

The Christian Visitor.

FAMILY NEWSPAPER: DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

EV. 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 OF THESE LOWER PROVINCES.

CHAPTER XV.

County of Yarmouth.

Details of Father Harding's long career in the Christian ministry, which have been given in preceding chapters, are abundantly illustrative of his deep piety, evangelical zeal, and life-long usefulness. Seventy long and eventful years were devoted to the cause of truth and righteousness. His only employment, during that period, was the preaching of Jesus to his fellow-men; and now that his toils are ended, a sketch of the lineaments of his character may not be out of place.

If, in vigour of intellect, he was inferior to Edward Manning—if he was less distinguished in powers of oratory than was Theodore Harding—and if, in discipline, he was not so judicious and rigid as were some of his contemporaries, yet he exhibited other admirable traits of character, which are essential to success in the ministry, and in which, perhaps, he far transcended most of his clerical brethren, in whose labours our denomination originated in these Provinces. The pulpit discourses of Father Harding, intellectually considered, were never brilliant; but they were generally effective and useful. If his sermons were seldom profound, they were always richly studded with apposite biblical quotations. He had never studied theology as a theoretic system; but he had embraced the prominent doctrines of the Bible with his whole heart; and to him they were streams of salvation whose origin was in the everlasting love of God. Few of his discourses were pre-arranged—and none of them were written. He went into the pulpit without memorandum or note. In fact, in the strictest sense, he was an extemporaneous preacher. Nevertheless, it was not without preparation that he ascended into the sacred desk on the Sabbath. He had been pondering upon his own helplessness in secret, where, bowed in humility before God, he had implored spiritual help from above. He deemed it of far more importance that the heart should be burning with love, than that the head should be stored with matter. He was ever deeply impressed with the humbling fact, that independently of gracious influences, he could say nothing which would profit his hearers.

If, in addressing a congregation, he never dazzled with the splendour of his eloquence, he often touched their sympathies, and moved their hearts as he descended upon the Saviour's love. All who listened, while he dilated upon this soul-stirring theme, knew that the preacher was in earnest; and that selfishness and pride had nothing to do with his appeals to their consciences. At times there was a melting pathos in his utterance, which was irresistible—overpowering. While there was little method in his discourses, they were generally delivered with fervour, and interspersed with anecdotes, illustrative of the topics he was discussing. He loved to dwell upon interesting incidents in his own religious history, or in the spiritual experience of some other saint, who was struggling to overcome every difficulty that obstructed the pathway of his piety. In speaking particularly to his brethren, he invariably addressed them in the most endearing terms of Christian affection; and in his appeals to the ungodly, while pointing out the danger and heinousness of sin, there was nothing repulsive or offensively austere in his manner. To all classes and conditions of men he spoke in the language and spirit of love.

Had his best and most effective sermon been committed to paper by a stenographer, it would probably have been but lightly esteemed; but the most refined scholar, if a man of genuine piety, would have listened to its delivery with both pleasure and profit. There was that indeed in the manner of Father Harding, which imparted a charm and a power to his pulpit efforts. No matter what was the text, the love of God to sinners and the all-sufficiency of Christ to save them, were the great facts which he was ever intent upon presenting to his hearers. The exhibiting of those sublime truths, in all their gospel prominence, appeared, always in his views, and the tendency of whatever he said was to humble the sinner, and exalt the Saviour.

It is not in the pulpit that Father Harding was regarded in the most interesting light. However efficient there, it was in domestic circles, as he "visited from house to house," personally exhorting with impressive earnestness, and praying wherever he went that his efforts "to do good" were most successful. These fringed labours of love were greatly blessed of God in the conversion of souls. Multitudes in childhood years were thus savingly led to embrace the religion of Christ. His visits were not like angels' "few and far between." It is on the Sabbath he met his people, assembled together for public worship, on the other days of the week, he went among them in private,

enforcing the same truths in their dwellings that he enunciated from the pulpit. These his days were passed—all of them given to his Master's service. As regards religious zeal and activity, every day was devoted to God; and in this respect, his long life was one continuous Sabbath. During the whole seventy years of his ministry, he never suffered his mind to become so far secularized as to interfere with the faithful discharge of the duties which devolved upon him as a Christian minister.

