

Our Contributors.

SUPPOSING IT WAS A MISTAKE.

BY KNOXONIAN.

"It was a great mistake to submit the Scott Act to the people. The measure has some bad defects. Public opinion was not ready for it. There is not conviction enough in the country to enforce such a law. The machinery for enforcement was very defective. The temperance cause is thrown back for fifty years. The temperance men made a great mistake. Great mistake. Great mistake."

Well, supposing they did—what of it? Is it such an uncommon thing in this world to make mistakes that temperance men should be severely handled if they make one?

Let us assume for the sake of argument—mind, we say for the sake of argument—that a mistake was made in pushing on the Scott Act three years ago. If there was a mistake made it was made with the best intentions. To many it seemed the best thing to do at the time, and they did it. Nobody need be hard on himself for doing what seemed best under all the circumstances at the time the thing was done. It may yet be shown with a reasonable degree of clearness that submitting and carrying the Act was not a mistake. Good may come out of the movement, though the Act should be repealed in every county. But for the purposes of this paper let it be assumed that a mistake was made, and let us see if mistakes are such uncommon things even among the wise men of this little world of ours.

About one hundred years ago the British Government, presumably composed of the wisest statesmen in the world, goaded the American colonies into revolt by unwise legislation. That mistake cost Great Britain that country now known as the United States. There is not a statesman in England at the present hour who would defend the course pursued by the English Government toward her American colonies at that time. Not one. They all admit the British policy was a mistake. Well, if the first parliament of the world makes mistakes, is it anything wonderful that a few Canadian temperance men should make occasional mistakes?

It is now generally admitted that the Crimean War was a tremendous mistake—a mistake that cost Great Britain hundreds of thousands of lives and millions of money. We are too near the event to have unanimity of opinion about it, but everybody knows that many of the best minds in England hold that Britain was under no obligations to take part in that war. If not obliged to do so, surely going to the Crimea was a terrible mistake. And there were some fearful mistakes after our brave troops went there.

Canadians are a rather clever people. If anybody doubts that fact just ask themselves. But even Canadians have made some mistakes. It was a mistake to force Nova Scotia into Confederation without consulting the people. The bitter fruits of that mistake are seen to this day. Indeed, it is very difficult to understand why all the Provinces that entered into the Confederation compact were not consulted. It may yet become painfully clear that tying these Provinces together without consulting the people who have to pay the bills was a great mistake.

The biggest mistake ever made in Ontario was made by some prominent citizens of Toronto about twenty years ago. These gentlemen were seized by the idea that narrow gauge railways were just the thing for this country. They projected one from Toronto to Owen Sound; another from Toronto to Cobocok, or some other place in that romantic region, and one or two shorter roads. They got a bonus from all, or nearly all the municipalities through which the roads were built. There was a railway revolution in the country. The narrow gauge was the road for Canada. But the system would not work. The river banks put out the fires of the little locomotives. The cows caught up to the trains too easily. Everything went wrong, and with the exception of a few miles, these roads had to be changed to broad gauge at an enormous cost. There's a mistake for you.

And be it remembered this mistake was made by the leading business men of the greatest city in all creation. Toronto is the greatest city of modern times. If you don't believe it, see any copy of the *Globe*, or of any Toronto journal, or ask almost any Toronto citizen.

If the General Assembly should make a mistake one thousandth part as serious as this narrow gauge business, it would rend Canadian Presbyterianism into fragments. The slightest apparent mistake made by the Home Mission or Augmentation Committee—the giving of \$50 to a congregation or mission station, that at first blush should not receive it—makes an immense fuss in the Church. The only people in the world who are never supposed to make mistakes are clergymen.

We could name several municipalities governed by clever men, that bonused railways to carry their own business to other towns. That seems about as great a mistake as submitting the Scott Act.

The Judges of this Province are supposed to come nearer infallibility than any other class of men we have. Two or three of them held election courts not long ago, unseated members of Parliament, and fined and imprisoned persons for illegal practices. The Supreme Court of the Dominion decided the other day that these trial courts acted illegally—that they had no right even to sit when they did. It looks as though there was a mistake somewhere in these proceedings.

Taking a "calm view of the situation," we find that if the temperance men made a mistake in submitting the Act, and if many thousands of good citizens made mistakes in voting for it, they made their mistakes in fairly good company. One point of difference between a wise man and a fool is, that a wise man learns from his mistakes, while a fool doesn't. There are several lessons which wise temperance men may learn from the recent defeats which we may notice another time. One of the most important of these is to knock every barnacle off the ship, and allow no man to have anything to say in the conduct of affairs, except men who act from real downright principle.

There is one man in Ontario who never seems to make a mistake. His name is Oliver Mowat. No doubt you have heard of him. How would it do for the real men of the temperance party to get from Mr. Mowat, legislation that would be as near an equivalent to Prohibition as the public opinion of the Province will stand? We venture the opinion that Mr. Mowat can frame a better temperance law than the Scott Act.

IS CHRIST OR PETER THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

BY THE REV. R. WALLACE.

(Continued.)

