

OUR BANNER.

Vol. XIII.

APRIL, 1886.

No 4.

HOW CAN WE AS A CHURCH ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF TEMPERANCE?*

BY THE REV. J. C. MCFEETERS, PARNASSUS, PA.

This interrogation point lays its hand on the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The question is not a trifling one. Great importance is attached to the position of a battalion in the day of battle. It is not unseasonable; but bristles with the electricity of present issues. It is not without aim; but turns the eye towards the Judgment-seat, where we shall report what we did for the cause of temperance. It is not without point; but is full of points as a warrior's quiver, containing a shaft to pierce each conscience while duty is neglected. And it should not be without practical results;—mustering our forces, bringing into use our resources, and pushing us forward with nobler purpose into the front ranks.

How can we as a church advance the cause of temperance?

1. *By giving emphasis to our testimony.* We are a prohibition church. A whiskey man cannot get in; if he could, he would soon get out again. Our discipline is a wall of fire; our services would set alcohol aflame in a man's brain. Our testimony is our temperance banner with the motto, *no option, NO LICENSE, NOTHING BUT PROHIBITION*—universal, unconditional, constitutional prohibition!

Our testimony is clear as a bell on this question—a silver bell, without a crack; and it is mounted so that its chimes can be heard from the St. Lawrence to the Golden Gate. But it must be rung—rung by the pulpit, rung by the press, rung loud and rung long. It must be rung if it be heard. There is no danger of breaking it. Forty amendment questions cannot break it. It is made of good material—dug out of the quarry of Biblical truth, and moulded in the foundry of long discussion.

Our testimony is our ensign waving over our victorious field. As

* Paper read at the Temperance Convention held in Allegheny Church, February 9, 1886.

a denomination we have fought the battle within our own limits. We have won the day; thanks to our worthy fathers who threw themselves into the conflict and to the God who led them to the blessed victory. Whiskey has been cleaned out of our Zion. We are no more under its whip, nor under its gold, nor under its disgrace. Our Communion vessels are no more defiled by the brewer's hands nor by the drunkard's lips. If a solitary case arise, it comes like the devil, in a robe of disguise. We are an emancipated church. Every minister can denounce the iniquitous business; can declare against the still, that distills the tears of wives and widows; and the brewery, that brews the comforts of home into misery; and the cup, that is filled with the blood of the lost; every minister in the church can do it, and not lose so much as a slice of bread. Our pulpit is free; our press is free; our courts are free, because our pews have been made free from the tyrant curse.

Nearly all other churches are in the heat of conflict. They have not fought their way yet through the liquor traffic. They are gaining ground; but hard battles are yet before them. They feel the tyranny of the whiskey power. They make silent compromises. The whiskey-soaked and the whiskey-soakers enjoy the privileges of the communion-table, because, forsooth, their red hands fill up the treasury, and their red faces can smile or frown much financial significance. All such churches are sustaining the unholy trade, while they let it sustain them and curtail their liberty. One of the pillars that stay them rests upon the devil's shoulders; and he can shake the whole building at pleasure, and it is always his pleasure when the people begin to look about for a new foundation for the pillar. How un-Christian that business which dares to compel even the church to hold the gate of hell open with the left hand, while she holds the gate of heaven open with the right hand!

The churches are not subject willingly, but through lack of courage and hard strokes. And as we have reached the summit of freedom, and won our independence from the whiskey power through Christ our leader, let us display our banner in full view of the world, that our sister churches may be encouraged. Let us shout to the sacramental armies that are following to come forward to the same heights. Let us assure them that the theory is practical, the position is defensible; a church can stand without the devil's prop; her treasures can be sufficient without Satan's gifts; her discipline can be righteous without the distiller's veto; her ministers can be free without license from the brewer. It is a demonstrated possibility. Did all the churches believe this and practice it, the snows of our next winter would be the winding-sheet of the destroying monster; its funeral bells would begin to toll ere next Christmas bells would cease to chime. It would fall to the earth of its own weight like a mass of putrefaction, and be hied out of sight with greatest possible haste. Let the church forbid it to

lean upon her holy arm, and it cannot stand in this land of Christians. And as a church we are bound to advance the cause by keeping our testimony before the sisterhood of churches and before the world.

