

✓ Princeton Theological Review

THE

✓ BIBLICAL REPERTORY

AND

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EDITED BY AN

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AND ITS VICINITY.

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THE
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JANUARY, 1831.

ART. I.—REVIEW OF WOODS ON INSPIRATION.

Lectures on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, by Leonard Woods, D.D., Abbot Professor of Christian Theology in the Theological Seminary, Andover. Published and sold by Mark Newman. Flagg & Gould, printers. pp. 152.

THIS little volume, written on a subject of great importance and no small difficulty, deserves the serious attention of theological students, and of all others who are solicitous to understand the true grounds of evidence on which our religion stands. Commonly, no distinction is made between the authenticity and the inspiration of the New Testament; whereas, the proof of the former does not necessarily involve that of the latter, and accordingly, many believe in the authenticity and divine origin of the New Testament, who utterly reject the doctrine of inspiration. They believe that the scriptures contain a true revelation from God, and consequently that somebody must have been commissioned to make known the Divine will; but they deny that the persons who wrote the books of the New Testament were under an infallible guidance in making those compositions; acknowledging that they were men of integrity, who delivered the truth according to the best of their knowledge and ability; yet subject to the usual prejudices and mistakes which are common to men.

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the liberty of offering it to the notice of those who are most competent to judge; and if he should prove to have been the means of conveying the smallest hint which shall be directly or indirectly useful in imparting the least interest or life to a single meeting for social prayer, he shall feel himself richly rewarded. Certain it is, that whatever has a tendency to confer upon such meetings a character of deeper feeling, a more profound sense of what we need, and a more intense pleading with God for his blessing, is so much gained to the best interests of Zion. We are, probably, approaching times of solemn conflict, when all that faith, and prayer, and sanctified effort can achieve, will be put in requisition. Our "weapons" in this conflict must in no case be "carnal." And of those which our Master has put at our disposal, none are more universally accessible, or more powerful than PRAYER. Happy will be that individual Christian, or that church, which may be found, in the progress of the conflict, wielding this weapon with most constancy and persevering confidence! With this weapon, guided and animated by faith, we may defy the kingdom of darkness, "stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens." If Christians looked less to "the arm of flesh," and more to the promises, power, and faithfulness of their covenant God, they would have more comfort in their own souls, and be far better sustained in their controversy with Satan's kingdom.

QUÆRENS.

ART. IV.—SUGGESTIONS IN VINDICATION OF THE TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

IN endeavouring to arrest the progress of intemperance, the points which principally claim our attention are two; to communicate just impressions of the calamities and crimes which spring from the use of intoxicating liquors, and to propose and recommend some remedy for the alarming evil. The destructive influence of ardent spirits upon the health, the moral character, the fortune, the reputation, and the eternal hopes of men, has been ably and repeatedly presented to view. It is therefore our purpose, at this time, to confine ourselves to a vindication, first of the principle of entire abstinence, and

secondly of the measures of the Temperance Society, as founded upon that principle.

I. The principle is to be defended.

Total abstinence from spirituous liquors, except for medicinal purposes, is to be vindicated upon the ground of moral obligation, as well as of expediency. That which under all the circumstances of our present condition is plainly expedient, becomes, from this very expediency, a moral duty in the view of all who regard the welfare of their fellow men.

A familiar illustration may be used, which, although beyond the limits of probability, may present the subject in a new light, and elicit our more impartial judgment. Let us suppose that by some change in the human constitution, animal food should cease to afford nutriment; that those who partook of it, in any considerable quantity, were observed to lose their self-control, to become wild and giddy, loquacious and boisterous, confused in intellect, and misled by false impressions of external objects; that their limbs became powerless, and that they at length fell into a disgraceful and helpless stupor. Suppose that, after many painful symptoms, the recovered man should be found to seek again and again the dangerous morsel, and crave the unnatural excitement; nay, that multitudes were seen haunting the places where it was sold, and multitudes daily under its influence; that millions of dollars were annually consumed in its purchase, thousands of lives every year sacrificed to its power, and hideous crimes perpetrated in its frantic orgies. Suppose, further, that the morbid appetite should grow upon the most unsuspecting, and prey upon the most beloved; should we not retreat from it as a poison, the poison of the soul? Could we be willing to endure it in our sight, or to admit it over our threshold, or, worse still, to prepare or to vend it? Should we not dread to approach it lest others might be allured to taste, and tremble to partake of it, lest our neighbour should sink into its abyss of woes?

