

Religious Intelligencer.

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."—Peter.

VOL. XXXIII.—No. 8.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1886.

WHOLE No. 1671.

NOW IS THE TIME.

The friends of the INTELLIGENCER have been doing well for it. They have our hearty thanks.

There remains, however, much more to be done. Some hundreds of present subscribers have not yet renewed for this year. We are anxious to hear at once from all of them. It would be a great pleasure and a needed help to us to have all present subscribers renewed for 1886 before the end of this month. Why not? If possible, let the next mail from your post office bear your subscription. TRY!

Our friends are saying very kind things about the INTELLIGENCER. Their good words cheer us. We trust they will not cease their efforts to extend its circulation. If each one will do a little the number of subscribers can be greatly increased. With a systematic effort in every church in the two Conferences it ought to be possible to double the number of subscribers in a month. Keep at it, friends.

Our Contributors.

EVIL SPEAKING.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren.—James iv. 11.

It has been discovered as possible for even professors of Christianity, those whose honest, earnest desire is to live godly and blameless lives, to permit themselves to practice that, which looked at in the light of God's Word, is a violation of its precepts, dishonoring to its author and injurious to themselves. It is also strangely possible for them to justify themselves in its constant practice, and claim to be living without condemnation. Perhaps no sin is more frequently committed, and less frequently recognized as sinful, than that of speaking evil of others. There are scores of Christians who are thoroughly honest, who would not take advantage of another in a trade to the value of a cent, whose word and promise may be relied upon, who are punctilious in their observance of the Sabbath and the discharge of religious duties, and yet make a habit of retailing gossip and even talking scandal. Sometimes this is dignified with a religious semblance—is made the topic of conversation for Sunday, as though discussing religious people is the proper kind of Sunday talk. The minister, the deacons, the active leaders in the church are all put under the microscope; their sermons, their prayers, their exhortations, their mannerisms, their doctrines are freely discussed, and their defects, real or imaginary, are all pointed out; or the misdoings of some other church or rival congregation, the defection of its members, its internal dissensions, or its heterodox sentiments are freely canvassed; and this is called religious conversation. How much less opposed to the sanctity of God's holy day, how much less irreligious it would be to discuss the markets, the crops, the weather or even politics or pleasure, than thus to offend against that charity which is the very essence of true Christianity. Paul (1 Cor. xv.) teaches that we may be able to read the Bible in its original tongues, and preach it in all the dialects of earth, may possess the most profound wisdom and have a knowledge not only of things earthly but of the more sublime truth of the gospel, and preach it with angelic eloquence, mountains be removed in answer to our prayer of faith, our earthly possessions be freely distributed to the poor, and in the excess of our zeal we may give our bodies to the flames, and yet with all these, without charity they would profit us nothing. And of charity he says, it "thinketh no evil," it "beareth all things," or covereth all things; it does not take pleasure in hearing or talking of the imaginary or real faults of others, it "rejoiceth not in iniquity." Again the same inspired apostle writes, "Let all bitterness and evil speaking be put away from you, with all

