

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, JANUARY 9, 1867.

THE WEEK OF PRAYER.

Two or three weeks since we published the Circular of the British Evangelical Alliance, inviting christian churches to unite in Prayer during the present week. We doubt not our brethren have pretty generally accepted the invitation, and, where it is at all practicable, are proceeding with the meetings. The programme of the Halifax committee was also given in detail at the same time.

The meetings are being held in the city churches. The first was in Granville Street on Monday morning at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9. A goodly number was in attendance, notwithstanding the heavy fall of snow on Lord's Day. Mr. Charles Robson presided, and announced the subject: "Thanksgiving and Confession of Sin." After singing, prayer and reading of the Scriptures, an invitation was given to any of the brethren present to offer a word of exhortation, when Rev. Dr. Pryor came forward and stated that a letter had been placed in his hands, having reference to this meeting, and it no objection was offered he would read it to the meeting. The following is the letter:

Halifax, N. S., January, 1867.

TO THE REV. JOHN PRYOR, D. D.

Rev. and Dear Sir,—A few humble individuals who have been "sighing and crying" over the abominations of our city, solicit your influence on the first day of the "Week of Prayer" to call attention to a special cause for solemn and devout confession of sin, arising from the prevalence of the evils of Intemperance, so extensively pervading all classes and conditions of our community. Possibly but few of the clergy or members of our churches are aware of the extent to which dissipation and drunkenness exist, especially among our most promising young men. Young men on whom much care has been bestowed by their parents, in giving them the very best education their means could afford. Many of them have been instructed in our Sabbath Schools, and trained to fill responsible situations in society. But how sad, and yet how true, that there are few families in Halifax but have to bewail some of its members, lost to society, and in so many instances, in all our churches, parent's hearts have been pained and are broken in beholding all their prospects blighted by the cup of dissipation. We bewail this sin before God. But we go further, and take guilt to ourselves that we have permitted this enemy to ravage our city without control, and some of us have grievously given countenance to it. And hence we bow submissively to our Heavenly Father's will in the past.

Comparatively few persons are aware how many facilities for drinking, and how many places of temptation exist in our city, more to destruction the above class, as well as many of our industrious mechanics and others of our community. There are in this city places fitted up, and furnished with accommodation for every sort of dissipation. Intoxicating drinks of every quality and flavour, amusements and games of every description are provided, so that these young men may spend their leisure hours and evenings until late at night; or in other words, that they may "manufacture drunkards." Now in so far as we have connived at these things, we bewail our condition before God.

The question has often been and is still asked, What can be done? God expects his people to work, while it is day, and He calls upon His people to "Arise, awake, put on strength, O Zion," and "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." "Zion's Strength" and "Jerusalem's beautiful garments" are the zeal and sanctified energy of her members, united for the promotion of her King's glory and the everlasting salvation of her subjects; and hence we appeal to you this day as the united Church has met and will again meet in your Church, to ask that the sympathies of the men of God, and their prayers may concentrate in this channel, with especial view of saving our young men from this dire calamity; that the sanctuary may be filled with spiritual worshippers, and that the places where so many parent's hearts have been made sad, so many fondly cherished hopes have been blighted, may be forsaken and closed forever. Nor would we ask your prayers alone,—efforts should be made to arrest the evil. A few months ago many of our citizens were grieved at a flagrant desecration of the Lord's Day. Prayer was made,—but they did not stop here. United, concentrated efforts were made for the accomplishment of a great object, and by the blessing of God that object was accomplished.

Now a question may very pertinently be asked after this day's confession of sin is over, "Can no means be adopted to induce our City Council to save our young men, our friends and our children now growing up, from going to destruction?"

If the entire sale of intoxicating drinks cannot be stopped, may not the tippling shops, saloons and bar-rooms in Hotels,—so that the temptation to a certain extent may be removed out of the way. And that the sale of intoxicating drinks be confined to places where nothing else is sold, and separate and distinct from all groceries, and that licenses have in them the special restrictions that they shall not be used on the premises.

