

British American Presbyterian.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 1872.

No. 8

Contributors & Correspondents.

NEW BRUNSWICK.

The New School Act—Roman Catholic Demand for Separate Schools—Effort to Restrict the Liquor Traffic in St. John—Presbyterian Union—Statistical Inaccuracy of McComb's Presbyterian Almanac—The Correct Figures.

From Our Own Correspondent.

The question of Common School Education is occupying much attention in this Province at the present moment. It is to our shame that we were so late in adopting the system of Free Schools in comparison with the other Provinces. The Act was passed last year, and went into operation at the beginning of this one. Now before there is time to see how it will work, the Roman Catholics are up in arms against it, apparently determined to have Separate Schools or perish in the attempt. It would appear that, up to the last moment, they indulged the hope that the schools taught by the Christian Brothers with whatever books the clergy choose would be embraced in the present scheme; and it is alleged by the clergy, with the bishop at the head of them, that prominent members of the Executive gave assurances to that effect. When the regulations of the Board of Education were published, and to the detriment of the working of the Act they were not published until the last moment, it was seen that the two points demanded by the Bishop were most effectually excluded. Therefore it is that the weight of their anger did not burst until the Act was just coming into operation.

The Executive get much blame for their dilatoriness in preparing for the working of the scheme. They had some seven or eight months to prepare, that is to work out the school districts, have the trustees elected, select school books, draw up regulations and have them explained, and such other work as was needed beforehand; but nothing of all this was done until the closing days of the year. Hence there is double the amount of odium thrown on the Act it otherwise would have had to bear. One reason for the mismanagement, as currently reported and indeed pretty generally believed, is that the members of the Executive are not very earnest in the matter, that, with the exception of Attorney General King, who fought for the Bible for years, and at last carried it through, they are all very lukewarm. The working of the Act proves that had the people got fair play there would have been no obstruction to the operation worth speaking of, save from the Roman Catholics, whose opposition, as other countries show, may be reckoned on at any rate. In almost every district in the Province the attendance of children has largely increased, in many cases it has doubled, as compared with the former regime. It is clear that every inch of the ground will have to be defended, and that with the utmost pertinacity, for some time to come. The leading friends of free schools are confident however that what we have got we will be able to keep.

In this city and in one or two of the leading towns the Roman Catholics support their own schools by subscriptions and throw them open to all free, as the other schools are. In country districts where denominations are mixed they have fallen in with the Bill, notwithstanding the peril to which the young are exposed in the so-called Godless schools. It is rather curious, or rather would be in any other circumstances, that they will not admit, if they can help it, the Bible into the schools, and then if that book is not admitted, they stigmatise the institutions as "Godless."

Since the above was written I notice with pleasure that in a "no confidence" debate going on just now in the House of Assembly, it is affirmed by men of all sides that the Act is to be accepted and all facilities give for the working of it now that it is the law of the land. This is satisfactory so far. An hon. member of the Legislative Council averred however, in a violent speech made over the Governor's address, that he would take his sons to the altar and—knight-like—make them swear eternal hostility to the present Act. Such is the

temper of some of the Roman Catholics, and of these the *Freeman* of this city is the mouthpiece.

A determined effort is being made just now to restrict the liquor traffic in this city and neighbourhood. So far as the city is concerned, the whole license system has hitherto been in the hands of the Mayor. Unfortunately, considering the character of the men elected to that office, there could hardly have been a worse arrangement. It was a temptation to pander to the rum interest; and it does not appear that such a temptation was needed in the case of either the present or late incumbent of that office, which ought to be a highly honourable one. The result is that everybody that wanted a license got one—irrespective of personal character or accommodation on the premises. The Evangelical Alliance took the lead in the agitation, and the Temperance bodies rallied around the flag that was hoisted. The first-named body got an Act passed last year with more stringent regulations as to the Sunday traffic, and that Act has been found to work very well. This year another step is to be taken. It was proposed at first to ask the Legislature to make provision for a License Board which would in no way be dependent on the popular vote; but it was found that the licensing privileges were secured to the Mayor by the City Charter. That point was therefore abandoned for the present. The leading provisions in the Act to be introduced are then to be something like the following:—Early closing every night, the separation of retail license from all other traffic; the separation of retail license from wholesale; the closing up of back and side doors in shops where liquor is sold; the refusal to give license to keepers of billiard and other saloons; the raising of the rate of license, etc., etc. It is believed that if this were secured and thoroughly respected, highly intelligent, and independent gentlemen elected as mayor, the result would be very beneficial. When consulting over the Bible, that is now nearly ready for presentation in the House, there was a good deal of attention given to the liquor Bill of Ontario which contains some very important clauses. There is a strong disposition also to have a permissive clause passed if it could at all be done. Anything to limit the traffic would be a blessing and a great one.