malice." It is not presumed that an honest Christian would invent a slander; only a malignant, unregenerated heart would be guilty of this; but, as Isaac Barrows has said, "There is not much difference between the big devil who makes it, and the little imp who circulate it." If we are found, however innocently as to evil intention, giving wings to a falsehood by reporting it, are we not bearing false witness against our neighbor? and more, are not we, by giving it the respectability of our endorsement, inducing others to accept the report as true, who, knowing its origin, would not but for us give it credence? Says one, "I do not bear false witness, I only tell what I have heard." Exactly, but how do you know it is not false? have you investigated the matter? do you know of its absolute truth? It may be wholly false, or distorted by exaggeration; if so, you are bearing false witness. How important to be sure before telling what you may hear; once out of your mouth it is beyond your control. He to whom you tell it will tell it to others. Even should you find you were mistaken, you cannot correct the mistaken impressions you have given to others. And even if it is true must it necessarily be told? Must the misfortunes, the weaknesses, or the faults of your neighbors be made the subjects of public comment? Is this "loving your neighbor as yourself" or doing to him as you would have him do to you? Solomon says, "A tale bearer revealeth secrets, but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter." You ask, are there no circumstances when that which is true may be told? I answer yes, if by telling, more good will be done than by concealing, tell by all means; but before repeating an evil report you should ask, does charity prompt me? Am I seeking the good of others? If it is not a painful duty, is it not a pleasurable sin? Unfortunately there are people whom we meet who evidently take pleasure in spreading evil reports, and whom you scarcely ever meet without their (either by direct charge or insinuation) saying something disparaging to the reputation or standing of some who have hitherto borne an unblemished name. It may be true, but is far more likely to be false; but whether true or false, they seem to take a diabolical pleasure in telling it. Such persons usually manifest a hypocritical sorrow, and preface their scandal with, "I'm dreadfully shocked to hear it," or "I'm very much grieved to have to tell you," &c., though all the while deep in their hearts there is a "rejoicing in iniquity;" there is a positive satisfaction, an ill-concealed exultation at the inconsistencies and disgrace of an enemy, a rival, or any one who has stood high in the estimation of others. Such persons should always remember that, whether the person maligned is guilty or not, the speaker condemns himself as lacking that charity "that thinketh no evil," without which he is "nothing." But why do they do this? It may be from a wanton exercise of power. They love to be the cause of wonder and excitement in others. They pretend to prevent mischief by enjoining their auditors not to repeat it to any one—"this is told you in strict confidence," &c.—but only that they may have the monopoly of telling it themselves. Sometimes envy is at the bottom of it. The rich, the wise, the influential, the good, the useful, are rendered less superior to themselves when some evil is said of them. So by slander they are brought down nearer to a common level. It may spring from excessive egotism or spiritual pride. There is a secret self-laudation in finding fault with another, as much as to say, "Look at me, see how good I am. I am not as other men are." Some seem to think there is a fixed amount of merit and praise in the world, and so the more they deprive others of the more they reserve for themselves. It is one of the sad things in life to see parents making their homes the repositories of gossip and nastiness, by their undisguised love for the new, the strange and sensational. It is not to be wondered at that children educated in such homes become false and unreliable. Early in life they discover what will best please their parents. Being often commended for their promptness in reporting in the home circle what they have heard in the street or elsewhere, they take delight in becoming

ing industrious scavengers of both public and private gossip, assured that their unctuous budget will gratefully tickle the itching ears of the old folks at home. Is it any wonder that when the children discover that the more startling and exciting the news they bring, the more joyfully and gratefully it is received, that they yield to the temptation to exaggerate and lie in order that their otherwise commonplace stories may possess the requisite amount of sensational spice? I fear that such parents are offering a premium for dishonesty, are undermining the foundations of their children's integrity, and are planting thorns in their own pillows that will pierce them through with many sorrows. Utterly opposed to this love of scandal is the charity "that thinketh no evil." It delights in goodness, looks for it, is prompt to recognize any sign of it, and heartily commends it to others.

As greedy vultures pouncing down upon a prized carcass; as filthy flies buzzing around a reeking dirt heap, are the gossippers who with evident relish utter detraction or listen to it. As the lark which soars and sings only in the light, as bees which are only attracted by the flowers that exhale sweetness, so are the possessors of that charity which "thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." J. T. PARSONS.

THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

It has more than once been said that the chief English and American exports to heathen lands are rum, missionaries and gunpowder. In these far off countries extremes meet, and the man of God with the Water of Life finds the man of trade with his bottles of brandy; the peaceful school and Mission house are alarmed by kidnappers and the report of fire-arms sold the natives through greed of gain. We have hitherto heard very little of Germany in discussions about new territories and the battle of merchandise against the missionary in the dark places of the earth. But the Fatherland has now become united; it has its first Protestant emperor; it has seized colonies and entered the race of civilization and Christianity, which is fast circling the world. Since April, 1884, Angora Pequena, and four other territories in West Africa have come under German control; part of New Guinea and some small islands have also become colonies, and Germans are busy discussing questions of migration, self-government and treaties.

A recent article in the *Missions-Zeitschrift*, on "The Transmarine Brandy Trade," sheds not a little light upon why the empire seized some of these lands, and what the business has been which attracted German merchants so far from home.

