

## Our Contributors.

### SOME PROBLEMS OF PERPETUAL MOTION.

BY KNOXIAN.

In his admirable work on "Men and Books," Phelps tells young men to preach, and "let other men solve the problems of perpetual motion, of which church history is full."

What are some of these problems of perpetual motion that abound in the Church? One is the

#### BEST WAY TO MAKE AND DELIVER SERMONS.

One preacher adopts and defends the extempore method. Another believes in and practises careful writing and free delivery. A third stands up bravely for reading sermons. Around these three methods a kind of homiletic war has raged for many years. One favourite way of carrying on this wordy warfare is to quote great names in favour of each method. Storrs preaches extemporaneously after having written carefully for a quarter of a century, and therefore every preacher should extemporize from the first. John Hall writes carefully, and delivers without thinking of the words written, and therefore that method is best. Dr. Chalmers produced marvellous effects by reading, and therefore every preacher should read.

One solution of this problem of perpetual motion would be for every preacher to try all the methods and adopt the one that suits him best. The way he can preach best is the best way for him. Another solution would be to master the three methods, and be able to preach in any one of them. The problem, however, must continue to be discussed. It is purely a clerical problem, and, like Tennyson's brook, must go on forever. Another perpetual motion problem is

#### THE BEST WAY TO FILL VACANCIES

in Presbyterian Churches. This is a most useful problem, and will stand any amount of handling. The thing aimed at is to bring suitable preachers into contact with suitable vacancies. This is the thing aimed at, but it is easier aimed at than hit. Perhaps the problem can never be solved. Churchless ministers and pastorless churches may be a necessary part of the Presbyterian system. So much the worse for the system.

#### THE PEW QUESTION

can never become one of the perpetual motion problems, though a few writers are trying hard to push it to the front. The pew question is mainly a layman's question, and the laymen will stop the motion and settle the question according to the circumstances of their own particular congregation. No rule at all is the best rule. Each congregation will adopt the method that suits it best, and that is the common-sense way to settle such matters.

Nothing need be said about the perpetual motion problem.

#### OF THEOLOGY.

Some of them can never be settled, and what on earth is the use in working at them? Professor Young used to say that he once heard a youthful preacher solve divine sovereignty and human freedom, and half a dozen equally difficult problems in a single sermon, but they didn't stay settled. No doubt the young man meant well, and it was not his fault if the world did not accept his solution.

#### THE UNION QUESTION

promises well to become a perpetual motion problem. It is popular at the present time and fascinating to a certain order of minds. It might not be impossible to show that many of the passages of Scripture frequently quoted in favour of union do not refer to organic union at all. It might not be difficult to show that the existence of different denominations is quite in keeping with the constitution and course of nature and that reasoning from analogy we may expect denominations to the end. It certainly would be easy to show that God's people are one now and that herding them together and calling them by one name would not be any advance on the unity they possess by being one in Christ.

With all due deference to the learning, piety and position of the divines who met in Toronto the other day to discuss a basis of union we venture to suggest that they might, perhaps, do a much to promote real union by using their influence in their own churches to put an end to proselytizing practices as by holding union conferences. So long as Methodist revival meetings are made a regular means of gathering in weak Presbyterians; so long as immersions are used for advertising purposes; so long as Baptist ministers make no secret of the fact that they consider it their duty to prey upon other congregations; so long as Episcopal ministers exult in their exclusiveness and deny the validity of ordination outside of the Episcopal Church, union conferences cannot make much progress except in the newspapers. Any union movement—even if desirable—to be successful, must begin with the mass of the people and work upwards. When or where did any great movement begin with leaders and work downwards? When the body of the people are ready and anxious for union, union will come, if ever, and not till then. The practices of some of the churches represented in that conference do not promote union sentiment to any great extent. Ask the devoted little band of poor Presbyterians—poor in money but often rich in faith—who are trying to keep alive a mission station alongside of an Episcopal congregation how much union sentiment there is in the country. Ask any weak Presbyterian congregation struggling for existence alongside of a powerful Methodist body if the practices of the stronger body tend to

promote union. More spirituality and less sheep-stealing will help on union—if organic union is ever to come—much more quickly than conferences, though conferences may be good things. A minister once explained the doctrine of human depravity to an old lady, and she blandly remarked that it was a grand doctrine "if we could live up to it." The deliverances of conferences are grand enough if the people would only live up to them.

