

Obituary

MR. JOHN SMITH OF PORT HOOD, C. B. Died, on Port Hood Island, C. B., March 18, 1869. Mr. John Smith, aged 54 years. For many years Mr. Smith has been a consistent member of the Wesleyan Church. He was ardently attached to the Church of God, and evinced a lively interest in everything affecting the prosperity of the cause of Christ. He laboured unwearily for the spiritual good of the people by whom he was surrounded; and gave cheerfully of his means to the support of the Gospel. He lived to see a gracious outpouring of the Spirit and to rejoice over five of his family, and others in the place recently brought to the Lord. During the special meetings he manifested great zeal for the salvation of souls—even going from house to house to speak about spiritual things; and when his family and friends were anticipating years of extended usefulness, his life was unexpectedly terminated by three days illness of brain fever.

That after hours of pain and strife, He slept one morning peacefully, And woke in everlasting life. The nature of his disease precluded any testimony being borne concerning his conversion with God; nor was this necessary, as he had frequently spoken in the congregation during the last few weeks, of "peace with God" and a blessed hope of rest beyond. On the day of his interment a large number assembled to pay their last tribute of respect to the departed; many feeling "he was a good man and a just." His death was that of the righteous and his name will long be had in blessed remembrance. Mr. Smith leaves a widow, five sons and three daughters to mourn their loss. J. G. B.

MR. JAMES B. JOHNSON, OF NEWPORT, N. S. Died at Brooklyn, Newport, April 6, James B. Johnson, aged 29 years, after a brief but painful illness.

This sad and afflictive dispensation has deeply wounded the hearts of his parents, brothers and sisters, who now mourn the loss of one of the most dutiful of sons and useful of brothers. His unexpected removal has deeply affected all classes in the community. His gentlemanly and christian character had won for him the esteem and respect of all who knew him. The business men readily affirm that they have lost one of the most enterprising and valuable members of the village; and while looking upon the men in his employ, as they walked before the house to the place of interment, their appearance would lead us to feel that they had lost a friend as well as an employer. The Methodist Church, of which he was a consistent member, will feel his removal from the lower to the upper sanctuary (while it is his gain) to be our loss. While we record his name upon the death roll, amid our tears, we can in truth exclaim, "Thank God, they die well."

In youth he learned of him who taught, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"; and though during the last three years he was deeply immersed in business, yet he never lost his confidence in God, or his faith in the atonement. In frequent conversations during his last illness, he would say "Christ is my only hope, and he is able to save to the uttermost." On this rock he remained; and when unexpectedly called to give up his stewardship, he was prepared to do it with joy.

"O may I triumph so, When all my warfare's past, And dying and my latest foe, Under my feet at last." H. McK.

MRS. ROSS, NORTH SYDNEY, C. B. Died at North Sydney, March 18th 1869, Mrs. Ann Ross, widow of the late Capt. John Ross, in the 83rd year of her age.

Mrs. Ross was a member of the Wesleyan Church for many years. The circumstances which led to her conversion to God are not now certainly known, but there need be no doubt entertained of the fact itself. She was a devout and sincere follower of Christ and although her life was prolonged beyond the usual term, yet she held fast the beginning of her confidence to the end. She sometimes suffered from depression of mind, but this was chiefly owing to the feebleness of old age and her consequent inability to attend the means of grace which had been formerly, such a comfort and strength. Again her faith triumphed and she would say "Christ is all I know He will never leave me while I trust in Him." In this she was not disappointed. On the last Sabbath she spent on earth her mind was unusually tranquil and happy. During that week she passed away, in peace, to be forever with the Lord.

MR. GEO. CREW, BIRD ISLAND COVE, N. F. At Bird Island Cove in the Bonavista Circuit on the 5th of March 1869, George Crew an old and faithful leader in our Society, calmly fell asleep in Jesus. The deceased was born in the County of Dorset, England, in the year 1786, and when about 16 years of age came to Newfoundland. Though previously he had had serious thoughts about religion, it was not till after a few years residence in his adopted country that he decided to be on the Lord's side.