As a pastor, he was loving to his people, and greatly beloved. If there were difficulties and dissension in the Church, and brethren were arrayed against each other in disagreement, he never became a partisan. If he interfered in such disputes as sometimes unhappily do arise among brethren, he never "took sides;" but endeavoured to reconcile in the spirit of love. He was, perhaps, somewhat too lax in discipline; and if he did not with promptitude bring transgressors before the church, to account for their departure from the path of rectitude, he followed them in private with admonitions of love, and exhortations to repentance; and when exclusion became unavoidable, he could scarcely be prevailed upon to perform the duty, which in this respect devolved upon him as "overseer of the flock."

Whenever a church member came to him, complaining of the personal wrong of a brother; and, after having stated his grievance, would ask:

"Now, Father Harding, what course would you advise me to take?"

"Love him," would Father Harding reply.

"But he has used me so badly that I have lost all esteem for him."

"Nevertheless, it is your duty to love him."

"How, Father Harding, can I love one who has treated me so unkindly?"

"O my dear brother, I have never known us were in rebellion against him," would Father Harding reply with streaming eyes; "and if we have the spirit of Christ, we, too, shall love our enemies."

In this way, he often succeeded in reconciling brethren, who had become estranged from each other, and were mutually indulging in a spirit of unchristian animosity.

Although Father Harding's support, as well as that of his family, was chiefly derived from the "free-will offerings" of his people, he never wholly liked the idea of a stipulated sum in remuneration for his services. He seemed averse to a subscription paper as a pledge for his sustenance. "I do not wish to be a hireling," he would say; "if I am not faithful in the service of Christ, I deserve nothing; but if, through grace, I am useful in his cause, he will take care of me." After Mr. Burton became co-pastor with him, an annual subscription guaranteed to each a certain sum; yet he never seemed to entirely approve of the arrangement. He knew that he lived in the affections of his people; and he required no stronger pledge of support at their hands.

From what we have said, our readers will form a tolerably accurate idea of the life, Christian graces, general character and usefulness of Father Harding. Apart from what we have already written, as respects his success in the ministry, there is little else in his life of interest. Like most other men, he married, and became the father of sons and of daughters, most of whom survive him. He was born in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, on the 10th of October, 1761. When very young, his father removed to the State of Connecticut, where his son Harris, of whom we are speaking, spent several of his youthful years. He, however, returned to Cornwallis; and when a young man, during that series of religious revivals, which originated in the preaching of Henry Aline, he was converted to God. Almost immediately after experiencing the sweets of pardoning mercy, he commenced preaching the doctrines of the Cross, travelling from settlement to settlement, and his labours were generally blessed whithersoever he went. In Cornwallis, Horton, Palmouth, Newport, Colechester, Cumberland, Annapolis, and Liverpool, the very old saints still remember the fervour and success of his youthful ministry.

Prior to his removal to Yarmouth in 1797, he married Mahetable Harrington, of Liverpool, who was a faithful and loving Christian wife during the remainder of his days; and who, bowed down under the weight of years, still survives.

Father Harding's remains are interred only a few feet from the west side of the Meeting House, in Yarmouth. Over his grave stands an elegant marble monument, about twelve feet in height. It is thus inscribed on one side:

In memory of the Rev. Harris Harding, born October 10th, 1761, died March 7th, 1854. For nearly seventy years, sixty of which were spent in this neighbourhood, he proclaimed the Gospel, which he loved, with unwearied diligence and extraordinary success.

And 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."