Would to God that it were a sketch of fancy! The observation of every reader has already enabled him to apply it to the case before us.

The fear of "offending" others, (to use a scriptural expression,) that is, of occasioning sin in others, or making our brethren *stumble*, would, in the case supposed, lead every Christian man to cast it aside. Now this is the doctrine of the apostle Paul: "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother is offended or is

made weak." And this abstinence needs the sanction of no positive command, but becomes binding by all the stress of the law of love, on him who endeavours to love his neighbour as himself. Applying the principle to the case before us, and acknowledging, as we all do, that intemperance is an evil incalculably great, we argue, *That in the present state of society, it is the duty of every prudent and benevolent man, to abstain from any use of alcoholic liquors, except as a medicine.*

We say the *duty*, because that which is so far expedient, that, if neglected, it leads our brother into sin, is our duty.

In the days of early Christianity, it was a question whether meat which had been offered upon the altars of heathen gods might be lawfully eaten by a believer. There were many who supposed that the indulgence was, in itself, sinful, as giving countenance to Pagan rites, and symbolising with idolaters. Paul was clearly convinced of the contrary, and believed that he might, with unquestioning security of conscience, eat whatever was sold in the shambles. Yet mark the purity and charity of that great and holy mind: he does not say, like many among us in similar cases, 'My conscience is clear, and I am not bound by the sanctimonious scruples of others.' No, his quick perception descries the danger of leading others to do sinfully, what he could do conscientiously: his sincere love felt the argument, *None of us liveth to himself*, and he concludes, *Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, if my lawful indulgence lead my brother into sin, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.* The principle of the gospel, therefore, is plain: if by any indulgence, however innocent in itself, or by any practice which is not morally obligatory, I lay a stumbling-block, an offence, an occasion to sin, in the way of others, that indulgence is to be forborne. And the application of the principle to the case of any individual, is equally plain. If, by the use of ardent spirits, however innocent in my own case, I lay temptation in the way of others, it is my immediate duty to abstain totally from this gratification.

The case is not hypothetical, as just stated. What has been presented as a supposition is an undeniable truth, and by every indulgence in spirituous liquors, however limited, guarded or temperate, we lay an offence in the way of others. Grant for the moment, what is always questionable, that any given individual is fully competent to restrain his desires, and to limit

himself to the proper modicum, that he is never heated, never misled, never injured; can he, in like manner, answer for those who surround him, and copy his example? Others see him partake, but they see not his secret cautions and rules and measurement. They are led to taste, to tamper with the poison, to believe it innocent, to submit themselves to its power, to become drunkards, to perish! Such is the gradation witnessed in instances innumerable. Such an one may observe his neighbours and dependants improving upon his model; he may know that ravages are hourly made upon soul and body by the same stimulus; he may hear the entreaties of Christian friends, who sorrowfully warn him against the practice; yet he replies, 'I am not subject to other men's consciences, nor answerable for other men's sins.' Listen to the piercing rebuke of the apostle, in a like case: *If thy brother be grieved by thy meat, (mark that a single word only is to be changed) now walkest thou not charitably; destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not your good be evil spoken of.* It is even so, the painful truth is not to be dissembled; the unguarded indulgences of moral and Christian men are ruining the bodies and souls of thousands. The temperate drinker is seen by his children, his domestics, his associates, to partake of the polluting draught. What wonder if they drain the cup, which he only tasted? What wonder if the son feels no dread of the liquor which his father buys or sells or uses?

It is in this way that the use of ardent spirits, however limited or temperate, tends to keep up the injurious habits of society. We have heard it justly stated, as one of the most fruitful causes of inebriety, that the almost universal custom of men overwhelms the voice of prudence and religion. False ideas of hospitality, of generosity, of festive celebrations, and of encouraging labour, promote the criminal indulgence. Every drop which we take, goes to confirm and extend these habits of society. However small our influence, we are accountable for it. When we taste of the liquor, we indulge in that which is slaying its victims throughout our land, and has already plunged millions into perdition. The sin is national; we are tainted as a community; because of drunkenness, the land mourneth, and as the nation is made up of individuals, each man is called upon to shake off, at least from his own shoulders, the burden of infamy.

