

prehend the sinfulness of this sin. We may lay it down, that in this work we have done nothing, till a man is ready to say from his very heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

But assuming that this acknowledgment has been obtained, ought any further steps be taken, with the view to the reclaiming permanently such a one as we have supposed to have consulted us.

I am clearly of opinion, nor do I anticipate any dissent from my assumption, that total abstinence from intoxicating liquor is essential for him who has been a drunkard and who is now struggling to be free. To apply words of Holy Scripture belonging to another subject, the motto of this one ought to be "Touch not, taste not, handle not." To touch the viper is to invite his attack. No one but the unhappy man can estimate the force of the temptation which the permission to himself of that which may intoxicate, exercises. The taste or even the smell, sometimes the very sight of liquor, is fatal. The barrier of resolution which seemed strong, is swept away in a moment, because it was exposed to the assault of the enemy. I am persuaded that the drunkard's only hope, in a human point of view, is in *abstinence*. There is no use talking to him of *moderation*, as the true temperance. It may be so in the abstract, but to the man whose case I am supposing it is an utter impossibility.

At this point, however, I arrive at what may be considered debateable ground. Some of you may henceforth differ from me, having hitherto gone fully with me. If abstinence is necessary, shall we *pledge* the man who is trying to reform, to the observance of it? I am aware that, as Christians, we are already pledged, not to abstinence, but to temperance, and in the distinction between these two, I find my justification when I answer my question, by saying that a pledge is oftentimes an advisable thing.

I do not believe the moderate use of intoxicating drink to be sinful. I do not agree with those well-meaning persons who find total abstinence enjoined in the Bible as a positive and universal duty.