

## THE DEATH-BED OF A CHRISTIAN IN CANADA.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."—*I Isaiah xvi. 3.*

"To the true believer, "the Lord saith," is a sufficient guarantee for the truth of every Scripture promise. There are particular texts, however, which appear in a stronger light, and are more firmly relied upon, when we can perceive instances of their fulfilment within the range of our own experience.

Thus the Lord has said that every person whose mind is stayed on Him, will have perfect peace. The God of truth has uttered this declaration, therefore we are bound to believe it. But the Christian's faith is strengthened and confirmed, when he actually sees or hears of a fellow being, whose mind was stayed upon God, and who enjoyed "perfect peace." He sees not only truth itself, but that truth fulfilled in his own experience. He sees its effects, its fruits, and its workings.

In the bustle of worldly occupations, amid the engrossing cares of time, and in the enjoyment of prosperity, even the false professor of Christ may have some degree of outward peace, and may seem to be a real disciple. His mind may appear to be stayed on the Lord. But it is in the midst of afflictions and trials that the true Christian is made manifest. When sickness seizes on his frame—when a lingering disease consumes his body, and when the cold icy hand of death hangs gloomily over him, and seems about to descend at every moment,—then, and then especially, is the true child of God brought forth as the light—then is his real character displayed like noonday of the day—then is seen the "perfect peace" of him whose "mind is stayed" on the Lord.

These remarks have been suggested from perusing an account of the recent death of a pious servant of the Lord. As some account of his last illness and peaceful end, may not be found uninteresting, or void of instruction to some, we will endeavour to give a slight sketch of his latter days.

The congregation, in connexion with our Synod, which worships in Cote Street Church, Montreal, was desirous of obtaining a pious schoolmaster for that city. Mr. W. Thomson came for that purpose from Glasgow, about nine months ago. He was an Elder in the Free Church, and bore a very high Christian character. He immediately opened a school, and met with much encouragement and success. His great piety, combined with his admirable system of teaching, attracted many pupils to his establishment, which soon contained upwards of 60 pupils.

In the meantime Mr. T. had endeared himself to every one who had the privilege of enjoying his friendship. His mild Christian deportment and meekness was so marked, and his manners were so engaging, that, when seen and known, it was impossible not to esteem and love him. There appeared to be every prospect of his being eminently useful, and of his proving a blessing to Montreal and its neighbourhood.

"God's ways," however, "are not as our ways." Mr. T. had scarcely established his school for four months, when the Lord laid his hand heavily upon him. Sickness seized him in the midst of his labours. He thought that it was only of a temporary character; but more alarming symptoms were observed. A pain in the chest, spitting of blood, and the usual indications of consumption, made their appearance.

When Mr. T. was thus laid upon a bed of sickness, his Christian character was strikingly seen. It was really refreshing and instructive to enter his sick chamber, to look upon his patient and even smiling countenance, and to converse with him. There was such a mild serenity—such a holy calm in his whole deportment, and such sweetness and heavenly-mindedness in his words, that you could not help admiring him; and especially the goodness of God in supporting him so much. His case was truly a trying one. Laid low in the midst of his useful labours—cast upon

a bed of sickness among strangers, and far away from his native land, he had much to make him despond. But in him was this promise fulfilled, "Thou wilt have perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee."

Days, weeks, months, passed away, and Mr. T. was gradually sinking under the effects of disease. But though "the outward man" was perishing, "the inward man" was renewed day by day. His peace remained. He seemed to say, with the afflicted saint of old, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." His mind rested, with much delight, on the sovereignty of God, and on the well-ordered covenant.

The following circumstance beautifully illustrates his happy and contented state:—Several friends had asked him if he was prepared for death. One day he said to a pious person, seated beside him—"People ask me, 'Am I prepared for death?' 'Am I ready?' and 'What do I think of it now?' I don't know what they mean, 'To them that are in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation.' That is all I have to say."

His physical strength was latterly so much impaired, that his mind frequently wandered; but his wanderings were all in a Christian direction. He would be in Scotland, or in Montreal, teaching the Scriptures, or explaining them to his imaginary pupils. Disease had also reduced and greatly emaciated his whole bodily frame. A few days before his death, animation had at times almost entirely ceased. He grew much worse in February last, and towards the close of the month his death was evidently at hand.

It is now the 24th of this month—let us enter his room towards the evening. Life is seen to be ebbing fast. He is so low that he can hardly speak. His lips are seen to move frequently—and his voice, scarcely audible, discovers him to be engaged in prayer. It is now twilight—many kind friends are surrounding his bedside, and one is heard uttering comforting passages of Scripture, such as *Deut. xxxiii. 27*, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," or the 23rd *Psalms*, or such sweet passages as the following, "My peace I leave with you," "Father I will," &c.

