

death as in case of felony. If they abjured, they were to remain in prison till they found sureties that they would not maintain their errors any more: then, if they afterwards recanted, and were convicted a second time, they were to be executed. It was also enacted that all persons convicted before two justices of the peace of maintaining and defending certain specified opinions held by Baptists, Arminians, Antinomians, Quakers, or Baptists, should be ordered to renounce their errors in the parish church, and in case of refusal to be committed to jail till they should find sureties that they would not maintain or defend such opinions any more. This was equivalent to a sentence of imprisonment for life. The baptist sentiment condemned was thus expressed:—"That the baptizing of infants is unlawful, or such baptism is void, and that such persons ought to be baptized again": it is added, "and in pursuance thereof shall baptize any person formerly baptized." Even the Episcopalians were included in the condemnation. For the same penalties were provided for those who should maintain "that the church government by presbytery is Anti-Christian or unlawful."—(Crosby, i. 199-205).

It is no apology for this vile law, that it was practically a dead letter, and was intended to terrify or prevent rather than to punish. The good sense and christianity of the people would not suffer it to be executed; but the Presbyterians, whose handiwork it was, were fully prepared for the experiment, if power had been entrusted to them. Here again we see "old priest work large."

During the Commonwealth the Baptists evinced much zealous activity in the cause of the Saviour. The ministers were indefatigable, the people fervent and steadfast. If now and then the fervour evaporated into fanaticism, or something like it, and if diversity of opinion on comparatively minor points caused a multiplication of small parties, an excuse may be found in the peculiar state of the times. And surely it was better that the waters should be in motion, or even troubled, than stagnant and corrupted. We are not required to defend all the measures adopted by our forefathers, any more than to employ their quaint modes of speech. But it would be well for us to imitate their diligence, their prayerfulness, their strict regard to the authority of the Saviour, their endeavours for mutual edification. They laboured "in season, out of season." Those of them who were in Cromwell's Army took care not to blink their principles there. Prayer and preaching were duly attended to, by officers as well as by privates. A serious, orderly deportment prevailed. In camp and in garrison they observed good discipline; in the field their prowess was unquestioned. They were the HAVELOCKS of the seventeenth century.

Yours truly,
MENNO.
From my Study,
Jan. 16, 1858.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JANUARY 27, 1858.

Baptist History: in Europe and the world generally, and in Nova Scotia in particular.

MANY of our readers are watching with deep interest the historical developments of MENNO. In a writer of history nothing is so important as faithfulness, and a bold and fearless statement of facts as they have occurred, without regard to their being palatable or otherwise to interested parties. We may sometimes desire to forget the obnoxious parts of the past, yet, if we would learn wisdom from the experience of our forefathers and guard against the errors into which they have fallen, we must not shut our eyes to the steps by which they have arrived at such mischievous conclusions. Perhaps there is less difficulty in getting at the truth in matters relating to any other denomination of christians than that of the Baptists. They have been in all ages "the sect every where spoken against," and have had continually to suffer from calumny and reproach under the despotic governments of Europe. Their real sentiments have been distorted, so that it is often only by examining the evidence obtained from their enemies, and stripping from it the bigotry and prejudice by which it is encrusted, that we can discover the genuineness of the pure gold in the injured parties, and the principles which they held as communities.

Where the expression of opinion merely is concerned, it is but of comparatively

small moment if in the endeavour to avoid giving offence, we adopt conciliatory language, and hide some of the harsher features, but where truth is at stake and facts are to be narrated, we should lose all confidence in a writer's statements if we found him, one day steering in one direction to shun the reproaches of one body of Christians, and another day by a different course to retain the good will of others.

In these valuable 'Letters to a young Christian' references have been made to circumstances and events of not the most pleasing character in connection with various denominations. We do not for a moment suppose that their descendants should be held responsible for these acts. Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Puritan and Baptist have each had the truth as well as untruth, told about them. We have this week a chapter of Presbyterianism which some of our readers might be willing to consign to oblivion, but no, the truth must be told; and although we see in these later times, a better spirit prevailing in the British dominions, yet we believe it arises simply from the fact that no single body of Christians is entrusted with the supreme power. We have now the enjoyment of religious freedom, in England partially, but here in Nova Scotia fully. The separation of Church and State is a principle for which Baptists have ever contended, and so long as the voice of history is allowed to be heard, so long may we hope for this priceless boon to be perpetuated.

By studying history we enlarge the circle of our existence by adding to our acquaintance with the present that of past ages. We also learn the causes which have led to the present state of things, and by knowing these we may arrive at a more correct estimate of the advantages we possess, and may form a better judgment of the probable progress of events in the future.

This general view of past events is highly important, and exercises a most beneficial influence on the individual mind. It prevents to a large extent the bigotry and prejudice which prevails amongst those who are only acquainted with the occurrences of their own times or their own localities.