He who makes any use, even the slightest, of ardent spirits,

just in the proportion of his indulgence, does his part to encourage and sustain the manufacture and sale of this bane of human peace. There are many who drink the liquor, who would scorn to make it, many who buy that would be ashamed to sell. Now, though not in the same ratio, yet to a certain and a culpable extent, every consumer gives his vote, and pays his tax to uphold the traffic.

Almost all that has hitherto been advanced is entirely consistent with the assumption, that the article, in particular cases, is neither useless nor dangerous. The assumption is false, as we shall endeavour to show. Waving the disputed question of medicinal value, it is undoubtedly true that spirituous liquors are, in every case, useless and dangerous. They are useless, and therefore it is wise to abstain. We are all alarmed at the evils, the horrid, innumerable, damning evils, which this single article has introduced. Unless, then, we are indemnified by its manifold virtues, in the full amount of this loss and suffering, it is unwise, it is sinful, it is cruel to encourage the traffic or use. What are the countless benefits of the intoxicating draught? Has it contributed to human strength? While it has brought the youth to premature imbecility, and the sturdy vigour of the robust labourer to palsied helplessness, it has never permanently braced a muscle, or added one tittle to the physical power of its votaries. Has it given nourishment to the body? With united voice, our most eminent, and most unprejudiced physiologists protest against the delusion. Has it prolonged life, or averted disease? It has but marked out the first victims of epilepsy, apoplexy, malignant fevers and madness, while it claims as its own peculiar instruments of torture, *delirium tremens*, and *mania a potu*.

Ardent spirits are injurious, even to the temperate drinker, as he is called, and therefore it is wise to abstain. This we may pass over at the present time, as pertaining rather to the evils of intemperance, which we have thrown out of the field of inquiry. Yet it is not to be passed over in the private meditations of the serious Christian.

Ardent spirits, whenever used, open the door for temptations to him who indulges, and no man under such influence is safe. Every drunkard was once temperate. It was by gradual steps that he explored the loathsome and fiery deep, in which he is now groping towards final destruction.

No human eye can mark the point where temperance ends,

and intemperance begins; and wherever that imperceptible boundary may fall, the victim is always secure in his own apprehensions. The debased and squalid sot, who creeps into the recess of his dwelling, which he supposes to be unknown, and quaffs the beloved stimulant, while he endeavours vainly and ludicrously to conceal his disgrace, was once a man who despised the drunkard; and, even now, flatters himself that he is not detected. And each of us may have known as honest, honourable, industrious and kind, the brutal wretch who now brings daily sorrow into the family circle, pours mortification into the heart of a virtuous wife, and robs his offspring of their daily food. That appetite, once grown strong, knows no restraint; and we learn to feel the words of the poet:

'Tis quenchless thirst
Of ruinous ebriety that prompts
His every action, and imbrates the man.
O for a law to noose the villain's neck
Who starves his own, who persecutes the blood
He gave them in his children's veins, and hates
And wrongs the woman he has sworn to love.—*Cowper.*

Let it be repeated, no man is safe who treads upon the crumbling brink of this precipice. The only safety is in a total relinquishment of the seductive draught; and no individual, in the view of these things, can continue in the use of ardent spirits, and consistently pray 'Lead us not into temptation.' Are you willing, we might ask, to lay before your sons and your brothers, even the *possibility* of becoming drunkards? Alas! perhaps they have already taken the irrevocable step. Perhaps they are, even now, possessed by that demon, and marked out as his prey. The cup which you cannot abandon, is the centre from which emanate those baleful influences, which, though they leave you untouched, may yet murder the dearest object of your love, blast the honour of your family, and cover your grey hairs with unavailing regrets and burning shame. *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.* Prov. xxiii. 31.

