

The Canadian Independent.

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TORONTO, APRIL 14, 1881.

NOTICE!

Mr. Wm. Revell has kindly undertaken the business management of the INDEPENDENT. In the future, therefore, all remittances and letters about the subscription, or complaints, should be addressed to him, Box 2618, P. O., Toronto, and all articles for insert on, news of churches, &c., to Managing Editor, same address.

Mr. A. Christie, 9 Wilton Avenue, will continue to attend to the business of the Congregational Publishing Company, including arrears for the INDEPENDENT and the Year Book.

We would call the attention of our readers to their labels. All whose subscriptions expired Jan., '81, or earlier, are now due another year. Will they please remit.

We want as many items of news of the churches as possible, but will our correspondents be BRIEF; our space is limited, and we dislike to cut down.

WINE AT THE COMMUNION TABLE.

It is well known that reclaimed drunkards, and now established Christian men (we could name some, such as John B. Gough), refuse the cup at the Communion table lest the *slumbering appetite* for intoxicants should be awakened, and that which is intended as a comfort and strength should prove a temptation, if not a first step down again towards the drunkard's fearful death. We may say such is a groundless fear, if men would only use their will and exercise their strength, all would be well, but *ifs* are oftentimes the difference between life and death, heaven and hell. Hypochondria is as truly a disease as consumption, and an imaginary weakness, for practical purposes, equally unfitting for work as a broken limb. Let us acknowledge the potency of faith. Besides, men like Mr. Gough are entitled to speak with some authority upon matters, to them, of living and painful experience. When, as in perhaps the least hopeful aspects of intemperance, the periodical craving returns, even the smell of the wine cup may be the feather which turns the scale, and overcomes the overstrained resolution. And if this is a weakness, "We who are strong should bear the infirmities of the weak," and not please ourselves. This article leaves out the question of total abstinence entirely; meets the question of wine at the Communion table simply on its own merits, on ground that may be common to both total abstainers and advocates of moderation. On testimony of men who have been or are reclaimed drunkards, and, as far as man can judge, thoroughly Christian men, we are emphatically told that the sip of strong wine at the Communion table is a *temptation, not a comfort*, and does tend to awaken an appetite in their ease of the utmost difficulty to resist; so much is this felt, that many such allow the cup to pass them untouched. Just so, you reply, the simplest remedy, let such abstain. A ready solution, and were they demanding as their right the disuse of intoxicating wine from the ordinance, at least a defensible reply; but the writer has never been a

drunkard, nor apparently at any time in danger thereof, and, with many who think with him, simply acts in the extension of Christian Charity to those who are working out—as we all must work out—their own salvation with fear and trembling, is there any reason why, if the cup of the Lord is dear to ourselves, we should not so order it that our trembling brother may with us partake and not be ensnared thereby?

Let us examine the question somewhat. We *must* have wine, otherwise the appointed symbol and seal is not there is the position in theory maintained by most of our churches. How is the practice? In fact, conscience is satisfied by the use of "wine" procured almost anywhere under that name, though the moral conviction is overwhelming that the probabilities are equal between the mixture so used being wine in the Palestinian sense of the word, and a compound of cider, brandy, logwood, and rhatany root. It is called wine, however, and the conscience rests therein. Some time ago, in a district far from telegraph and railway lines, with roads over which travel was simply impossible over six miles an hour, and two days' journey from even a village of moderate size, a congregation was to gather from a circuit of at least twenty miles to the yearly visit of a minister for the dispensation of ordinances. Late on the evening of the day preceding the morning for which the services were announced, and to which the people would be gathering, it was discovered that there was no wine. What was to be done? Was the ordinance of the Supper to be disallowed, an entire community disappointed, and a solemn convocation of people under the dispensation of a spirit which declares that the letter killeth be parted, so far as the object of gathering was concerned, because a dubious mixture was not to be procured? One suggested a tavern, some eight miles away, where the sure commodity was whiskey, and wine (?) might be. We remembered, as we heard thereof, Toby Tinpot's straits:

"Sour vinegar will do,
Anything to help me through."

A reverent common sense prevailed, however, the ordinance was dispensed without the wine of commerce, and a day of refreshing enjoyed.

The wines of Palestine, even to this day, are represented as of excellent quality, and we may safely conclude that they were equally so when the Lord's Supper was instituted. Our Saviour used wine, the "fruit of the vine;" as a matter of fact we in nine cases out of ten do not know what we use only that it is called wine. We ask no questions for conscience sake. Now, for a brother's sake let us break the silence and the spell and inquire: If by constraint of circumstances we are willing to take doctored brandy, chemical compounds, *commercially* called "wine," and use it unquestioned in our Communion Feast; why, for the sake of a brother who mutely cries "lead me not into temptation," are we not willing to take a less harmful mixture, call that *religiously* "wine," and use it with comfort and sincerity?