A telegram appeared in an evening daily here a few days ago to the following effect:—"One of the Presbyterian congregations in the city last night unanimously passed a resolution in favor of Presbyterian Union, but opposed the conditions attached to it by resolutions of Assembly." I should have said that the telegram comes from your city, and its among the specials. I am waiting to know particulars.

A day or two ago McComb's Presbyterian Almanac, published in Belfast, Ireland, came to hand, having been sent me by request by a friend. I have known the publication for a long time, and have generally found it accurate. In the present issue there is a strange item which depreciates the strength of Presbyterianism in this part of the world in a way that I regret to see. Under the head "Presbyterianism in British North America," it is stated with all gravity that "there are now about 300 Presbyterian congregations in this quarter of the empire." I at once took steps to correct the mistake in the quarter where the Almanac is issued. I gave statistics taken from official returns in my possession that there are not less than 679 Presbyterian congregations in British North America, exclusive of Manitoba and British Columbia, and that all these with the exception of 13 belong to the our churches now negotiating Union. I just add the numbers for the satisfaction of some of your readers. The Canada Presbyterian Church reports 362; the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, 197; the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, 127; and the Presbyterian of the Maritime Provinces in connection with the Church of Scotland, 40. I take these figures from the last published minutes of the Supreme Court of each Church. The other 18 embrace the U. P. Presbyteries of Ontario and two small Presbyteries of Covenanters in these Lower Provinces. The complaint is pretty frequently made that politicians and newspaper writers of the old country are unpardonably ignorant of the geography and statistics of these colonies; I am afraid that our Church friends, if the above be a fair sample, are not much better improved.

St. John, March 9th, 1872.

ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—In prosecuting my remarks on the State of Religion, or rather in reference to the best means of promoting it in our Church, I feel the importance of avoiding the lengthy and prolix, and aiming at the short and simple. In reply to the question, How may vital religion be most effectually promoted? the answer is obvious and simple. The Spirit alone can either begin or promote religion in the soul, and therefore the great desideratum is more humble, and earnest, and Jacob-like wrestling with God in prayer for the Spirit, on the part of ministers, elders and people. This, of course, supposes the diligent use of the various means of grace as appointed by God. To see this we have only to look at the principles inculcated in the Divine Word, and rigidly adhere to them. In the kingdom of grace, as in the kingdom of nature, God has not only resolved on accomplishing certain purposes, but has prescribed the best means of their accomplishment. While all things are really of God in both kingdoms, He has placed the means of accomplishing His purposes in the hands of man, and requires him to work and act as if all depended on himself, while, at the same time, he is required devoutly to acknowledge God as the real and sole origin of all efficiency. In the kingdom of grace, the grand object to be accomplished is the conversion and sanctification of fallen men, and the means He has devised for this end are every way adapted for its accomplishment—as much so as what are called the laws of nature are adapted for the accomplishing the Divine purposes in the material world. The laws which regulate the kingdom of nature differ, indeed, from those which God has appointed for accomplishing His purposes in the kingdom of grace—for the simple reason that the subjects to be acted on differ. In the one case matter is to be acted on, whereas, in the other, the human soul, dead in sin, is to be acted on. But in both cases God has acted worthily of Himself, in adopting the means to the end. The fundamental principle in both cases is the same and has been stated by Paul—all things are of God. The kingdom of grace may be said to rest on the atonement of Christ as its basis. This is exactly what men need to extricate them from guilt and bondage. Nothing less would have suited, and nothing more is needed. But something more is required in another direction. The soul dead in sin must be quickened. Provision has been made for this by the mission of the Holy Spirit in Christ's name. This divine agent has prepared the Bible by His own inspiration and human instrumentality, and thus provided a means—complete and perfect—of arresting man's attention and acting on the mind, heart and conscience by its heavenly doctrines, its great and precious promises, its holy precepts, its solemn warnings and threatenings, its faithful admonitions and earnest appeals and expostulations, and hence, in the highest degree, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. This Bible is not the Spirit Himself, but is merely the instrument which He has prepared for accomplishing His gracious purposes. It is hence called His sword. It has therefore no efficiency in itself or independently of Him. This deserves special consideration, for many speak as if the truth, especially when clearly and eloquently stated and enforced, has inherent power to enlighten and sanctify independently of its Divine Author, and by mere force of human eloquence. Hence the Spirit's agency, or its necessity, is too often ignored both by speakers and hearers, as well as by private readers of the Word. As wielded and applied by Him, however, the Word is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds and advancing a work of grace in the soul. Without His accompanying agency, on the other hand, the eloquent sermon becomes merely a pleasant song and the Bible itself a dead letter. Hence the necessity of ministers in the study and in the pulpit—hearers in the closet and in the pew—living habitually impressed with the necessity of the Spirit's influence, and consequently the necessity of earnest and important prayer for that influence being granted. Our blessed Lord assures us that our Heavenly Father, knowing our infirmities, is ever ready to grant the Spirit to all who ask. I cannot help concluding these remarks with the expression of my belief—would that I were mistaken—that the great