On another side of the monument, is the following inscription:

Mr. Harding first visited Yarmouth in 1790. In 1797, he came hither to labour steadily in the Gospel. In 1827, he and his

Church, the members of which resided in several parts of this County, united with the Nova Scotia Baptist Association. At his death, he was the senior Pastor of the first and second Baptist Churches."

To the Editor of the Christian Visitor.

You have been pleased to characterize in reply to your strictures "as the sting of an irritated mind." It strikes me irritation is all on the other side; and my letter to answer for itself.

I am willingly to be the object of your and to be as "insignificant as you make me; but I am not willing to be the imputation of employing my defaming the character of christianity. This, I never have done. I trust, the grace of God, I never shall. I disposition to anatomize all who do not my views and pursue my plans. Honour their piety, rejoice in their usefulness, forgive their mistakes, and pray that they be brought to more correct views. I say, that a great part of my letter is as much to do with my charges the Baptists in these Provinces in the independent as it had with the pier of Genesis." You did not find as little to do with the charges you against me in the Visitor. To meet charges I was painfully necessitated to myself and yet in doing so I only follow the example of one greater and better than of us. Paul said—"I have been fool in glorying, ye have compelled I adopt his language.

My charges are now, I think, brought a very narrow compass. I presume my offence lies in what I wrote of revivals. I am greatly mistaken if it is my only offence, I was perfectly at the time that in advertising to this I was treading on delicate ground and a deep sense of duty impelled me. "President Edwards" says Sprague in his "Thoughts on Revivals," and invaluable works in connection with me subject, at the expense of being deeded, even by some of his own brethren, enemy of revivals, but these publications served to correct and prevent great error since, and if he had rendered the same service, for this alone he should have embalm'd his memory." We liable to err—ministers and churches. Richard Baxter remarks—"The word of God is divine, but our mode of dispensing it is human; and there is scarcely any thing we are handing off, but we leave on the prints of our fingers." Let any one Edwards' treatise on revivals and he find evidence of the fact as painful as it questionable.

However, let me confirm my testimony of one of your own brethren. I have before me the "Minutes of the Sixth Year of the Western Baptist Association, held at St. John's, N. B., June 14, 16, and 17, 1856."—These Minutes we have an address on revivals by the Rev. T. N. Bentley, then of St. John's, now of Halifax. In advertising to effects of a genuine revival, he says, "I would bid farewell to strife, enmities, and divisions. Pastors would in fewer plan removals every few years or months. Such a revival as we have endeavored to sketch would fill the treasuries of Lord and leave no pastors pinched for priests, with starving families and starving orphans, they who "preach the Gospel and live of the gospel."

As things are, it is easy to account for lamentable deficiency of students for the pace of our Home Missionary movements, for the early increment of the Foreign missionary feeling among us, for the lack of a deeply religious and richly devotional sentiment which marked the earlier meetings, our associations, for the prevalence of unkindness and of Sabbath desecration in our country.

"How dwarfish our zeal, how meagre our charities. When Christians meet they resemble a congregation of northern icebergs jolly down to the temperature of the world's sordid atmosphere. Can such agents be expected to do much towards converting the world?"

Have I written any thing so strong as this? Will you charge Mr. Bentley with defaming the character of his brethren? I cordially agree with Mr. B. that one effect of a genuine revival would be, the filling of "the treasuries of the Lord." The relation of the one to the other is simple and natural. We have many examples of this, both in the old and in the New Testament history. At the erection of the tabernacle, at the building of the temple, and at the Pentecostal establishment of the kingdom of heaven, I cannot form the idea of revival in the church, without a special increase in the ardour of the missionary spirit. This is a practical test by which I would estimate the amount of revival.

