

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

TEMPERANCE, AS RELATED TO REVIVALS.

PAPER BY REV. DR. BURNS, READ BEFORE THE PRESBYTERY OF HALIFAX ON 1ST FEBRUARY LAST.

There can be no question of the fact that when a time of religious declension is followed by a time of religious revival, one of the most practical evidences of the change is a healthier temperance sentiment.

Temperance has sometimes been related to revivals as a pioneer going before with its ploughshare to break up the fallow ground and to prepare it for the incorruptible seed and the whitening harvest; but, it has not less frequently followed after, to attest the genuineness of the work, by exhibiting in richer luxuriance this fruit of the Spirit. So intimate is the relation between the two, that Finney in his "Lectures on Revivals" says (page 272): "Shew me the minister who has taken ground against the Temperance Reformation who has had a revival. Shew me one who now temporizes upon this point, who does not come out and take a decided stand in favour of temperance who has had a revival." This relation between temperance and revivals accords both with reason and with fact. Under the former a single line of thought may suffice. Through the influence of a revival such graces are formed and fostered as are peculiarly favourable to temperance; such graces as humility and self-denial, love, faith and fortitude.

1. *Humility* is generated when we get emptied of self. The self-conceit and self confidence, so natural to us, which make us insensible of our danger, are taken out of us. We are made to feel our own weakness, our own liability to err, and in the lurid light of many a beacon, to read, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall." When brought to walk humbly with his God, clothed with humility, the loftiness of man is laid low, and he will not be so likely to talk any more so exceeding proudly as they do who pooh! pooh! pledges, who think they are beyond the tyrant's grip; who laugh at the shaking of his spear and the clanking of his chain. Humility suggests, the resolutions of others, naturally as strong as myself, proved as the withs of Samson when the Philistines were upon him, and why may not I too fail? Wine to them proved a mocker, strong drink raging, and deceived thereby, they were not wise. Why may not I too be deceived? My safety consists in having no fellowship with such unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to reprove them.

"My wisdom is to seek
My strength in God alone,
And even an angel would be weak
Who trusted in his own."

"AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?"

2. But, supposing I may be able to keep the enemy at bay, there are others to whom I stand related, over whom my influence extends who cannot. Am I my brother's keeper? Yes, you are, and the voice of your brother's blood will cry against you in the ears of Him who will make inquisition for blood. Perhaps you are strong, but he is weak, and through your remissness shall that weak brother perish? We that are strong should bear the infirmities of the weak and not praise ourselves. If even meat, useful, and in a sense necessary though it be, cause my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I cause my brother to offend. The Christ to whom I have plighted my attachment, and who to me, believing, is so precious, pleased not Himself. Surely then I must not be a self-pleaser or a man-pleaser. He bore a far heavier cross, and has said, "He that would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

A DILEMMA.

During a revival time such thoughts are uppermost, and naturally lead to the temperance platform, and before one is aware he finds himself between the horns of the dilemma—"Either it is easy for me to abstain or it is not." If it is not, then I should do it for my own sake, for I am in danger. I am in the smooth water that leads to the rapids. I am on the outer ring of the whirlpool. Before I am aware, I may be swept down; I may be sucked in. If it is easy, if it be no sacrifice for me to give this thing up, then I should do it for my brother's sake, and I am the more responsible if I refuse. Thus does the love of Christ constrain me to live no longer to myself, but

to Him who died for me, while the brotherly kindness and charity which that love inspires land me on the apostolic conclusion, "It is good not to drink wine, or anything whereby my brother is offended (literally trips), or is made weak."

3. *Faith*, too, in a revival time comes into fullest play. Faith, bringing near this living, loving Christ, who says, "I did this for thee—what are you doing for Me?" Faith, bringing near that eternity on which ere long we all shall be launched, the evidence of the things not seen. Faith, placing right beneath the eyes, and making bulk big there, the soul which outweighs and will outlive the whole world. Faith, giving us insight into the wondrous capabilities of our nature; revealing, too, how that with God all things are possible; that nothing is too hard for the Lord, and that consequently, even with reference to those counted "twice dead," it should never be counted "an incredible thing" for God to raise them. Revival faith takes hold on God, attempts great things for God, expects great things from God.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And says it shall be done."

4. Faith is linked with fortitude; virtue or valour is added to faith. It removes mountains—the mountain of pride, the mountain of prejudice. It goes up to each mountain, and in tones of holy defiance flings out the challenge: "Who art thou, O, great mountain?" Yea, it grasps the mountain—be it custom or fashion, or that which more iniquitously still "frameth mischief by a law"—and casts it into the sea! See, this faith and fortitude in Peter. He who had cowered beneath a servant girl's glance is bold as a lion. "Grant that, with all boldness, we may speak the word without fear," is answered on the spot and at the moment. Thus it was with the primitive—thus it is in all genuine revivals. There is an increased courage in battling against sin and Satan, and a more sensitive shrinking from the very appearance of evil, while the want of concord becomes increasingly apparent between the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. You can at once perceive how all this will tell favourably on the cause of temperance. When there are multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision, an exceeding great army in the valley of vision, in whom, by God's Spirit, humility and self-denial, and love and faith and fortitude, have been wrought, the grace that has brought salvation to them and caused these holy beauties to be inwrought, will teach them to live soberly; and to do what in them lies to witness before others of righteousness and temperance as well as judgment to come.

