

"Do you want the liquor licenses in London, at present 69, reduced to 50?" By a majority of 700 votes the men and women of London voted, "Yes! we do want the licenses reduced from 69 to 50."

It was simply an expression of public opinion. It is true, but the City Council at once bowed to it, and reduced the licenses in accordance with the public will.

When next a reduction by ten more licenses was asked, the City Council granted the request without needing another plebiscite.

Strike a blow wherever you can, put in a pin, drive a nail or lubricate a wheel, pray and work, trust true men in the nation as in the home or in the church, and "have faith in God."

THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN.

Ontario is about to enact, if she has not already done so, another law in relation to the protection of children, about as sweeping or far reaching in its operations and consequences as her excellent and efficient Education Act has proved to be in the general culture and intellectual advancement of her youth. The Hon. J. M. Gibson, the Provincial Secretary, has charge of the bill in the Legislature, and has introduced it with explanations and comments that are deeply interesting to all who have studied the subject and are at all interested in the great issues which it involves. It must not be supposed, however, that this province has had no previous legislation on this subject. It has for some time past been feeling its way to what has just now been brought forward in such provisions as those for the protection of infants placed in "baby farms," the Industrial Schools Act, the Refuge for Girls, the Reformatory for Boys, the Act of 1888 for the better protection of children, the provisions for children in the Factory Act, the Shop Regulation Act, and others. After careful consideration, it is said, the present Act diverges from some of the recommendations of the Prison Commission, and instead of establishing Industrial Schools and houses of refuge in every county, it deals with the evils involved from a preventive rather than from a disciplinary standpoint. This has necessitated probing the core of the subject, and the laying of a somewhat strong hand upon what has hitherto been regarded as the sacredness of parental ownership in children and the consequent right of exercising almost unlimited authority over them. Great caution seems to have been exercised in the structure of this Act, with reference to unnecessary interference with the natural rights of parents. At the same time, first and foremost, have been kept in view, the rights of the helpless children, whose main purpose it is the object of this Bill to protect. As to whether the parents or the state has the first or paramount claim to control depends altogether upon the manner in which control is exercised. Neither the parents nor the State has any natural or revealed right to pervert the parental relationship, or the duties arising out of it, from the evident purpose of child-being. Good and not evil, is the true end of both childhood and manhood; and neither parental nor civil authority can change it, with impunity. Pagan ignorance, dire necessity, and conformity to most fearful forms of social cruelty and vice, have in the past abandoned, mutilated, and even slain thousands of helpless infants, and decades and even centuries have passed over the most civilized of communities, and not a statute to shield, or a refuge to open its arms to shelter these most pitiable ones of our kind.

It was left for Christian teaching to become the terror of these evil doers in the State, and to require parents to be "in the Lord" in the obedience they demand of their children, not to provoke them to wrath, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And when these duties are so neglected as to altogether change the heritage of child life, and thereby render it unfit in future to discharge its rightful obligations to both civil and religious society as well as to itself, it is then specially necessary

for the State to see that its own foundations do not become weakened by the permission of an abnormal condition of parental authority on the one hand, and of filial obedience on the other.

In dealing with this difficult and important subject, the author of the Bill has gathered from the most advanced legislation in the world on the subject. The provisions of the first sections of the Bill relating to the prevention of cruelty to children were copied, he tells us, from the English Act. "The Crown has from time immemorial protected the rights of property in children. It was the poor children, who had no estates or property and no influential friends, who had not been protected, and it was on behalf of these helpless children that the Bill had been proposed. Similar provisions had been made in several States of the Union, and in Australia. This section provides against children begging or singing in the streets, in taverns, or in public places, and for their removal from cruel, neglectful, or criminal parents, and for their examination and commitment to temporary shelter pending their final disposal.

The second edition which deals with the care of the neglected and dependent children, seems possibly to be the most drastic. As the law has hitherto stood, a police officer could not enter the precincts of the home to prevent the brutalities of parents towards their children. The charitable societies were the only agencies up to the present time, that could legally come to the aid of the neglected ones, and though exceedingly useful, they could not at all cope with extreme emergencies.