When MENNO has completed his series of letters and given our readers a general view of the history of the denomination in past times and other countries, we shall have space and opportunity to take up what belongs more particularly to the present age and our own Province. Abundance of the most authentic material for such a work is available. Our readers we know would value highly a well written record of persons and events connected with the rise and progress of the Baptists in Nova Scotia. It is, however, essential that such a work should be entrusted to persons in whose competency for the task the denomination shall have full confidence, otherwise it would be not only valueless but might be highly injurious.

The late Rev. R. W. Cunningham.

THE telegraphic announcement in our last will have made our readers acquainted with the decease of the Rev. Richard W. Cunningham, at Digby, on the 15th inst. The following brief communication from the Rev. A. H. Munro, will afford information of the circumstances attending the last moments of our beloved and much afflicted Brother:

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger.
DIGBY JAN. 20th, 1858.

Dear Brother.—It is my painful duty to inform your readers of the decease of our long afflicted brother Rev. Richard W. Cunningham. He fell asleep in Jesus on Friday 15th inst. The immediate cause of his death was the rupture of a blood vessel. Recently his complaint had assumed the form of congestion of the lungs combined with a complication of disease too plainly premonitory of a speedy dissolution of the earthly tabernacle to permit us to hope that success would attend the efforts of his kind and able physician Dr. Syda. Brother Cunningham was the first to perceive the dark shadow of death approaching him.

On Tuesday morning he took me by the hand and said, "I am going home, my brother." In reply to a question I put, he answered, "It is all well. I have often felt afraid that I should die in darkness struggling with doubts and fears. But," he added raising his voice while tears of joy flowed down his cheeks, "it is all light and peace. I am in the valley of the shadow of death, but I am not alone. He is with me." In this frame he continued till he died. In another conversation I asked him upon what his soul rested the most for support and comfort. What was his rod and staff in the dark valley? He replied, "The fact that Christ died to save sinners. The promise that he will cast out none who come to him."

On Friday morning I read and prayed with him, for the last time, though I did not then know it. After I left his room he told his wife and daughter that he had felt an unusual interest

in the devotional exercises in which we had just been engaged and that they had afforded him great comfort. He then alluded to myself in the kindest manner, expressing the pleasure he had derived from our religious intercourse. This was his last conversation. Soon after he fell asleep. In a short time he awoke, bleeding copiously from the lungs. I was immediately recalled to his room but could not now converse with him for the rapid flow of blood was choking his utterance. In a few minutes the struggle was over and then his spirit gently passed away to the land whose inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick."

Yours in the bonds of Christ,
A. H. MUNRO.

For very many years past his sufferings from confirmed and deep-seated disease (Asthma) have been frequent and intense. We trust we may confidently say that his "strength has been equal to his day," and that in few cases on record has the sustaining grace of God been more conspicuously displayed than in that of Brother Cunningham. We rejoice to learn that his latest hours have so abundantly confirmed the strength of his love and the certainty of his hope. Another notice of his decease from the pen of a Christian friend, which reached us very shortly after that of Brother Munro's, will appear in our next. Many we are well aware are ready to add their testimony of respect for the memory of the deceased, and of the high estimation in which his character is held among our Churches. We should hope that ere long some competent pen will be found to record his life and labours, which in many respects have been peculiar and interesting. Springing from a family among the oldest and most respectable in the Province, Brother Cunningham's early years were nevertheless beset with difficulties of no ordinary nature, but which were surmounted under circumstances which strongly evinced the overruling Providence and Grace of God. His mental faculties were far above mediocrity. Quick reasoning powers, a fertile and lively imagination, and a playful and ready wit, chastened by deep religious sensibilities, were, perhaps, the leading features of his mind. These qualities, however, for by far the largest portion of his religious life, have been darkened and restrained by the prevalence of a wasting chronic disease. From these causes, to our weak and imperfect apprehension of the ways of God, the fruits of the ministerial life of our departed Brother have been far less than might have been expected. But we may not reason thus. His Heavenly Father best knew what was best suited for the child of his love, and determined that the highest fruits of his ministry should result from his faith and patience under the iron hand of affliction. He himself was ever most ready to acknowledge and justify the fitness of the dispensation, and we dare not doubt that its wisdom hereafter will abundantly appear.

It is but a short time since, on receiving a communication from our beloved Brother, he signified his high appreciation of the Messenger, and his desire and intention of contributing more steadily to its pages.

Alcohol: and its effects.

A medical friend (Dr. Hume) has kindly handed us a late number of the *Edinburgh Weekly Herald* with the following brief but comprehensive notice of a lecture delivered to a crowded audience in that city by Professor Miller, on "The Use of Alcoholic Drinks." It gives the names of a number of medical and other gentlemen of the first respectability who were on the platform.