Zogoland lies beside an English colony, and the English put a high duty on imported liquors. The Germans do most of the business in ardent spirits, so when they saw Zogoland preparing to unite with the British possessions, and pass under an expensive liquor tariff, they became wildly patriotic, and the colony was seized by Germany to protect the brandy trade. A constant stream of cheap intoxicants flows from Hamburg to all parts of the heathen world. The following figures illustrate this. The annual German exports to Africa, in a recent year reached \$7,929,500, of which \$3,000,000, or over thirty-eight per cent. was in ardent spirits. Most of it went to the gold coast. Hamburg sent 531,501 double centners of goods to West Africa in 1884, and 345,000 or sixty-five per cent. of it was brandy, representing \$3,729,475. This dreadful traffic is steadily on the increase. During 1883, and the first quarter of 1884, a steamship firm in that city sent 2,453 tons of spirits to the Congo region, with 555 tons of other goods; or \$75,000 worth of brandy, \$75,000 worth of powder, and \$62,500 worth of other goods. England and America have fallen behind in this sad competition of missionaries, rum and powder. Following our guide through the wide world of heathenism, we are met everywhere by the same sad sequence—strong drink going before, and despair and death following.

Says Dr. Reichel, of the Moravian Missions, "A cry of horror rises from all Mission fields at the ruin wrought by intoxicating liquor." Drunkenness

reached the heathen Lapps in Europe, and nearly destroyed them before the Gospel came near them. American traders and the Hudson Bay Company have done similar work among the natives of this continent. Of the negroes in the West Indies a missionary writes, "Drunkenness is the rule; no land has been so desolated by alcohol as these islands." In Demarara the white merchants have boycotted the missionary, Meyer, to force him to give the natives brandy for wages as they do.

Two German merchants, in 1883, imported \$10,000 worth of liquors among the 30,000 Samoan Islanders. That is the business which led Bismarck to seize these coral reefs. The missionaries report that drunkenness is on the increase, and brandy is one of the chief imports in all West Polynesia. In Japan intoxication is so terribly familiar that a sign has been put up over a Buddhist theological seminary, which reads, "Brandy is not allowed here." Burma was once wholly ignorant of strong drinks; now they are the bane of the people.

But the Eldorado of ardent spirits is Africa, the Dark Continent for the darkest curse of humanity. The weak native here seems unable to resist this terrible destroyer, and the unanimous testimony of missionaries is that the natural cruelty and bloodthirstiness of the Africans are kindled into the madness of demons by fire-water, and beneath the wounds of European traders this poor land lies bleeding at every pore. The subject tribes of Madagascar "fairly swim in a flood of brandy." Some are never sober; men, women and children lie drunk together. Not a little of the guilt here must be charged to France.

Mohammedan influence hinders the sale of liquor on the east coast of Africa; but in spite of that the German traders import \$20,000 worth of brandy a year. In South Africa the spectacle is heart-rending. Rottenets, Caffirs, and others, perish beneath this curse by thousands. On one Sunday, between eleven o'clock and noon, an English gentleman counted at the diamond fields, 317 natives dead drunk, while many others were partially intoxicated.

West Africa is, if possible, in a still more deplorable condition. Every small harbor on the coast sucks in the deadly tide of sulphuric acid, sugar and water, which these heartless traders present as brandy, gin, etc. The first German colony here was bought from a dealer in such drink. The Congo lands also, we are told, were bought with liquor. A bottle of rum is current coin. The request for a drink in West Africa is heard everywhere, as one hears "Backsheesh" in Arab lands. One ship brought to the Niger 300,000 bottles of gin. Brandy has almost taken the place of the native beer on the Gold Coast, and drunkenness has become so common that it is a rule not to visit an official after dinner. No street preaching is allowed in the evening, for no man dare face the intoxicated multitude. From the cradle to the grave, every event in the West African's life is saturated with strong drink. Funerals are horrible to see, sometimes \$500 being spent for rum and powder at such occasions. A missionary says at times a whole village is drunk. Many sleep with a bottle under their heads, for use during the night. One native dealer is reported as keeping 96,000 bottles of brandy in stock for the interior trade.