sin of the Church in the present lay is, that while the Spirit's agency holds a prominent place in the creed of every section of the Evangelical Church, it is to a large extent practically ignored and treated, I do not say by all, but by too many, as the doctrine of atonement was treated by the old Moderates, who, after some short discourse on some moral topic, to save their orthodoxy, finished by some slight reference to the atonement. Even so is the Spirit's agency treated by too many. If we would see vital religion thriving in our Church, we ought to press the doctrine in question on the minds of our people and drive them from depending on ministers, and sermons, and outward means for their soul's salvation. Christ crucified and the Spirit's agency must go hand in hand.

REVIEWS.

"THE FAR EAST."—An illustrated newspaper bearing this title is published fortnightly, at the *Japan Gazette* Printing Office, No. 87 Main Street, Yokohama, Japan. It consists of four leaves measuring 8½ x 11¼ inches. There are two columns on each page of letterpress. Though it is but a small paper, it presents a very creditable appearance. The price of a single copy is one dollar. It seems that no subscriptions are received for it. The reader, if he has never seen a copy, or heard of the paper, will, of course, wonder why it is so dear, when one of the same kind, but containing twice as many leaves, and these twice as large and several more illustrations, is published weekly, in Montreal, at four dollars a year. The reason is this. The illustrations in *The Far East* are photographs. They are used, either because there are no wood engravers in Yokohama, or, if there are, the circulation of *The Far East* is so very limited that their services would be too expensive. The photographs are very neatly pasted on the pages. Where one does not require a whole page, a sufficient blank is left for it when the "form" is made up. Of course, a photograph is infinitely more exact than any drawing can possibly be. For example, every pebble, blade of grass, or leaf in a landscape which was within the range of the instrument is represented. Looking on a photograph of an object is, therefore, next to seeing the object itself. I have received from a friend a copy of the 18th number of the paper referred to. It consists of five photographs, all of which are done in excellent style. The first occupies half of the first page and represents the Bund, looking east from French Hatoba. The road running along the front of the settlement skirting the sea is so-called. On page two is one somewhat smaller, entitled "Village Scene—The Pack Horse." It is thus described in the letterpress:—"An old Japanese pony which, having got rid of his load, stands in the middle of the road, his knees securely tied with the rope which when in motion he is led. The pack saddle and the ropes for tying on the burden, whatever it may be, are quite characteristic." On the fourth page is a full page photograph of the Saibansho, the principal building on the Japanese side of Yokohama. According to the descriptive article which accompanies it, this is "the principal Government office, at which the governor transacts his business; cases are heard as between Japanese and foreigners; all matters connected with land granted, sold or leased to foreigners are settled; and the municipal affairs generally both native and foreign are dealt with." From the same source we learn that only two foreigners, besides the police, are employed by the Government in this department. Mr. Benson, the municipal director, and Mr. W. H. Doyle, both of whom are Americans. On page five is a full page photograph of the United States Consulate. This building is directly opposite the Saibansho. Here are the Consular court-room, Consular offices, United States' post office, and the Consul's private residence. The Consul, Mr. Lyon, is an enemy to laziness. We are told that, in 1870, he sent upwards of one hundred "loafers" off to America, where they could get employment if they would work. On the seventh page is a photograph, the same size as that on the second, representing a village street. This shows how slimly the dwellings of the lower classes are put up. We are told that a man "may build his house, furnish and stock his shop for \$100 on the scale exhibited in the picture; and being content with very

