

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, APRIL 27, 1859.

We do not know a more interesting field of Missionary labour, according to its extent than that presented by Lower Canada. Some half a million of people, immersed in the deepest ignorance and superstition, but at the same time possessing many traits of natural character commending them to our best feelings for their simplicity and amiability, cannot but afford ample scope for the sympathies and efforts of the Christian philanthropist. Under such a light the mission at Grand Ligne assumes an interest and importance inferior to no other on this Western Continent, and especially deserves the most earnest patronage of our own denomination.

It is now twenty three years since Madame Feller and her zealous coadjutor M. Roussy, abandoned their native country, Switzerland, to devote their lives and energies to the spiritual welfare of the Habitans of Canada. We have frequently adverted in our pages to the severe and protracted struggle amid circumstances the most adverse and depressing, with which they have prosecuted their truly evangelical labours, until, with the manifest blessing of God, they have now arrived at a state of wide and permanent usefulness. The Register for March, their Quarterly Paper, contains a summary of the proceedings of the mission during the past year, and one which must be highly encouraging to themselves and every friend of the Society. In the Educational Institution at Grand Ligne, for the instruction of young men, as missionaries, and Colporteurs, or in other departments of Christian labour among the vast Roman-Catholic population that surrounds them, there have been twenty pupils during the year, while the primary School connected with the mission, affords elementary Education to 40 or 50 children of the inhabitants of the vicinity. The original missionaries and five other male and female assistants conduct the religious duties and instruction at this central position. The female Institution at Longueuil, conducted by a missionary, his wife, and three other Female Teachers, has enjoyed the average attendance of twenty-two pupils during the year, and promises to be an incalculable blessing to the female population of the country. At Montreal, Quebec, and four or five other principal stations, Missionaries are labouring with more or less encouragement. Upon the whole however the most decisive evidence of progress and success are apparent, and a more open field is almost every day being offered for the preaching of the Gospel. A number of instances of the most hopeful conversions have occurred at the various stations, and a very general desire for the preaching of the Word is widely manifest.

The devoted Brethren and Sisters who are so zealously sustaining the interests of this noble enterprise of Christian love, entreat the prayers and patronage of their fellow disciples to uphold them in their sacred labours. It would be difficult to name, a more worthy occasion for their exercise.

The Prohibitory Bill:

WHO ORIGINATED THE CLAUSES FOR SUBMITTING IT TO THE PEOPLE?

We have occasionally called the attention of our readers to this measure as it has been working its way, from the people up through the Temperance organizations of the Province, into the Legislature; and were hoping soon to find it securing for itself a place on the Provincial Statute Book. Perhaps however we were too sanguine. Great improvements and moral reforms are accomplished only by a succession of onward steps, often interrupted by severe repulses. It may possibly be better that it has met with a few checks in its progress. The rebuffs it has received have probably been necessary, like storms to the oak, to drive the roots deeper into the soil.

Whatever is said of the Prohibitory Bill for the purpose of disparagement, by the enemies of Prohibition, does not much surprise us; the time of trial, which will show who are its real friends, is when it is misrepresented and maligned. Those who unite in reviling it, calling it "a delusion and a snare," &c., because of some disappointment they may have experienced respecting it, present the cause in a very unfavourable aspect to the world. We think the Bill as good now as when it first drew breath. The objections which have been urged against it by its foes, and even by some of its professed friends, are various, but probably all arising from the same source, at one

time they dislike the ballot; then an objection is made against its being submitted to the people, and it is elegantly denounced as "all a humbug;" then again it is said that the time of a General Election is "most objectionable" to have it so submitted. As if the electors who choose Representatives to enact all their laws are not then in a fit state to think of Temperance—"a great moral question." Those who urge this objection cannot surely entertain a very exalted opinion of the people they represent. Let the Temperance men beware of those who raise this objection.

Efforts are made by certain parties to divide the ranks of Temperance men, by the same lines as politicians are divided—not perhaps professedly—but not the less really. The false statements made to accomplish this object must, expose their real designs to thinking men and rather excite pity and contempt than produce distrust in Prohibition itself or weaken their desire to see it enacted.

It has been boldly stated by those who knew otherwise, or ought to have known, that the Clauses for submitting the Bill to people "owe their paternity to the Attorney General" and for the purpose of creating prejudice against them, some of the anti-Temperance men, in and out of the Legislature, have also incorrectly called this part of the Bill "the Electioneering clauses" &c. Other statements of similar import have been made and repeated until it may be almost thought they are true. The utter want of truthfulness in these assertions has not been so fully brought out as it deserves to be.