Other remedies have been tried; they have accomplished something. Total Abstinence

alone would cure the evil, but its universal adoption has been despaired of. Temperance Societies and the Sons of Temperance have all accomplished a certain work, in calling attention to the evil. They have not failed altogether. But the time has, in the good providence of God, arrived that we, in the name of the Lord, strike for higher ends, nobler aims and efforts consecrated to His glory who is the Great Author of all good and successful efforts.

May we ask that as the first day's meeting is held in your church, that you would be pleased to bring the question under consideration—And may God bless and prosper all our feeble efforts for the promotion of His glory.

We remain,
Rev. and Dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,

Remarks were made by several others, and the letter was again read by request at the evening meeting. A committee was appointed to take charge of the subject and to suggest means for an endeavour to effect the object desired.

There is no doubt this is one of our great sins, and the source of almost all the crime of the city. A visit to our prisons would be assured shew that there is not perhaps one in twenty of the inmates who has not been brought there, directly or indirectly, by the use of intoxicating drinks.

It is not merely the physical evils, in crime, poverty and wretchedness which intemperance entails, that we must bewail, but the fact which is plainly stated in holy writ, that "no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven" must rest on the hearts of christians before they will be willing to use the necessary effort to banish the evil, and dry up the source of the wickedness.

It may be said that the great evil lies still deeper—that the heart must be changed, and that men must be made christians before they will be permanently rescued from the paths of the great destroyer. This we fully believe, and would seek to impress it more upon those who would seek to reclaim the fallen; so that they may also seek for them the higher good at the time that they encourage sobriety. Total Abstinence is of the utmost importance, but it is not salvation—men can be saved from the degradation of sin only by a reception of the gospel. All the machinery of temperance is well suited to protect and preserve those who come under its influence, but if they advance no further the christian work is not commenced. Let there be no reserve in this point. The christian church is instituted for recovering men and bringing them to Christ.

The meetings were in Brunswick Street Wesleyan Church yesterday; in Poplar Grove Presbyterian Church to-day; in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Thursday; in the North Baptist Church on Friday; and in the Grafton Street Wesleyan Church on Saturday.

Christian Labor.

The circumstance of various organizations existing having Temperance, and Benevolent objects in view, or perhaps for Literary and Scientific purposes which have no positive connection with the church, but which embrace large numbers of young men—members of churches and others, is worthy of the serious consideration of enlightened christians. Formerly church relationship secured the social influence of its members far more we believe than it does at present. It is supposed by many that it is an advantage to the church that her members should unite with these organizations wherever they have a good moral tendency. There is, however, we think, often a possibility that the effort given to them is at the expense of the church, and that whilst good is done by christians exerting some influence over such associates yet it is not, after all, that influence which will bring them directly under the power of religious truth, and promote the salvation of their souls. It may be good to give silver or copper to those in want, but when one has gold for the purpose of imparting to persons in need of it, he is surely failing in his duty if he contents himself with doling out his inferior coin. It may be that some think they are serving the cause of Christ more effectually by joining their efforts with those who have not made a public profession of faith in Christ, but who are deemed moral and upright. This may be the case, but it depends much on whether there is a watch kept for opportunities and such opportunities are embraced of commanding Christ as a Saviour, and at the same time of avoiding any withdrawal from the interests of Zion.

Christian Union is good, but if it is effected at the expense of the church, it may be a doubtful good, and its benefits may be but questionable. The persons who most serve the cause of Christ by uniting with members of other Christian bodies are those who are most useful in their own. Members who are content to live just on the verge of any church are of but little benefit to any combination of christian people. It is well for brethren to

consider whether they should lower their standard of devotedness for the purpose of forming other combinations, or whether they might not in connection with the church, effect the good that is sought to be done in the world; outside the portals of Zion, and at the same time be the means of bringing many within her sacred precincts, and conveying to them the highest good. There is we believe a wide field for mental, moral and spiritual improvement in the church at which is at present but very imperfectly occupied.

