

# THE GOSPEL TRIBUNE,

FOR ALLIANCE AND INTERCOMMUNION

THROUGHOUT

## Evangelical Christendom.

VOLUME II.]

JUNE, 1855.

[NUMBER 2.

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

*AN UTTERANCE—clear, full, and explicit, on the moral and religious bearing of the Maine Law, having been conceived as demanded of this Journal: and having found the recent Report of the Rev. Mr. Mulkins admirably adapted in style, argument, and tone, to meet the requirement as specified, it was determined to reproduce the Report in the "Gospel Tribune," with the endorsement now given. And as the whole of this number is required for the purpose, another is now in press entirely filled with correspondence and religious intelligence. It will appear in a few days.*

### REPORT.

#### 1. Introductory Remarks.

For some time past the subject of the legal prohibition of the traffic in intoxicating liquors has been earnestly discussed in this Province. Indeed, since the first enactment in the State of Maine for the suppression of the traffic, public attention has been strongly called to it in this country. It was a piece of Legislation so novel, so perfectly unique, that it could scarcely fail to attract the consideration of thoughtful men, or to engage the attention of other Legislators. The evils of intemperance are so open to view, so manifest, so numerous, so universal, and their ramifications so infinite, that all good men, necessarily, desire to see them lessened, yea wholly extinguished. It is nearly fifteen years since the doctrine of legal prohibition was first mooted and discussed in the public press in the United States, but it was not until 1851 that public sentiment on that subject assumed a statutory embodiment, and became law. This was an experiment so singular and so important, it was hailed with such general admiration by the friends of sobriety, and was so vehemently denounced by those interested in the Traffic, that it became evident, that it would be watched with intense interest by all parties. On the one hand with the sleepless eyes of interested vigilance, and on the other by the watchful eyes of energetic philanthropy. That experiment has now been in operation four years and upwards, and, if it has been successful, it is time that others should know it; if its effects have been baneful, the world should be apprized of the result, that all illusions on the subject as far as may be done, should be dispelled.

#### 2. The Principle of Prohibition of British Origin.

Although it is true that the doctrine of Prohibition of late years was revived in the United States; and although the State of Maine was the first to embody the principle in a Statute, yet the doctrine was by no means new; it was agitated in generations past in England, and so late as 1834 the question was brought before the British House of Commons, when a committee was appointed to examine and report on intem-

perance. Sir Robert Peel was chairman of that committee, which drew up a most able report, and in concluding their valuable labours, recommended and unanimously adopted, as a final measure for meliorating and removing the vast evils arising from the traffic, the following resolutions:—

46.—"The Prohibition of the importation from any foreign country, or from our own Colonies of distilled spirits in any shape. 47.—*The equally absolute prohibition of all distillation of ardent spirits from grain;* the most important part of the food of man in our own country. 48.—The restriction of distillation to the purposes of the arts, manufactures and medicine; and the confining the wholesale and retail dealing in such articles to chemists, druggists, and dispensaries alone."

Whatever merit or demerit may be due to the Statute which first carried the suggestion of "absolute prohibition," into effect, it is undeniably true that the principle, and even its initiation in practice, are of British Origin, and the conception of British Statesmen.

#### 3. Importance of the Question.

Since 1851, when the "absolute prohibition" suggested nearly twenty years before in the British House of Commons became the law of the State of Maine, the same question has been canvassed throughout the United States, and the British Colonies. Seven other States, beside Maine, and one British Province, have passed severe enactments for the prohibition of the traffic; while eight other states, and two other British Colonies have had Bills for the suppression of the evil before their respective Legislatures. The question is therefore assuming a grave importance, not less politically than morally. The Parliament of Canada passed the second reading of a Bill for the suppression of the traffic by a great majority, and all parties seemed to vie with each other in desiring the destruction of the evil. It was natural that a question of such vast proportions, likely to affect Society to its very centre; a question which would interfere with the daily avocations of at least 10,000 families in the Province, and which could be looked on only as an