

British American Presbyterian. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1875.

TEMPERANCE MOVEMENTS.

It is now on all hands an admitted fact that the liquor traffic is the most fruitful source of vice, crime and misery in every shape. Its abettors are the most stubborn and unprincipled opponents of every humane and philanthropic undertaking for the relief of human misery, and the uplifting and improvement of mankind. It is the very masterpiece of Satan. It is the worst enemy the Gospel has to contend with in civilized and professedly Christian countries. It is a standing and crying disgrace upon the civilization of our time, and the most astonishing thing of all perhaps is, that such a traffic, producing such manifold and terrible evils, should be legalized and protected by law in a Christian country.

It is gratifying to every true patriot, to every humane and philanthropic man, and especially to every Christian, that this odious and destructive traffic which flourished so long unchallenged is now being so vigorously assailed from a great many different quarters. Men are now waking up generally to the enormity and wickedness of this vile, unchristian business. So disastrous are the fruits of this traffic that it is high time it was made illegal.

Very gratifying progress is being made, if not so much as could be wished, in lessening the evil, at least in preparing the public mind at once greatly to restrict this business, and finally to destroy it altogether. Women are now taking a vigorous and prominent part with their husbands and sons and brothers in seeking to abate this nuisance. Cities and towns are becoming eager for its limitation or suppression.

As the season is close at hand for the election of municipal officers who have, to a certain extent, the control of this traffic, as our local legislatures are at present in session, now is the time to act, and it ought to be done with vigour and decision. Petitions are being presented to the Legislature from various cities and towns largely signed, and influence brought to bear upon municipal elections. We venture to say that there is no question before the public of so much importance to the present and future well-being of the country in the highest sense as this is. Compared with this the objects and squabbles of political parties, in the strict sense of the word, are paltry or contemptible. This cause is well worthy of the best efforts of every wise and good citizen.

The objects sought apart from prohibition, pure and simple, are chiefly these. First, a great reduction in the number of taverns licensed; one to every thousand inhabitants is proposed by many. Second, no saloon license to be granted at all; and third, no licenses to be granted for the sale of spirits in groceries, and if spirituous liquors must still be sold in some shape, that only a limited number of places be licensed to sell them and nothing else. If these things can be secured, a great advance will be made. Another, and most important thing needs to be done, without which all else will be comparatively useless. The grand defect all along in temperance legislation has been the want of effective means for carrying it out. It has been left almost, if not altogether, in the hands of local municipal bodies, and hitherto they have been chiefly distinguished by showing how not to do it. No laws have been so unblushingly ignored or openly contemned and despised as those regulating the liquor traffic. The whole thing, in the past, has looked more like a huge joke than anything else. Municipal bodies and their officers are so much under the fear of local influences of falling in the estimation of voters, and so losing their places, that it is vain to look to that quarter any longer. If anything is to be done in carrying out already existing legislation, or that which is asked for, a complete change must be made in the machinery for this purpose. It ought at once to be removed from the hands of local bodies, and placed under the surveillance of officers appointed by, and responsible to the Government. Then we might expect to see laws regulating this traffic respected, and violations punished as certainly as those against burglary or theft, or human life. If this is strictly looked to, and made indispensable in any legislation upon the subject, if what is asked now can be secured, if ministers and churches will take strong ground upon this subject, if all, both men and women, who believe this traffic to be wrong, or who have personally suffered from its desolating effects, and if the press will faithfully discharge its important duties, we see no reason why a very great reform may not be effected speedily, to be the precursor and pledge of a yet greater reform in time to come.

The first of a Scotchman—ask him to repeat the twenty-third Psalm; if he cannot do it, be sure he is no Scotchman.

IS THE BIBLE THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH?