THE IRISH REVIVAL.

Ireland's wondrous "year of grace" (1859) very strikingly illustrated the relation of temperance to revivals. The statistics as to the decrease of crime, and especially the crime of drunkenness, during that and the following year, attracted general attention. At Ballymena Quarter Sessions in April, 1860, over a year after the revival commenced (and be it remembered, Ballymena was its very source and centre), "there was not a single case of indictment upon the record." The Rev. Edward Maguire, Church of England Minister there, writing to the Bishop of Down, says: "I met, a few evenings ago, a number of gentlemen connected with this neighbourhood. Among them there were three magistrates. Their unanimous testimony was, that since the revival the public morals were vastly improved, and though, as we might expect, there were some cases of drunkenness and other vices, yet they said that these were quite exceptional. I asked various and independent parties—the barrister conducting the Sessions (Mr. O'way), magistrates, grand jurymen, all at different times and in different places—to what cause, in their opinion was this absence of crime owing, and they each and all at once replied, "To the revival." At the Londonderry Quarter Sessions, the same time, there was no criminal business, and His Worship the presiding magistrate was presented with a pair of white gloves. At two leading towns in the county of Antrim the Grand Jury was congratulated on having nothing to do. The most competent judges who made diligent search state it as a "fact which admits of no dispute, that no person has, during the year in question, been before the police court of Belfast on a charge of drunkenness who had ever been brought under religious influences." Let me adduce, further, the testimony of a thoroughly unprejudiced witness,

the occupant of the Bench at the County Court of Coleraine, which, next to Ballymena, was most closely associated with the origin and progress of the great revival. Addressing the Grand Jury, taking a retrospective glance, he said: "When I look into the calendar for the last three months, and in memory look back on calendars that have come before me, I am greatly struck with its appearance on this occasion. During the entire three months which have passed since I was here before, I find that but one new case has to come before you, and one which, in some respects, is very unimportant." After directing the Jury as to this case, His Worship continued: "Now, gentlemen, as I said before, I am greatly struck at the appearance of this calendar, so small is the number of cases, when I formerly had calendars filled with charges for different nefarious practices. Now, I have none of these, I am happy to say. How is such a gratifying state of things to be accounted for? It must be from the improved state of the morality of the people. I believe I am fully warranted now to say that to nothing else than the moral and religious movement which commenced last summer can the change be attributed. I can trace the state of your calendar to nothing else."

All this goes to shew that when men are "filled with the Spirit," and the Spirit of God is moving on the face of a community, they are not likely to be "drunk with wine wherein is excess." It also shews that the love of drink, like the love of money, is the root of all evil, and that when this tap-root sin is diminished in its life and spreading, other forms of sin will undergo a proportionate diminution.

(To be continued.)

DANGER FROM FRIENDS.

BY REV. J. HASTIE, LINDSAY.

Danger to the Sabbath from its friends is imminent in Canada just now. Sabbath-breaking prevails in summer much more than in winter with a class, and among that class are many avowed and, no doubt, sincere friends of Sabbath sanctity.

The danger in question was pointedly alluded to in the report on Sabbath observance, presented lately to the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, to wit, that found in connection with religious and philanthropic assemblies held on the Thousand Isles and elsewhere. In frequenting those places by boat and otherwise there must needs be much Sabbath travelling, while on the spot the forms of Sabbath desecration are simply legion.

The strong statements of the report on this point were fully corroborated by the oral testimony of others who spoke from pastoral observation, and whose word is unquestionable.

Judging from present indications, Sabbath desecration under guise of religion is likely to prevail still more largely in the future.

Announcements already are made in the press of similar gatherings contemplated elsewhere over this Province. A good deal of capital has been invested in those summer paradises and in their furnishings, and the investors want a dividend, however the fourth commandment may fare meantime.

It is found, too, that arrangements can be made with railroad and steamboat companies on such terms as to bring in to the Churches in the partnership a good sum of money. This, to needy bodies, is a strong temptation to do evil that good may come, and does not money answer all things? And does it not advertise a denomination to the public in a very cheap and attractive way? And are not many adherents got to "our Church" by this means who otherwise would not be secured? And may not the wide-spread spirit of revivalism which so happily characterized the past year, and the cordial co-operation among the different denominations in so many places, and the laudable desire to make still greater acquisitions to Christ's cause from the world—may not all this prove a snare to many well-meaning people this summer, who in the ardency of religious feeling or through denominational zeal, may give countenance to forms of Christian effort which, in the long run, may result in a much larger harvest to Satan than to Christ?

Those gatherings cannot succeed without ministerial help. The presence of ministers there, and their Sabbath travelling to fulfil engagements, are reckoned by the public ample justification for Sabbath-travelling by laymen to and from the same place. "If it is no sin for the preacher it is no sin for me."