysterious hour,
How oft from waking dreams I start,
To find thee but a fancy flower,
Thou cherished idol of my heart.
Thou hast each thought and dream of mine—
Have I in turn one thought of thine?

Forever thine my dreams will be,
Whate'er may be my fortunes here,
I ask not love—I claim from thee
One only boon, a gentle tear;
May blessed visions from above
Play brightly round thy happy heart,
And may the beams of peace and love
Ne'er from thy glowing soul depart.
Farewell! my dreams are still of thee—
Hast thou one tender thought of me?

My joys like summer birds may fly,
My hopes like summer blooms depart,
But there's one flower that cannot die,
Thy holy memory in my heart;
No dew that none fower's cup may fill,
No sunlight to its leaves be given,
But it will live and flourish still,
As deathless as a thing of heaven.
My soul greets thine, unasked, unsought—
Hast thou for me one gentle thought?

Farewell! farewell! my far off friend!
Between us broad, blue rivers flow
And forests wave and plains extend
And mountains in the sunlight glow;
The wind that breathes upon thy brow
Is not the wind that breathes on mine,
The starbeams shining on thee now
Are not the beams on me that shine,
But memory's spell is with me yet—
Canst thou the holy past forget?

The bitter tears that thou and I
May shed when'er by anguish bowed,
Exhaled into the noontide sky,
May meet and mingle in the cloud;
And thus, my much loved friend, though we
Far, far apart must live and move,
Our souls, when God shall set them free,
Can mingle in a world of love.
This were an ecstasy to me—
Say—would it be a joy to thee?

Funeral Sermon for the late Rev. Harris Harding.

BY THE REV. J. DAVIS.

[CONCLUDED.]

PART II.

We pass from Jacob to Father Harding. We shall speak of him now more in his personal and private character, though not exclusively so, than in any other aspect; reserving enlarged and particular references to his public course for a future opportunity.

I. We present a few notices of his LIFE.

He was born at Horton, in this Province, Oct. 10, 1761. He has died, therefore, in his ninety-third year. He was brought to a knowledge of the truth in Cornwallis, when about twenty-two years of age. Thus for some seventy years he has trodden the paths of piety.

Soon after his conversion he began to exhort—then to preach; entering upon the work in which he continued to the end of his days.

When he became a preacher he gave up school teaching, in which he had been previously engaged, and threw himself upon the providence of God for his support. Nor thro' seventy years, have he or his been forsaken.

He used to talk largely of his early preaching adventures about Onslow, Sackville, Falmouth, Chester, Liverpool, &c. Many of his details are gone down with him to the grave. Nevertheless some of them may be recovered, and made available for future use.

In 1790 he seems to have paid his first vi-

sit to Yarmouth. He was there connected with the New Lights, as they were called—was inclined to gather societies rather than organize churches—and preached under the impulse of strong emotion, with great freedom, fervour, and power. In no long space a church was gathered, and set in such order as the New Light brethren acknowledged, by the late Thomas Handy Chipman. For a few years these people were irregularly supplied, in part by our deceased father, in part by other brethren; among the rest by the late Joseph Dimock, whose labours in this neighbourhood appear to have been greatly blessed.

In 1797 Mr. Harding came here to reside, preaching in a little meeting-house erected for him by his friends. In a little while he and his brethren were introduced, by a vote of the proprietors, into the occupation of our present house of worship, then, however, presenting a very different aspect from that which it now wears. Thus, though there had been much opposition to his ministry when he first came into these parts, it soon began to give way; and some who had been determined enemies became fast friends. Frequent revivals of religion distinguished the earlier periods of Mr. Harding's ministry here, and more or less marked his whole pastoral career.

In December 1827, the church having gradually approached to the standards of the Nova Scotia Baptist Association, it was organized into a regular Baptist Church, still under the care of our deceased father; and as a Baptist minister he has fulfilled his earthly course. In 1830, the Rev. W. Burton was united with him in the pastorate, and continued in that relation until last spring; that is for about twenty-three years. It has been the lot and the privilege of the present speaker to close the eyes of the venerable saint in death, and now to stand in his stead in this portion of the large field over which he was wont to traverse; and which in some sort he persisted in traversing until his last sickness, commencing about four months ago, stripped him of the poor remnants of his strength. Harris Harding, in his ninety-third year, his energies exhausted to their dregs, his limbs unable to sustain their own weight, yet refused to lay aside his tools, and died, like himself, almost on the field, and in his harness.

Without going into detail, it may be stated that, down to no very distant period, the labours of our father, though they centred at Yarmouth, extended over the whole of this country, and were often carried beyond its borders. Behold, among ourselves, the direct results. In these immediate parts, where there did not exist a single Baptist church, there have now been organized nine churches. These were reported, at our last Association, as containing upwards of twelve hundred members. Such are the results which connect themselves with the pioneering labours of the departed, entered upon more than sixty years ago. Of course what has been wrought by others in these latter years, and especially by our brother Burton, whose exemplary ministerial diligence needs not here to be commended,—what has been wrought by others in the same field with father Harding ought not to be forgotten. Still the great day of reckoning alone will tell, how many now in heaven, and how many on their way thither, have been first awakened to serious thought by the teachings and appeals of him whom we this morning, as with apostolic honours, consign to his tomb. As Jacob was an earthly father to the Israelitish nation, so Harris Harding was among us a father in Christ; and leaves behind him hundreds of souls, besides all who, from this vicinity, have preceded him to the skies, who regard him as, in one way or another, their progenitor in the kingdom of God. We proceed,

II. To some outlines of the CHARACTER of our departed father—his Christian character.

we mean rather than his ministerial, though to the latter we must necessarily advert.