We intended mentioning a number of other perpetual-motion problems but time is up. For a list of them see almost any programme carefully prepared for a Presbyterian or Synodical Conference, or for a Sabbath school convention.

### FRAGMENTARY NOTES.

Leaving Halifax, about an hour and a half brings you to Windsor, the best town in the Annapolis Valley. It is also an academic centre, being the seat of King's College, one of the oldest colleges in Canada. From this institution have graduated many scholarly men now holding prominent positions in the country, and where last summer one of our Presbyterian clergymen in Ontario secured the degree of D.C.L. I refer to the Rev. A. M. McClelland, of Ashburn.

The people of the Maritime Provinces sometimes complain that those in the Upper Provinces do not take more of the good things which they have to give, and it is refreshing to see that where the mercantile men fail, some of our clergymen can slip into the gap and prove their unselfishness by carrying off a "good degree."

Dr. McClelland has lately declined a call to a church in Nova Scotia, preferring to remain with his "own people," by whom he is much beloved.

Windsor is beautifully situated. Here there is a flourishing Presbyterian congregation, under the pastoral care of the Rev. T. A. Nelson, who is labouring faithfully for the good cause in that historic town. It is the birthplace of "Sam Slick" (Judge Haliburton), whose quaintly humorous writings are so widely known. The Rev. Mr. Nelson has recently been giving a series of discourses on the Tabernacle, illustrated with diagrams, which secured the undivided attention of his audience. The subject of the discourse to which I listened was on the "Laver," and was much appreciated by the large congregation present. Mr. Nelson's sermons give evidence of careful preparation, are solid and concise and at all times highly instructive. The Sabbath school is prosperous and the prayer meetings well attended.

A few hours' ride by rail and sail by boat across the Bay of Fundy brings you to St. John, N.B., which for some time past has been enjoying a financial boom, as during the past year shipping interests there have been very active; and it is estimated that some two millions of dollars have been added to the wealth of shipping stock. The churches have all shared to some extent in this prosperity, all being prosperous and contented, and to refer here to any single congregation would be invidious where all are doing so well.

#### THE JESUIT QUESTION,

as might be expected, was creating much interest, and the leading men in all the evangelical denominations have their attention turned to the subject. At the request of the Evangelical Alliance, the Rev. Mr. Fotheringham read an elaborate and exhaustive paper on the subject, at the conclusion of which he was warmly congratulated by the ministers present. Much satisfaction is expressed at the manner in which THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN has taken up the question, and the various contributions, editorials, communications, etc., are highly spoken of. Whatever the secular press or partisan politicians may say or do on the subject, one thing sure is that the Protestants of Ontario will give no uncertain sound. The speeches of Principals MacVicar and Caven, and the trenchant editorials in the *Mail* are subjects of universal praise.

From St. John we travel by the Grand Southern to St. Stephen, a good town on the boundary line. This railway has been in operation for some years, but has never been in such condition as will entitle it to the fine name it bears. We did not encounter any snow drifts (middle of April) or collisions, but occasionally the train would stop until the road bed was repaired, and one of the few passengers in the car would throw up the window to get a view of the monotonous district of country through which we were passing. One lady put her head and shoulders so far out of the window that one of the passengers shouted to her that the door was at the other end of the car. In St. Stephen we have a handsome church and Sunday school hall, the former lately enlarged and renovated, and the latter rebuilt. The pastor is the Rev. Godfrey Shore, who is doing good work, and under whose ministry the congregation continues to prosper. The cause of Temperance is earnestly prosecuted, a number of ladies and others being active in their endeavours.

Sixteen hours brings you by rail to Boston, the "Hub" of New England, whose population continues to increase, not only by persons flocking in from the rural districts, but by direct immigration from the older countries.

Just now Massachusetts is in the throes of one of the most important contests which has ever engaged the attention of the New England States. It is proposed to amend the Constitution by inserting the words, "That the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks to be used as a beverage is prohibited." This question is to be voted on on April 22, and at present writing the excitement runs very high. The war is being waged with tremendous fury, and the strife rages between friends and foes more like the battles of which we

read in ancient history, and if suspended at night, it is renewed next day with tenfold greater force. One strong feature of the campaign is that a number of clergymen, some of whom announce themselves as life-long temperance men, speak and write strongly against the Bill, and one lady—Miss Kate Field—has taken the platform against the measure, and gives her reasons for opposing prohibition, the principal grounds and arguments being that "prohibition does not prohibit," referring to the examples furnished by prohibition States, where all sorts of deceit and perjury have been resorted to.