The Journals of the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance, Annual session 1858, show that the Rev. Mr. McMurray, then at the head of the Order, says in his official Report:—

"All I can venture to recommend in the case is, that steps be taken at once to secure petitions to the Legislature, numerously signed, for the Prohibitory measure; and as the best mode of ascertaining whether the country is prepared for it, and at the same time, of agitating the question, that it be submitted to the suffrages of the people at the approaching general election."

The next reference we have to it is by a Committee of that body. On the State of the Order, Messrs. Nathan Tupper, Rev. R. Alder Temple and R. M. Barratt, they say:

"Your committee, deeply impressed with its importance, have given the subject of prohibition their grave and deliberate consideration. They regret that the measures adopted by this body at its last January session to procure a prohibitory liquor law proved abortive. The history of the agitation in the State of Maine sufficiently proves that, in order to succeed, the question of prohibition should be released entirely from the influence of party politics. The measure which your committee has prepared, after due deliberation, to recommend, is both simple and practicable."

Your committee would recommend the following resolutions to the adoption of the Grand Division, viz:

Whereas, it is expedient that the question of prohibition should be introduced into the Provincial Assembly in such a manner that it will not be liable to be sacrificed by the influence of party politics; therefore,

Resolved,—That a respectful petition be presented to the Provincial Legislature at its next session, praying that they will enact a prohibitory liquor law containing a provision for the submission of the question directly to the people for acceptance or rejection, at the next general election, and providing that, should a majority of the votes polled throughout the Province be in favor of the Law, its practicability shall be fairly and honestly tested; and that the vote on this question be taken by ballot.

The following excellent resolution too was moved by Rev. R. A. Temple and seconded by Wm. Lippincott, Esqr., and adopted.

Resolved,—That a respectful petition be presented to the Legislature at its next Session, praying that a law may pass closing all liquor shops during the election of representatives to the Legislative Assembly, in any county where such elections may be held,—and providing that a heavy penalty be exacted from all who shall be convicted of selling or giving intoxicating liquor to any person during such elections, or within two days previously thereto,—and further providing that any person known to be under the influence of liquor, shall be prohibited from voting at any such election.

We make these quotations for the purpose of removing the false impression some may have received respecting this Bill. We wish to keep it from becoming a party question. It is essentially so in its paternity, and in its late reception in the Legislature by 33 members from both sides. The parties whose names are given above are we believe, almost without exception, opposed to the Hon. Mr. Johnston and those who act with him. Whatever honor belongs to the originators therefore should not be given to him. That gentleman and

several of his friends are however fairly entitled to credit for advocating it in the House of Assembly.

The real friends of the cause from both political parties, have hitherto worked harmoniously in its behalf; and it will be too bad, if now by its enemies raising a false issue they are able to divide its friends and defeat them.

If the parties making the incorrect statements above alluded to were accustomed to acknowledge their errors when discovered, we might hope to see them essay an apology; but, on certain subjects they appear to prefer darkness to light, and error to truth; and although they may learn that what they have sent forth into the world is untruthful; yet to act the manly part and make the amende honorable would not suit their purpose, and therefore they will probably still try to leave their readers in the error to which they have led them. A further refutation of the slander against the Bill will probably soon appear from the session of the Grand Division of the Sons commencing this day at Wallace.

The Bill is supposed to have been put to sleep for a time by the Legislative Council; we think, however, its friends are but faithful to their professions, it will before long awake to claim a more respectful hearing in that Branch of the Legislature.

We have been disappointed that the electioneering cards of the candidates for Legislative honors have not noticed this subject. We have only observed a reference to it in those of Messrs. Elder and Creed two of the candidates for Hants. Intemperance with its ten thousand attendant vices is still the greatest curse in the land, and Temperance men on both sides should now use their utmost efforts to obtain pledges from those they send to Parliament, that they will support a Prohibitory Bill.

"THE TRUTH."—We have received a small sheet of four pages entitled "The Truth, published by Bible Christians," having for its motto, the remark of the Pagan Athenians to the Apostle Paul, "Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears."—Acts xvii. 20.

The object of this publication seems to be the setting forth of the opinions of a body of persons who have adopted the name "Bible Christians," and hold their meetings in a large room in the house of Mr. Jas. R. Lithgow, Argyle Street, Halifax.

The writer says he is "induced to publish and send forth this little paper," "believing that to a very great extent the ears of church-goers are turned away from the truth unto fables."

An effort is made to solve the difficulties connected with the immortality of the soul, by denying it; except as it is "dependant on character, and to be manifested only in an incorruptible body by a resurrection from the dead." Because the term "sleep" is used in the Bible figuratively to denote death, the writer endeavours to make it appear that what is believed by "a majority of the sects" on this subject is not according to truth.