The view that I have set forth is that of the majority of evangelical expositors. I hold then that Christ and not Peter is the foundation of the Christian Church here referred to by our Lord. We would add here that the infallibility of Peter is nowhere taught in the Scriptures. On the contrary Paul rebuked him for his temporizing and falseness in regard to the Gentiles being circumcised. This shows that he did not always speak under the guidance of divine inspiration; and besides, his teaching in that matter was contrary to the decision of the first council or Synod at Jerusalem. Infallibility cannot therefore be claimed for Peter (Gal. ii. 11-14; Peter xv. 19-29), much less for the Popes of Rome.

Now, some well-meaning Christians, lovers of peace, who have never sufficiently studied the subject, may think that there is no need to preach or write on the subject at all. This is not the view of those who have made a life study of this subject. The leading minds of the Christian Church have long held and do now hold that the greatest hindrance to the conversion of the world is the Papacy; and that it is the duty of the watchmen placed by the Master on the walls of Zion to sound the alarm from time to time. Now we learn from the Old Testament that though God chose Israel to receive and make known His truth to the world and to maintain the pure worship of the true God, they were continually given to apostasy and adopting the false doctrines and practices of the idolatrous heathen nations, until at length God, in just displeasure, permitted the ten tribes to be dispersed and lost among the nations whose evil ways they had followed. And during these ages God held His own prophets responsible if they did not faithfully warn the Jewish Church against all errors and dangers to its purity and welfare (Eccles. xxxiii. 1-11). They were directed to proclaim God's message whether men would hear or forbear. God commanded Jonah, "Preach the preaching that I bid

thee" (Jonah iii. 2); and that after he had passed through a terrible experience through fear of offending men. Our Lord gives the same command still to all His servants (Matt. xxviii. 20; 1 Cor. ix. 16). And the Apostle Paul declared that he felt constrained to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts xx. 27). And Jude commands all ministers and Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude iii. 1).

Now it is worthy of note that God put special honour on those who were the most faithful in opposing and denouncing the inroads of error and idolatry in ancient Israel, whether prophet or king. Why was it that the highest honour ever conferred on mere man was bestowed on Elijah, to be received into heaven without death, but to mark in a special manner God's approval of his fidelity in this matter? Let any one read and ponder the history of the kings of Judah, and mark the special honour put on Hezekiah and Josiah, and he will see that it was for the same reason (2 Kings xxiii. 24-25). On the contrary we are told that the fierceness of His wrath was kindled against Judah because her king had fostered the idolatrous customs of the heathen, until at length He removed the people to Babylon, and allowed their once holy city, Jerusalem, the seat of His worship, to be destroyed (2 Kings xxiii. 26-27; Jer. xv. 4, etc.). We are told that it was while men slept that the tares were sown in the field. So while Christians think only of their own spiritual culture Rome is busy sowing the noxious seed of her semi-heathen errors, and seeking to gain the control of our Scriptures, our schools and our public institutions, and thereby to put down liberty of conscience and banish true Christianity from the land. It is not safe therefore to be ignorant on these practical questions that affect human life and the highest interests of our people. It is because our people are not properly instructed on these subjects that so many are easily led away into all manner of errors and heresies of the day. It is a true saying, "Well warned is half armed."

The facts stated above show how important in God's estimation is fidelity in exposing error, and in warning the people against apostasy. Besides, the Christian Church was divinely appointed as the pillar and ground of the truth of God, both to declare it and to defend it against all error that would hinder the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the world (1 Tim. iii. 15). We freely admit that there may be good men under the Church of Rome—men who are better than the system, who are ignorant of the real character of Romanism. But that does not alter the character of the system which they uphold. Now ministers themselves are the best judges of what they should preach about, and how to do it, because their lives have been devoted to the study of this subject, and by their training, their reading and their conference with their brethren, they are much better informed on these subjects than the people generally. Paul commands the Hebrews not to remain content with the elements or A B C of Christianity, but to go on to perfection (Heb. vi. 1). We cannot otherwise become men in Christ Jesus, unless we know, as we are able, the whole truth of God. We should not be content to always feed on the milk of babes, but receive the strong meat of the Word as well.

Now let us glance at a few facts in regard to Romanism as a system, and you will see that it is the duty of Protestant ministers to instruct and warn their people on this subject.

The Church of Rome has held for ages that she is the only true Church of Christ, and that to be subject to the Pontiff or Pope of Rome is to every human creature absolutely necessary to salvation, as the Papal bull *Unam Sanctam* declares. This doctrine was declared even by the council at Rome in 1870. In keeping with this, several councils and Papal bulls have declared that it is the duty of the Church to punish with death all heretics; that is all who differ from Rome in regard to religion. Dr. John Cumming, of London, in his controversy with the Popish leaders there, proved that the oath which all Romish bishops take yet requires them, wherever they have the power, to persecute, fight against, and crush all heretics—all who do not receive the dogmas of Rome and bow to his holiness the Pope, or as the Canon law calls him, "our Lord God the Pope." This oath was found by Dr. Cumming in the Papal document appointing Cardinal Wiseman, in 1850. Now as Rome claims to be infallible, or "the same in all ages and everywhere" her leaders cannot