About sixty years ago under the ministry of Rev. W. Ellis one of the pioneers of Methodism in Newfoundland, our departed friend was converted to God and joined himself to the Methodist Society, which connection was unbroken till he passed away to join the Church triumphant. To Methodism as a section of the Church of Christ he was ardently and intelligently attached. His christian career was marked by consistency and regularity. Possessed of more than ordinary intelligence, he employed himself for the spiritual benefit of his fellow creatures and for upwards of half a century conducted religious services in the cove in which he lived, on those Sabbaths when it was not the preserver turn to be there. His house was the home of the ministers, his delight was in their company and often times he spoke of meeting in heaven many of them who had already passed into the skies.

On the last Sabbath in August 1868 he (though with difficulty) as usual conducted the worship of God in the Sanctuary, and this proved to be the end of his public labour.—It was his farewell visit to the place he so much loved, his feet never again trod the hallowed courts—the word went forth "get thee up and die." His affliction protracted through six months and more was very painful, his sufferings were frequently very great; but amidst them all he was unmoved and patiently waited "the end of the Lord." He felt he was on the rock, he knew in whom he had believed, and expressed his gratitude to God for the privileges of Methodism. Referring to his sufferings he was glad that they should pass away that death would end them all and to have the sad prospect of eternal suffering. Death to him was no "King of Terrors," his anchor was cast within the walls, and he had a good hope of eternal life. As time he passed the faithfulness of the promises, as he had done store-time in the service of God, for it had pleased the Master to try him in the furnace of family bereavement,

like Job he had had to mourn the loss of many children, three only of a large family, with an aged and sorrowing widow, surviving him.

MRS. MARY FOWELL, OF BONAVISTA, N. F. March 22, 1869. Died, at Bonavista, aged 68, Mary Fowell, brought to the knowledge of God many years ago, amidst much opposition she held fast her confidence. Left a widow with a helpless family she endured much hardship and trial, but trusting in the widow's God she was sustained. Her affliction was long but she met it with Christian fortitude, and as the earthly Sabbath dawned, she passed to the Sabbath of the skies. "She had another more than ours."

MRS. MARY ABBOTT, BONAVISTA, N. F. March 22nd, 1869, widow Mary Abbott, somewhat suddenly departed this life. About the year 1817, during a revival, when Rev. Jas. Hickson was stationed at Bonavista, she was converted to God, and continued a member of Society until the day of her death. The first Sabbath in March found her at the weekly class meeting. She was a widow about 50 years, and amidst the cares of life treated in her old age with pneumonia, an illness of a few days finished the mortal strife. Her departure was unexpected, and our hope is that she is now numbered with those before the throne.

J. D.

Provincial Celestian.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 1869.

Sudden Conversion. When the necessity of conversion to God is pressed home by personal appeal to the conscience of the unconverted, especially if this be done in connection with a revival of religion, the excitement sometimes offered, "O, I don't understand these sudden conversions." It might seem surprising that such an objection should be made to religion and to its profession by persons accustomed to evangelical teaching; but the greatest obscuration of mind in regard to Gospel teaching is explained by the principle laid down by St. Paul, "The natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

It seems to be forgotten by those who offer such an objection, that the subjects of converting grace in christian lands are generally persons who have long listened to the faithful preaching of God's word, whose minds have been enlightened as to the necessity and reasonableness of personal piety, and whose consciences have been often aroused to consider the sinfulness and the danger of living without God and without hope in the world.—They have known their duty well; the only question with them has been one of time, as to when they would renounce the sins and follies of the world, and heartily espouse the cause of the Redeemer. At length, under providential and favorable circumstances, moved upon by a more powerful divine influence, or constrained by the greater drawings of the Holy Spirit, they yield to convictions of duty, they decide to seek salvation; they make the surrender, and they find that the Lord is more than ready to meet them with his mercy, and to bestow on them the tokens of His reconciling grace. Surely there is nothing wonderful in all this being accomplished in a short space of time.

