

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

NEW SERIES.
VOL. V.....No. 13.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1860.

WHOLE SERIES.
VOL. XXIV.....No. 13.

Poetry.

Our Rest.

"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us."

My feet are worn and weary with the march
Over rough roads and up the steep hill-side;
O, city of our God, I fain would see
Thy pastures green, where peaceful waters glide.

My hands are weary, laboring, tolling on,
Day, after day, for perishable meat;
O, city of our God, I fain would rest;
I sigh to gain thy glorious mercy-seat.

My garments, travel-worn and stained with dust,
Oft rent by briars and thorns that crowd my way,
Would fain be made, O Lord, my righteousness,
Spotless and white in heaven's unclouded ray.

My eyes are weary looking at the sin,
Impiety and scorn upon the earth;
O, city of our God, within thy walls,
All, all are clothed upon with the new birth.

My heart is weary of its own deep sin—
Sinning, repenting, sinning still away;
When shall my soul thy glorious presence feel,
And find its guilt, dear Saviour, washed away?

Patience, poor soul; the Saviour's feet were worn;
The Saviour's heart and hands were weary, too;
His garments stained, and travel-worn, and old,
His sacred eyes blinded with tears for you.

Love thou the path of sorrow that he trod;
Toil on, and wait in patience for thy rest;
O, city of our God, we soon shall see
Thy glorious walls, home of the loved and blest.

Nova Scotia Church History.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Baptists of Nova Scotia.

PERIOD II.

From A. D. 1784 to A. D. 1800.

LETTER VI.

EXTENT OF HENRY ALLINE'S LABOURS.—DIVERSIFIED RESULTS.—THE "NEW DISPENSATIONERS."—AFFAIRS IN OTHER DENOMINATIONS.—MORAL AND RELIGIOUS STATE OF THE COUNTRY, AS DESCRIBED BY MR. MANNING.

MY YOUNG FRIEND,

Henry Alline had preached in almost every part of Nova Scotia, as far as it was then settled. He found the people, generally, in a state of formal fruitless profession, and he laboured to bring them, by God's blessing, into spiritual life and activity. His own religion was mainly of an emotional character; it was love to God, producing love to his people and to the souls of men. It was distinguished by strong feeling, venting itself, sometimes, in strange outbursts of sympathy or joy. Hence, those who were converted under his ministry and those members of churches who attached themselves to him, felt a peculiar attraction to each other, and at the same time a repulsion from the ordinary, religious societies. They must dwell by themselves. They heard a call to "come out" from others and "be separate." Propriety of outward conduct did not satisfy them; the church of God, they held, should consist only of regenerated persons. The consequence was a withdrawal from churches already formed, and the establishment of new ones. Those seceding bodies sprung up wherever Henry Alline had preached. At the time of his death there were "New Light" churches (so they were commonly called) in the districts which are now the Counties of Cumberland, Colchester, Yarmouth, Shelburne, and Queen's. The churches in Newport and Falmouth, Cornwallis and Horton, and Annapolis, were not secessions, like the others, being originally constituted in connection with Mr. Alline. In these there was a mixture of Congregationalists and Baptists. It does not appear that the Baptist element was as yet introduced in other parts of the province.

The Rev. John Payzant became pastor of the church at Cornwallis, shortly after Mr. Alline's death. Daniel Dimock preached in Newport and Falmouth. Thomas Handley Chipman was in Annapolis. The remaining congregations were destitute of regular pastors. Well-meaning but uneducated men, more enthusiastic than intelligent, conducted the services of the assemblies, and the utmost freedom of exhortation prevailed. "Every

one had a psalm—had a doctrine." There was at that time but little opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge; and few were competent to correct or withstand error. In the absence of an enlightened and effective ministry it was not at all surprising that some results followed which were greatly to be deplored, and for which Mr. Alline must not be held responsible.