At many of our Communions

wine is used which, having been kept over from time to time, has by age increased to a strength that would satisfy a toper's palate, and generally light wines are ruled out. As a fact the Passover wines, and it was at a Passover table the Lord's Supper was instituted, "water was mixed with the wine, because it was considered too strong to drink alone." The Gemara say, "The cup of blessing is not to be blessed *until it is mixed with water.*"

There are some who advocate the simple use of water instead of wine; others have suggested two cups, one of wine, the other of water, which would be simply to draw an unwise, even invidious distinction at a gathering where all meet as one in Him whose death is commemorated. In reality, none of these expedients are needed; grapes are not impossibilities here, scores of our housewives can and do make therefrom a wine which first is virtually un-intoxicating and pleasant to any but a vitiated taste, and which with ordinary care can be kept over the season when grapes are practically unattainable. To sum up.

We have men, our brethren, who virtually say, "don't needlessly tempt our weakness at the table of our Lord, and make a religious ordinance in which we desire to join ensnaring." In listening to them, which we are bound in charity to do, we are not bound by a ritual from which departure is a crime; indeed our prevailing custom and procuring departs as much from the letter of the law as any course urged by an extremist in their behalf; we have, with a little extra trouble, at our hand the means whereby we may meet their wants, depart no further, to say the very least of it, from the letter of the ordinance than we are practically doing all the time, will not the spirit of our communion be manifestly strengthened as we take away every occasion of offence from a brother's way as we draw with him around the table of the Lord?

An objection has sometimes been raised to the use of unintoxicating wine, on the ground of the difficulty found in procuring an article not obnoxious to the taste. To this we make the following remarks: When, as in practice, the lips are no more than moistened, the quality of taste, so long as not offensive, is of comparatively small moment; besides, we have, under the name of wine, tasted some of the most villainous compounds at the Communion table under the present prevailing regime. Mishaps in the quality of the element used under any practice may obtain. This we plead for, and with this sentence we close: Let a general and honest attention be directed to this subject, and an earnest care exercised in the selection of a wine for our Communion services which will satisfy all the reasonable requirements of our simple ritual, and remove at the same time from some tender consciences and trembling hands a cause of stumbling, if not a temptation to sin.

THE visit to our city of the Rev. E. P. Hammond has been characterized by the marked interest that has been awakened among a large number in connection with the various denominations, although his advent

was under circumstances not, perhaps, the most favorable or encouraging to him. But to those who have attended more than one or two meetings, the depth and sincerity of the work is manifested in the many from among the classes who are seldom, if ever, seen within church walls, who have been led not only to ask "What must I do to be saved?" but who have gone farther, and are now asking "What can I do for Jesus?"

The writer knows personally of more than one instance in which those who were perfectly satisfied with their morality have been led to see that not morality—but Christ—is the way to God.

Although the means used by Mr. Hammond are not the same as those to which we are accustomed, let us remember that Paul said, "I am made all things to all men, that by all means I might save some;" and so by whatever method or means God sees fit to carry on His work we can rejoice and be glad that souls are being saved.

THE following paragraph, which we extract from the *Religious Herald*, of Hartford, Conn., is so much in the line of what we have been saying for some time past, and so full of hope in that direction, that we gladly insert it.

One very clear indication of health and vigor in the Congregational churches of our country is seen in the fact that while here and there a church or a minister is found protesting against any concerted action or utterance on the part of these churches, the generality of both ministers and churches desire and favor special methods for promoting increased fellowship and co-operation. There is a growing spirit of fraternity, which demands for its expression group meetings, conferences, consultations, and outward visible signs of what Paul calls "fellowship in the gospel." We are beginning to see the moral treason that looks under a professed desire to fellowship all believers, while it decries the chosen methods for promoting fellowship in our own denomination. Liberty without fraternity is cold and fruitless. Liberty and fraternity, like sunshine and rain, bring ample harvests.

We reprint from the *Nonconformist* a letter from Montreal on "Congregationalism in Canada." We commend it to our readers in connection with the article of Mr. Hannay and our own remarks thereon, it is an able, thoughtful production. We ask attention especially to the last paragraph, it shows that the points upon which we have been insisting are viewed in the same light by others, that order, organization, and co-operation is the great need of our churches to-day. Cannot we rise above our petty jealousies and touchiness into this denominational "higher life.?"

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

GIVEN TO THE WESTERN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UPON THE INSTALLATION OF THE REV. A. F. M'GREGOR, B.A., INTO THE PASTORATE THEREOF, BY REV. J. BURTON, B.D., OF THE NORTH-EAST.

In considering your duty to your pastor, consider your duty as a Church, and the work required at your hands. Read Matt. v. 13, 14, as the mission placed before you; also Philip. ii. 15, 16, which