The conversion of the soul to God is indeed a great work, and were it to be wrought by merely human agency or by any power less than the omnipotent, we might reasonably expect that the obstacles presented were not to be overcome in an hour. But the efficient power is of the Lord alone. Man is generally an instrument in enlightening his fellow-man and in leading him to Christ, but the great business to be transacted is between the sinner himself and his God. To be born again, we must be born of the Spirit of God. He who brought nature into being, and who alone creates us anew in Christ. Nothing less than divine power, than almighty grace, can turn our hearts from sin to holiness,—nothing can deliver us from the power of darkness, and translate us into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Is it to be thought a thing incredible that God should raise our dead souls to life in an instant? Must it not be so in the very nature of things? There must be a moment when the light is wrought; when God says "Let there be light," and there is light in the previously darkened heart. There it is, a preparatory process, the awakening of the soul to thoughtfulness, the conviction of sin by the Spirit of God, the consent of the will to be saved, the earnest cry to God for mercy, and the exercise of confidence in the merits and love of Jesus the Saviour. But all this need occupy no long period. As soon as there is an earnest willingness to be saved, there is a readiness on the part of the Redeemer to enter the sinner's heart and make it his abode; and this inward work of Christ is instantaneous. The inward evidence of this state of grace may be more or less clear, owing to the measure of our faith, and thus may in its commencement be as the dawning light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day; but the change itself is wrought in a moment, and very often its results are strikingly sudden.

This view of conversion is in harmony with the Gospel teaching of present salvation by grace. No other than a present salvation, a salvation now, would meet our necessities. The future is not ours; we know not that our existence here is to be prolonged for another hour; we want therefore our peace made with God this moment; and, blessed be God, the offer of a present salvation comes to our relief. God is ever waiting to be gracious; the Great Advocate ever lives to make intercession for us, and "This instant now I may receive The answer of His powerful prayer."

The salvation offered is by grace through faith,—all of grace, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." The one condition is faith, heartily embracing Christ as our personal Saviour, through faith in His blood, and in a moment we may "Believe, and all our sins are forgiven, Only believe, and cease to sin."

It has often been remarked that any instances of religious experience given in the New Testament, in which the time occupied between the awakening and the attainment of a state of grace is mentioned, are all in favour of a short method of conversion, the longest being that of Saul of Tarsus, who in the lapse of three days passed from the condition of a zealous persecutor of the Church unto that of an avowed and acknowledged disciple of the Lord Jesus. The case of the penitent thief is a memorable instance in point, while the day of Pentecost furnishes striking illustration of sudden conversion. At no time, in no place could men be found so little prepared for so marvellous a change, as were many of those Jerusalem sinners who listened to Peter's discourse on that day. But they were quick to the heart under the word applied by the Holy Spirit, they yielded to that awakening, they inquired, "What shall we do?" They gladly received the apostle's doctrine, and were on that day added to the Lord and to His Church. That we do not in our day witness more frequently the manifestation of sudden awakening and soul-converting power in the means of grace is because of our unbelief. Numerous instances might be cited from Christian geography, sordid and unimpressive, and immediate conversion, followed by exemplary holiness of life. We present a striking incident of this nature from the Revival, an English journal. A correspondent of that periodical says:—"About fifteen months ago I met one of my workmen in the country, a few miles from home. He was a man of about fifty years of age, generally of the usually large wages he earned by his trade, but often profane in his language, and subject to fits of violent passion. In one of these he had, a few weeks before, driven his family from the house, and beaten his youngest son, till his Christian wife, in fear for the boy's life, had to interpose, and resolutely say that he must strike her before he should again assault the boy. He was a peculiarly interesting, open hearted man, but so long without the claims of Christ in the midst of a religious community, that there seemed little hope of his conversion. Addressing him, I said, 'John, I have been waiting for you for two years, and now I want you to become a Christian to-day!' 'We sat down, and I again told him as I had several times done a year before, the story of the cross, solemnly pressing the gospel of salvation home upon his heart.—He listened respectfully, saying but little; but when we were about to part, and I asked him if he would not kneel while I asked God's blessing, he replied with characteristic frankness: 'Well, I am much obliged by your kind interest in me, but, to be honest with you, I am really not now interested. I have sometimes felt these things deeply at meetings, but I have no interest in the subject now; I feel nothing.' 'He, however, consented to kneel, and a friend joined us, as we bowed before God. The prayer ascended, that as Jesus, in the hour of his flesh, had looked upon the faith of those who broke through all obstacles to place their beloved sick before Him, and had said, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee,' so now He would look upon the poor sick soul who we brought to his feet and in mercy make him whole. It was a bold request, but God honors our petitions when we ask great things. Almost immediately the man broke down, weeping and pleading for mercy. His wife, who, during my conversation with her husband, had stood behind us, soon after our prayer had been answered in his conversion she received, as he rose from his knees, her now Christian husband with joy better conceived of than described. As he left, he exclaimed, 'I am a new creature in Christ Jesus!'