II. The measures of the Temperance Society, as founded upon the principle of entire abstinence, are to be defended.

It is to be presumed, that the most decided friends of ardent spirits will not controvert the position, *That it is the undoubted right of any individual to lay it down as a rule*

for his own conduct, to avoid altogether the use of intoxicating liquors. It has never been contended, that any moral obligation constrains men to this indulgence; or, that there is any moral turpitude in abstaining from the excitement. Single cases of such abstinence are by no means new. In every age, since the acquaintance of man with the dangerous stimulant, individuals have here and there been found unwilling to approach it. And long before any fellowship in this forbearance was dreamed of, abundant have been the instances of abstinent and temperate men. Even now, it is by no means rare, to discover one and another whose habit it is to refrain from every thing of the kind; and we have not learned that any umbrage is taken at such a peculiarity, even though dissolute wits may affect to despise the water drinker. Various considerations may lead a man to adopt such a maxim. The care of health or reputation, the wise fear of seduction, the desire of holding forth a salutary example may prompt him; and no one, even among the profligate, doubts his right to pursue his own course of life, any more than the right to choose his own regimen, or adjust his own apparel. And, as in any given case, he who, from private reasons, chooses to avoid ardent spirits, acts according to his own acknowledged right; so no one can deny *that the same individual is altogether free to frame a resolution, or if he chooses to take a vow, that he will persevere in this way.* It may be deemed unnecessary, whimsical, rash or fanatical, but no one dreams that there is hereby any breach made upon the liberties of others. Such resolutions are made by every man, under every variety of circumstances, in matters of economy or trade or religion; and with the privacy of such a transaction, no one presumes to interfere. Private engagements of this nature are found useful in the conduct of our domestic affairs. They add the force of an obligation to what was before simply a prudential maxim. They decide, once for all, upon a class of actions, instead of leaving the mind in painful vacillation upon every emergency. They afford a brief apology in every case of objection or expostulation.

That there is nothing morally wrong in such an engagement, appears from the case of the Nazarites under the Old Testament, who bound themselves for a certain length of time to abstain from all intoxicating liquors. It is true, that this example has no weight when adduced as an argument for our abstinence, but it is a case in point, to answer at once every

charge of moral impropriety in voluntary obligations to such abstinence.

Indeed, so clear is the case, that it is certain we should never have heard any strong objections raised against single cases of such resolutions. The great English moralist, during many years of his life, abstained totally from the use of wine, in compliance with a resolution of this nature; and though he moved in a circle somewhat dissolute in this particular, no one, we believe, brought any charge of error or fanaticism against Dr. Johnson.* Nay, there is not a man among the ranks of the objectors, who does not feel himself free, at any moment, to discard ardent spirits or wine from his table, as well as any beverage or dish which he disapproves; and to fortify his purpose by a resolution, or even a vow.

It may, indeed, be urged that there is always danger in such resolutions, since such is the weakness of all human purposes, that they are very liable to be violated, and that thus the sensibility of conscience is wounded, and moral fortitude impaired; also, that through the strange perverseness of our minds, we are the more likely to rush to the opposite extreme, after the removal of the barrier. There is some truth in the premises, yet the argument founded on them leads us much too far; since it would equally deny the prudence of any fixed rule for human conduct, any purpose of holy living, any serious attempt of the libertine to amend his life. Grant that, because defeated purposes are mischievous, no purposes of good, no resolutions of temperance or safety are to be admitted, and you tear away one of the strongest barriers against vice, and aids of virtue, from the wise and good of every age. It is, therefore, as prudent, and as just, for me to determine that I will not indulge in ardent spirits, as to determine that I will avoid the excesses of the table, or the accumulation of debts beyond my means.

We frequently hear it said, that it is unnecessary to form such a resolution, inasmuch as he who believes that total abstinence is prudent and useful, may be supposed to have strength of purpose sufficient to confine himself to the path which he approves. In reply to this, let it be observed, that we suppose too much, when we presume that every man who

* See in Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, the record of a conversation which took place, April 7, 1773.

“sees the right” may not “the wrong pursue;” the adage of the heathen poet is familiar:

*Video meliora proboque
Deteriora sequor.*

The stubbornness of fact repels the conclusion every day. Men indulge daily in that which they know is leading them to ruin. Witness the bankrupt, the gambler, the drunkard, the debauchee. There are, moreover, seasons of allurements, when the mind which is influenced by a floating impression of what is right, without being held down by settled resolutions, will waver and fall under the fascination. This takes place without shame, because there is no consciousness of deviation from any prescribed rule.

