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DOUGHT PARENTS TO ENCOURAGE THEIR CHILDREN TO BECOME MEMBERS OF JUVENILE ABSTINENCE SOCIETIES?

This is at present an important practical question. Juvenile abstinence societies are springing up throughout our country; and they are likely to go on increasing, till we have them in every town and village. What, then, are parents to do when their children wish to join these societies? Shall they give, or withhold their consent? Shall they encourage, or dissuade them? Those parents who are anxious to know what is present Christian duty, in reference to this important matter, we invite carefully to consider the following statements, and to remember that not only their own comfort, but their children's present and future welfare, may depend on their deciding rightly.

Juvenile abstinence societies imply, that as *1st* the present customs of our country, there is danger even to the young. And this is fearfully true. It is dangerous to allow children to taste even a little of anything that is intoxicating. There may at first be an aversion to it. But this aversion soon gives way, and a liking, not so much, perhaps, for the mere article itself, as for the pleasurable excitement which it produces, is created. And this liking soon becomes a longing. And this longing, even by slight and distant indulgences, continues and strengthens. And thus thousands are ruined. A young lady, who died the drunkard's death, said—'I learned to love it while yet a child. I drank the drops left in the glasses, and, when unseen, would take a mouthful from the decanter.' 'When a child,' said a young man, 'my father was in the custom of taking me on his knees at dinner-time, and giving me one tea-spoonful out of his glass. By this means the taste of drink was acquired, under the influence of which I committed the crime for which I am about to suffer death.'

Juvenile abstinence societies proceed also on the principle, that *prevention is better than cure*. And, considering that drunkenness prevails so greatly in our country—that the paths which lead to it are so numerous, and so full of danger—that the habit, when once formed, is so potent in its influ-

ence, and so difficult to be overcome—and that so many, even of our youth, are ensnared and ruined; is it not Christian duty to employ every reasonable precaution in our power? 'In a Sabbath School, consisting at a particular period of 100 scholars, the character of '65 was, in after years, fully known. 38 had become confirmed drunkards; 5 had been transported; and 1 had been the cause of his mother's death in a public-house.' These are startling facts; and to parents especially, speak trumpet-tongued their own application.

But you may think that there is no danger to your children, so long as they are at home, and under your own inspection. Supposing this were true, which it is not, we ask, may you not soon be taken away from them? or, if spared, are you not looking forward to the breaking up of your family, when some of them must leave the paternal roof, and encounter, far away from your eye and your aid, the temptations of the world? And have you no anxieties about that period? Have you no fears when you remember how many others have fallen, that some of your children may fall too? And if they should—if those so dear to you, and at present so promising, should do, as some that you know have done; oh, how heart-rending! You could never bear it. It would soon bring you to your graves. The very thought of it is full of anguish. Well, the point which you have now to consider, and which, both for your own and your children's sakes, we are anxious that you should decide rightly, is this—*Whether, in the circumstances supposed, would your children be safer, as trained and practised abstainers, or without this training and practice?*

They would be safer, we say, as trained and practised abstainers. And here are our reasons; and we invite all reasonable men to ponder them; and call on all upright men to carry them out practically, so far as they see reason in them:—

As trained and practised abstainers, they go forth armed within and without. As applied to the young especially, total abstinence is not a system of mere negation. It seeks not only to prevent evil, but to implant good; not merely to prohibit pleasures that are pernicious, but to put pleasures that are pure, and refining, and ennobling, in their room. In our societies, accordingly, in addition to instruction in abstinence principles, and counsels and cautions in reference to the dangers arising from the drinks and drinking usages of our country, there is a regular system of intellectual and moral training; and the whole is carried on in the spirit, and followed by the services of religion. Thus do we endeavor to discipline and fortify your children. And may we not hope that, by the Divine blessing, these endeavors will not be altogether in vain; and that they will go forth to the world internally stronger, and therefore safer, than those who have not been so disciplined?

But the practised abstainer goes forth, not only armed within, but armed without. At home, he had his little trials as an abstainer, and overcame them. And these little trials at home were preparing him for successfully encountering the greater trials that await him in the world; and he goes forth not only with the prestige of one that has already been