

Temperance Column.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

ARTICLE I.—(Continued.)

The aim, moreover, has been to reproduce, as far as possible, the harmony of local independence with loyalty to a central authority, itself representatively English, both in Church and State. Naturally, as in our English Constitution, the growth has been marked by some irregularities, which it is now, we understand, intended to remove. Naturally, too, the attempt to realise that harmony, while, on the whole, it has been liable to defects and difficulties, from which a narrower system might have been free. But, again, this resolution to be in the strictest sense a Church Society, to cover the whole Church ground, and to subordinate itself to Church organisation and authority, is absolutely essential, if the Society is to rise to the ideal which is expressed in its name.

Lastly, the objects of the Society have been so enlarged as to include in theory the whole of Temperance work. The object most immediate and obvious is still, as at the beginning, its rescue work—"the reformation of the intemperate"—which is, of course, carried out in what experience has proved to be the only practicable way—through the pledge of total abstinence. Here splendid work is being done in every quarter, most notably, however, by the police-court missions in London and the great towns, which are strongly supported by many of our leading magistrates, as not only the salvation of offenders at a most critical time, but as really a help to the right administration of justice in thousands of cases. The work, of course, has its failures as well as its successes, and those failures, involving the breach of a solemn pledge, are positively harmful; but on the whole it has been greatly blessed, and, as the Society obtains larger funds year by year, it will grow continually both in extent and in thoroughness. But behind this the Society has two larger objects—"the promotion of habits of Temperance," and "the removal of the causes leading to intemperance," which are evidently closely connected, almost identical. The former depends almost entirely on the social, moral, and religious influence, which the whole organisation of the Society is designed to foster—by its pledges, first, of sympathy and work from all, and then, from those who choose to take it, of total abstinence—by seizing for good that power of association which, especially for the young and weak, is so fatal a temptation to evil—by bringing up through the "Bands of Hope" our growing boys and girls in that abstinence from strong drink, which is on all hands acknowledged as natural and healthful for them, and so predisposing them to Temperance in later years—perhaps, above all by stirring on this all-important subject the great body of public opinion, especially in the working classes, so as to impress on the public mind and conscience

the extreme gravity of the question, with a view not only to "example," but to "exertion" against a common enemy. But it is the last object—"the removal of the causes of intemperance"—which most of all introduces the Society to a vast and varied field of enterprise. It must always be remembered that at the root of intemperance lies a craving for ready excitement under the monotony of life—perhaps for self-forgetfulness under its hardships—and, as connected with this, for the delight and relaxation of social fellowship. The causes which give to this natural craving a morbid and excessive power are many, and have to be met by many and various influences—some concerned with the material environment of life, some with social laws and conditions, some with individual character. It is clear that the Society ought to concern itself with all these, and to find room within it for all who will take up whatever special form of action for good most approves itself to them, but who are at any rate ready to do something at the cost of real labour and sacrifice. As a Church Society it must, of course, maintain its supreme religious character, relying, therefore, mainly on moral and religious influence. But the mission of the Church herself bears upon all the elements of human nature, and all the forces and conditions of human life. If the Society is to be, as has been said, "the Church in action," in the Temperance cause, it must cultivate a corresponding variety and comprehensiveness of function: and it is certainly right in boldly venturing on this universal crusade against all the causes of evil.

Such is a brief sketch of the growth of the Society in the past. What it is at the present time must be considered hereafter.—From "The Guardian" of August 31, 1892.

The Bishop of London on Intemperance.

The Bishop of London, presiding over a meeting of temperance workers, which was held in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, referred to drunkenness among women in the following terms: Of all the evils of the present day I do not know anything that is more terrible than the fact that just now there is—and that for the past few years there has been—a growing increase of intemperance among women. It is an awful thing to think of. I charge you not to forget it. I charge you, in all your relations of life, to make it perceptible that you look upon this thing as a horrible thing. It is a dreadful thing that men should give way to intemperance, but there is something quite revolting to humanity in the thought of a woman doing so—that the natural refinement, that the modesty of constitution which distinguishes a woman, should be degraded by so fearful an evil as this; that a woman, created to be helpmeet for man, and in many ways the very representative of the heavenly life to us—her gentleness, her tenderness, the special and wonderful charm with which God has endowed her—that all these should be degraded by such an animal indul-

gence. What can be more terrible to think of? If it has been permitted of late amongst us, is it not a kind of warning to us that we must be in earnest in this matter? We must be resolute and determined. We must not slacken for a moment in our exertions, for those who have been called to join in this work have God's call sounding in their ears, and woe to them if they do not listen, if they do not recognise what it is, and how assuredly we shall be called to account at the last for having used rightly or neglected that which God has made our conscience and our hearts to feel.

THE CLERGY AND TEMPERANCE.

The subject of Temperance is both large and difficult. It is large when you remember to how much it is applicable, and if you do not limit it to the particular detail of the use or abuse of alcohol. It is difficult when you also remember how widely good and earnest men, impressed with the evils which come from the abuse of alcohol, differ one from the other as to what is, and is not, to be understood by temperance. The subject of temperance occupies the minds of philanthropists, moralists, men of science, the medical profession at large, and of all who have at heart the best interests of the nation. It is being forced persistently on the attention of the Legislature. It is one on which judges at our assizes, chaplains of prisons, asylums, and workhouses cannot but have their say. It is one with which every earnest parish priest is being constantly brought into contact. It is one with which everyone who names the name of Christ is more or less concerned. It naturally finds a place amongst those things of which, as "good ministers of Jesus Christ, we have to put the brethren in remembrance." It can do no good, nor is it fair to say, as I notice one correspondent affirms somewhat recklessly, that as a class "the clergy of the Church of England assume an attitude against all great movements aiming at social and political reform; that that attitude is one of such coldness and half-heartedness as to constitute them in reality hinderers and not helpers in any Christian enterprise outside the narrow bounds of the Establishment." I cannot bring myself to believe that this statement is endorsed by the general consensus of Nonconformists. I will even go further and say, as a protest from this cathedral pulpit against such an assertion, that it is disingenuous to prejudice the question by such comparisons, and to import into it the acrimony of sectarianism. There are names, as honoured as they are widely known, of prominent clergy in the Church of England who are in the very forefront of the crusade against intemperance. I am not aware—and I have many Nonconformist ministers as personal friends—that, as a rule, they reckon more total abstainers amongst themselves than are to be found amongst the ranks of the clergy of the Church of England, or that, as a body, they affect to set a higher example of moderation.—Dean Pigeon's Sermon at Bristol.

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