We suppose too much when we presume of *ourselves*, that we need no deliberate engagement to retain us in the way of duty. It would be a waste of words to argue this point. Its illustration may be read in the case of the invalid who daily tampers with forbidden food, the sluggard who indulges in excessive sleep, the father who suffers insubordination in his family, the tradesman who neglects his business and the sinner who restrains prayer before God. And, in another view of the same objection, it may be truly said, that the very argument concedes the principal thing for which we contend: ‘The prudent man *has strength of purpose* enough to abstain, without the yoke of resolution.’ If, indeed, there is a *purpose* to abstain, and a purpose of some *strength*, it is all that we ask. The resolution which we defend is not a sacred covenant, not a religious vow, but a fixed determination to avoid a certain evil. But if there is not a purpose to abstain, of some strength, if there is no more than an indolent preference of such abstinence, we deny that we have any guarantee that the individual will not succumb at the first attack.

It is urged that such a determination is invidious, and implies a tacit charge of intemperance, against all moderate drinkers. To this it is a sufficient reply, that if the objection has any weight, it lies against abstinence itself, which has been vindicated, and not the resolution to abstain; and that the same scruple might be raised against any course of life, or moral habit, which might happen to militate with the opinions of the multitude. It is, therefore, reasonable that every man should be left to enjoy the right of laying down for himself

such rules as he chooses, with regard to the use of ardent spirits.

Any number of persons, maintaining such opinions, have a right to associate themselves upon the principle of entire abstinence; and such associations deserve our warmest approbation and most decided encouragement. If one man is free thus to resolve, the same liberty must be conceded to two, twenty or a thousand; unless something immoral or injurious is likely to result from their relation to one another, or from the circumstance of their multitude; which it will be no easy task to prove.

The member of the Temperance Society states the case thus: 'If I am free to reject the poison, the members of my family are equally so, and no less free to declare their resolution in my presence, and in common with me, with such formalities as may be judged proper; and so of my townsmen and fellow citizens.' Certain persons affect to be alarmed at the idea of a *mutual pledge*, or *binding ourselves to one another*, and thus forming, as they say, a dangerous compact. There is no ground for such alarm, and no shadow is more unsubstantial than the argument suggested. If the words *mutual pledge* have been used, they mean only this, that we, who by subscription, vote or acclamation, express our purpose, do so in common, in presence of each other as witnesses, and for mutual encouragement. Further than this there is no compact, except such as a prolific fancy may trace among a hundred men who subscribe to the same school, or put their names to the paper of the same mendicant. The only bond is the community of sentiment upon a single point, already vindicated.

There is power in concert of action. A thousand men may be directed singly to address themselves to any public work, and nothing shall be accomplished; because there is no feeling of encouragement, no unity of plan, no interchange of experience and wisdom, no view of success, and no concentration of strength.

Every man must have remarked the advantage which accrues to his own mind from association with others in such a work. Were the plan of our objector adopted, we should be carried back to the precise state in which we were before the dawn of the temperance reformation. And what was this state? Here and there was found a man bold enough to stem the current of public opinion and practice, and there may have been hundreds who resolved on, and attempted abstinence, and

had relinquished the attempt, because each was isolated, and without encouragement. However numerous the cases of individual abstinence, there was no great impression made upon the hostile evil, no appreciable diminution in the sale of liquors, no general amendment visible on the face of the social body.

The truth is, that human imbecility, even in the conscientious, is greater than we willingly acknowledge. If the basest of men were judged by the resolutions of their better moments, we might esteem the world free from crime. The virtues of the wisest and most circumspect need those aids of circumstance, those incitements of practical goodness, which so much abound in associations for benevolent ends; and those are wise who gather around them a circle of advisers and helpers in executing their good intentions. This is precisely what the prudent and temperate man does, when he unites himself to those who are pursuing the only safe path of total abstinence. He feels upon himself the happy operation of such concert. He is incited to persevere by the sight of so many linked in with him in the same cause; and pride itself, where there is no better principle, may be the salutary cause of his steadfastness, since so many interests besides his own would suffer by his fall. "There are higher considerations," we may say, in the language of the eloquent Robert Hall, "which ought invariably to produce the same effects; but we have no such superfluity of strength, as should induce us to decline the aid of inferior motives, when all are but barely adequate to the exigencies of our state. The recollection that we are acting under the eye of Omniscience, will lose nothing of its force by being joined to the remembrance, that our conduct is subject to the scrutiny of friends, whose sentiments are in unison, whose influence coincides with the voice of conscience and of God."*