We can fancy some one saying as he reads this question that a good old lady said when dying, to a young minister who asked her if she was sure she was not mistaken in relying upon Christ and his promises? "Poor man," she said, "is that all the length you have got yet." It is out of date to ask this question in a Presbyterian paper with a view of seriously answering or discussing it. That the Bible is the only rule of faith is with us an axiom. We take our stand upon that. The controversies and discussions into which we poor benighted Presbyterians have lately been led have moved the compassion of a wise Episcopal brother, who has kindly undertaken to do the part of a good Samaritan, and help us out of our difficulties. They have all arisen, it appears, from our perversely or ignorantly holding this most heretical and false doctrine that the Bible is our only rule of faith. Our kind helper on the contrary, scouts the idea. We wish to be grateful for all help given us, especially when it is so generously volunteered, and we only notice this subject now to point out some difficulties we have still, which check the flow of our gratitude.

Our friend, Mr. Langtry, tells us in a letter explanatory of his lecture, that it was simply a "Protestant lecture, a Protestant proof, i.e., against the right of every individual exercising his private judgment upon what he thinks the Bible teaches him; a protest against the right of private judgment in any form, and to uphold the voice and judgment of the whole Church as the only unerring guide to the understanding of the Scriptures." We confess that the teaching of Scripture seems to us much more clear than that of Mr. L.'s lecture, and if we are incompetent to exercise our private judgment in the one case why does the lecturer appeal to that judgment? Nothing can well be more obscure or difficult to comprehend than the deliverances of general councils to which Mr. L. would refer us to see what the Scriptures teach. If we are in danger of being led into error by exercising our private judgment upon the meaning of the Bible, much more are we in danger of mistaking what councils say it means. We should have to ask the Church next to explain what the teaching of the councils meant, and this done, giving our assent to the explanation would be an act of private judgment so that we are forced to fall back in the end upon what Mr. L. denounces. We are reminded of the minister who asked his parishioner how he liked the "Pilgrim's Progress" with his notes? He answered that, "He understood the book itself very well, and by the grace of God he hoped he would understand the notes too by-and-by."

This helper again tells us that, "He denies that the Bible is the only rule of faith; or, in fact, that it is a rule of faith at all." It would be quite wrong, of course, after our helper has uttered his dictum to exercise our judgment, so we shall content ourselves with merely asking him to explain.

In the next sentence he declares that "the Bible contains the truth, nothing is to be required of any man, to be received as an article of faith which may not be found therein or proved thereby." Is not truth wherever found, in the very nature of things a rule or guide, and in religious matters a rule of faith? Again we are told, "God has provided two guides for his people, the Bible and the Church. We are rather perplexed by this kind of help. "The Church is not the rule of faith, but the teacher of the faith, and the interpreter of the Holy Scriptures." If it is the function of the Church, to interpret the Scriptures, and men are bound, according to Mr. L., not to use their judgment, but believe and act as the Scriptures interpreted by the church say we should, are not the Scriptures then really the rule of faith and not the church? Whatever Mr. L. may think, it clearly appears to us by his own reasoning the Scriptures are the very thing which he says they are not—the rule of faith.

It will be a rather curious piece of information to most to learn that not the Presbyterian sect, but the Romish Church was the first to exercise this banned and proscribed right of private judgment. Presbyterians are not destitute altogether of intelligence, and they have just been reading a most severe and solemn impeachment of that Church by one of the leading men of our time, because her spirit and aim have ever been to forbid and deny this very right, and that by late decisions she has bound the chains of intellectual and spiritual slavery upon every adherent of her doctrines. Will our helper tell us which to believe—William E. Gladstone or himself?

"The Bible," we are told, "was never intended to be the teacher of truth to the world. This is the prerogative of the Church." Here we should like to ask our compassionate helper to tell us what he means by the church, where it is to be found, and how he discovered it? It

could not be by the exercise of private judgment on his part, for he tells us that the object of his whole lecture was to "protest against the right of private judgment in any form." How then did he find the church? It can only have been by the church telling him which is the church. He does indeed say that any one may decide that question for himself by an exhaustive course of reading in church history from its foundation until now, and so determining which of all the bodies that claim to be the Church can show a continued historical existence from the time of Christ up till the year 1875. It is plain our helpful friend cannot have settled the question for himself by such means, for he tells us that "he has been studying the statements of the creed for the past five and twenty years, and has only yet begun to apprehend the length and breadth and height and depth of the truth it contains." How then shall others less learned, and the vast bulk of mankind, ever be able to discover which is the church? Instead of helping us we are afraid we are to have life saddled with a work to do which would leave us time to do nothing else.

