

TEMPERANCE 1898.

A Sermon Preached by the Rev. James Simpson, M. A.

Some Practical Suggestions to Think About.

The clergy are sometimes reproved by the local press, and at temperance meetings, for not speaking sufficiently often upon the subject of temperance. But I doubt whether frequent temperance sermons would have the beneficial effect their advocates anticipate.

UNSATISFACTORY CONDITION

of Charlottetown with regard to temperance matters calls for special attention and action on our part, both as Christians and citizens. It is undoubtedly our duty to repress intemperance in our city, just as it is our duty to repress other crimes or avert other calamities.

EVANESCENT CHARACTER

of the temperance work done in this city. Before a Civic or a Scott Act election various meetings are held, enthusiasm is aroused—a Citizens League or a Temperance Alliance, or a Temperance Committee, is formed, everything is to be changed, and each time we are assured that permanent work is to be done.

There is, as I said, great occasion, at present, for us to rouse ourselves to deal with the drink question as it affects our city. Last July, as you know, the Canada Temperance Act was defeated. Whether, as some allege, the temperance cause was betrayed for political purposes, or whether many of the temperance people, after long trial concluded that the act was ineffective or whether in spite of strict temperance legislation for many years, intemperance has increased so much among us that the liquor interest now controls the polls, since a majority of nearly 400 for the act in 1879 has been turned into a majority of 113 against it in 1897, or whether a combination of these circumstances helped to defeat the act, it is not necessary to consider here—the fact we have to face is this: the Canada Temperance Act is repealed; it cannot possibly be brought in again under three years,—are we then for the meantime to be satisfied with the Liquor Regulation Act as it stands at present, or shall we endeavor to amend it, that it may be made more effective? Shall those who favor the Scott Act openly gloat over the increase of drunkenness and crime, if there be any, and say "we told you so," "we are glad of it" and refuse to raise a hand to mend matters, hoping that if things go from bad to worse everyone will gladly vote for the restoration of the Act at the appointed time. Shall those who prefer the Liquor Regulation Act shut their eyes to its weak points, and insist that all is well—that there is no more drunkenness,

or if there is more drunkenness there is less perjury than heretofore? Shall we all rest on our oars in expectation that the promised prohibition plebiscite will shortly be followed by stringent prohibition legislation. In a word, are we to be like children who refuse to play with others unless they can have their own way in ever thing; or are we to be like men willing to lay aside our differences, and if we cannot obtain what we believe to be the best law, realize that it is our duty to make the best of what we can get, and so band ourselves together to improve matters to the utmost of our power?

If there were only the same amount of intemperance now, or even if there were considerably less than there was under the Canada Temperance Act, there would be no reason for us to decrease our endeavours: We ought not to be satisfied until there is no intemperance amongst us. But undoubtedly there has been more drunkenness during the past year than for some years previously. There were 275 convictions for this offence in the police court in 1897 as compared with 158 in 1896, and 150 in 1895. Now, it is an easy matter to infer from this that the Canada Temperance Act was better than the present law; but it is not so easy to prove the inference,—for during the two years the Liquor Regulation Act was in force before, the convictions were fewer than in any of the nine previous years of the Scott Act. Police court statistics, however, are not always to be depended upon as a true index of the increase or decrease of drunkenness. Sometimes the police are more vigilant than at others; elections always cause an outbreak of intemperance; and such public rejoicings as the Diamond Jubilee last summer are unhappily made the occasion of excessive drinking. The Scott Act was not defeated until July and not repealed until two months later; yet the drinking has been going on ever since the Spring. It was said at first that the liquor dealers were making men drunk without charge, and then turning them out into the street to bring discredit upon the Scott Act, and so aid in its defeat at the polls. As soon as the Act was defeated, the drunkenness, which continued unabated was attributed to the open and unrestrained sale of intoxicants. I think

THE TRUE EXPLANATION

of much of the increase of intemperance is to be found in the return of more prosperous times. If you watch the annual drink bill of any nation you will find that it fluctuates with the business prosperity of that nation. It acts like a barometer. If the times are hard the drink bill immediately falls perceptibly, and people congratulate themselves on the growth of temperance habits; but as soon as better times come again, up goes the bill and they stand aghast at the seemingly unaccountable increase of drunkenness.

Now, I believe I am right in stating that there has been more money in circulation in Charlottetown during the past year than there has been for a long time. Large buildings have been erected, the Park roadway gave employment to many, shipping has been prosperous, and trade brisker than formerly. As soon as navigation opened in the Spring—that is to say as soon as work commenced and money began to move—the drinking increased, and it has kept up more or less ever since. This seems to show—although I do not expect everyone to accept this explanation—this seems to show that, here as elsewhere, when men have cash to spare they are inclined to spend it in liquor; when cash is scarce and times are hard, they economize in this direction.

But whatever be the cause of the increase of intemperance, whether it be that men who formerly were kept in hiding when they were drunk are now put on the streets, or whether it be the repeal of the Canada Temperance Act, or the prosperity of the year, whatever be the cause, we must surely be all agreed that there is a great deal too much drunkenness for the size of the town.