The testimony of a man of so much distinction must add vast weight to his statements on this important subject.

The advocates of total abstinence from alcoholic beverages may feel encouraged by such testimony as this in favour of their benevolent exertions:

"The Professor introduced his subject with some general explanatory remarks regarding the physical economy of the human frame, in which he showed that an excessive amount of combustible matter sent from the stomach through the veins detracted from the purifying process of nature, he proceeded to establish that alcohol, both chemically and physiologically, is essentially a poison; and he included under the name every description of intoxicating drinks. He then traced its poisonous effects to its rapid absorption into the blood, and consequent effect upon the brain and nervous system; by which, while perception, memory, excitement, and exhilaration were at first promoted, the will to control became insensibly marred, and a species of insanity was thus engendered. As a medicine, he admitted that, like most other poisons, alcohol when properly administered was of great and peculiar value, especially in such diseases as typhus fever, where there was a tendency to depression requiring to be kept in check; and experience had shown that there was no better stimulant in such cases than alcoholic drinks. He showed, however, the great necessity which existed for cure

and skill being exercised even in this application; and although he did not wish to be uncharitable to his professional brethren, he was satisfied that many cases of the most hopeless intemperance, especially amongst the better classes, owed their origin to ill-regulated medicinal alcoholic administration. The learned Professor then proceeded to demonstrate the impossibility of alcohol being ranked as an article of food, or as a solvent of food, seeing that the very use of it retarded digestion, and its effects in the stomach were rather to harden and coagulate than to act as a solvent; and that although an auxiliary in maintaining the temperature of the body, its action was neither desirable nor necessary. In conclusion, he viewed alcohol as a luxury, and as such pointed out its dangerously seductive and enslaving characteristics."

We have before referred to the deficiency of attention to the press which has hitherto characterized our Legislature, especially in this the case in not supplying it with copies of important printed papers and bills, as they are submitted for the consideration of parliament.

In Canada copies of all such papers are handed to the Editors of all the papers every morning, as regularly as they are to the members of the Legislative bodies.

The remonstrance in a late No. of the *Recorder* on this subject and on the want of accommodation for reporting the debates, except for those employed for the purpose, is well timed. We hope some effort will be made to remedy these deficiencies in the coming session, so that an opportunity may be afforded of learning what the provisions are of measures submitted to the "assembled wisdom," before they actually become the law of the land.

The Bible in Schools.

The futile attempt of the *Morning Chronicle*, on Saturday last, to controvert some remarks we made last week respecting force in the use of the Bible, indicates that the ground which late writers in that paper have taken is found on examination to be not quite satisfactory, either to himself or to his readers.

We are not disposed to follow the example of our friend by any laboured attack, or even by a "defence,"—that of course is not required. Our language shall rather be that of congratulation that he has found more light on the subject. The statement of our New Brunswick contemporary that "We ask for no coercive statutes making it binding upon any class to receive or read the Scriptures," is quoted with admiration whereas similar remarks made by ourselves, respecting our own province are, and have before been, distorted and an effort is made to shew that they mean something else.

The learned writer after a fruitless effort to convict us of what he probably wishes we had said, informs his readers that "the leanings of the *Christian Messenger* in this controversy about the Bible in Schools is (are) but too evident." Our own readers are fully aware of what we have said on the subject, and we are glad that the writer of the editorial referred to, not only shews that he too has read the same, but that he sees the position we have taken is the only just and truly Protestant one that can be maintained. Whether he has learned this from ourselves or some other source is a matter of but little consequence. We are glad to find that although he does not acknowledge the error which he or other anonymous writers in the same paper have made, yet he comes out right at last.

Dr. Clay will smile at the clumsy attempt of the *Chronicle* at laudation of himself at our expense.

After quoting the report of Dr. Clay's speech at the Bible meeting given in our columns last week, and the remark we made upon it, the *Chronicle* exclaims "What ignorant benighted Hottentots those New Brunswick Baptists and this Rev. Mr. Clay of the number, are supposed to be."

Our New Brunswick brethren will not feel flattered by such a compliment paid to them. Dr. Clay too, we hope, will survive the shock he may experience from such language being used in reference to himself. He may rest assured that it is perfectly harmless, both in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The object of the writer is too transparent to mislead those of far less penetration than he possesses.

After giving his readers a long commentary on our few brief sentences, the writer comes to the conclusion to adopt those views on the subject which we have always held, in common with Baptists in all ages. Our readers will not require proof of this, as almost every number of our journal might be referred to for the purpose of substantiating such a statement. The letters of MENNO, in every alternate number also, give the sentiments of our ancestors on the use of pains and penalties in matters of religion.