

The Christian Visitor.

A FAMILY NEWS PAPER: 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

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BAPTIST HISTORY IN THE LOWER PROVINCES.

CHAPTER XI.

County of Yarmouth.

Autumn of 1827, the Rev. Thomas was constrained to visit Yarmouth on a mission of evangelization. For weeks he was impelled in his spirit to leave people in the County of Annapolis, such Jesus to Father Harding's church congregation. Mr. Ansley was a rigid unionist, and he had reason to think that his views in this respect would be acceptable to a large majority of the people, to whom he was desirous of claiming the gospel. Nevertheless, he was so powerfully exercised with conviction that it was his duty to hasten to Yarmouth with a message from God to the people, that he determined, at length, to follow those spiritual impulses which were leading his soul day and night. At the time to which we refer, he received a verbal invitation from Deacon Zachariah Lewis, to supply Father Harding's place, and was absent on a mission elsewhere. All the circumstances were indications of God's will, which Mr. Ansley did not fail to recognize; and when he reached Yarmouth, he meditated to hear the Saviour say:—"Lift up thine eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."

We need not, perhaps, tell our readers that Mr. Ansley, in his doctrinal views, was strongly Calvinistic, and that in his preaching great prominence was given to God's sovereignty in the choice and salvation of his people. Grace abounding through Jesus Christ to the chief of sinners, was the theme upon which he chiefly dwelt in his earnest and impressive addresses to the people of Yarmouth. His own soul was burning with love to sinners as he descended upon the "everlasting love" of God to the lost and guilty of our fallen race. The solemn truths of the Bible thus fervently and forcibly proclaimed, soon affected his hearers. The sovereign agency of the Holy Spirit accompanied the word preached, and a blessed religious revival was the result. Multitudes of persons, who had previously "passed from death unto life," and who had lost "their first love," and relapsed into a backslidden state, living in disobedience, were aroused from the spiritual lethargy into which they had sunk. Their consciences, rendered keenly sensitive by the application of divine truth, impelled them, with broken hearts, to confess their sins, and implore forgiveness; and many, who had hitherto been wholly indifferent to their souls' welfare, were constrained in the public congregation, from time to time, to cry aloud, each exclaiming, "What shall I do to be saved?" It was a time of great and powerful religious excitement; and while some were joyful in the consciousness of pardon, others were overwhelmed with a half-despairing sense of their sinfulness and danger.

In the midst of this wonderful work of God's grace and mercy, Father Harding returned, and was rejoiced to see the effects of the Gospel upon the hearts of his church and congregation. While many who believed, obeyed and followed their Redeemer in the ordinance of baptism, Mr. Ansley did not fail to propound his views of communion, in reference to which there was a contrariety of sentiment among those who were under the influence of the prevalent revival. The discussion of this "vexed question," for the most part, however, was conducted in the spirit of moderation and love; and its agitation appears not to have militated against the work of grace which was then prosperously progressing. While many readily admitted that Mr. Ansley's views of the matter were in accordance with apostolic principle and practice, others could not see the distinction between *Christian fellowship* and *church communion*. Another class, who admitted that restricted communion was in conformity with New Testament injunction and usage, with palpable inconsistency, deemed it inexpedient to adopt it, because, as they alleged, it was a "non-essential ordinance," and would tend to separation.

Meanwhile, Father Harding, who had long felt that in externals there was a separating wall between him and his Baptist brethren in the ministry, was desirous of uniting with the Association. In respect to his anomalous position among the fellow-labourers of his youth, he was by no means satisfied; and yet he could not contemplate, without pain, the idea of church dis-connection from brethren, with whom he had long been in Christian fellowship, and whom he ardently loved. While conviction pointed in one direction, affection would have led him in another. It was indeed a struggle between duty and expediency. He had expressed in conference, several months prior to Mr. Ansley's visit to Yarmouth, his desire to connect himself with the Baptist Association; and now that the close communion principle was submitted to his church by a visiting brother in the ministry, he expressed his views of the matter in terms more decided and strong than on any previous occasion.

