

prisonment the use in moderation of a perfect gift—for every gift of a perfect God must be perfect—not only violates the fundamental conception of right and wrong in our nature, but every revelation God has made known to our nature. Charity and self-sacrifice evoke high principles in our nature, the divine element being never altogether extinct in humanity, and therefore they do not violate nature, but find in it their "own reward." But slavery, which Mr. Wright instances, is contrary to nature, because to man belongs the inalienable right to his own person. He accepts the gift of existence from his Creator, and demands from his fellows the liberty to maintain that existence. There is, therefore, no analogy between slavery and the liquor trade. On the other hand, the ascetic violates the divine in nature. He is a caricature of the sanity and catholicity of Presbyterianism, complete self-abnegation being no higher rule of life than complete self-gratification. To preserve the equal mind and moderate desire was the example Christ set.

I am told that in writing of the tyranny of majorities I am "talking nonsense quite unworthy of myself, and such as should emanate from a despot or a dunce." If there is no moral limit to the power of the majority the individual becomes a machine, while the justice and perfection of God is arrogated by the majority. This implies the perfectibility of human nature by its own actions; for, if there is no moral limit to the action of the majority they can do no wrong, and do not need divine aid. Now, sir, would Christ have consented to settle a question of morality by popular vote? God's laws and Nature's laws demand obedience. They demand obedience that we may enjoy the bounties of Providence, kindly human sympathy and wise love. Thus while divine law and the ethical nature of man are in strict accord with human progress and the organic character of society asceticism is opposed to it. If man has—and I contend that St. Paul asserts he has—a natural and absolute right to govern himself in meat and in drink, it is his duty to assert that right, and to demand its recognition from others. It is also the absolute duty of others to respect that right. They break a divine law in not doing so. The enjoyment and continued enjoyment of my rights and duties is as essential as the rights and duties themselves, and cannot be surrendered to others, since every right and duty is a divine gift which implies my acceptance. The majority cannot repudiate it, because they would thereby challenge the wisdom of the Giver, and also because they can neither obliterate my power of reason nor their own, nor can they ignore either. The continuance, then, of my right to eat or drink any natural food rests on the conditions I use in asserting it, on compliance with the physical and divine laws which govern my being and not on the abuse, distortion and deception of others. It was the violation of the rights of the individual that produced the French Revolution. Like its originators, the temperance people started out with wise and moderate views. It was well to urge men to forsake their cups and young men to give up the detestable habit of "treating." But to punish with fines and imprisonment men who sold or who drank in moderation is a tyrannical and unholy act. Just as virtue is the same in every human soul and can never be vice, so is every gift of God good and perfect to all men and can never be bad and imperfect. It is the imperfection in some which turns the gift to apparent imperfection. But it is contrary to the function of law and contrary to the spirit of Christianity to punish a man by depriving him of his rights because another sins, since both law and Christianity assign each his respective rights and duties. Now, if there is no moral limit to the power of the majority, wherein lies the guarantee to the individual not only of his rights but of his duties? All enacted law, to be effective, must be just and founded on natural laws and on a full appreciation of the human material they are meant to influence.

Mr. Wright, while ignoring the fact that the United States Government by wise legislation has largely diverted the taste of the people from whiskey to lager beer, laughs at the idea of substituting beer and light wine for strong alcoholic liquors in Canada. In India the natives use opium, chang and the infinitely more mischievous drug gauga, the smoking of which produces lunacy. The extensive use of these drugs in Mohammedan countries is owing to the aversion to drink, the ban imposed on alcoholic liquors, and the long religious fasts of Buddhists, Hindus and Moslems, in which they are used to allay hunger. To divert the taste from ganga, and encourage the consumption of

mild liquor, the Indian Government has permitted the brewing of pachevai (rice-beer) without payment of any fee. Some officers have already reported that liquor has displaced the consumption of deleterious drugs. It has been found that the only way to substitute alcoholic liquors for ganga is by making them cheap and easily accessible. Why, then, should this gentleman laugh at a similar policy being adopted in Canada?

Men who know little or nothing of the subject have undertaken to instruct us, and after relinquishing in turn all the Acts they have brought into existence, are about adopting the scheme of reducing the number of licenses and increasing the license fee, the effect of which will be to increase the number of illicit dens. The existence of these places is proof that the present number of licensed houses is not beyond the demand. It is surely worthy of these truly honest and sympathetic people to drive men out of their business at a moment's warning, without compensation, or tax them out of existence by unequal taxation. What sum will these "reformers" pay the community for the crime and drunkenness their scheme entails? In Switzerland the same scheme produced groggeries, and deaths from alcoholism were much more numerous in the cantons where the number of licensed houses was reduced.

Name of Canton.	Number of licensed houses per 1,000 inhabitants.	Deaths from alcoholism per 1,000 deaths certified.
Solothurn.....	8	10.1
Thurgau.....	12	9
Graubünden.....	10	2.7
Berne.....	4	8.3
Ticino.....	10	1.3
Schwytz.....	12	2.9
Neuchatel.....	9	10.2*

Thus the mortality is lowest in Thurgau, Ticino, Graubünden and Schwytz. We should exterminate illicit dens, support respectable licensed houses, punish drunkenness severely and take away the license from those who break the law.