Ecclesiastical reformers have appeared in almost every age:—some, celebrated for sound judgement and deference to the word of God, and sincerely desirous of effecting beneficial changes as the people were able to bear them; others, equally sincere, but impassioned and rude—disposed to lay hands unsparingly on every kind of imagined abuse or evil, and therefore in danger of rushing into an opposite extreme. It is observable that the followers of these reformers seldom keep the beaten track marked out for them. They strike out new paths, not infrequently very divergent from those of the original leaders. The English champions of Protestantism, for instance, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer and Hooper, with their coadjutors and successors, thought it sufficient to cut off the most unsightly excrescences, leaving the trunk of the tree ecclesiastical untouched. But having adopted the principle of the supremacy and sole authority of scripture, those who came after them carried out that principle to its legitimate issues. They became "root and branch" men; the tree must be cut down and rooted up, as a "degenerate vine," and the divine plant substituted for it. Hence the Puritans of the times of Elizabeth and James I., and the Nonconformists of the succeeding reigns. This was true and useful progress. Some, on the other hand, went too far, and exposed the reform system to unmerited reproach. I refer to the visionary theories of the Fifth Monarchy men, the excesses of the early Quakers, and the infidel tendencies of Socinianism. This was reformation gone mad.

The followers of Henry Alline, or those who undertook to carry on the measures which he originated were in like manner divided into two classes. By the one he was regarded as in the main a scriptural reformer, though they were not prepared to adopt all his opinions or to tread in all his steps. As far as he was a restorer of true personal religion and spiritual membership in the church, they deemed him worthy of imitation. His errors were at once rejected, and with his lax sentiments on the ordinances of the gospel they had no sympathy. They were prepared to separate the precious from the vile, and to abandon all that would not abide the test of the divine oracles, whatever consequences might result. We shall see hereafter that these men became the leaders of our denomination in this province. But they had difficulties to encounter, and they did not altogether avoid errors and mistakes, in their first efforts. The purifying process was necessarily slow.

Others pursued a different course. Henry Alline's disputables were treated as certainties, and the objectionable features of his system were yet more distorted. The persons I am now alluding to ran into all sorts of wildness. Mr. Alline would have been deeply grieved by their outrageous proceedings. I find an account of them among Mr. Manning's writings, from which the following passages are extracted.

"Mr. Alline's lax observance of divine institutions fostered in the minds of his followers such ideas as these;—that the ordinances are only circumstantial, outward matters, and mere non-essentials; that the scriptures are not the only rule of faith and practice; and that no person is under any obligation to perform any external duty until God immediately impresses the mind so to do. In a short time after his decease several began to question the propriety of having anything to do with external order or ordinances, and soon refused to commune with the church. Much extravagance in word and deed followed, and many pious characters were duped into the more moderate errors of the times, who afterwards saw their folly. As they had no rule to go by but their fancies, which they called 'the Spirit of God,' great irregularities ensued."

Having observed that "it was a fixed maxim with some to act as they felt," and that this

produced, "a spirit of levity," followed by immoral acts, of which he adduces some melancholy instances, Mr. Manning proceeds thus:—

"Since the above circumstances, that description of people have been losing ground very fast. [This was written in the year 1812.] At a certain time, when their extravagances began to appear, a number of ladies were in company one afternoon, and some remarks were made on the novelty of the doctrine. A young lady who was rather partial to the new way said, 'oh, Madam! this is a new dispensation.' From this circumstance those that neglected the ordinances were called *New Dispensationers*. Their distinguishing tenet is, the neglect of all christian duties, except when they feel the Spirit. But at present they are in a low state, and dwindling very fast. They denominate themselves 'Congregationalists.' There have been some instances of professed Baptists being led away with this delusion, but the number was comparatively small."

I deemed it necessary to put you in possession of these facts, since without a knowledge of them a correct judgment cannot be formed of various matters connected with the religious policy and proceedings of our fathers. You will naturally infer, that although the excesses and evils above adverted to were disallowed, their influence probably continued to be felt for many years, and that the spirit of the New Light movement affected, perhaps unconsciously to themselves, the evangelical efforts of both Congregationalists and Baptists.

Before resuming our Baptist history it may be expedient to notice some events that occurred in the province during this period.

By an Order in Council, bearing date June 18, 1784, "provision was made for the division of the province of Nova Scotia into two parts, by the names of 'Nova Scotia' and 'New Brunswick' respectively." At the same time the Island of Cape Breton was set off as a distinct government. It was re-annexed in 1820.

In the year 1787 Nova Scotia was erected into a bishopric, and Dr. Charles Inglis, formerly rector of Trinity Church, New York, was appointed first bishop of the Church of England in this province. Twenty-one clergymen were stationed in different parts of the province between the years 1784 and 1800. They were supported by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Some of them left the country after a short residence; others continued at their posts till death.