While this question continued to be a source of controversy within the church and

without, the revival still prevailed, prejudices gave way, and more scriptural views of Christian ordinances than had previously obtained, were embraced by many; and on the 19th of December, the close communion principle was adopted by the church. There were numbers, (baptized and unbaptized,) who withdrew from their brethren in consequence of this arrangement. They stigmatized it as a system of bigotry and austere exclusion, and joined themselves to other denominations, who, whatever may have been their theory, were practically as rigid in communion, as are the Baptists belonging to our Associations. This re-organization of Father Harding's church imparted a fresh impulse to the revival, and the good work, with increased rapidity and accelerated power, spread through the surrounding community. While some, who had been baptized in the apostolical manner, withdrew from Father Harding's church, and united with others, a number, who had formerly belonged to some of the Peco-Baptist denominations, impelled by the spirit of truth, became Baptists, and were afterwards pillars in Zion for many years. Among these Christians, who at that time, changed their views of New Testament ordinances, were the late Deacons Robbins and Crosby, of Chebogue. These worthy brethren were strongly denominational in their feelings; and their piety and fidelity to the cause of Christ greatly endeared them to the church, to which they belonged, and to all the genuine friends of religion, who were acquainted with their Christian graces. In fact, most of those who joined the church during the revival of which we are speaking, continued "steadfast in word and in doctrine," and adorned the profession which they had made.

Mr. Ansley's mission to Yarmouth was productive of great and lasting results. Not only were multitudes converted and brought to a saving knowledge of the truth; but many were established in their minds in the doctrines of the Gospel and in the ordinances of the Church. A number whose views in these respects had been vague and uncertain, were led to see more clearly, and act more in accordance with the injunctions and usages of the New Testament; and what they had previously regarded as non-essential in faith and practice, they now acknowledged to be matters of too much importance to be treated with indifference. Of course this change in sentiment led to a corresponding change in conduct. It was apparent at the time that Mr. Ansley had been instrumental in the accomplishment of a great work in Yarmouth; and in subsequent revivals, many who "put on Christ" dated their first religious impressions to the stirring period of which we have been speaking.

When we reflect upon the impulses of soul, which prompted Mr. Ansley to bear a message of mercy to the people of Yarmouth—the effects that followed—and all the other circumstances connected with it, who will pretend to deny or doubt that he had a special mission from God to preach Jesus to the people, with whom he laboured for several weeks with such distinguished success? It was his own belief that such was the case. Father Harding, too, was equally confident that Mr. Ansley's mission was of divine appointment; and many of the leading and prominent lay brethren in Yarmouth concurred with that view of the matter. The mighty change which was there wrought in so brief a period in the sentiments and practices of the people—the multitudes that were saved—led to the Cross—the long and continuous period of religious prosperity which followed—all conspired to prove that Mr. Ansley's labours, at that time referred to, were in accordance with the will of God.

This wonderful revival was a source of great joy and encouragement to Father Harding. A few, whom he esteemed and loved, withdrew, and united with other denominations because of their disapproval of close communion; others embraced the sentiment of the recently re-organized church which wore a cheering aspect of Christian consistency. The barrier, too, which had separated him in some respects from his beloved brethren in the ministry, was removed, and his church was now in an eligible position to unite with the Baptist Association. The cords of Zion's tent had been lengthened, and its stakes strengthened, and the sunshine of divine approbation illuminated the church of which he was pastor. It was indeed a happy season of religious prosperity.

In June, 1829, the Nova Scotia Baptist Association, for the first time, held its annual session with the Church in Yarmouth. It was a time of general religious awakening in many parts of Nova Scotia; and the ministers and lay brethren assembled from various sections of Zion with their hearts inflamed with love and burning with zeal. Among them were several young evangelists, who had just begun to tell the moving story of the Cross to their fellow men. The Fathers, too, whose heads were already hoary with years, were the prominent actors in the religious services and business transactions of that interesting denominational gathering. It was emphatically a season of joy, long to be remembered. It was with no ordinary feeling of Christian cordiality that Father Harding and his people bade their brethren from a distance, "welcome to Yarmouth." The gospel fellowship of nearly forty years' standing was renewed and strengthened; and the aged heralds of the Cross, extended the warm hand of brotherly encouragement to

the young men who, with trembling hearts were just entering upon the duties and responsibilities of the Christian ministry.

