

encouraged and rewarded in the Scriptures? Emphatically no. Religion is our life; we only begin really to live when we become alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Religion is not a vain thing, it is our life." Religious principles, the principles of Jesus Christ, must take possession of the heart and control life and mould character for eternity. There is nothing secular to the Christian. We are to do all things to the glory of God. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," is a standing order in the Christian Church. Wherever this is strictly and conscientiously adhered to, success is the result. Wherever it is ignored the reverse—failure—is the result. Examining the lives of church members with the Bible model of a Christian before us what do we find? Why, an alarming and most humiliating state of matters presents itself to our astonished gaze.

Will any one say that the glory of God is the all-prevailing aim in the life of church members? To say or think so is a libel on our holy religion. By their fruits ye shall know them; do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? In some congregations whole settlements habitually neglect the ordinance of public worship. The prayer meeting is very thinly attended and little interest taken in the exercises even by those who do attend. The services are almost entirely conducted by the pastor. This is no fancy sketch, no overdrawn picture.

Am I too severe in my remarks? Have I stated anything not borne out by facts met with from time to time in our experience? I ask. What interest do most of our members manifest in the work and success of the Church? Is not the interest confined simply to attendance on Sabbath at both services (sometimes one service), occasional attendance at the prayer meeting, and the payment annually of a small sum of money for the maintenance of ordinances at home and of missions? I say a small amount (even in the case of the most liberal) as compared with what is devoted to personal and family claims. With few notable exceptions there is little personal, direct work at soul-saving efforts put forth by members. The question of Cain, if not actually uttered, is daily acted out in life in the case of many members: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Some, no doubt, excuse themselves by stating that it is the special work of the pastor to seek out and save the perishing around. I reply at once: The pastor's duty is clearly to follow Jesus in seeking and saving (instrumentally) the lost; but is it anywhere taught in Scripture that members are exempted from this duty? To the whole Church the duty of preaching the Gospel to every creature has been given as I understand my Bible. And the whole Church embraces members as well as pastors.

Individual members and heads of families are bound, as well as pastors, to preach and live the Gospel. That was a smart reply of a pastor to a lady: A certain lady was saying on leaving church to a friend, "Thank God, the sermon is done." The pastor overheard the remark, and addressed her: "No, madam, the sermon is not done till you and I live it!" Each member, as well as pastor, must be a hearer and doer of the truth. Hence the injunction of Jesus aptly applies to each and all: "Let your light so shine before men," etc. The "Word of God" comes to us as individuals, saves us as individuals, instructs us as to life and duty as individuals, and, when the volume of our life here is filled up and our work done, we fall asleep in Jesus as individuals, and at last we are welcomed as individuals to the realms above. "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Let us remember, we must here and now, and to the end of life, bear the character of "good and faithful servants." We must wait on Jesus, hear His commands, carefully follow His instructions, be faithful unto death, then the reward of faithful, loving service will be ours as individuals.

We have in the raising of Lazarus another striking illustration of the relation that obtains between the divine and the human in Christian work. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, but not until the stone was removed from the sepulchre. Human hands had placed the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, and before Jesus does His work in raising the dead, man must do his part—the only thing he can now do—remove the stone. Then the dead is raised, and human hands must loose him and let him go by removing the grave-clothes from the body. We have here a picture of successful church work. The Church, by means of

her officers and members, must, as a rule, remove all hindrances from the soul of man before Almighty power is put forth in regeneration. And after the new birth has taken place, the Church is to instruct and guide the new-born souls. How does the Church stand in relation to this work, this two-fold work? We see something of it occasionally, but not constantly.

A considerable part of this preparatory work must be performed in the family by parents. The stones of ignorance and error can be put out of the way by parental instruction exemplified in earnest, Christian living. When parents do their part they can with confidence ask God to fulfil His promise, and not till then. Precept teaches, example draws. We may expect God to quicken by His Spirit the hearts of those under our care when we have prepared them. And as "quickened souls" our further instructions are, as contained in the Great Commission. "Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." Does the Church in any special way see to the interests of new converts? Are they subjected to careful, constant culture?

Is there not much room for improvement, and ample scope for the gifts, etc., of our church members? Are not new converts pretty much left to look after themselves? Here, it seems to me, our week-night service could be utilized, were we so minded, and had we the help we ought to receive from our members. Ministers should look into this matter. Sessions should carefully and prayerfully consider it. Much, very much, can be done just here to help in the practical work of the Church.

It is said that the prayer meeting is the spiritual thermometer of the Church. I think there is much truth in the remark. The smallness of the attendance at the prayer meeting may be given as another reason why so few are interested in the work of the Church. A word or two about the prayer meeting: Those who frequent and enjoy the prayer meeting (1) keep themselves in line with the promises. This is helpful to fellowship with God and equipment for bearing much fruit. Those who are given to prayer will, according to their faith, be in sympathy with God and His work will interest them. (2) Regular attendance forms a most excellent habit which enhances and diffuses Christian influences. (3) Regular attendance on and enjoyment of the prayer meeting, prevents backsliding. Forward is their motto, "looking unto Jesus." (4) It keeps conscience lively and active and tender, and the believer is careful to perform his vows, "Lord, I am Thine," and he lives as not being his own.