WHAT THEN CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE MATTERS?

First, we ought to amend what legislation we have on the subject. No act will be perfect. Men all over the world have been experimenting in temperance legislation for many years, and they have not yet framed a law that cannot be evaded in some way. And even if the selling of intoxicants were made a capital offence, we should still find men willing to risk their lives for the sake of a little gain. In this province we have every facility for improving the laws connected with the liquor traffic. The sentiment of the people of the Island, as a whole, is undoubtedly in favour of temperance. We can always command a majority of temperance advocates in the City Council and the Legislature is, almost to a man, ready to aid every reasonable effort in the cause. Consequently, we may, if we only will, have things virtually all our own way, as we have not to contend, as many other places have, with a City Council or a Government the majority of which is altogether controlled by the liquor interest. Therefore, as from time to time we realize certain defects in the regulations for the sale of intoxicants, we have but to send a strong petition to the Legislature to get them amended. I am certain our wishes will be complied with. This might be done at every session if it were deemed necessary. At present, we require the number of taverns to be

LIMITED IN SOME WAY.

There appears to be a very strong prejudice among many temperance workers, against a License Act, and it would be unwise therefore to advocate such a measure, lest it should divide our forces and wreck our prospects of success. But without any license system, why should not liquor sellers be obliged to give security for their good conduct. For instance, why should not every saloon keeper be required to register his name at the City Building and at the same time make a deposit of two, three or four hundred dollars; or if no deposit is made,

then give bonds for a like amount. Such money or bonds to remain in the hands of the city treasurer to be forfeited in whole or in part, on any repeated infraction of the law, or to be returned to the owner if at any time he withdraws from the business?

This would have the effect of at once closing a great number of dens which are now opened by any one who has enough money to purchase half a dozen bottles of vilely adulterated liquor to begin with, since these people would not be able to supply the required security, and it would make those who were able to give bonds more careful in their conduct lest they should lose their deposit, since it might easily be arranged that he who for misconduct forfeited his security at any time should not be allowed on any account to tender another or remain in the business.

Again, the block system, in use in other places, might be adopted with success—that is to say, no person would be permitted to open a saloon unless one-half or two-thirds of the householders in his block gave their consent, and this consent would have to be renewed every year. This, also, would make a very great reduction in the number of taverns; and this is the crying need, for it seems outrageous that in a civilized community, let alone a Christian community, the present state of affairs should be allowed to continue when we have it in our power to put an end to it, if we like.

NUMEROUS OTHER AMENDMENTS

might be suggested, which would be most beneficial in promoting temperance and in checking drunkenness. But it is unnecessary to refer to them here; and I see only two difficulties in the way of such amended legislation. First, the supineness of those who ought to be up and doing in the matter; and secondly, the opposition of the extreme temperance advocates who insist upon Scott Act or nothing. To the former I would say, "take care that through your indolence your brothers' blood does not cry unto God from the ground;" and to the latter, take care that the liquor interest does not become so powerful during the next three years that when it is time to petition for the Act again, it will be found impossible to restore it.

LET US REALIZE

that the Canada Temperance Act is not the only way of promoting temperance.—On the contrary the general opinion in other parts of Canada is that it is ineffective to this end. The old argument in favour of it was that, although it might not reform the drunkards, it would prevent the rising generation from drinking. Alas! Many of the drunkards of this town were children in arms, some of them were not born, when the Act was first introduced here, but they had no difficulty in learning to drink notwithstanding.

During the last nineteen years this Act has been submitted at the polls some 135 times, and Charlottetown has been the only place, in all that time, to reintroduce it after it was once repealed. It is now in force, (I believe) in only one city and 30 counties, Ontario, where the temperance sentiment is quite as strong as here, and where at one time nearly two-thirds of the counties adopted the Act, has now entirely repudiated it, and it is there looked upon as a thing of the past, as antiquated and ineffective as the carts and wells which not ten years ago supplied this city with water, or the system of drainage we reject in at present. Would it not be well for us, therefore, instead of blindly holding to our own opinions, to learn a lesson from the larger provinces, and see if it is not time to attempt some more effective measure of temperance.

IN CONCLUSION,

I would fain say a few words on behalf of those who are victims to intemperance. It is a very easy matter to put all drunkards into one class and brand them as sinners of the deepest dye; but those who come in constant contact with them know that this is not the case. There is a vast difference, for instance, between the man who drinks wilfully for the pleasure of drinking, or for so-called good fellowship, and the man who after a hard day's work comes to a cheerless, comfortless home, with a badly cooked meal and a complaining wife, and then goes off to the tavern to seek that solace and companionship he cannot find elsewhere. It may be said that the drunkard himself makes his home miserable. This is doubtless true in many cases, but it is equally true in others that the miserable home makes the drunkard. Then there is the consideration of heredity, and surely the craving for drink is inherited just as much as consumption or scrofula or any such disease. Those who are not so afflicted can little realize the awful struggle which frequently goes on within the victim before he finally yields to the temptation and enters upon a debauch; and even while the debauch is in progress he perhaps makes frantic but unavailing efforts to stop it and sober up. Again, there is the consideration of pain—a man is suffering from some disease and by using intoxicants he obtains temporary relief which enables him to continue his work,—the habit increases with the disease and the man becomes a drunkard.