There is indeed no magic in these associations, which can wash the Ethiopian, or charm away the spots of the leopard. How often must we be called upon to explain, that it is not the drunkard whom we hope to reach, at least in any direct manner, by the measures proposed? It is to establish the footing of those who begin to slide, to secure the principles and fortify the minds of the rising generation, to brace the courage of the inexperienced, and arm for future combat the temperate, that we now labour. And he is no wise defender

* Works of Robert Hall, volume ii. page 195.

of innocence, who is content to see her free from taint, but strives not to make her free from danger. It is from among the temperate of our community that the army of drunkards is to be levied, and the fatal conscription is to take effect upon the kind and dutiful sons and brothers, who are now exempt from fear as well as reproach.

Let us look, therefore, at the additional force of example in these associations. The example of a single individual is not inefficacious, until it is contravened and nullified by the power of adverse practice. This, however, is the lamentable fact, and where one abstains, there are thousands who indulge. To give effect, then, to the exemplary influence of the temperate, those who have determined to avoid the very appearance of evil, must have a mutual understanding, must join their forces, must form one visible mass, and then the temperance of thousands may have weight, where that of one would have been unavailing. Now, whoever has taken the pains to examine the operations of the Temperance Society, has not failed to observe that this is just the way in which the sphere of its influence has been enlarged. A small company of persons have agreed to abandon all use of ardent spirits. This has attracted notice, and given occasion to inquiry. They have been ridiculed, vituperated and attacked, but have still increased: for obloquy and opposition have but raised more conspicuously the standard of their simple principle. The rule of their action, however misrepresented, has commended itself to some, as innocent, safe and desirable. He who came to scorn, has sat down to investigate and risen to applaud. He has observed the aged, the virtuous, the disinterested, the pious, among their band, and he has been brought in himself by the force of example. This, indeed, could not be the case, if men of eminent standing were unwilling to unite in the enterprise, because they feel no danger themselves. Of all persons among us, those are most needed to befriend our efforts, who are above suspicion of any personal risk as to their good habits. One man of high reputation and acknowledged probity, may stand in the breach, and ward off death from a multitude. In no possible way can the example of one temperate man have so much weight as by this public connexion; the light of his consistent life is no longer hid, but diffuses itself; and this is what we ask, since the great influence of the Temperance Society is *exemplary*.

The union of effort in these associations has tended to diffuse accurate and extensive information throughout our country.

It is the simple statement of facts, which is the great engine used in this work. It is the unvarnished truth respecting drunkards and their destiny, which has been the instrumental cause of this reformation. No man can open his eyes, for the first time, upon the authentic statement relative to intemperance and its train of curses, without astonishment. Its statistics are appalling. For centuries, men have known that there were many drunkards, that a great quantity of liquor was therefore used, and that much misery, crime and death ensued; yet the impression of these general truths was vague and transitory. But when, upon careful investigation, it was published to the world, that more than thirty millions of gallons of ardent spirits were every year consumed in the United States, and twenty-eight millions of dollars expended on the article, that we have in our land seven thousand distilleries; that three-fourths of our criminal prosecutions may be traced to this source, that one-third of the maniacs in our hospitals have become such by intemperance, and that thirty thousand human beings annually die from this poison; when these alarming facts, in all their horrible details, were spread before the eyes of the community, the effect was instantaneous. Many a moderate drinker forsook his daily allowance, and the catalogue of our Temperance Societies increased by thousands.

As the interest of every individual in this subject is necessarily rendered deeper by association with others, so every conscientious man is led to use all suitable means for disseminating correct opinions on it; and our presses send forth, weekly, the productions of able pens, all of which have their influence. Addresses, tracts, sermons, periodical journals and newspapers, are now directed against the desolating scourge with the happiest consequences. Without the Temperance Society, these loud and stirring appeals would never have been heard: without this information, the great reform would never have advanced.