Its foundation was deeply laid in the grand essentials of the Gospel. The ruin of man as a sinner, and his utter helplessness—Christ the only, the Almighty Saviour—the blood of Christ—the Spirit of Christ—God's gracious choice of his people from eternity—his love for them to the end—"the Lord our righteousness"—"the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world"—these, including what we understand by the fundamentals of the Gospel, though there are many "holding the Head," who differ from us on some of these topics,—these were the doctrines, these the ideas, that filled the heart of Father Harding, reverberated and re-echoed through his ministry, moulded his life, and illuminated his dying hour.

This character, inlaid and imbedded in this evangelical faith, wrought itself out in a vigorous evangelical practice. It is no exaggeration to say that, to an honourable degree, the deceased man of God followed out Peter's memorable exhortation, "Giving all diligence add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." We proceed to supply some illustrations of this statement.

1. There was his zeal in the public administration of the Gospel. For many years he was almost THE minister of the country. There are those here who can tell how he pervaded this field, and even seemed to fill it. He has been the pioneer of the religion of Western Nova Scotia, as it now exists, not only among Baptists, but among all who hold to the peculiarities of an evangelical Christianity.

2. To expansive zeal he added unwearied pastoral diligence. By night and by day he visited from house to house, presenting the gospel to individuals as he could find opportunity, or could make it, preaching as much and as effectually out of the pulpit as in it. In this department he had no rival, and has left no successor.

3. To works he added prayer. He lived in an atmosphere of prayer. He brought together these three great ideas, the emptiness of man—the fulness, the overflowing fulness of God in Christ—and the efficacy of prayer as the channel for supplying the poverty of man out of the riches of Deity. Hence he "prayed without ceasing." He believed much, too, in the value of special prayer; abounded in this species of supplication; and had many a tale to tell of the answers of God to particular pleas for help.

4. To a deep and prayerful piety he added the fruits of kind-heartedness and benevolence. He was of an eminently loving nature, "ready to every good work." In visiting him on his death-bed we were often struck with his expressions of unaffected love; taking the form of gratitude for little attentions, which it would have been almost barbarous to withhold, but which he accepted as though they had been angel ministrations. In deeds of kindness, in every form, so long as his strength permitted, he himself abounded. He counted every man his brother, every sufferer a special claimant upon his services; never grudging travel, labour, sacrifice where any aid could be rendered; enacted perpetually the good Samaritan; believed in the words of his Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and demonstrated his faith in those words while like that Lord, he "went about doing good."

5. His benevolence found its highest and most Christian expression in an unbounded catholicity. His whole soul went out to the likeness of Christ wherever he beheld it, whenever he heard of its manifestation. He

was a Baptist and a Calvinist from principle, but more of a Christian than either; and loved, by a holy instinct, all, of every name, who, "loved our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Oh! what scope has this element of his renewed nature found in the heavenly world! Without it, which of us can expect to enter that world?

6. Nor was he without his touches of an enlarged public spirit. While he "loved the brotherhood," he "honoured all men;" honoured them in the practical, apostolic sense, so as to long to do them good. Hence he heartily sympathized in the objects and labours of Bible and Missionary Societies, and gave them his advocacy, his money, and his prayers. Moreover, if he was unduly jealous of our educational enterprises, yet they too shared in his contributions. Even here, therefore, his head was more at fault than his heart.

7. Besides all this, we may boldly claim for him a spotless integrity. Nor let this be called small praise. What character can be finished without uprightness and integrity? Is that an aimless, needless prayer, "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me?" And does not a common moral honesty acquire a sort of dignity even, when it has stood the test of a prolonged residence of more than sixty years? It were a wrong to the reputation of father Harding, therefore, in the tribute now offered to his memory, to pass by this element of his excellence. In some matters, in regard to which others felt no compunction, including professors of religion, he had serious scruples, and failed not to give them effect. While he "feared God" he "honoured the King," and had no fellowship with such as defrauded the public revenue by indirect practices. And in all his money transactions he was still true to his engagements. "Owe no man any thing," was his motto; and that motto was faithfully reflected in his practice. Who is there to contradict that statement?

8. Amid all the changes and trials to which he was here exposed, he still exercised an unfeigned trust in providence. His doctrine, even about ministerial support was but an exaggerated and ever-wrought expression of that trust. He believed in the whole of that text, "The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." In all his straits, therefore, he looked to God; and the God in whom he trusted honoured his confidence; and has done so even to the end. Yes! he has passed through his last conflict, and come off "more than conqueror through him that loved him." And now we gaze upward, and see him where "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." We are thus brought

III. To the DYING EXPERIENCE of the departed saint.

On which, however, we have but a few words to offer. He complained, at the commencement of his fatal illness, that "he could not see Jesus;" was not favoured, that is, with so much of spiritual enjoyment as he could have wished. Subsequently, as the "outward man perished, the inward man was renewed day by day." His body had lost its force—his mind its tone—he was the wreck of his former self; but, as the needle still trembles towards the pole, so his heart still trembled towards his God. How often, when we have gone to see him, has he magnified the grace of God in choosing him, making him all that he had become, and assuring him of support and deliverance to the end. "I know not why God has chosen me," he would con-