Another reason for the lack of interest in church work on the part of many church members is ignorance in reference to what the Church is doing. Whilst it is true that some take pains to have themselves well-posted on what is being done, it must be acknowledged that many manifest great ignorance. This arises partly, it seems to me, from the absence from the household reading matter of our distinctively Church literature. The *Record*, authorized by the General Assembly, and THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, which deservedly stands in the front of our denominational papers. It is a well-known fact that, in those congregations where the circulation of the *Record* and other papers is good, the people are interested in church work and contribute much better for the maintenance of ordinances at home and abroad than in those where their circulation is limited. Where there is a missionary prayer meeting judiciously conducted I find that the people are better acquainted with and more interested in this work of the Church than where there is none.

Again, church members failing to recognize their obligation to full consecration to the Lord is another reason for lack of interest in the work of the Church. Many desire the rest that Christ gives without taking upon them His yoke of service. Did we as pastors and our members fully realize that we belong to Christ, the whole aspect of the Church would speedily assume a different appearance. We would get up to the pattern of the Church in early apostolic days when self was kept in the background and Jesus and the Resurrection in the front, and all members took a hearty interest in church work, and made religion the main business of everyday life. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word."

Again, it seems almost an impossibility to get our elder members out of the old, well-established routine of Christian duties. They never for a moment think

they have anything to do in the week-night service but be passive worshippers. To take any active part in these services is not to be thought of. The minister must do everything—read, pray, speak and sometimes lead the praise. What is to be done? The prayer meeting is the people's service and they ought to be taught to recognize this in a very practical manner. How is it to be accomplished? Take them early in life. Get the youth interested in these services. It can be done. It has been done in some cases.

Let all who now enter the Church in full communion be impressed with the fact that each has something to do for Jesus; teach the same truth in early home training, in the Sabbath school, and encourage the youth of both sexes to help in the "Bible service" by reading at the call of the pastor or leader, passages of Scripture to illustrate the Bible lesson, and we may with good reason expect more interest in and more help for the work of the Church in the near future. You will pardon my making just here a personal reference: In two of my meetings for Bible study I give those present (parents and youth) the opportunity of asking questions on the subject of the address for the evening. Passages illustrative of the topic are taken up and read at my request. I ask the meaning of the verses then read, etc. I have found it exceedingly helpful in awakening and sustaining the interest in Bible study. Permit me to state that the plan is worth a trial. I would like brethren to do so and report progress and their experience. Bible readings, cottage meetings, will also draw out our people and give them a deeper interest in the work of the Church.

CHURCH AND STATE.

BEER AND WINE.

(Continued.)

MR. EDITOR,—We may now consider that act of the Senate of Canada which was condemned by the General Assembly, namely, the beer and wine clause. This clause was inserted to conciliate those who utterly disregard a law they consider tyrannical, and who would uphold it were a reasonable concession made. I propose to prove that the taste of a people can be diverted from one beverage to another, that light wines and beer are conducive to sobriety, and that this country can produce them. I do not regard any liquor that cannot be drunk in its pure state and is not a natural production, as coming properly under the head of a drink, and if we had simply beer and light wines, which are natural drinks, we should be trying an experiment that has never, to my knowledge, been tried before in modern times. Beer and light wines have been tried, but only side by side with ardent spirits. We cannot ignore the fact that alcohol is only used for chemical and mechanical purposes, and that it cannot be drunk in its pure state. There is never too much alcohol generated by natural fermentation of any kind of grain or species of grape to make the undiluted beverage dangerous to any who use it in moderation. Whereas alcohol is a further product caused by distillation, by which the water and nutritive extracts, which were in combination with the alcohol in the fermented state, are separated from it by the evaporation of the spirit. Nature allows no waste. And in producing a fermented beverage such as beer, for example, the natural rule holds good. Thus, a certain quantity of malt contains a certain quantity of saccharine matter (producing alcohol), which must be extracted by the aid of hot water, but which requires more than one infusion to secure the full amount of saccharine. Consequently, where there is no waste, each successive infusion is necessarily weaker in saccharine (or alcohol) than the previous one until all the saccharine is extracted. All of the infusions, being afterwards combined in one vat, give the natural strength of the drink. Nature thus provides a sufficient quantity of water to keep the alcoholic strength within proper bounds, while at the same time supplying sufficient alcohol to preserve the drink. As a proof that this is a natural drink, it will be found that when a sober man exceeds in the use of it he will conceive a dislike for it, just as a sober man who becomes ill through eating too much of a solid food will conceive a dislike for it. Whereas, if he exceed in the use of ardent spirits, the tendency will be to use them more and more. In wine-making, distilled alcohol is frequently added after the first "run." This produces a fortified, or unnatural, wine