Mr. Wright in six long letters has not quoted a single sentence from my correspondence, but while detaching words from their proper connection has charged me with insolence, notwithstanding that he has exhausted most of them himself. He regards as insolent all who do not come with low bows and cringing civilities. He would have me divest myself of my manhood by assuming the wretched and demure mien of a trembling mendicant while criticising the august General Assembly. There is not a little cool assurance in such humility. Sir, I rest my claim to criticise the Assembly's action in public matters on the ground of citizenship, and on that alone, and while I reject the desolating spirit and moral prostration of my critic, I recognize his claim to any consolation which extravagant flattery of the high and mighty may bring him. In a semi-delirious way he has endeavoured to discredit me, as he thinks, by coupling my name with one who does not represent my views. I should be sorry to hold him responsible for the views of Ingersoll, who is a co-worker of his in "temperance." He has descended to childish personality in which may be traced the subtlety which adorns all his letters. Any one familiar with the equities of controversy must know he has violated them. It is not the malignity nor extravagances of personality, but the austerity of well-fortified argument; not the jokes and gibes of a burlesque, but the lofty themes of truth and liberty we look for.

The clergy, as if afraid to attack the sins we are most prone to, have selected for special attack the sins we are least prone to. There is only one drunkard in every 414 of the population of Ontario, without taking into account the recommitments, which would probably elevate the standard of sobriety to one in 700 and possibly not one in 2,000 native Canadians. Compassing sea and land to make one proselyte they strain at the gnat and swallow the camel. The sins of unchastity, lying, gambling, swindling, extortion, forgery, stealing, misrepresentation in dealing, suggestive advertisements, salacious plays, brutal prize fights, gossip, scandal and spite as far overshadow drunkenness as the pine of our forests does the shrub at its roots. And so I have pointed to the example of Christ, the central figure to whom all Christians look, the perfect Man who was tempted by an appeal to the senses, the Supreme King whose works were among

\* Message du Conseil Fédéral à l'Assemblée Fédérale sur la Question d'Alcoolisme, du Juin, 1884.

the obscure and humble, the unrivalled Preacher whose exposition in the Parable of the Prodigal Son taught that the most abandoned are to be treated with love, and in the Parable of Hired Labourers denounced repudiation of contract—"Didst thou not agree with me for one penny?"—as indeed it denounces to-day the veiled robbery in the destruction, without compensation, of property created under the law; that is to say, under contract. I have pointed to the example of His inspired follower, the intrepid exponent of the new law, the free-born and chivalrous apostle who asserted his civil rights by demanding from the prætors of Philippi the justice of a Roman citizen; the courageous champion who demanded not that his opponents should be mute, but faced the bitter jealousy of the Jews at Antioch, and the sleepless hatred and tyranny of a race who understood not the breadth of the Pauline Gospel, but through narrow interpretation became servile to the law; the educated advocate and skilled disputant who confounded the subtlety, and withstood the unfathomable pride, of Epicureans and philosophers in the Areopagus; the liberal-minded citizen who would not make himself subject to false brethren, "no, not for one hour." W. T. TASSIE.

(o) Art., *Belford Magazine*, vol. 1, p. 359; (p) *id.*, p. 359; (q) Report, Prisons of Maine, 1884, pp. 51 and 10; (r) *Alliance News*, September 8, 1883; (s) Art., *Princeton Review*, March, 1884; (t) Report, Maine Prison, 1884, p. 15; (u) *id.*, pp. 26 to 30; (v) *id.*, p. 82; (w) Report, Maine Prison, 1884, p. 84, and Report, Ontario Gaols, 1884, p. 2; (x) U. S. Census, 1880; (y) Report, Asylums for Insane, Ontario, 1884, p. 8; (z) U. S. Census, 1880; (a) Report, Maine Insane Hospital, 1884, p. 43.

THE SECOND COMING OF THE LORD.

PESSIMISTIC VIEWS.

On p. 48 of "Behold, I Come Quickly," I find the following statement: "All the facts in the Church and world, so far, are in precise accordance with these pessimistic views of the teachings of the inspired Word." And I presume our premillenarian brethren will admit that—as in early times persecution made Christians long for "rest with us"; as in the fourth century distress and distraction forced men into deserts under the idea that the world could not be cured; as under the incubus of popish error, before and about the time of the Reformation, Christian souls, seeing no prospect of relief, were led to despair of the Church of God; so now amid the earnest effort put forth to deal with the new state of society, and its apparent want of success,—many good men (they would, perhaps, say the best and most spiritually-minded men) have come to abandon all hope of the conversion of the world, and to think of the bodily presence of Christ as the only hope that remains for the Church. Then searching Scripture with this preconceived idea, they find to their surprise that there are very many passages which may be so interpreted as to make that view plausible; and straightway they pronounce all who cannot thus interpret God's Word, "misguided," "blinded," etc., while their "doctrine has been supported by the best preachers, the most learned professors, the most able writers of the Church, in all ages" (p. 28). It is hard to deal with those who have come to this conclusion; but it may not be useless for the sake of others to examine the view shortly. Condensing, then, what I find between pp. 31 to 47, and what I find generally assumed elsewhere, the pessimistic view may be stated thus: 1. The characteristic of the last days of the age in which we live "is incurable wickedness," which is incompatible with the idea of a millennium. 2. The idea of the universal triumph of the Church and a spiritual millennium is precluded by the way in which "our Lord and the Holy Ghost (*sic*) speak of the state of things during the present dispensation" (p. 45). 3. There is not in the New Testament a single intimation that the Church is to win universal victory before the personal coming of our Lord. If this be really so, then surely "life is not worth living"; the sooner the age ends the better. "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

But is it so? Does the Word of God, properly interpreted, teach this? Does the history of the Church and world warrant any such pessimistic inference?

To answer the latter question first, I read the condensed description of the present time as given on p. 48 in confirmation of the view with amazement. I ask myself, is it possible that a man who thinks clearly can see in it a confirmation of pessimism? "Not one county, nor city, nor town, nor village, nor neighbourhood has been wholly converted to Christ after