Calmly, and with a pale but unmoved countenance, the dying Christian repeated those passages. The *Psalms* Book is opened, and the 46th *Psalms* selected—

"God is our refuge and our strength,  
In straits a present aid."

"Sing it," said he feebly, and he joined in singing the 1st and 4th verses. He feels revived, though he speaks but very little. But in about 10 minutes, a change is observed to pass over his pale face, and then his spirit passed away, without even a sigh, or the motion of a single muscle. Like the proto-martyr Stephen, "he fell asleep" in Jesus.

Such, reader, is the quiet and composed death of a true Christian. Does not such an account lead you to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his." May you be brought to Jesus, who can alone impart peace to the troubled soul. Stay your mind upon Him.

Mr. T., we firmly believe, has now passed from death to life—from the church on earth to the church in heaven—"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

This slight sketch has been attempted by one who had the privilege of knowing Mr. T. He has seen, and can testify to his Christian deportment—in the midst of his pupils—in the house of God—at the social prayer meeting—at the solemn communion season, and in his own house. Everywhere there was a savour of Christ with him. He has beheld him afflicted with sickness, and disease preying on his vitals, and still he blessed God.

The writer desires cordially to sympathize with the afflicted widow of the deceased, and to mingle his tears with hers. A stranger in a strange land, may she be enabled to cast herself on the mighty God of Jacob—on Him who is peculiarly the "widow's stay."—*Communicated.*

## Miscellaneous.

## STATE OF RELIGION IN BELGIUM.

(From the Edinburgh Witness.)

We beg to call the attention of our readers to the following extract of a letter from the Rev. Mr. Abston, who was sent out by the Free Church Continental Committee to labour in spreading the Gospel in France. It was written some weeks ago, on his arrival in Paris, after passing through Belgium. It gives an interesting view of the state of religion in Belgium,—that country of the Continent to which, next to France, there is perhaps at the present time the loudest call to send the Gospel:—

"In a hasty visit, it is not easy to come to a correct notion of the state and progress of religion in any country. Information conveyed by conversation is very apt to be inaccurate; but I saw enough to convince me that there is a spiritual movement going on in this country, which promises to be extensive, solid, and lasting. There has never been anything here like what is called a revival,—that is, a large number of persons in a locality brought under strong conviction, and into a state of strong spiritual feeling. It is one here, or two there,—a family in one locality, a few families in another,—who have been brought to the knowledge of the truth,—have embraced it, and now walk according to the light which they have obtained. Yet the numbers are considerable for the time that the Gospel has been preached among them. At Charleroi the congregation has risen in three years from twelve to two hundred,—of whom seventy-six are communicants, with a session exercising discipline along with the minister, and a school attended by fifty-three pupils, and sixteen adults in the evening. At Montigny le Tillieu, a small village in the neighbourhood, I found seventy persons assembled, and of two ministers, a licentiate, a schoolmaster, and the congregation, I was the only one not born a Roman Catholic. I found elders here too; and one of them, like a true Scotch Presbyterian of the old school, clenched with a nod of the head every expression that pleased him. *Nessonveaux*—a village between Liege and Verviers, and not very far from the German frontier—may be thought an exception, as the whole parish, with the exception of four families, have joined the Protestant Church, though the Gospel has not been preached among them above a year. But I found there an old man, still keen and lively, who told me that it was forty years since he began to relish the Gospel,—he had done something to spread the knowledge of his discoveries among his neighbours, though his knowledge was very limited. About a year ago, Ricard, a colporteur employed by our own Free Church, went among them, sold tracts, conversed with the people, and held meetings. At last M. Girod, the minister at Liege, went to preach to them, and, after some fluctuations, they are now all pretty well confirmed in their attachment to the truth. They have had a M. Depallans, a Swiss, labouring among them as an evangelist for some time. They have asked a minister too, and their wish will probably soon be granted. I spent a Sabbath among them—the only day since I left home that I have felt unwell. I was unable to mix much in conversation; but this gave me a better opportunity of observing the bent of their minds. I do not think that so many people in Scotland would have obtained so uniformly from secular matters. The only thing I heard to be regretted was, that they were too much occupied with the errors and abuses of Popery.

"And, indeed, the congregations were not only comparatively large, but bore the appearance of great solemnity. I preached at Charleroi, Montigny le Tillieu, Liege, and *Nessonveaux*; and although in the last two, a large proportion of the hearers speaking Walloon, do not follow French sermons so easily as in the others; yet I had uniformly most attentive congregations, and their attention did not appear to flag till the end. They had all the appearance of people who were in earnest; and the truth was of course presented to them in a form that was rather different from