This associational meeting was a bright epoch, so to speak, in the history of Father Harding and his Church. The impression made upon the people of Yarmouth, generally, was favourable; and tended to strengthen Baptist interests in the general opinion of that community. The thrilling sermons and exhortations—the fervent prayers and supplications—the earnestness of business, had a happy effect upon the spectators, convincing them that there was a great amount of both piety and talent in the denomination.

[For the Christian Visitor.]

Pastoral Labors.

Mr. Editor:—While reading the articles on Baptist History in your valuable paper the changes which are taking place in the habits of our ministering brethren, generally have forcibly struck my mind. My belief is the less change from the primitive simplicity the better. The exclamation of one of our sometimes arises, the fathers, where are they? and the prophets; do they live forever? I believe we have many very good men of whom the mantle of the fathers have rested; but I cannot but think, that they conform too much to prevailing worldly-opinions and customs of modern society—to be as useful as they might. The fathers preached publicly and from house to house, so did the Apostles. Our ministry can scarcely go a miss to follow their example. Much of the success of the fathers was attributable, (by Divine aid) to their personal knowledge of the minds and characters of many of their hearers. They were in the habit of calling on all, as far as time and circumstances permitted without thinking it necessary to pass by those who might or might not belong to other denominations—and thereby deprive them of the sympathy and prayers of the servant of God. By personal and private conversation and prayer, they comforted the feeble minded—supported the weak—warned the impenitent—and affectionately pleaded with the children to give their youth to God. I think we need not go very far back to remember when this course was much more common than it now is. When you Mr. Editor and a host of others who went forth to proclaim the gospel not far from the same time did the work of evangelists at times in these northern portions of the Province. It is perhaps not so necessary in towns and villages where there are resident preachers, but I am thinking of scattered settlements and small villages at a distance from a settled pastor, yet some often connected with him by church membership. It very often happens that persons are unable to attend at a long distance on a public ministry, and even if it is now and then near them, it may be that they cannot go. In such circumstances I have often been much pained and disappointed, yea and cast down, to hear of the proximity of a minister time after time; within five or perhaps two minutes walk of us, and yet we would not be privileged to see his face or to hear his prayers offered in behalf of ourselves and our little ones—or be comforted or advised—or reproved or whatever might be the most needed—all of which we have been accustomed from childhood to look for in a minister of Jesus Christ.

"How beautiful are the feet of them who bring glad tidings &c."—has been our own feelings from infancy and we wish our own children to have the opportunity of so feeling. I do not now attach blame to ministers on this score—though I believe many in common with myself have often attributed this seeming neglect to pride and thoughtlessness or in consideration of their own convenience. But I have learned that it is caused by a delicacy of feeling, a fear of trespassing on the ground of others—or being charged with a wish to proselyte, and thus those who should be at the family board are often left unaided.

Another charge is the neglect of preaching to a scattered people and where there are meeting houses. It should be so that each settlement should have a comfortable house of worship—but this will not be till piety and liberality prevail. But there are generally comfortable dwelling houses or school houses. Small places often pay more in proportion to their number and means than larger ones. It sometimes happens that a minister will visit a place and periodically for a time—the people become attached to him and interested—they look forward to his visits with pleasure, they are the green spots in the desert to many. They contribute their share to his support expecting to have his visits continued, when perhaps ere long he will be seen no more at that retired station. He perhaps becomes discouraged on account of the small attendance, in some busy season when every weak day has its hay or harvest to attend to, and even then the probability is, that in proportion to the number of people, there is a much larger attendance than in the flourishing village, where there are no roads to walk, and not miles.

But what of the Sabbath meetings—Alas they perhaps never have a sermon on the Sabbath. The minister probably does not know who contributes to his support, but his deacons know, and it is not their duty to give of their spiritual things to those who minister of their carnal things? If the adult population can go a long distance, what is to draw the young? what is to teach them to go to the house of the Lord. Not long since I heard a little child of four years, suggesting to his brother

that he would like some one to die, that they might again hear the minister preach.

