

National Democrat.

RAHWAY, N. J., AUGUST 27th, 1886.

MINISTER'S PRACTICAL VIEW

Rev. Mr. Ballantine of the First Presbyterian Church of Bloomfield, in this state, recently preached a temperance sermon on drunkenness a sin, and what can and should be done to remove it. After thoroughly treating of the sinfulness of intemperance, he closed as follows:

It is however seriously questionable whether National or State Prohibition is desirable, even if it could be carried by a vote of a majority. Laws secure respect and obedience only where they rest on the sense of right in a community. But our nation is not a community. Our State is not a community. A community is not an abstract conception of the people within certain designated boundaries; it is a true organic growth and consists of people that think and feel alike, that mutually recognize themselves to have interests in common, and that are united by ties of sympathy. A State or Nation embraces many communities, every one of which is swayed by what it conceives to be its own interests. It is impossible at present to bring our country districts and our cities together on these liquor traffic questions. Prohibitory laws, even if duly enacted by a majority, will be resisted in the cities as the oppressive imposition of a despotic authority. The instinct of Home Rule is against them. Even God does not work upon the plan of making it physically impossible for people to sin. In the last resort it is better to let each bear their proper share of responsibility. In our smallest municipal subdivisions, where by common feeling and common interests the people can act together, the liquor traffic may be restrained without antagonizing the equal liberty of other people. Other people would readily concede us this right and we ought to be willing to concede the same to them, and are certainly not under Christian obligation to try to deprive them of it.

The sermon closed with calling attention to some things the friends of Temperance ought not to do. We ought not to erect a sin, that is, we ought not to make a law, as for example, the temperate drinking of wine. We may say it is dangerous, if we think it so in our present circumstances, but it is beyond our ability to make sin, if we do.

Further, we ought not to give way to passion and denounce as criminal all those who do not think and vote as we have decided. Any offense committed recently by a temperance convention in our own county, which resolved that "all men who vote for parties which license, or for parties which will not declare for Prohibition, (where there is a Prohibition law) are themselves accessory to the crime, and equally guilty with the man that carries on the traffic."

In James 4: 11, 12, we read, "Speak not against one another, a brother, or judge a brother, speak against the law and judge the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law but a judge."

One only is the lawgiver and judge even He who is able to save and destroy; but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor? And again we read "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Ohio has a new "idea" in the interest of temperance. A new law is proposed in that State to forbid the sale of liquor except to registered druggists. A man can register his name in the office of the Judge of Probate and receive a license upon payment of a fee of twenty-five cents, which entitles him to purchase liquor at any licensed liquor seller's place. Many persons who purchase liquor frequently, would hesitate to have their names enrolled at the office of the Judge of Probate, and the State would be flooded with such a record. In this way, if enforced, the law would aid in suppressing intemperance. It is adapted only to States in which license laws prevail. To our prohibitionists can consistently prohibit the sale and license the druggists.

Spirituous liquors are no help in roughing it. On the contrary, they invite sickness and various other unpleasant visitors incident to the life of a traveler. Habitual brandy-drinkers give out sooner than cold-water drinkers. I have seen fainting red notes by the score succumb to the weather, when boys addicted to water would grow like chandeliers through a long storm of sleet and snow on the freezing Alps.

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