With a view to promote the interests of the same church an Academy was established at Windsor in 1788, and the sum of £400 voted for the purpose by the legislature. In the next year, 1789, King's College, Windsor, was founded. An annual income of £444, 8s. 10½d was awarded to it from the public revenue, and the sum of £500 was granted towards the purchase of land and the erection of buildings. The British Parliament assisted the project by two grants, of £1000 and £500 respectively, and in 1802 a royal charter was obtained, when the College went into operation. *Twenty thousand acres of land* were also granted to King's College by our Legislature, in 1813.

The Rev. James Macgregor, of the Scotch Secession Church landed at Halifax in 1786, and proceeded to Pictou, where he laboured indefatigably for nine years, unaided and alone, often enduring great privations. At the end of that time two other ministers, Messrs. Brown and Ross, came to his assistance. There was a minister of the Established Church of Scotland at Halifax, and several ministers of the Burgher Synod in other parts of the country. Mr. Macgregor (afterwards Dr. Macgregor) was the father of the "Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia." A very interesting Memoir of his life and labours has been recently published by his grandson, the Rev. George Patterson, of Greenhill, Pictou.

The Wesleyan Methodists had begun to hold social religious meetings in Halifax about the year 1779, and gradually increased in number. The Rev. William Black was the first minister raised up among them. He laboured hard and usefully for many years.

Some observations by Mr. Manning on the state of society at the commencement of his

religious career may be fitly introduced in this place. They were written in 1844. "In a moral point of view these Provinces presented also a dreary aspect. They might well be termed 'a howling wilderness.' There were a few ministers of different denominations, and no doubt some of these were pious, as were some of the members of their churches. But alas! alas! there was too little evangelical preaching, and far less experimental religion and godly living. The power had fled, and the mere form was fast hastening after it. The revolutionary war in the American colonies, now the United States, had a bad effect upon the people of Nova Scotia. The consequences of war are dreadful, and extend far and long into futurity. At the close of that unhappy contest these provinces were a place of refuge for the loyalists. They came to our shores in thousands. Among these were many men of high character and merit—many belonging to the learned professions, particularly the law, who of course became the leading men in the provinces, and who no doubt proved a great blessing to the country in many points of view. But the great mass of the emigrants were of a different description. Many of them were disbanded soldiers, &c. Such an assemblage coming directly from the seat of war would be ill qualified to benefit the morals of the rising generation. Vice of every kind incident to the camp and the navy was soon transported into Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and our youth were corrupted, and many of them became adepts in wickedness. The common schools were generally of an inferior character, and in many districts there were no schools at all. Teachers were generally intemperate. The last four schoolmasters I was under were all fond of stimulants. What a curse to youth to be placed under the tuition of men who care nothing about their moral or religious interests! Thus miserably were the schools conducted, I have been a sufferer all my days from the want of instruction in my youth, and the whole population in the rural districts suffered in like manner."

Such was the condition of the country when our venerable fathers entered on that course of labour and conflict which has immortalised their names.

The narrative of their exploits will be commenced in my next.

Yours truly,
March 20, 1860. MENNO.

Resistance to Temptation.

Hugh Miller has told how, by an act of youthful decision, he saved himself from one of the strong temptations so peculiar to a life of toil. When employed as a mason, it was usual for his fellow-workmen to have an occasional treat of drink, and one day two glasses of whiskey fell to his share,—which he swallowed. When he reached home he found, on opening his favorite book, "Bacons' Essays," that the letters danced before his eyes, and that he could no longer master the sense.

"The condition," he says "into which I had brought myself, was, I felt, one of degradation. I had sunk, by my own act, for the time, to a lower level of intelligence than that on which it was my privilege to be placed; and though the state could have been no very favourable one for forming a resolution, I in that hour determined that I would never again sacrifice my capacity of intellectual employment to a drinking usage, and with God's help I was enabled to hold by the determination." It is such decisions as this, that often form the turning point to a man's life, and furnish the foundation of his future character; and this rock on which Hugh Miller might have been wrecked, if he had not at the right moment put forth his moral strength to strike away from it, is one that youth and manhood alike need to be constantly guarded against. It is one of the worst and most deadly, as well as extravagant temptations which lie in the way of youth. Sir Walter Scott used to say "that of all vices, drinking is the most incompatible with greatness." Not only so, but it is incompatible with economy, decency, and honest living.

When a youth can not restrain, he must abstain. Dr. Johnson's case is the case of many. He said, referring to his own habits, "Sir I can abstain, but I cannot be moderate."