So the dreadful tale of ruin, physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual, goes on. Mission work is made almost impossible, for every finest instinct is blunted, and the moral character so demoralized that appeals to self-respect, conscience, love of home or virtue fall like seed upon the unbroken rock. The greatest obstacle to-day to Foreign Missions is strong drink; and strong drink is manufactured, bottled, shipped and sold to the blacks of Africa—poor overgrown children—by so-called Christian men.

Is it not time that the thought and prayers of all friends of Missions were turned toward this dreadful lion in the way?—*The Advance*.

PROPHETS OF FAILURE.

There are some church members whose faith never anticipates success in special religious effort. As the month of January closed in their church with few conversions and little evidence of religious awakening they manifest small regret, but on the contrary rather flatter themselves on their own prescience. They did not think the meetings would do much good and, therefore, they are not disappointed.

Why is it that they had so little faith? Simply because they did not want to have faith. Their plans and purposes were such that a succession of evening meetings conflicted with them, and they were not disposed to the self-denial which their surrender would have compelled. Consequently, they tried to appease their consciences by doubts and unbelief and so were able to be absent with very little compunction, and even this they relieved by

some commiserating words on the pastor's devotedness and disappointment.

The lack of faith is very easily communicated. In fact, all defects and infirmities in Christians are more contagious than graces. So, as one brother or sister took little interest in the meetings others partook of that spirit, and excuses for non-attendance were easily found, and if, perchance, sometimes they were there, they had no real heart in the exercises, and were most pleased when the clock hands told that the time had come for dismissal.

And now the church is worse off than before. The pastor is discouraged, the brethren who have abided faithful feel as if God had forgotten to be gracious, and some who gave token of thoughtfulness are apparently further from the kingdom than they were. The whole blame of this state of things is on the members who said the church was "not prepared for a revival" and who themselves were stubbornly set against such a renewal of their own spiritual life as would have overcome their worldliness, and made their lives more consistent with a Christian profession. If there is a man who ought to be humbled because the church belongs to him, has no evidence of spiritual prosperity, it is that one whose love of the world and his own comfort made him prophesy there would be little good accomplished and, after his guilty help to fulfil that prophecy, seems to rejoice that his words have proved true.—*Baptist Weekly*.

INTEMPERANCE IN SWITZERLAND.

It has been the common practice of those who oppose the doctrines of prohibitionists on this side of the Atlantic to refer us to continental countries as affording proof of the more temperate habits of communities in which the utmost freedom in the use of beverages is allowed. Men of less or greater note in literature have discovered that freedom to indulge the appetite induces virtue and abstemiousness, and that restraint is inimical to both because of the perverseness of our human nature. According to their views, the prohibitory sections of the decalogue were an exceedingly unwise provision for the moral and social development of our race, and it would have been far better had the world been left to its own experience of evil for a knowledge of its unhappy consequences. Especially is it in the interests of society that there be as few obstacles and as abundant facilities to and for indulgence as possible. It is true they do not adopt such a process of reasoning about larceny, assault, homicide and kindred crimes, but much of what they do say upon the liquor question might, by fair inference, be adopted by those whose immoral tendencies are in that direction.

If any country in Europe has had a fair chance to realize the superior advantages of the anti-prohibitory theory it is Switzerland, in which for some years the traffic in intoxicants has been as free as that in bread and meat, but under this system the prevalence of intemperance has become so great that the Government has been at last aroused to the necessity of adopting some method for its suppression. Up to 1874 the power of regulating the traffic was vested in the cantons, and by wise restriction in the number and locality of saloons, hours of sale, etc., the trade was held well in check. In that year, however, the Federal Council deprived the cantons of restrictive power, and with the results which we have indicated. Whether they had a "Liberal Temperance Union" shedding its effulgence upon them in 1874, and were thereby persuaded of the folly of restriction or local option we do not know, but it is certain a few years of experience has convinced them of the folly of giving loose rein to the liquor traffic, and of the absolute necessity for repressive measures.

Some idea of the rapid and alarming increase in the trade appears from the fact that the 17,807 saloons of 1870 swelled to 21,738 in 1880, an increase of 22 per cent., while that of the population was 6 per cent., and now there is a public-house for every seventy persons. In the same period the consumption of beer has more than quadrupled, while that of potato brandy has increased from seven and a-half million litres to twenty-seven millions.