As is generally the case in Canada, the churches have pronounced in favour of the amendment, which has been ably discussed in the pulpit and on the platform, and judging from the interest awakened in favour of the measure, its friends have good hopes of its success.

#### A TEMPERANCE SERMON.

"Prohibition does not prohibit" was the subject of the discourse preached by the Rev. J. A. Gordon, D.D., in the First Baptist Church last Sunday. The text was Exodus xix. 19, and following verses. Dr. Gordon is one of the most prominent clergymen in Boston, and any subject he discusses is sure to be handled in an interesting manner, and this was no exception. At first a stranger might have thought that the Rev. Dr. was against prohibition, but his position was soon made abundantly clear. In an eloquent exordium the preacher referred to the giving of the law, the solemn mandates of which were "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." Moses did not wait to ask whether the people were educated up to the law or not. He read the Ten Commandments, and referred to the manner in which they were received, and how Moses dashed the two tables of stone in pieces. The second point dwelt upon was the success of prohibition in separating the friends of God from the enemies of God. God never takes the side of any man. He stands on a high pedestal and men either take His side or go against Him. The people no longer go together; they divide, and take different sides. Although Christ was the Prince of Peace, He came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; with the sword of truth will Christ's people be separated from His enemies, and against whom are arrayed the principalities and powers of liquorism.

The third point taken was success or failure—prohibition still. The Decalogue stands to-day condemning sin, and although the whole universe arise as one man and ask for it, it will not be abrogated. The law has its soul in the bosom of God, and not in the belly of man. At the conclusion of a very able discourse the preacher made a powerful appeal to his congregation to cast their ballots on the side of uprightness and purity, and if they would not, he would take it that his ministry of nearly twenty years among them was a failure. The discourse made a deep impression on the large congregation, which was chiefly composed of adults, relatively few children being present.

K.

### CRIME AND ITS CONCOMITANTS.

MR. EDITOR.—The following statistics from our Provincial criminal calendar of last year are somewhat noteworthy and well deserve the careful consideration of your readers.

Whole number, 12,454; Intemperate, 8,722; cannot read, 2,378. Nationality: Irish, 2,514; English, 2,105; Scotch, 626. Roman Catholic, 4,499; English Church, 3,925; Methodist, 1,646; Presbyterian, 1,590. Whole expense, \$134,143. Increase over last year, \$8,055.

I only notice the three British nationalities, the four largest churches and especially the number of inebriates as being sufficient for my purpose. In connection therewith I quote thus from the report of the last meeting of Toronto Presbytery: "Rev. Messrs. Milligan and Macdonnell opposed the recommendation of the Committee of Temperance to the effect that ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church should adopt total abstinence principles, the opposition being based on the grounds that it would be an unwarrantable interference with individual liberty, and an enforcement of a principle which was foreign to the opinions of the Presbyterian Church, and contrary to the teachings of Scripture. The report was, however, adopted without alteration."

Although these two worthies, as constituted instructors and exemplars of others, in the previous part of the day, differed *in toto* in their ideas of liberty in the discussion on Confessions of Faith, introduced by the latter, yet in the evening when the liquor question came up, they showed themselves in this matter wholly at one. They both took ground which proved to be groundless, that total abstinence "would be an unwarrantable interference with individual liberty, an enforcement of a principle which was foreign to the opinions of the Presbyterian Church; and contrary to the teachings of Scripture." The Presbytery then showed their ground to be groundless by adopting the report *without alteration*. But above and beyond all this it seems passing strange that such an assumption should have been allowed in the Presbytery as that total abstinence "was foreign to the opinions of the Presbyterian Church" in view of the annual deliverances of the Assembly for years bygone, and especially in view of the existing law of the Church which is "That the Assembly again declares that the general traffic in intoxicating liquors is contrary to the Word of God and to the spirit of the Christian religion; that total prohibition would be the most effective form of Temperance legislation; that it is in the highest degree expedient