The principal text quoted to sustain this view we think teaches quite the reverse from what this writer endeavours to shew. He says "the immortality taught in the Scriptures cannot be enjoyed without a resurrection of the body. This is plainly and forcibly taught by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 15.—'If the dead rise not, then they also who have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.'" To get the true meaning of this passage, it must be read with its context, and it will then be seen, we think, that the argument of the apostle is intended to prove quite the contrary from what these "Bible Christians" appear to suppose,—that as Christ is risen, therefore they who have fallen asleep in Christ are not perished,—a very different conclusion from that arrived at by this writer.

The effort to cast odium upon "the sects" by comparing what he terms "the popular doctrine"—the belief that man is essentially an immortal being—to the language of the Serpent when he said "ye shall not surely die," and designating it "the language of sectarianism" indicates no deficiency of assurance in these self-styled "Bible Christians' par excellence."

We rejoice in free enquiry, especially in respect to whatever is connected with the Bible; and think that Christians should "search the Scriptures" for the purpose of obtaining definite views of truth, especially of those doctrines on which they rest for happiness in this life, and on which they base their hopes of eternal life beyond the grave, but we also think that if we do so in a right spirit we shall not find it necessary to pronounce all the sects "anti-Christian" and their teaching "foolishness" because

we suppose some passages have a different meaning from that commonly received by other denominations.

The article on our first page on "The State of the Impenitent Dead," and others we propose taking from the same excellent work will we think aid our readers in discovering the truth as it is in Jesus on this subject.

The REVIVALS which are being experienced in many parts of the Province appear to be gathering strength. We have information from private sources of large additions being made in several different localities and have hoped to get more definite reports; but either because the brethren are so much engaged in connection with them, or else because they do not recognize sufficiently the duty to give their brethren the good news, they are remiss in sending intelligence. We would suggest that brief reports like those of Brethren Read and Murray if nothing further strikes them as necessary to be made public, would not occupy much time, and would cheer many of their brethren who are not similarly favoured.

NOMINATION DAY is appointed for Thursday the 5th of May consequently before our next issue can have reached many of our readers the Province will be passing through all the bustle and excitement of the General Election. As the new Representation Bill, found in our advertising columns, makes various alterations in the Constituencies many of them have new men as Candidates for their suffrages.

We have from week to week given a fair digest of the doings of Parliament whilst it was in session, principally from the authorized Reports. The general policy of the two parties is therefore before the country, and the people may by comparing one with another exercise their own judgment and give their votes accordingly. Some of the Speeches delivered in the last assembly are well worthy of a careful perusal and would do discredit to no legislative body in the world. They have been too voluminous however for our pages and would have compelled us to disappoint our readers by omitting our record of proceedings in Parliament.

We shall not make use of our position, like some of our neighbours calling themselves religious journalists—become mere political partisans—as we believe by doing so we should greatly injure the cause of Christ for which especially we are concerned.

There are local and other reasons in several parts of the province which induce some of our readers to vote on one side and some on the other. We proffer our entreaties to both, that they will not forget their Christian obligations while exercising their political rights and privileges.

AS TRUE IN NOVA SCOTIA AS IN YANKEEDOM.—One of the new Candidates for Legislative honors writes:—

"I have read in some American paper a recipe for learning what can be said against one, and thus gaining humility. It is this:—Offer as a Candidate for some town Council or House of Representatives."

Our English mails per Steamer bring London news to the 9th inst. The Derby Ministry have been defeated in the House of Commons upon Mr. D'Israeli's Bill for Reform of Parliament, upon a motion for an amendment introduced by Lord John Russell. The Ministry however have not resigned, but have advised Her Majesty to dissolve Parliament, and the United Kingdom is now, as well as ourselves, in the midst of a General Election. It is generally thought that the appeal to the Country will not save the ministry, but that they will soon have to resign their places to the Opposition and that Lord John Russell will be called on to construct a new administration.

Great uncertainty still hangs over the question of peace or war in Europe. A Congress of the leading nations have probably assembled ere this at some neutral City on the Rhine, but as neither Austria nor Sardinia will consent to be the first to disarm, great apprehensions are entertained that hostilities may yet be the result. Great efforts however will be made by the Powers not directly interested in the strife to bring matters to a pacific issue.

In England business appears in a healthy and prosperous state, while new and extensive outlets are being opened for her commerce and manufactures. The Feejee Islands, an extensive group of small islets in the Pacific Ocean, lying just within the Southern tropic, have applied to be made a dependency of Great Britain.