Would it not be well, lay brethren, for you to take more of the burden on your own shoulders, conduct meetings for yourselves often, and relieve your pastor, that he might look after those few sheep in the wilderness. Who knows but the nooks and corners of this land might rejoice, and the midnight slumbers be broken as they often were years ago, when father Harding's voice was often heard in these parts, arousing the sleepers with his joyful song—"How can you sleep while angels sing? &c. Or if not, if angels rejoiced over repenting sinners would not you be amply rewarded.

February 24th.

[For the Visitor.]

FREDERICTON, 24th March, 1858.

Dear Brother:—Allow me to give you a line or two in reference to my recent visit to Maquapit Lake. I left home last Saturday, and in the evening attended a deeply interesting Conference Meeting in that place. I find that God designs to manifest His presence, especially in the newly erected place of worship there. The meetings on Saturday evening and the Sabbath were very encouraging. I had the pleasure of administering the ordinance of Baptism in the presence of a large and solemn audience. Several others of that place I hope will also follow the example of the individual who was baptized expects to obey Christ in this ordinance when I visit Maquapit Lake again if not before. He related to me a fact or two which I must give for your encouragement and that of your Agents. He informed me that about four years ago he met a young man who was travelling as an Agent for the *Christian Visitor*, and that being requested, he became a subscriber to the paper, that the Agent upon leaving him gave him an affectionate admonition relative to his soul's welfare, and that this admonition was the means under God of his conviction and ultimately of his hopeful conversion. He informed me further that he has since taken the *Visitor* and that it is highly prized by his family to whom it has already proved of vast benefit.

These are very important and encouraging facts, and many more doubtless of a similar character might be found in connexion with the circulation of your valuable paper. You and your Agents have a blessed and hopeful field in which to scatter the words of life.

Brother Reed has been labouring at Maquapit Lake for some weeks past with good acceptance. There is some prospect of his settling permanently in that region occupying as his field of labour Canning, Scotch Town and Maquapit Lake.

Yours affectionately,
ISA. WALLACE.

Donation Visit to Pugwash.

DEAR BROTHER,—It is cheering to hear of the advancement of the gospel of Christ; throughout the United States and these Provinces God is working wonders among the people. Our own little church after a season of darkness and trials has also been revived. Our much esteemed pastor is faithful, and is always ready to take hold with the Church to discipline unruly members, which is sadly neglected by many of our churches. Twenty-one have been added to the church by baptism. Our meetings are still well attended and there appears to be a deep sense of eternal things resting upon the minds of the people.

One day last week a number of the friends of the Rev. E. F. Foshey assembled at his house, and after spending the afternoon in singing and religious conversation they sat down to a sumptuous tea. After the tables were cleared away J. Wheaton, Esq., was called to the chair, several gentlemen present addressed the meeting, they spoke of their respect for their pastor as a faithful minister of Christ, expressing many wishes that he and his beloved partner might be long spared to labour in the vineyard of the Lord. Bro. Foshey replied in a very affectionate and cheering manner, the company then spent the evening in singing many of the songs of Zion, which are always calculated to call the mind up to contemplate on heavenly things. Prayer being offered by one of the brethren, the company separated well pleased with the afternoon's entertainment and left our beloved pastor improved financially upwards of £30, and spiritually, none the worse. Our sisters deserve all the credit for this. May their example be imitated throughout the Province.

Yours in gospel bonds,
W. H. ROCKS.

Ordination.

Mr. Editor,—A Council was convened at Gaspereaux, Horton, N. S., the 8th day of January last, by letters from the 3rd Horton Church, to consider the propriety of ordaining to the work of the Gospel Ministry, Bro. Eliphaz D. Read, Licentiate of Sackville, N. B.

The Council was composed of Ministers and Delegates, as follows:—
1st Horton Church,—Rev. J. M. Cramp, D. D.; Deacons, Simon Fitch, Martin Cleve-

land, William Peak, and Rev. S. W. DeBlois.

3rd Cornwallis Church,—Rev. James Parker; Nictaux Church, Rev. Willard Parker; Saint Andrews, N. B., Rev. A. D. Thomson; Kempt, Queen's County, Bro. Kempton, Licentiate. Lower Aylesford, Bro. Goucher, Licentiate.

2nd Horton.—Deacons James Peak, Jeremiah Eagles; Payzant, M. Allen, — Westcott, and Rev. James Stevens.