Now, Mr. B. speaks of the tardy pace of your Home Missionary movements; and the early increment of the Foreign Missionary feeling among you." At the Yarmouth Convention I remember, too, with deep feeling you bewailed the lack of Missionary spirit in your churches in reference to Australia. The churches in connection with the Western Association of Nova Scotia contributed towards the following objects:—"Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Infirmary, and

exception and, in my opinion makes a number of very sensible remarks to which it would be well if both Congregationalist and Baptist, as well as Methodist churches in the Upper as well as the Lower Provinces would take heed." I thought of giving some extracts from the private letters, but I forbear. I have no desire to dwell on what I conceive to be evils connected with religious movements, except for the purpose of having them corrected. It would be far more congenial with my feelings to dwell on the blessings of revivals, and on the triumph of the cause of revivals, than on the evils which through the weakness or corruption of human nature, may be associated with them.

My earnest prayer is, that all the churches in these Provinces may be blessed with "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." When there shall be spirited action; action as if all were one, and that one "full of power and might by the Spirit of the Lord;" action for the glory of Christ, for the progress of his kingdom, for the conversion of sinners, for the stability of saints, for the salvation of souls, for the happiness of earth, for the peopling of heaven. O for such a revival in all the churches—revival in spirit—revival in action—revival animated by the love of Christ, cheered and imparted by the presence of Christ. Such revival (and no other is genuine) will set all minds, all hearts, and all hands to work.

I conclude in the closing words of Mr. Bentley: "How great, then, the need of revivals! How earnestly should we use all the Scriptural means for promoting revivals! How important the inquiry what those methods are?"

I remain yours, &c.,
ROBERT WILSON.
Sheffield, N. B., 8th April, 1858.

Duty to Young Church Members.

The desire of aiding converts to our churches is often in advance of our diligence in training them to piety and usefulness. We forget that the question to their final salvation is never fully settled by the evidences on which we receive them to our fellowship, and that only those shall receive the crown of life who continue faithful unto death. God says, "if any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him."

The convert is "a babe in Christ," and the church is his nursing mother. Without her fostering care in feeding him with the sweet milk of the Word, in watching over his feebleness and immaturity, and in teaching him more perfectly the way of the Lord, how can he grow to the maturity of a Christian manhood? Do the churches duly consider the responsibilities which they assume when they receive young converts to their fellowship? By this act of receiving them they virtually pledge themselves to train them up to greater perfection of Christian character. Each conversion is a call from the Holy Spirit to some church saying, "take this child and bring him up for me,"—and our responsibility to ensure for him a healthy Christian development, is quite as great as it is to do what we can for his conversion. All the epistolary parts of the New Testament are an evidence of the care taken in the apostolic churches to increase converts in knowledge, to edify them in love and in truth, to correct their waywardness and lead them along in the way of righteousness. So intense were the anxieties and endeavors of the apostles on this point that we hear one of them saying to backsliding members, "my little children, of whom I travel in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you."

At a time like the present when the churches are adding so many, it becomes them to consider seriously and prayerfully, whether they are in a state to really advance these young Christians in holiness. Can you lead them forward to still higher and higher attainments in the divine life? Can you say to them, "follow me, as I follow Christ?" How little they know as yet of the depths of Satan! How ignorant are they of his devices! How much do they need the pious watch-care of older Christians to secure them against "the wiles of the devil!" How imperfect their knowledge of the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints! How feeble their estimate of what the apostle means, when he prays that Christians may be "filled with all the fullness of God." They have really little more knowledge of the utmost possible attainments in piety, than they had before the day of their conversions.

If they chance to fall into the hands of a church equally ignorant of a full salvation in Christ, the probability is that they will never go on unto perfection, but will sink down to the cold dead level of the prevailing spirit of piety, or rather of impiety and worldliness around them, and thus will disappoint all the hopes which their conversion had awakened. But on the other hand, if they fall among mature Christians, who know by experience what the assurance of faith is, and whose "love abounds more and more in knowledge and all judgment," the effect will probably be to inspire them with a zeal to make their calling and election sure; for if they do these things they shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Is there not a danger with us Baptists, that we repose so absolutely in the correctness of ordinances and our plan of church organization, as to think too little of maintaining among

as a high order of personal piety? Do we not cherish the shell to the neglect of the kernel? However purely and perfectly apostolic we may be in form, without the power of Godliness, we are totally unprepared for training young Christians. Those churches whose forms are defective, if their spirit is more apostolic than ours, may be even better prepared to train the sacramental host to act upon a coming age. Let us not glory in the outward to the neglect of the inward and spiritual elements of Christianity.