2. *We can, as a church, help the cause by helping the Women's Christian Temperance Union.* This organization is of recent origin, of rapid growth, of extensive reach, and has been honored with marvelous success. It is one of the potential forces of our age, one of the distinctive features of present providence. It carries a commission from Him who is the widow's help and the orphan's shield, and by whom the way of the wicked shall be turned upside down. And that commission bears the visible seal of divine favor in the splendid achievements already wrought.

The temperance union of Christian women is but the prohibition tree out in blossom. And what a wealth of bloom it exhibits! what a prophecy of abundant fruit! The promise amounts to an assurance. Already the morning dawns upon the generation which shall have happy homes, sober fathers and joyful mothers, loyal husbands and noble wives, manly sons and cheerful daughters, and cruelty and misery shall flee away as mist before the rising sun.

We call not this Union the church, but we say it is of the Church. We call it not the bride of the King, but we say it is a daughter of Zion. It is a system of arteries, through which the blood accumulated about the heart is conveyed to the extremities, sent throbbing through the withered hand and the withered foot and the withered face, putting new energy, new activity, and new comeliness into our Christianity. It is the fragrance of the church going out into all the earth. It is the radiance of the church entering the home darkened with drunkenness and the heart hidden under sorrows. It is a bannered host of mercy, coming up out of the wilderness to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty; soldiers of truth and love, begotten of that devoted womanhood which has been tried and chastened through long years of anguish, and consecrated in these last days for the reclaiming of besotted manhood.

As a Church we ought to recognize the purpose and value of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. We should recognize it as an instrument in the hand of God, and help the instrument to do its work. We should consider the vast project with which it grapples, the weighty load it proposes to carry, the tremendous task against which it has set its face. We should consider the energy with which these women carry forward the work; their wisdom, which seems like the mind of God reflected from calm waters; their zeal, which makes their very reports an electric battery, thrilling every honest reader; and their hope, which throws a rainbow over every cloud, transfigures even the darkest events, and transforms defeat itself into the brilliant sunset, which tells that the sun has departed only to usher in a new day and a new battle and a grand victory. These Christian women

have gathered around the giant tree of intemperance. They apply the axe and mattock to root and branch; have marched their companies into every department of the iniquity for its eradication. The tree must fall. The politicians have been cutting off little twigs, and the roots have only gone the deeper into the soil of national life. These faithful women are cutting off the branches, the saloons; splintering the trunk, the United States revenue; and digging out the roots by education. And they are also preparing a great fire of public indignation to burn up branch, trunk and root; and we should help to make the fire. They are making progress. As summer advances from her tropical home, driving winter back to his arctic regions at the rate of twenty miles a day, and strews his desolate path with flowering orchards and verdant meadows and fields of waving grain, so this temperance union is advancing from the home of love, and driving back the death-dealing power of the liquor traffic, and strewing the path of desolation with peace and thrift and songful homes. And we should help in this prophetic work of making the wilderness blossom as the rose.

The ship of State lies stranded on the beach of political cowardice, with all her immense steam-power, with all her violent campaign exertions, with all her loud whistling for help from reformers, she has not made any noticeable progress in moral reform for a score of years. She is stuck in the sand bank of political cowardice; the waves of corruption are beating over her. And this union of women is but a tide of consecrated strength. It is rising higher and higher; and without the least doubt it will yet lift the ship of government out of its mud-bed, and set it riding proudly and safely on the broad sea of temperance and prosperity. Then should we not help to raise the tide?

We can help this union of Christian women by encouraging our mothers, our wives, and our daughters to join them. Put into the hands of our households the literature that will awaken the feminine emotions, and make the sympathies flow, and kindle a fire in the heart for this cause of the Lord. And accord to the right which all true mothers and wives and daughters have, by virtue of their fidelity,—the right to use our purses with womanly generosity in this noble work. The work requires brain, the women have it; requires heart, the women have it; requires heroism, the women have it; requires consecration, the women have it; and requires money, and the women will have it. They must succeed. Better for men to turn half their capital into the temperance cause for the next two years, and the country will double her wealth in a very few years.