On motion, Dr. Cramp was appointed Chairman; Rev. S. W. DeBlois, Secretary.

The Council then heard the Candidate relate his Christian experience, the evidences of his call to the ministry, views of doctrine, and of ministerial duty,—which being deemed eminently satisfactory, the Council unanimously voted—

That we proceed to the ordination of Bro. Read; which accordingly took place in the following order:—

Ordination Sermon, Rev. A. D. Thomson; Asking the Questions, "Dr. Cramp"; Ordaining Prayer, "J. Stevens"; Right Hand of Fellowship,

Rev. S. W. DeBlois;

Charge to the Candidate,

Rev. Willard G. Parker;

Charge to the Church, "James Parker."

The exercises were deeply solemn and interesting. The sermon, from 2d Cor. 11: 6, was exceedingly appropriate.

Bro. Read has been much blessed since he commenced his labours; sixteen having been received by baptism.

By order,
S. W. DeBlois,
Secretary.

[From the New York Tribune of the 23d inst.]

THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL.

BURTON'S THEATRE.—A MID-DAY PRAYER-MEETING.

A few years ago there suddenly arose, in one of the thriving cities of Western New York, an impetuous popular demand for theatrical entertainments, which refused to be assuaged until it had been professionally ministered unto by a full company of actors. There being no theatre edifice in the place, a church was hired for the Winter season, and was soon, by the combined efforts of carpenters and scene-painters, changed into a neat and commodious theatre. It then became exceedingly desired by the religious community that some theatre should be transformed into a church, as a fitting retributive compensation, that the moral equilibrium of the Empire State might be restored. Time has at last accomplished this, and eternal justice has set the balance level once more.

Yesterday, at 12 m., Burton's old theatre in Chambers street was opened for divine worship, under the direction of the Rev. Theodore L. Cuyler, the "Young Men's Christian Association" being the movers of the work. Side by side, on the outer walls of the building, were huge posters announcing that at Burton's Theatre, opposite Bond street, "the last great successful play will be performed this evening," and placards stating that a prayer-meeting was now in progress in Burton's Theatre in Chamber street. There were several hundred persons present, the parquet, dress circle and private boxes being all full.

On the same benches, where undoubtedly many of them in the days of their "Wild Oats" had been seated with a very different purpose, were now grouped "Brother and Sister," "Man and Wife," "Married and Single," "Sweethearts and Wives," "Old Heads and Young Hearts," "Opposite Neighbors," "Parents and Guardians," "The Poor Gentleman" and "The Patrician's Daughter," "The Old Guard" and the "Young Scamp," "The Wife" and "The Young Widow," "The Scholar" and "The Fool," "The Stranger," "The Sea Captain," "The Poor Soldier," "The Critic," "The Gamester" and "The Drunkard," all gathered anxiously together in one great "Serious Family," all intent on the same "Momentous Question," all seeking "A Cure for the Heartache."

Many who had perhaps been playing "The Game of Life" with utter disregard of the future, and been dashing headlong down "The Road to Ruin," many a one who, spurred by his "Evil Genius," had run through every stage of "The Rake's Progress," and more than "Six Degrees of Crime," and who had at last begun to think of "Retribution" and "Repentance," offered in the Theatre yesterday his earnest prayer to be taught the better life.

The Rev. T. L. Cuyler, in company with the Rev. R. M. Hatfield, and Mr. Lasar, organist of the Thirty-first street Presbyterian Church, were seated on the stage, in front of the curtain. In the dress circle of the house were the Rev. Mr. Van Meter of the Five Points Mission, the Rev. Mr. Garnett, the Rev. Mr. Jones of the Mariner's Church, Mr. Benjamin T. Manierre, President of the Young Men's Christian Association, the Rev. Dr. Marsh, and a number of other leaders of the present Revival movement.

The meeting was opened by the singing of No. 182 of the "Union Hymns," beginning "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, Weak and wounded, sick and sore; Jesus ready stands to save you, Full of pity, love and power; He is able, He is willing, doubt no more."

The Rev. Mr. Cuyler then read from the 15th chapter of Luke the story of the Prodigal Son.