Our friend belongs to the Church of England, and no doubt he believes that to be the Church; however, he has made the discovery, to which all men ought to give up their private judgment. Here then we should be at rest. Yet we confess we are still so much at a loss that we shall have to ask for yet more help. It is no secret, our friend well knows, that this church is divided into widely divergent, and even in many cases mutually hostile sections, each claiming for itself to have the true and pure faith. To which must we give up our judgment, to the High or Low, or to those who have hit the golden mean? We dare not exercise our own private judgment; our friend tells us he has renounced his; life is now too short to trace down the historical existence of this church to the apostles, even if it could be done, and if we ask the Church itself to decide for us, we are driven distracted by the conflicting claims of the several divisions—we might call them almost sects—into which what is fondly termed *The Church* is divided. We have other difficulties that we could wish to have solved—some questions about responsibility for example—if we may not exercise our judgment; when the General Council of the whole Church in the future is to be held, which is going to settle definitely and forever all knotty questions yet unsettled, and to which the Church of England is going to appeal; also, how Mr. L. knows that this future council will be able to do this, especially as nobody will be allowed to exercise his private judgment, and, as our friend is not likely to be a member of it?

But really we are so much perplexed already by the help offered us, that we are glad to fall back on the Bible itself for relief, upon the Great Teacher who has commanded us to "search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me," who has said, "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." We prefer Paul to our would-be teacher and helper in Toronto. "The Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the Word of God with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so." Our pitying, sympathizing Angelican, and all who take his ground, which has in it the very spirit of Popery and persecution, conveniently shut their eyes to all such passages. God has promised the illuminating aid of His Holy Spirit to every humble patient decile reader in search of truth, and instead of renouncing our private judgment to accept blindly the teachings of the Church so-called, instead of making the truth subservient to the Church, and asking what the Church says, we would bring the Church to the test of the inspired word, and say, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

THE attention of our readers is called to an advertisement regarding the school for young ladies at the Morvyn House, Toronto, formerly conducted by the late Miss Skinner, and now by Miss Haight. Miss H. having had long experience as a teacher in similar institutions, entered on her work here in September last. It is pleasant to have to state that the school continues to retain its previous high place among the educational institutions of this city. The number of day pupils is fully larger than at any previous period. There are a few vacancies for boarders, who can enter either at the beginning of the year, or at the commencement of the 3rd term (February 3rd). It will be an additional recommendation to any of our readers who are contemplating sending a daughter away from home for education that Miss Haight is a member of the Presbyterian Church, and unless in cases where the parents desire otherwise, takes the boarders with her to one of the Presbyterian Churches in this city.

Messrs. Ross & Co., lumber merchants, Detroit, have become insolvent, with liabilities \$300,000.

Ministers and Churches.

THE Rev. Mr. Baikie will be inducted as minister at Port Stanley on Tuesday, 29th inst.

THE Rev. Mr. Stewart of Pakenham, has received an unanimous call from Pembroke.

THE Rev. J. A. Murray will be inducted as minister of St. Andrew's Church, London, on Wednesday, 29th inst.

At the last meeting of the London Presbytery, Rev. Mr. Cuthbertson tendered his resignation as minister of the Presbyterian Church, St. Thomas, and it was accepted.

THE Rev. Adam McKay, late of Cape Breton, N. S., was inducted into the pastoral charge of Knox Church, Ripley, on the 30th ult.

REV. JAS. M. Grey of Roslin, has received an unanimous call from Stirling. This is the second call the reverend gentleman has received within a year.