We ourselves, have known the case of a large family of young children dependent upon the small amount that the two elder boys could earn, the father meanwhile working, gambling away all he earned, and coming home to eat and live on the boys, and not contribute a cent to the general support; the smaller members of the family having to go to the Girls' and Boys' Home, respectively. These benevolent institutions have done a grand work, and we do not think it is the sphere of this Bill to interfere with that work. It contemplates placing the peculiar class it deals with in homes where they will be properly cared for, and give them a training that will fit them for after life, absorbing them at the same time into the healthy blood of country life, rather than herding them as a class, separated from the general community. Due precaution seems to be made in the other sections for the trial of children and for their examination, inspection and reports of the entire working machinery of the Act. And not the least important will be that section which comes to us at first with a touch of the sentimental. It will be found after all not to be so sentimental as real, if especially our cities and larger towns only carry out its provisions faithfully. We refer, of course, to the section bearing on the ringing of the "Curfew Bell." To our mind, there is not a greater danger open to the future of Ontario, than the very conditions of the children of our province that give rise to this Act. Our autumn and winter evenings are the fruitful means of many a ruined boy and girl, not of the lowest class either. Every conceivable mischief, involving petty thefts, foul language, unclean conduct, and the formation of tough habits, they learn on the street, between the hours of 7.30 and 10.30 p.m. If parents cannot or will not keep their children from the streets after dark, then let the "Curfew Bell" ring, and the streets be cleared accordingly.

For the due and proper execution of this Act, much will doubtless depend upon the Superintendent who will be the chief officer in relation to it. He is, we are assured, to be a man fitted for his work, and not a mere political hanger-on. In addition a strong and healthy public sentiment must be maintained; for people are touchy about their children on the streets, more so than in the schools. Still the good sense of the people of Ontario should sustain well this excellent hand-maid to our Public School law; that together the very best results, both of our culture and of our Christianity, may follow to the generations to come.

SYNOD CONFERENCE.

The conference in connection with the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, commences at Guelph, on the evening of the 8th inst., at 7.30 p.m., Rev. Dr. Parsons presiding. At 8 o'clock the subject of Home Missions will be taken up: (1) "Extent and importance of the work within the bounds of the Synod." Discussion led by Rev. A. Findlay, superintendent of missions for Muskoka and Algoma. (2) The work in the West; present day needs, and the relation of present effort to future strength of the Church." Discussion led by Rev. Dr. Cochrane, Convener of Home Mission Committee.

Tuesday forenoon, May 9th, Rev. Dr. Wardrope, presiding. "Augmentation as an essential part of Home Mission work." Discussion, led by Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, B. D.

Foreign Missions. "Present condition, difficulties and prospects of the field occupied by the Presbyterian Church in Canada." Discussion, led by Rev. R. P. McKay, B. A., Foreign Mission Secretary.

Tuesday afternoon, May 9th, Rev. John Hay, B. D., presiding. (1) Foreign Missions. "Our mission to the Jews." Discussion, led by Rev. McP. Scott, B. A., Toronto. (2) "The pastor's responsibility for the awakening of a missionary spirit in his congregation." Discussion led by Rev. Dr. McTavish, Toronto.

The practical nature of the topics given above, and the names of the gentlemen associated with the various subjects to be discussed, insure a most profitable conference.

A regular meeting of the Presbytery of Homan was held at Ch'u-wang on Jan. 24th., Mr. MacGillivray, Moderator, in the chair. Reports were received from the two stations of the mission. At Ch'u-wang, it was noted that the anti-foreign feeling has been growing less marked; while at Hsin-chen it has been sustained more or less throughout the year, culminating in the removal of the roof from a building recently acquired but of which possession has not yet been obtained. From Ch'u-wang the evangelistic work has been carried far afield; at Hsin-chen it was confined to daily preaching in the street Chapel, which, owing to its advantageous situation, is always well attended. At both stations the medical work affords every encouragement, Dr. McClure reporting 1718 treatments, and Dr. Smith 4677. Rev. T. Sedgwick was nominated Moderator of the General Assembly, and Rev. J. H. MacVicar appointed commissioner, together with Wm. Nicol, M. D., Brantford, and Mr. John Cameron, London. Certificates of proficiency in the language were received for transmission home concerning Mr. and Mrs. Goforth, Miss MacIntosh, and Mr. MacGillivray, the last named of whom took 89.27 marks out of a possible 100. A scheme was set on foot for arranging a systematic correspondence to the Presbyterian Record. After hearing a medical opinion from the Doctors of the mission re Mrs. MacVicar's insomnia, now of two years standing, it was resolved that Mr. and Mrs. MacVicar be requested to take a furlough to Canada and return as soon as Mrs. MacVicar's health may permit. On two evenings during the meeting practical and devotional conferences were held. J. H. MacVicar, Clerk.