The Rev. Mr. Hatfield made a prayer, in the course of which he used these words: "Come into this place, O Lord, by thy spirit, and let every one here present feel that this house is indeed the house of peace, and the gate of Heaven." He concluded by repeating the Lord's Prayer.

The Rev. Mr. Cuyler then addressed the meeting in the following words:

"At the request of a Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association, I have come to conduct the service to-day. At last we may congratulate the defenders of the stage that a theatre has become a school of virtue, and not a haunt of profanity—a spot for the real tears of penitence, and not the scene of fictitious grief over the fictitious sorrows of the stage. For 'this let us give God the glory!"

This is not the first time that a theatre in New York has been used for a daily prayer-meeting. In 1831 the old Chatham-street Theatre, a haunt of obscenity, blasphemy and vice, was purchased by a Committee for purposes of worship. It was during the height of the great revival of 1831 that two gentlemen called on the lessee of the theatre and proposed to buy his lease. "What for?" said he. "For a church," "A w-h-a-t?" "A church," replied the gentleman. The astonished man broke into tears, and exclaimed, "You may have it, and I will give \$1,000 toward it." The arrangement was completed. At the close of a morning rehearsal the beautiful hymn "The Voice of Free Grace" was sung, and Mr. Tappan announced to the actors that very evening there would be preaching on that stage! A pulpit was placed on the very spot where dying agonies had often been counterfeited in tragic mockery; and in front of the footlights of the stage seats for the inquirers were arranged.

The first prayer-meeting in the theatre (which was christened "Chatham-street Chapel") was attended by 800 persons. Among those who offered prayer were the late Rev. Heman Norton and the late Zachariah Lewis, one of the first editors of the *The New York Commercial Advertiser*. On the 6th of May the house was consecrated to the service of God. The Rev. Mr. Finney preached from the text, "Who is on the Lord's side?" In the evening the crowd was so great that many were unable to get into the building. For seventy successive nights Mr. Finney preached there to immense audiences. The bar-room was changed into a prayer-room and the first man who knelt there poured forth these striking words, "O Lord! forgive my sins. The last time I was here, Thou knowest I was a wicked actor on this stage. O Lord, have mercy on me!"

For three years this house was used for revival meetings, and Mr. Finney continued to preach there until the erection of the late Broadway Tabernacle. That glorious revival of 1831 brought into the churches of this city many of our most active and faithful Christians, many of those who are now most prominent in the benevolent movements of the day. May the present awakening be equally fruitful in enriching God's Church, and blessing a sinful world!

To-day for the second time in the history of New York we set apart a disused play-house for a house of worship. Oh! what soul-tragédies may have been enacted in this very building! From yonder "pit" how many have gone down to the pit of everlasting despair! Let our service here be as solemn as eternity! Let us invoke the presence of God's spirit! and may this former habitation of the Tempter be the very habitation of God—the very gate of Heaven to souls seeking after Jesus!

I probably shall offer the united petition of every Christian here present, when I say "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

After the singing of this 17th hymn, several announcements and the adjourned request were read:

"The Spirit of God is moving upon the hearts of many of the Five-Points' Mission. Some in Cow Bay have turned to the Lord, but the enemy has come in like a flood upon us. Pray for us, that this glorious work may not cease."

A gentleman from Philadelphia then gave a brief account of the progress of the revival in that city, after which hymn 219 was sung.

A gentleman here made some comments on the building of theatres. When he had concluded Mr. Fardee of the Sunday School Union related a couple of anecdotes of theatrical people. One was a lady, who, while watching with a sick friend, had her attention awakened by a tract she there saw, and was ultimately converted. Her husband and two daughters were all members of the theatrical company in this city, and were playing an engagement at that time, but through her instrumentality they have been all converted, and have left the stage. The other anecdote was of an actress who herself was sick, and while on her sick bed was brought to believe in the truths of the Gospel, has since become a member of the church, and has induced several others to leave the theatrical profession. Said the gentleman, in conclusion: "These things prove conclusively that actors and actresses are not beyond the reach of our prayers."

A young man in the gallery announced that he had heard that "The greatest actor in New York, Mr. Edwin Forrest, had lately

(Continued on last page.)