To take another view of the same influence: wherever there is an association of this kind, however small, there will be excited much inquiry and conversation upon the subject. 'What is its principle? what its object? Who are its supporters? Why do they thus abstain?' These and other less innocent questions are raised and circulated. Ridicule and opposition are no doubt called forth; but this is by no means to be deprecated. The man who sneers, may, from mere curiosity, read the tract or the discourse, and stand aghast at the extent of the

evil, and his own peril. Self-interest will lead some who are deeply engaged in the traffic, to decry the work. The careless and the jovial will smile at those fears which most become themselves. The tap-room and the haunt of vice will resound with profane jests and boisterous merriment, when temperance is named. The sot at his fireside, and the street drunkard as he returns from his debauch, will curse the hypocrites who would rob them of their idol. In the midst of all this, the cause prevails. The inquiry once stirred, may not so easily be satisfied. The ignorant are instructed, the careless aroused, the unwary warned, and the temperate corroborated; and the result in every case is, that the wisdom and benevolence of the scheme are made apparent, and the steps of many recalled from the ways of death. According to the most moderate computation, there are in the United States 2,000 societies, comprising 200,000 persons, who are pledged to abstain from ardent spirits, except as a medicine; and in every place where any suitable efforts have been made, the cause gains strength with each successive year.

What may we not then hope? A field of promise opens before us which cheers the heart; and those of our youth who reach advanced age, may witness the accomplishment of our devout aspiration. We look for the day when no city, village or neighbourhood shall contain the poisonous draught, except in the repository of medicine; and when with a wary hand it shall be measured out at the bed-side, by the temperate physician. We hope for the time when the distillery and the dram shop shall exist only in the annals of past years, and when the fruits of Providence shall no more be prostituted to the fabrication of a brutalizing drug; when the Christian father shall dread to set before his household the deadly potion, and the Christian merchant shall blush to make his bread by affording an article which is, to many, the occasion of disease, crime and death, to most the cause of intemperance, and to all both useless, tempting and dangerous: and when the Christian minister shall be no more called to lift up his voice against drunkenness, than to denounce the fight of gladiators or the altars of Moloch.

An outcry has been heard, charging the defenders of total abstinence with infringing upon the rights of conscience and the liberty of their fellow citizens. It requires a perspicacity greater than that which falls to the lot of most, to discover the point of this objection; and the difficulty of reply arises not so much from the cogency of the argument as from our inability

to discover any argument at all. For thus the sober thinker reasons with himself: Does my abstinence from ardent spirits violate the sacred liberties of my neighbour? Am I not free to use or disuse any article of diet or drink, at my own discretion? To lay down rules for self-government, and when I please to recommend them to others? And in the exercise of this freedom, am I guilty of any infraction of another's rights? Whose rights are these which we are charged with violating? Surely not those of the abstinent; for he, exercising his free choice, acts out his own voluntary purposes. Not those of the man who declines our fellowship; he is no less free in rejecting the proposal, and so far as the question of *right* is concerned, we leave him, if such be his pleasure, to besot himself daily with drink, and to form a society for his encouragement.

But we are told that a combination is formed, upon a principle which is peculiar, and which gives an invidious notoriety to such as choose to make use of ardent spirits; that we thus reflect upon others and infringe on their rights. Without pausing to seek for the somewhat indiscernible connexion between the premises and the conclusion, let us examine a parallel case. It is well known that certain highly respectable Christians have thought it a duty to abstain from what they conscientiously believe to be a sinful extravagance in outward apparel, and to encourage plainness of dress by their own example. They have exercised an undoubted right. They may have been blamed, as needlessly scrupulous; they may have been ridiculed by the unthinking or malicious. But is my patriotic sensibility so great that I take fire at this as an infringement upon my liberties? Has their united abstinence from a certain supposed excess led to the clamour that the state was threatened, or our private rights endangered? Has their economy and rejection of ornament been considered as an invidious crimination of such among us as do not adopt their principle? The cases are parallel, and the candid mind will scorn to harbour an objection which, even if it can be comprehended, has no bearing upon the question. We lay down a rule for our own conduct, and we heartily desire that others should voluntarily assume the same; but we enjoin no law upon our neighbours, we use no coercion, we erect no new terms of ecclesiastical communion, we threaten no penalty. Still we claim the same right to declare our honest convictions, which the politician has to speak his sentiments, the

moralist to denounce vice, or the teacher of religion to proclaim the gospel.