inexpensive living, may have all he can desire and put by money on the profits of his little business." Corea is the subject of an interesting historical article at the beginning. From the news department, I shall give two short extracts and with these close this review. The first refers to a dispute between the late Belgian Consul for Yokohama and the Consul for Yeddo, which was taken to the North German Consular Court. At the trial, German, French, Japanese and English were spoken by turns. A burlesque on it appeared at the time in the *Japan Gazette* which was copied into *The Far East*. It is as follows:—

"Il est évident que le témoignage von die wohlgebohren heeren in dieser case has been given un Kotoba majitta kredoma taksan mudscashi. Aber werm aller die circostances sont bien considered there is but little doubt amo home no yaksoker etail le point d'appui of the bobbery."

"Kome okuremasen kereba le plaig-nant a saisi le bargain money y sin duga tenia rizon if the nation understood it so. Shikasi nagara moshi der kaufmann etn dato hat un le Japonnais avait un autre en su imagination the Court is of opinion que l'affaire est bien melangee."

The next refers to the police of Japan. "Japanese police would seem to have a great deal more power than the police of foreign countries, if a circumstance that occurred a few days ago, is sanctioned by their government. Loud cries were heard proceeding from the rear of a Japanese guard-house, which attracted the notice of some Europeans. On going to see by what they were occasioned, a man was found suspended by a rope over a well, and several Japanese policemen were taking it in turns to beat him with a stick. At last the unfortunate fellow was lowered and laid by the side of the well with his face downwards and scarcely able to move. Ultimately, death came to his relief. We believe that the man was a poor blind beggar, and the case is one that demands very full and particular investigation."

"LE MESSAGER DES FAMILLES."—This is the name of a Children's Paper which is published at Montreal by the Canada Sunday School Union. Prof. Coussirat is the editor. It is, of course, unsectarian. Each number contains two engravings, one of which is full page. The fact that these engravings were originally prepared for *The Cottage and Artisan*, published by the London Religious Tract Society, is a sufficient guarantee for their excellence. I would strongly recommend such of "the brethren" as understand French to subscribe for it. I would do the same to Presbyterian parents who have children studying that language. The reading of it would be an excellent exercise. Each number would bring them a pleasant variety. Besides, they would help a most praiseworthy undertaking. Presbyterians who, though they may not understand French themselves, have French Canadian Roman Catholic neighbours would do well to subscribe for and distribute it among them. There is nothing of a controversial nature in it. I have distributed several copies among French Canadian Roman Catholics, which have been well received. A French Canadian Roman Catholic where I live subscribes for it. The price of a single copy for a year is 25 cents including postage, if ten sent to one address for the same period, \$1 95. Mr. Mair, of the Bible House, Montreal, will be most happy to receive subscriptions. I would here make a remark on the principal illustration in the second number which has appeared. It is called "Le pot casse" (the broken jug), and refers to a French Canadian temperance story. A grandfather is represented as seated at the dinner table examining a broken jug which his grandson has brought in. They are both thorough John Bulls, not Jean Baptistes in the least. The former wears gaiters. The latter, in addition to these, wears a smock frock. The artist evidently did not know how his fellow-subjects the habitants in the Province of Quebec dress. His picture reminds me of the manner in which I have seen it stated that the French used to represent Scotchmen on the stage, namely, in kilts and top boots. This, however, is but a slight defect.

I hope that this article will have the effect of stirring up some of the classes of which I have spoken to patronize *Le Messager des Familles*.

MURIS.

A firm faith is the best divinity; a good life is the best philosophy; a clear conscience is the best law; honesty is the best policy; and temperance the best physic.