We would earnestly invite the attention of our brethren to this subject, and shall be glad to hear from them in reference to it.

Mr. Spurgeon's Work.

The adaptation of the congregational principle—on which Baptist churches are instituted—to effect the great objects of the gospel, is well illustrated by the Church in London, of which the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon is pastor. Whilst other modes of church government would probably have interposed barriers of formality which would have repressed such ardour, there is elasticity in this mode by which the church and its pastor can engage in enterprises of benevolence to any extent, and thus give scope to generous christian philanthropy. It can hardly be believed that so many institutions have been, and are being, brought into existence in connection with one congregation. The existence of this church is a wondrous phenomenon in the religious world as well as in the Baptist denomination; but its affiliated institutions help to explain, as well as to account for the vast influence it is exerting on this world around.

At a late meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Mr. Spurgeon stated that:—

"Since the establishment of the college, 106 brethren had settled in different pastorates. Five of them had fallen asleep, ten others had settled as pastors and were still in the college, and five were evangelists, who would possibly continue to perambulate the country, preaching the Word of Life. During the present year, a large number of students had settled in various spheres of usefulness, and Mr. Spurgeon read a list of them, commenting on the peculiarities of each case. A gentleman had sent him £70 to pay for the passage out of a young man who should preach in South Africa, and Mr. Stokes had been sent to Port Elizabeth for that purpose. He had been asked to send some one over to Natal, and when he mentioned the matter to his students, he was pleased to find that five of them expressed their willingness to go out, if no one better should be selected. That project was in abeyance at present. The young men of the college were mostly labouring in districts where a new cause was wanted; and it was now worthy that he was frequently entrusted with sums of money to be spent in erecting new chapels for their students. During the time the college had existed, he did not recollect any case in which he had not had money in hand when it was wanted; of course there had been delays, but no difficulties. He had frequently lain awake at night thinking of the many schemes he had in hand for the glory of God, but he always felt grateful that not one of them was flagging in interest. He found from papers supplied to him last March that during the previous twelvemonths, the settled students of the college had baptized 1,235 persons, and that there had been a clear increase of 1,461 members in their churches. He was glad to say that the work on the rock of St. Helena was going on prosperously. Mr. Colher had admitted fifty-eight persons into the church there; and various preaching stations had been formed, and the labours of the preachers had been much blessed of God."

In the course of the said meeting:—

"Mr. Rossiter, a blind student, stepped forward and presented Mr. Selway, the tutor in the sciences, &c., with a noble timepiece, which had been subscribed for among the students. After Mr. Selway had returned thanks, Mr. Spurgeon stated that a young lady, evidently of not more than ten or eleven years of age, had subscribed £20 towards the college solely by keeping a box, and asking each person who visited her parent's house to give a penny towards the fund. The young lady having presented Mr. Spurgeon with the money.

Mr. Spurgeon then made an announcement with reference to the orphanage buildings. He said he had purchased two and-a-half acres of land near Clapham Common, on which to erect the orphanage. The plan proposed was that they should first build in a central part of the ground the schools, chapel, and such other buildings as were absolutely necessary, and then to build smaller houses, where the boys might live together in not more than ten or twenty in each house, which he thought was about the usual limit of most families, and not keep them huddled together as in the workhouses. By adopting this arrangement they could proceed to build smaller houses as the money flowed in. A lady had given them £20,000, out of which £12,000 could not be spent, but the interest upon that sum would amount to £600 a-year. If possible, they would maintain fifty orphans, which would probably soon swell to 100, and then they would raise the number to 200, perhaps 300. They did not intend to give people the trouble to go about begging for votes, but the admission of the children would rest with the manager. He believed that the members of the

congregation would make the clothes for the boys to wear, and he hoped that they would find tailors and cloth dealers who would supply the stuff. The working men might help by giving a portion of their time to the work of erecting the buildings, and thus all would have an opportunity to help forward the good work to which they had set their hands. The almshouses and day-schools which were to be built close by the Tabernacle would be sufficiently advanced to enable their venerable friend Mr. Thomas Olney to lay the stone within a few weeks."