It only remains for us to recommend to all who read these suggestions, the solemn consideration of this subject, and to propose to every lover of public order, virtue and happiness, the adoption of the principle and practice now defended. We shall not offer such an insult to their hearts, as to suppose that they look unmoved upon the sad spectacle of disgrace, crime and woe which intemperance has produced, however they may hesitate as to the expediency of these measures. To the ingenuous we may thus address ourselves: You have now set before you a method by which you may at least do something to save yourselves and your families from these fatal evils; by which, more than in any other way, you may contribute to public sobriety and consequent happiness. It has not been pretended that any real evil can ensue upon the adoption of the principle now recommended. The paltry enjoyment which you forego is contemptible, and below computation, when viewed in connexion with national prosperity and everlasting life. The rebuke or raillery of avarice and folly you may well endure, for the sake of an approving conscience, and for the good of your race; to use the happy remark of an honoured Senator, "it is surely no great trial, in such a cause, to be *the song of the drunkards*." Reflect, that even if there be but a possibility of preventing a fellow creature's ruin, that possibility is not to be neglected. Consider the subject but an hour, and you must be convinced that the hopes excited by these endeavours are reasonable, that already an amount of good has been effected which can be estimated only in an eternity to come. You may indeed be temperate without joining any association, or taking any pledge; as you may be a Christian without being a public professor; but you cannot be blind to the fallacy of any argument which would lead you to withhold your voice from this open testimony for virtue and public safety, which would restrain from lending the weight of your example and influence to a work which you know in your hearts to be pure and charitable.

There are occasions where neutrality is culpable, and where every citizen is called to be at his post, and to do his duty. Your influence is operating from day to day, on one side or on the other. Your example is cited, either for or against this enterprise. While you waver or delay, thousands are rushing onwards to disgrace and ruin. Are you willing to stand in the

way of this reform? Can you, dare you, in the sight of a holy God, set up your business, your earthly gains, your reputation among irreligious men, as motives to outweigh the high persuasive reasons urged by duty and benevolence? And will you be able, with any complacency, to look back from your dying bed, upon the advances of temperance so gloriously carried forward, and remember, that you had no part in this blessed undertaking, that you were unwilling to relinquish the manufacture, the sale or the use of a destructive drink, for the strong probability of saving souls and glorifying God?

Far be it from us to use the language of reproachful accusation. There may be many who still stand aloof because they have not yet discerned the path of duty; but we would call upon such, upon men of tender consciences to espouse the *safe* side, to avoid the very appearance of evil, to neglect no means which are innocent, and which even by possibility may stay the plague. By tampering with the poison, they may ruin their own peace, destroy their families, and vitiate the purity of their associates. By providing it for others, with whatever intention, they are ministering to the madness, the blasphemy, the crime of the drunkard; spreading before the ignorant and the unthinking the snare into which even the wise and the honourable have been inveigled. They are filling up the cup of bitterness for the more than widowed wife, and rivetting the chains of poverty on the children, who, though not yet orphans, know not the tender mercies of a father. And though the temperate only receive it at their hands, they are assisting them in the first step of that way which has led its millions to everlasting fire. Let such be exhorted to come to a decision, to spread before God in solemn prayer the doubts and anxieties of their minds on this subject. It is unwise to become offended or reject what is now proposed: it is the duty of all to seek the direction of the Holy Spirit. The father will surely be moved by the love he bears to the little ones who gather around his knees, and who are yet to endure these perilous temptations, to leave nothing undone which affords a hope of changing the habits of society, and banishing this cup of enchantment and sorcery.

In this great cause our hope is in God. Let us, therefore, with united supplications, implore the aid of that wisdom which is from above, and the blessings of that *Father of lights* from whom *cometh every good gift and every perfect gift*.