THE Rev. John J. Richards begs to acknowledge publicly, with thanks, the gift of a handsome and valuable set of Buffalo robes from the Newboro section of his congregation.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Paris, held at Ingersoll on the 15th inst., the Rev. John McEwen, of Pembroke, accepted the call of the congregation of Erskine Church in that town. The stipend is \$1,000.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, London, Ont., for so many years under the pastoral charge of Rev. John Scott, has given a call to the Rev. J. A. Murray, formerly of Lindsay. The stipend is \$1,500 and a free manse.

THE Rev. Charles Innes Cameron, at present serving in a mission field at Ottawa, has received a call to a Presbyterian Church at Carlton Place. Mr. Cameron is a graduate of Queen's University, and for a time was a missionary in India and Australia.

At a Presbyterian Church meeting held at Williamstown, on Wednesday, December 8th, called at the instance of the Anti-Unionists, the former decision of the congregation affirming union was reaffirmed by a vote of seventy-two to thirty-eight taken in writing.

St. Andrew's Church, Montreal, (Rev. Gavin Lang), having determined not to go in with the union, a new congregation has been organized of members of that Church, who are favorable to the union. They intend erecting a magnificent edifice to cost no less than \$100,000.

We are pleased to learn, says the Hamilton Times, from a private letter received by one of the Rev. gentleman's friends, that the Rev. Mr. McColl's health continues to improve rapidly. The climate of "Los Angeles" seemed to have a beneficial effect. Mrs. McColl is also enjoying improved health.

On Monday evening of last week the annual missionary meeting in connection with Knox Church, Guelph, was held. Rev. Mr. Ball occupied the chair, and after prayer and praise, he made a few remarks. Excellent addresses were given by Rev. Mr. Cameron, of Toronto, and Rev. Mr. Ballantyne, of Jamaica.—Mercury.

The True Banner says:—"The Rev. Mr. Laing's lecture on the "Monks of the Early Ages," in West Flamboro' on Friday evening the 10th inst., was well attended and proved to be highly interesting and instructive. Quite a sum was realized for the benefit of St. Andrew's West Flamboro' Sabbath School."

THE Young People's Association of Cooke's Church, in this city, forwarded the sum of \$25 as a donation to the French Evangelization Society at Montreal. A further sum of \$10, part proceeds of a lecture in the above church, has also been sent to this highly useful Society. These examples should be largely imitated all over Ontario.

ON Sunday last the basement of the new Presbyterian Church at Merrival, Nepean, was opened for Divine Service. Special services befitting the occasion were conducted at 10 a.m. by the Rev. James Stewart of Pakenham; at 3 p.m., by the Rev. Wm. Moore of Bank St. Church, Ottawa; and 7 p.m. by the Rev. Wm. Armstrong of Daly St. Church, Ottawa. At each service there was a large and attentive audience. During the past three years the congregation has made very pleasing progress, the membership has almost doubled, a shed has been built for the horses, a glebe of seven acres of land has been purchased with a dwelling house thereon, which has been repaired and converted into a comfortable manse; and now a new church is being erected which when completed will be a comfortable place of worship, an ornament to the place in which it stands, and a credit to the people who are building it.

ON the evening of Tuesday the 9th November last, the Bible class of Rev. D. J. Caswell at Silver Islet, Lake Superior, commenced the series of lessons not in the usual manner, but by a regular and genuine "surprise party." While Mr. Caswell

was waiting the arrival of the class a knock was heard at the door, and on it being opened a large number was there, and paired in till the house was full. They then took possession of the house, and all seemed to enjoy themselves very much. Mr. Hutchison on behalf of those present expressed the good feeling on the part of the class towards Mr. Caswell, and they presented Mrs. Caswell with a beautiful and valuable dress, as "a small token of esteem." The time passed pleasantly till ten o'clock, when a good and substantial tea was served, the furnishings of it coming from numerous baskets which the members of the class brought with them, and shortly after all took their departure, leaving the contents of their baskets. Such occasions are useful, as they create a good feeling between ministers and the younger members of their flocks, and show the ministers that their labors are not without at least some good results.