What Mrs. Wilson said regarding native Christian servants, at the recent annual meeting of the W. F. M. S., was incorrectly reported in our columns. We regret the mistake. Mrs. Wilson writes: "In explanation of the fact that our native Christians often get so bad a name from English residents, other than missionary, in India, I said that a large number of people going by the name of Christians belonged to the Roman Catholic Communion, who though baptised had never had any Christian training, and were simply baptised heathen, and, knowing themselves freed from caste restrictions, added the vice of drunkenness to their other vices. I would rather have a good heathen servant than one of these Roman Catholics, of whom there are a large number acting as servants in English households in India."

He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace.—Ruskin.

The man who has in him the elements of a worker for Christ will find a field or make one. Paul, when a prisoner, made converts in Caesar's household.—Spurgeon.

Books and Magazines

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY. Vol. XV. Twenty third Session. Published at the office of the Society, 37 Great Russell St., Bloomsbury, London, W.C.

Within sixty-two pages, the proceedings comprise three articles. The first is Mr. P. le Page Renouf's continuation of a translation of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, which is ludicrous where it is not dreary. Thus "Chap. XXXIII, whereby all serpents are kept back. O serpent Rerak, advance not! Here are the Gods Seb and Shu! Stop or thou shalt eat the rat which Ra execrateth, and gnaw the bones of a putrid she-cat." How very edifying! The Rev. G. Margoliouth writes on the "Superlinear Punctuation of Hebrew found in certain MSS., and which he supposes had its origin in Syria, prior to the development of the present sublinear vowel system. Finally, Messrs. A. C. Bryant and F. W. Read translate an inscription of the Egyptian Amenophis IV. who called himself Khuenaten, and worshipped the disk of the sun as did certain tribes of Central America. Khuenaten's city was the site of Tell el Amarna.

STIRRING THE EAGLE'S NEST, AND OTHER PRACTICAL DISCOURSES. By Theodore L. Cuyler, D. D. New York: The Baker and Taylor Company. Toronto. William Briggs.

This handsome 12mo volume of 318 pp., bound in blue and gilt topped, contains eighteen sermons, the last being Dr. Cuyler's valedictory to the Lafayette Ave. congregation. Everything Dr. Cuyler writes is worth reading by those who read sermons and similar productions. There is nothing very novel in his matter nor startling in his style; but he puts old truths in new dress, and his language is chaste and simple. There is something very devout in all his utterances, and his great aim, to build up pure Christian character, is one that all right minded people must sympathize with. For printed sermons, which generally lack the personality of the living preacher, these are very readable, and the reading of them cannot fail to do good. The valedictory is peculiarly interesting as a piece of modern Christian autobiography, which many who are familiar with Dr. Cuyler's name would not willingly miss.

SOCIALISM FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION: By Rev. F. M. Sprague; Boston: Lee and Shepard. 1893.

There can be no doubt that socialism is in the air; but in what form it is to take permanent possession of terra firma is quite another matter. It has been well said that there is this difference between Christian socialism and the socialism of unbelief, that the one says: "All mine is thine," while the other says: "All thine is mine." There is a great gulf between the two. We do not for one moment stand up for particularism which divides human society, whereas the Christian Church is an organism, and its organic character has to be more fully recognized. But we remember that there is always a danger of the destruction of individuality, and no love for our fellow men must be allowed to lead us into ways of hurting them. There is a good deal in this book with which we cordially agree. Here for example, is an excellent protest against Mr. Henry George's doctrine of the nationalization of the land and all its concomitant heresies: "The plan proposed by Mr. George that government should take forcible possession of all lands by confiscating rent, thus robbing multitudes of land-owners who have purchased and paid for their land, frequently with the savings of a lifetime of toil, is so repugnant to reason, so vicious in principle, it so outrages every sense of justice that we are left to wonder how a head so clear and a heart so humane could suggest a measure so anarchistic and villainous." This is excellent on the negative side. But Mr. Sprague's positive principles will hardly be satisfactory to some who may be willing to cast the land owners to the lions. Mr. Sprague thinks that socialism should come gradually, tentatively, and only so far as may be necessary. Latet dolus in generalibus. We are a little afraid of this coming so far as may be necessary. The five postulates of socialism, we are told are: 1. Labour is the source of all value. 2. Private capital is a social crime. 3. The rich are growing richer, and the poor growing poorer. 4. The wages of labour furnish a bare subsistence. 5. The public ownership and control of capital. These be large demands. La propriété c'est le vol, is now an axiom, not a heresy. The poor are growing poorer. We are not quite sure of this. And capital is to be owned and controlled by the public—by aldermen, for example, so fully are they trusted!