When he came among some of his Christian fellow-workmen, and told what God had so marvelously done for his soul, their joy was unbounded. More than anything that I have ever seen, his expression made me understand how David must have felt when he danced before the ark. They embraced one another, and wept and laughed for joy as they welcomed the poor sinner so suddenly snatched from the snare of the devil.

About fourteen months, under my own almost hourly observation, of faithful walk, "adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," as far as human observation can discern, have demonstrated, were such discourses needed, that the glorious chain of events—the wife's loss, the continued prayers, the selection of this man by his comrades for special prayer, the midnight intercession of the aged saint, the word of testimony, and the laying him at the feet of Jesus to be healed—all these events were but the links in a chain of God's marvellous purposes of grace to the poor sinner.

Lord, increase our faith in the present power and immediate results of thy testimony!"

The Rousing Method. In the reminiscences of his life, which P. T. Barnum is getting out, we have an anecdote of Dr. Baird, of the Presbyterian Church, which possibly is well preserving:

They were fellow passengers on a steamer from Liverpool to New York, and during the voyage they had several conversations respecting the merits of their respective religious opinions. Barnum is a Unitarian, and sought to perplex his companion. He recalled the case of a woman somewhat noted for her coarseness of speech including profanity, making her altogether such a person as needed the refining influences of religious teaching. Describing the very unpromising condition of this woman, he said:

"Well, Doctor, if you can do anything with your own eyes, I would prove that woman, I should be glad to see you undertake the job." "I was at once struck," says Mr. Barnum, "with the business air in which he considered the exigencies of what undoubtedly was a hard case. It was clear that he had dropped the character of the sectarian, and was taking a common sense view of the problem. It was soon solved, and he replied: 'Mr. Barnum it is no use for you, with your opinions, to attempt to do anything for that kind of person; and it is especially useless for me, with my views, to attempt it; but you could contrive some way to set some free-running Methodist to work upon her; he is just the man to do it.' 'No doubt both the gentlemen were amused at this solution of the difficult problem, and possibly were unconscious of the very high compliment paid that set which is sometimes called enthusiastic. The physician who can relieve the most desperate sickness, the lawyer who can steer the most knotty case, the sailor who can steer the most dangerous channel, the general who can save his colors against the most desperate odds, have each furnished the highest evidence of skill in their various callings; and the preacher who meets humanity in its most abandoned state, and boldly attempts its reform must rank high among the servants of him who came to "seek and save those who are lost," and that gospel which insures him success in this herculean untraveled the most knotty case, the sailor who can steer the most dangerous channel, the general who can save his colors against the most desperate odds, have each furnished the highest evidence of skill in their various callings; and the preacher who meets humanity in its most abandoned state, and boldly attempts its reform must rank high among the servants of him who came to "seek and save those who are lost," and that gospel which insures him success in this herculean untraveled the most knotty case, the sailor who can steer the most dangerous channel, the general who can save his colors against the most desperate odds, have each furnished the highest evidence of skill in their various callings; 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