A MEETING of the Presbyterian congregation, Pembroke, was held in Calvin Church, on the 3rd day of December, 1875, for the purpose, among other things, of taking into consideration the propriety of proceeding to the calling of a minister. It was then unanimously resolved that the Presbytery be petitioned to moderate in a call as early a period as possible. It was then moved by William Moffat, Esq., and seconded by John G. Gormack, Esq., that this congregation having had their attention drawn to a minute of the Ottawa Presbytery, passed at its meeting in July last, on the resignation of the Rev. John McEwen, our late pastor, and as said minute of the Presbytery is not according to the facts of the case, and therefore calculated to give a false impression of the course taken by the articles alluded to in said minute of Presbytery, as "a small element of dissatisfaction," be it therefore resolved that it is the opinion of this meeting that the said minute of Presbytery is both injudicious and unjust, and if not designed, at least well fitted to disturb that harmony and good feeling, which now obtains in no congregation, and which it should be the wish of the Presbytery to foster and promote. Carried unanimously.

The annual missionary meeting of Gault Street Presbyterian Church was held on Monday evening, and was largely attended. Rev. John M. King, M.A., pastor of the congregation, was in the chair. After devotional exercises, the annual report was read by Mr. Wm. Kerr, Secretary-Treasurer of the Society. The total amount reported as raised by the congregation during the year for extra congregational objects, in various forms of educational, evangelistic, and missionary work, was \$3,442. Of this amount \$250 was appropriated to home missions; \$250 to foreign missions; \$60 to evangelistic work among the French Roman Catholics. The amount contributed for College purposes was \$1,570 viz., for the Building Fund of Knox College, \$1,170; for the ordinary fund, \$340; and for the University Scholarship Fund, \$60. The amount contributed to assist College Street Church, was \$85 for its Building Fund, and \$80 for its ordinary fund, to be increased to \$100, and various other amounts for other objects. The adoption of the report was moved by Mr. Thomas Fotheringham, and seconded by Mr. Donaldson, and carried. The above mentioned sums will be largely increased by the contributions of the Sabbath Schools connected with the congregation. The meeting was addressed in instructive and effective addresses by Rev. Messrs. McLarn, of Cheltenham; Laing, Dundas; J. K. Smith, Galt, and others.

St. Andrew's Church. The Unionists.

The Unionists held their first regular service, says the Montreal Witness of the 13 inst., yesterday forenoon at eleven o'clock in the Natural History Society's Lecture Hall. It was filled, and a careful estimate showed that nearly 350 were present. Among them were Messrs. Kinghorn, J. L. Morris, McMaster, Bisset, Roach and Prof. Murray, elders; Messrs. Kinloch, D. Fraser, Drummond, Robb, Rhynas, Kingar, Grant, Cowan, Dr. Bell, Mrs. Cushing, Mrs. Gantin, etc. Mr. L. M. Lewis officiated as organist. As is typical of the consummation of that Union which the members had all so ardently longed for, Rev. Professor Campbell (connected with the late Canada Presbyterian Church) officiated. He took for his text the words:

"Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it."—Psalm cxxvii. 1.

He delivered an impressive discourse, applying the lesson taught in the text. Among the announcements made were those calling together the Young Women's Association in the rooms of the Young Women's Christian Association in St. Catherine street during the present week, and the Young Men's Association on Friday, in 37 Union Avenue. In the afternoon at eight, the Sunday-school was organized for the first time in charge of Mr. J. L. Morris, the former Superintendent. About seventy scholars were present, who were stated to be all from the other school. A Bible class is being formed, and a large and interesting infant class was being instructed in the library of the building. A teacher said he expected a large increase to the school when it once got into operation.

Our contemporary further remarks that St. Andrew's Church was also well filled.