

The Canadian Independent.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN."

Vol. 17.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, April 15, 1886.

New Series. No. 16.

Topics of the Week.

OUR correspondents will find in the following sentences from a contemporary, a clear and concise explanation which we ask them to kindly consider. It will help them to make all due allowance for us when we are unable to insert their communications, and have not time to write to each the reason for our decision: "A paper receiving such a multitude of communications as the 'Congregationalist' cannot always explain by private correspondence why it does not use certain articles. The editors would be glad to shew all contributors this courtesy, but it would be an unreasonable burden. We receive comparatively few articles that would not be worth using, if we had the space, but it is impossible to crowd a bushel into a peck measure, and we endeavour to select that which is best adapted to the needs of our readers."

COL. INGERSOLL was airing his peculiar views in Toronto last week. He made little or no sensation, and, we fear, did not pocket the anticipated amount of cash. The Col. lays claim to little learning, less science and absolutely no knowledge of spiritual matters. He does not know that there is no God, he merely thinks so. And so on through the whole course of his so-called revelations, discoveries, and exposures. There is besides a ring of insincerity about every word this man utters. He speaks with a leer in his eye, and as if he had his tongue continually in his cheek. He has no depth of conviction, not a particle of genius, and not the faintest approach to eloquence. We are bad enough in Toronto without anybody coming to teach us that morality is a delusion, that right and wrong are mere conventionalisms, with all the other nice little conclusions which necessarily flow from the conviction that man lives in a Godless world, and has nothing before him but a dog-like end. We are not sure that Dr. Johnson's advice about "counting the spoons" upon the visits of such unsavoury dispensers of "intellectual treats" was, after all, so far amiss. The Colonel himself may be to be trusted, though we don't know. We should be sorry to say as much for a good many of his admirers.

DR. FRASER, Bishop of Manchester, lately delivered an ordination sermon on preaching, which is considerably talked about. The theological epoch, he said, the epoch of œcumenical councils for framing dogmas and theological formulas, did not arrive till long after the days of the apostles. In the time of St. Paul men were content to be religious, rather than theological; to be experts in godliness, rather than in controversy; and to believe simple truths which they found to help them to lead Christian lives. For himself, he confessed, and he was not ashamed to confess it from that pulpit, that he could not, do what he would—he had not tried, it was true, but he could not get up an interest in many matters which were sorely disturbing the Church just now, and which even threatened to rend the Church in pieces. Somehow or other, he could not bring himself to care much about the colour or the shape of a vestment, or about the posture of a minister, or as to the number of candles lighted or unlighted, or as to whether the bread used in the holy communion was leavened or unleavened, or as to whether the wine in the chalice was mixed or unmixed; those things did not seem to him to concern the weightier matters of the Gospel. He had yet to learn that they were more important than righteousness and mercy toward our fellow-men, and love and faith in God, and peace from God. We cannot see but the periods preceding the creed-making councils were quite as Christian as those that accompanied and have followed them.

WE have a great respect for the "Christian at Work" and for all its words and ways—at least for the most of them. We cannot however, we must acknowledge, see how it finds out that the proposal to tax church property and theological colleges when above the value of \$10,000 is "immoral," and ought to be opposed *vi et armis* by all good citizens. It seems, according to the "Christian at Work," that such a tax "would be a burden on religion and education, and prejudicial to the highest public good." If so, the non-endowment of such institutions must be equally to be condemned, for if it is a sin for the community not to supply all such institutions with well-lighted and well-paved streets, protection from fire, robbery, vandalism and all possible municipal evils and inconveniences (all which require money from somebody) *free, gratis, and for nothing*, it must be equally a sin not to supply the wherewithal to build these churches, pay their clergymen, and make even the beadle comfortable. Of course we in these northern regions are very ignorant and we shall therefore be the more pleased if our big brother tell us how to consistently advocate class exemptions from municipal and general civil burthens and yet not be committed to the principle of the State endowing the Church or at least some particular section of it, with all the unpleasant Erastian and compromising consequences inevitably flowing from such a principle. If the "Christian at Work" is in favour of the State endowing the Church, and of Cesar sitting in judgment and deciding what is truth and what is error, the way is plain enough. But short of this, we cannot see why the owners of a church should not pay their share of the expense incurred in support of the fire and police brigades as they pay their door-keeper's salary and their plumber's bill.