The following is another feature of the operations having their centre at Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle:—

There is a large class of young men which meets every Sunday afternoon for prayer, exhortation, Bible study, &c. The class is presided over by Mr. H. Hanks, one of the elders of the church, and is attended by over 200 young men most of whom are engaged in open air preaching, house visitation, and other evangelistic work. On a recent Sunday, an address was given by Mr. Edward Leach, on the signs of the times, with reference to the work of young men in the Christian Church. It was pointed out that the tendencies of ritualism were in favour of the establishment of a priesthood, a religious monopoly which meant the disuse of all lay agency that was not under the direct sanction of a priestly tyranny. It was argued that the time had arrived when the young men of our churches should ask themselves how they can best resist the encroachments of sacerdotalism, and that could only be done by clinging to the old doctrine of each Christian man being a member of a 'holy priesthood.' By the side of the ritualistic movement was placed the wide-spread feeling in favour of bringing the working and poorer classes into our churches, and it was observed that the best way of effecting this object was by sending out young men of ability into the courts and alleys and poorer districts of London to preach the Gospel in a simple way to the hitherto unreachables masses. Instances were given of successful work in this direction; and certain helps in the carrying on of this work were noticed. The importance of studying the life and character of Christ; the desirability of cultivating self knowledge; of avoiding all fictitious enthusiasm and feverish agitation; the command of temper so necessary in dealing with ignorant 'roughs'; the cultivation of a generous disposition and gentlemanly bearing, were pointed out and enforced, and the address concluded by urging upon young men the necessity for renewed self consecration upon the altar of Christian work."

We perceive that these outside operations are not allowed to interfere with Mr. Spurgeon's direct ministerial and pastoral labors. The following is the record of his baptisms for about four weeks:—

October 25, eight; Oct. 29, six; November 1, fifteen; Nov. 12, thirteen; Nov. 15, fourteen; Nov. 19, twenty-one. Total, 77.

THE CONVENTION PHOTOGRAPHS.—We have obtained three or four copies of the photograph of the group of ministers who were at the Baptist Convention at St. John N. B., in August last. It comprises sixty-five figures on one card about 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches very distinctly taken, with the President Hon. Judge Johnston at the head. Each person is very clearly and faithfully represented. The artist has succeeded well in arranging them so that the picture of each person stands by itself, and altogether they combine to form a gem of photographic art, as well as a finely executed group of likenesses, of brethren held in high esteem by the Baptist churches of the three provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. We could have wished that there had been several other brethren in the picture, but they were not present at the Convention and that the picture had been of a larger size so as to form an embellishment for our walls to be seen at a distance; but we suppose the artist wished to bring it at a low price—only fifty cents—so that it might be within reach of a larger number of persons. We believe that a large number of copies will be required in each of the provinces.

REV. JONATHAN BASTOW.—We have received a copy of the Winona (Minnesota) Daily Republican of Dec. 20th, giving an account of the ordination of the above-named minister. Mr. B. spent a few weeks in this Province a year or so since, having been wrecked on the Barrington Shore. His ministrations were very acceptable in Guy-boro County, and on one or two occasions in Halifax. His early history is one of considerable interest. Left an orphan at 6 years of age, he worked in the coal mines of Bradford, England. At 15 years he was converted, and shortly commenced to speak in public. In his struggles to secure an education he went to work as a servant at Horton Baptist College at Bradford. Meeting with the late Dr. Maclay he was induced to come to the United States to take a course of education at Madison University. After eight years of study he has now been ordained over a Baptist Church in that far-west country. We shall be glad to hear of our brother being made useful in bringing men to Christ and into his church.