The first step taken by the Government has been the proposal of a duty on imported brandies so high as to be practically prohibitive, leaving native liquors free of excise and duty. This proposition was submitted to the people, and though opposed by the "importers and distillers of brandy who appealed to the people to resist the

discrimination against the potato, but carefully concealed the fact that it was only the perversion of its use which was aimed at." The proposition of the government was sustained, however, by a vote of 215,000 in fifteen cantons, against 135,000 in seven cantons. It is said that "by this measure of reform it is hoped the temperance habits of the people may be restored, but that their decadence in morals and business is so great that it will necessarily be slow.

Among Our Exchanges.

PRACTICAL.

Practical Christianity does not consist in going to church, nor in any outward observance of religious duty. The Christian is he in whose heart God lives with his sanctifying grace, and who is humbly trying to live as in the eye of him who is at once his "great Task-maker" and his loving Father.—*Independent*.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

A distinguished Sunday-school worker has said lately that the Sabbath-school of the future is to be a part of the church just as much as the hand is a part of the body. Certainly it ought to be, for, as a matter of fact, the Sunday-school is merely one branch of church work—one of the most important, too.—*The Congregationalist*.

A HIGH PRIVILEGE.

The privilege of preaching Christ and telling his love and power to save men is one which the angels might well covet. There is nothing necessary to make the work of the ministry a glorious and delightful one to any man only to have a true consciousness of what it means to bring men to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.—*Telescope*.

IT NEVER FAILS.

There is a kind of preaching that never fails to make an impression. This incident in the life of an eminent missionary illustrates it. As he was passing out of church one day, a little girl stepped up and asked, "Have you ever seen the Lord Jesus?" The child seemed disappointed when he answered that he had not, and said, "You spoke about Him just as if you knew Him well."—*Central Advocate*.

EMOTION IN RELIGION.

An unemotional religion is an absurdity. Love is a susceptibility, and emotion, a passion. Its outgoing cannot but be emotional. Its stronger exercises are even passionate. How then can love have anything to do with a religion which repudiates emotion? And what is the matter with our religion that it does not draw devout people to it, that it does not develop more charity among its adherents? What but want of a true, deep, warm, emotional life—heart!—*The Living Church*.

DON'T SHIRK.

Work as a Christian while you work as a blacksmith, or a shoemaker, or a merchant, doctor, or financier. Work anywhere, in any respectable calling, rather than stand still as a nobody and do nothing; and, remember that, in working, if you expect success, you must in all your work seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, believing that all other things shall be added unto you. In all your labors, remember that the hardest work in this world will end in a complete failure if you neglect to work out your own salvation. Don't fail of that. Don't shirk, and "retire" from work while you have health and strength to work. No matter how old you are. Let come what will, stand up erect, like a man, doing your own work manfully and hopefully.—*Independent*.

A NUISANCE.

Why, in the name of common sense, should any decent man, who is willing to give time, labour and skill to the public service, be expected to ask men, or women either, for their votes? Is it not for their own interest to vote? Is it not their duty to use the franchise? If the franchise is a trust, are they not responsible for discharging the duties that arise out of that trust? No honest man can gain anything by going into municipal or political life. As a rule, he loses in more ways than one by so doing. His business is sure to suffer, his time is much taken up, his evenings are taken from his family and devoted to the public, and quite frequently his reputation is somewhat roughly handled. Now, is it not the very climax of absurdity to expect a man to ask his neighbours to be allowed to make these sacrifices and to serve them at the same time? This whole canvassing business is degrading to the man who asks support, and demoralizing to the voter asked, for it is coaxing him to discharge a duty which he ought to discharge without being coaxed. Too often the coaxing takes the form of an offer, direct or indirect, of some advantage to be given for the vote, and then the effect is still worse for both parties. Canvassing in all its forms is a nuisance, a blot on civilization, and none know this so well as those who are forced to canvass because they cannot attain to any public position without canvassing. If canvassing cannot be abolished without compulsory voting, then we say give us compulsory voting at once.—*Can. Presbyterian*.