I have no wish to palliate the sin of drunkenness in any way—I have no wish to make excuse for the drunkard; but over and over again, when I have seen the miserable homes of drunkards, or the struggles some of them endure in fighting against their craving for drink, or the temptation others have to alleviate their bodily pain with intoxicants. Over and over again I have thanked God that I am not tempted in like manner; and I believe that if our Lord Jesus Christ walked the earth to-day, He, who was Himself called a gluttonous man and wine butler, would be full of compassion for such sinners—would be ever ready to help them, as He helped the prodigal and the fallen in the villages of Galilee, long centuries ago. And should not we, His professed followers,

be filled with like compassion for unfortunates?

BUT WHAT CAN WE DO FOR THEM?

Temperance sermons will not touch them, since, as a rule, they are seldom in church. Temperance meetings are equally ineffective because they will not attend them.—Fines and imprisonments only teach them to be more wary when they are drinking that they may avoid arrest. The reformation of the intemperate must be a personal work; there must be an individual dealing with each victim with offers of help, of sympathy, of encouragement. There must be a careful consideration of the circumstances he is in and the temptations which surround him; for different cases require different treatment, and there must be constant prayer. If we would only write out a list of the intemperates we know, and bring them daily before Our Father in Heaven, who knows how much it would assist in their conversion.

THE HARBOR LIGHT

which for several winters provided a place of amusement for laboring men of the poorer sort, did a good work and was greatly appreciated. But there, again, the evanescent character of our temperance work manifested itself. When first the place was opened by the Rev. Mr. Brewer, the helpers and visitors were so numerous that they had to be admitted by ticket, a certain number each night, lest they should frighten the men away. But this did not last long and after four years we were unable to get six men who would each undertake the charge of the rooms, one night a week; and so the place had to be closed. I would much like to see this work revived, and if some of the temperance Lodges, or the W. C. T. U. or the Y. M. C. A. would undertake the management of it, it would greatly aid in repressing intemperance. Let us, my brethren,

DO SOMETHING DEFINITE

to improve the existing state of affairs, the legislative Assembly will soon be in session; let us as citizens combine on some temperance policy and then petition the Legislature to amend the present act or grant such other measures as may be deemed advisable. Let us deal with the matter before it be too late. Let us one and all endeavor to roll away the reproach so often made against us that whether we are under the Canada Temperance Act or the Liquor Regulation Act, there are more drunken men seen about our city than are seen in Montreal or Toronto. Let us realize our responsibilities, lest, with everything in our favor, we let our opportunity pass by, and perhaps, in after years, bitterly repent of our folly and neglect. And above all, while we work let us pray constantly for the growth of temperance amongst us,—pray for the young that they may be shielded in temptation; pray for the drunkard that he may overcome his sin. Pray for ourselves that we be not high-minded but fear, lest in Pharisically thanking God that we are not as other men, we find in the end that those we condemn have entered into the Kingdom of Heaven and we ourselves are shut out.

Centuries ago, people used to fear what they called the plague. "Black death" was the most terrible thing in the world to them. They feared it as people now fear the Cholera and Yellow Fever. And yet there is a thing that causes more misery and more deaths than any of these. It is so common that nine-tenths of all the sickness in the world is traceable to it. It is merely that simple, common thing, constipation. It makes people listless, causes dizziness, headaches, loss of appetite, loss of sleep, foul breath, and distress after eating. The little help needful is furnished by Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. One pill is a gentle laxative and two mild cathartic. Once used, always in favor. If you are careless enough to let an unscrupulous druggist sell you something on which he makes more money, it is your own fault if you do not get well. Be sure and get Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. Send 31 cents in one-cent stamps to World's Dispensary Medical Association, Buffalo, N. Y., and receive Dr. Pierce's 1008 page "Common Sense Medical Adviser," profusely illustrated.

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List of Ratepayers for the City of Charlottetown

In default for Assessment due on Real Property, for the year ending 31st December, 1897, containing names of all such defaulters, and the amount due from them respectively, with a statement of the Number of the town Lot, Water Lot and Common Lot upon which or any part thereof such assessment is in default.

Table with 4 columns: Name of Ratepayer in Default, Statement or Description of Property upon which Assessment is made, Amount of Assessment due & unpaid. Includes names like McArthur, Sarah; Birch, John; Coyle, Stephen; Carmichael, Est. of Jas. A.; Capron, Edmund; Dockendorf, Chas. & J. E.; Griffith, John A.; Hollman, John; Hughes, Peter; Hughes, Bridget; Lowe, Walter; McNeill, Duncan; Purdie, Jane, Estate of, W. A. O. Morrison and Leslie S.; McNutt, Trustees; McQuaid, Dennis; Reid, Richard B.; Steel, Robert; Trainor, Patrick; Turnbull, Estate Andrew; Thorne, Charles E.; Thorne, Charles E.; Thorne, R. & Geo. S.; Williams, John; Ward, Estate Robert A. D.

GIVS THEM A TRIAL.

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