3. *We can, as a church, help the cause of temperance by bold aggressive work.* The field of labor furnishes opportunity for the women, who are weaker in the body but mightier in the faith. And it furnishes opportunity for man, with all the qualities of his hardy

manhood, with all his stern, daring, aggressive, inflexible and unconquerable powers of his best nature redeemed, to contend for the rights of God and man. Both sexes can work to advantage, and make all their powers available for the same worthy purpose. The women can advance the cause with their ribbons, their pledges, their banners; with their tears, their prayers, their entreaties; with their great unions, their mighty conventions, their effective press. But the work must be supplemented by the more vigorous measures of the masculine arm. Legislation must be effected; laws must be sustained; culprits must be arraigned; penalties must be enforced; the strong hand of justice must be laid upon the horrible business that it be stopped. But who will push temperance to this logical conclusion? This part of the work calls for the courage of the lion; the gentle gazelle is neither able nor willing.

Here is the field for our men to occupy. They cannot yet enroll in political clubs; they cannot cast their ballot to elect political officers yet; they cannot incorporate with the government yet. The liquor laws will bind the prohibition officer till the people amend the Constitution. And here is the field for our men to occupy. Protest against the iniquity of the government which requires its officers to sin against God and man. Labor to Christianize our country's politics, and secure a prohibition amendment, and enforce all just laws already enacted. This demands hardihood, ability to endure reproach, and a face set like adamant against every compromise with iniquity. The liquor traffic is bold, defiant, without conscience, persecuting, boycotting, and a dynamiter. It will devour your property, shatter your health, blast your reputation, drown your hopes, crush your wife, ruin your son, dishonor your daughter, and pretend friendship all the while. But if you lay hold on your destroyer, and in the name of justice attempt to bring him to a righteous tribunal, he will curse you to your face. And to stand before him, and charge his crimson crimes upon him, and drag him to his merited doom requires courage, and courage from men who love not their lives unto death. It has already reached this point.

Have we such men in our church? Ah, shame if our little covenanted denomination is not made up of such robust fidelity to Christ! We have the blood, but have we the pluck? Our fathers were men of war from their youth. They confronted kings on the throne and armies in the field. They arraigned the wicked before the tribunal of God; sustained the truth at dreadful hazards; made the great powers of iniquity tremble by their aggressive work for King Jesus. Their courage carried them through reproach, and danger, and death. Their untamable defiance of wrong and heroic defence of the right brought them into disrepute, into poverty, into exile, into prison, into devouring flames, and into gory graves. And are we their children? If we are, then is there a man in the church who will stand before this destroyer, and grow pale, or even keep silence? Yea, will he not

become inflamed with indignation, and throttle the monster? If we make our record worthy of our ancestors, we must wrestle with the rum power till it go under. And our men should form law and order societies all over the country. Every worthy man in the Covenanting church is, by virtue of his covenants, a self appointed policeman for the enforcement of righteous laws; and every praying society among them is, through their relation to the church, a vigilance committee for the suppression of this trade.

WHICH DAY OF THE WEEK IS SABBATH?

BY THE REV. C. D. TRUMBULL, MORNING SUN, IOWA.

This question has long been considered as settled by the great mass of Christians. The answer which they give is, "the first." There are those, however, who dispute this, and stoutly contend that the seventh day of the week always has been and still is the Sabbath of the Lord. These men are very zealous in trying to make proselytes to their faith, and in some places are meeting with success. Reformed Presbyterians are, in some cases, sorely beset by them, and some have departed from the faith of the church. This is a subject on which little has been published in the magazines of the church for years. I venture to present a few thoughts in support of the doctrine of the church on this subject, hoping that other minds will produce more cogent arguments.

We are met in the outset with the statement that the seventh day of the week was the day of original institution as the Sabbath of the Lord, as also the day specially mentioned in the fourth commandment, and that there is no Scripture warrant for the observance of any other day. If by Scripture warrant is meant that nowhere in the Bible do we find words like these, "Thou shalt observe the first day of the week to keep it holy," we admit the statement. There is, however, a difference between a Scripture warrant in express terms and a Scriptural warrant—a fair inference from the Word of God. For example, we are not told in express words in the Scriptures, "There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," yet Christians generally accept this as Scriptural doctrine. Protestant Christians generally have Sabbath schools and believe there is warrant for them in the teachings of God's Word, but where is it written in so many words, "Thou shalt have Sabbath-schools?" Where is it written, "Thou shalt worship God in thy family morning and evening"? Yet godly men in every age have regarded it as a religious duty, if not taught by direct command at least by fair inference from God's Word, and exemplified by holy men of God in Bible times. Once more: Where is it written, "Thou shalt have week-day prayer-meetings"? yet all Protestant Christians, so far as I know, believe there is warrant in Scripture for such meetings by inference from certain texts and by