TEMPERANCE NOTES.

The most carefully prepared statistics shew that there are not less than three hundred thousand drunkards in the United States, and this statement is probably much below the truth. Of these, thirty thousand die annually; one hundred thousand men and women are remanded every year to prison; two hundred thousand children are annually sent to the poor-house; five hundred murders are caused by drink every twelve-month, and four hundred suicides; four deaths to one, as proved both in England and the United States, is the awful proportion compared to the non-using population. Magistrates, chaplains, and prison keepers come forward with their statistics and prove that not less than four-fifths of all the crimes have their origin in strong drink. On the same authority it is proved that dealing in the deadly draughts causes seven-eighths of all the pauperism that exists. It costs the United States \$60,000,000 a year to support pauperism and crime. At least two hundred and fifty million gallons of fermented and brewed liquors are made every year in the United States; of distilled liquors, eighty-five million gallons; and twenty million gallons are imported. Here we have the fearful sum total of three hundred and fifty-five millions of gallons consumed in our country, and at what direct cost? At a direct cost of \$700,000,000. This on the debit side—and on the credit side, what does the Government receive? A paltry sum of \$50,420,815, in exact figures. What then is the direct loss to the nation? Not less than ten dollars to every dollar received as revenue. By this waste the national debt could be paid in less than three years. But this is not all. Put \$700,000,000 on the debit side—this is direct—then you have only begun to reckon the real damages. Who can compute the loss from sickness, from squandered time

and paralyzed energies; from property destroyed and taxes increased? Bring in the bill for indirect damages and put it on the losing side, and you have a sum total, the appalling aggregate of not less than \$2,000,000,000 a year lost to this one nation by this iniquity, licensed by Government and tolerated by public sentiment.—*Rev. A. McElroy Wylie.*

I wish to say that the clergymen of the Church of England are positively doing more for the temperance movement than Dissenters; and the same is true of their wives. I was invited to church with a clergyman who is now Bishop of Carlisle, and we had a discussion for two hours. A titled lady was present, and she helped him. I was alone, and had to bear the whole brunt of the battle in the Scriptural argument.

"The Bible permits the use of wine," said he.

"Very well," said I; "suppose it does."

"The Bible sanctions the use of wine."

"Very well, suppose it does."

"Our Saviour made wine."

"I know He did."

"Why, we thought you were prepared to deny this."

"I do not deny it. I can read."

"Wine is spoken of in the Bible as a blessing."

I replied, "There are two kinds of wine spoken of in the Bible."

"Prove it."

"I do not know that I can, but I will tell you what it is: the wine that is spoken of as a 'blessing' is not the same that is a 'mockery,' and the wine that is to be drunk in the kingdom of heaven cannot be the wine of the wrath of God. So that, although I cannot prove it learnedly, I know it is so."

"Now, there are others who can do better than I can go, but you will please let me go just as far as I can understand it, and if I cannot go any farther, don't find fault with me. I hold that the Bible permits total abstinence; and I would rather search the Bible for permission to give up a lawful gratification for the sake of my weaker-headed brother, who stumbles over my examples into sin, than to see how far I can follow my own propensities without committing sin, and bringing condemnation upon any one's soul."

Another gentleman who came to me for a long talk, said, "I have a conscientious objection to teetotalism, and it is this: our Saviour made wine at the Marriage at Cana, in Galilee."

"I know He did."

"He made it because they wanted it."

"So the Bible tells us."

"He made it of water."

"Yes."

"Then He honoured and sanctified wine by performing a miracle to make it. Therefore," said he, "I should be guilty of ingratitude, and should be reproaching my Master, if I denied its use as a beverage." "Sir," said I, "I can understand how you should feel so; but is there nothing else you put by, which our Saviour has honoured?"

"No, I do not know that there is."

"Do you eat barley bread?"

"No," and then he began to laugh.

"And why not?"

"Because I don't like it."

"Very well sir," said I; "our Saviour sanctified barley bread just as much as He ever did wine. He fed five thousand people with barley loaves, manufactured by a miracle. You put away barley from the low motive of not liking it. I ask you to put away wine from the higher motive of bearing the infirmity of your weaker brother, and so fulfilling the law of Christ." I wish to say that man signed the pledge three days afterwards.—*John B. Gough.*