The pastors should keep the watches and residences of all who are added to their churches ever on hand, so as to be able to find them without difficulty. Keep track of their changes of business, of location, and of association, that you may be prepared to admonish them against any danger that may arise. Make yourselves familiar with them; enlist their affections and their confidence in your person and character, that you may hold them the more securely for your Master. Do not permit one of the number to be long absent from your personal observation. As soon as the shepherd misses a sheep or a lamb from his flock, he goes in pursuit of it, nor does he rest till he finds it; and will you be less careful of an immortal soul committed to your charge?

Find something for them to do. The Apostles acted on the principle of having the church "edify itself in love." To this every member of "the body being fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," was required to make its contributions. As the senses, organs and fluids of the body, each in its place and measure contribute to the perfection of the whole, and no fibre exists in vain, so it must be in the Church. The member that does nothing is dead, and ought to be excluded to prevent his infecting the rest.—Bring out the young men in the prayer and conference meeting. Inquire whether God may not be calling some of them to the ministry. Engage both the male and female converts in the Sunday School, either as teachers or learners. There are many ways in which you may enlist them in doing something for Christ and his church.

Teach them the doctrines, and promises of God's Word, and the privileges of the Christian life. See that they are "rooted and grounded in the truth and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." There never was an age when Bible Christians were in greater demand. And much will depend upon the training which the present converts shall receive, whether this demand will be supplied. How great the responsibility, therefore, which is devolved upon our present churches and pastors.—N. Y. Chronicle.

General Havelock.

I have hitherto spoken of Havelock simply as a "good soldier." Perhaps some before me will deem this but slight praise, especially as we cannot regard the military profession as one of the highest in respect to its intellectual and moral requirements. And I am free to acknowledge that if Havelock had been only "a good soldier," I should not have selected him for panegyric to-night. Havelock is peculiarly interesting to my mind because he was "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." This is the one fact in relation to this man which tells so powerfully upon my sympathies and my admiration. I look at many of the great men both of the past and the present: and while I would be last to depreciate their greatness—while I would award them their full measure of praise—while I would have their memories embalmed, and their example, in all that is right and true and good, revered and followed—yet I cannot help feeling how much they lacked, simply because they were not, in any proper sense of the word, Christians. The Christian is the highest style of man; the Christian philosopher is the highest style of philosopher; the Christian hero is the highest style of hero. Nelson was great, but how much greater would he have been, had his life been submitted to the plastic hand of "the truth as it is in Jesus!" What was it that gave to Cromwell such a towering superiority to his contemporaries, and made him, in spite of his faults, emphatically the man of English History? More than anything else it was his devotion to Christ. Satan is a stupendous energy: let none, with the power in their hands, say that Milton has exaggerated his greatness in "Paradise Lost." Imagine that same spirit restored to virtue, loyalty to God—to acquiescence in a will—to benevolence—in one word, to intellectual and moral eminence on genuine godliness would place him; an shall estimate the superadded grandeur which his magnificent powers, in them and their history, would be invested? What a perfect standard of greatness shall find it in God; and thus it will be that those created ones who most resemble him are greatest and noblest in his dominion. Brethren, I rejoice to know that Havelock was a religious man—a religious man the sort prescribed in the New Testament. I contemplate his heroism with all the pride because I know it was the hero of an intelligent and honest believer in Christ.

He would have been great if he had been a Christian—for God gave him qualities in the very constitution of his nature which carry their possessor on