

pure, the large sum which went annually from licenses to so many publicans!

Hoping that these few statements may exercise some salutary influence through your columns on the public conscience and practice, I am, your workfellow in the good cause,

JOHN EDGAR.

Belfast, Feb. 2, 1836.

Original Articles.

Abstinence, a Scriptural means of doing good.

The reasoning of the opponents of Temperance Societies on the principle of Abstinence is somewhat curious. They admit that abstinence is lawful in itself—any person may practise it without blame if he chooses, for there is no precept which demands the moderate use of intoxicating drink as a duty. But, so soon as a person begins to do good with his abstinence, that moment, they say, it becomes unlawful—its nature is so completely changed that it is in fact transformed into an infidel principle, in direct opposition to the scheme of the gospel.

If any person can believe this, his mind must be strangely constituted indeed. If the above reasoning be true, it would follow that he who practises abstinence for the gratification of his own caprice, may be praised, while he who does so from the benevolent desire of doing good, is to be condemned. Moreover, since our opponents do not quarrel with abstinence, but with our using it as a means of producing consequences which they acknowledge to be good, it will also follow that, though an act may be lawful in itself, yet if it is attended with consequences that are good, it may then become unscriptural. Is it not evident to every unprejudiced mind that, if the abstinence which proceeds from no higher motive than caprice is not condemned by the word of God, that which proceeds from a desire to do good, and which actually effects it, is still more in accordance with it. For when good is to be gained by it that which was merely permitted before, becomes a matter of duty then?

Bishop Hopkins maintains that Temperance Societies "oppose vice, and seek to establish virtue in a manner which is not in accordance with the word of God, and that if they could succeed it would be a triumph of infidelity"—These are heavy charges indeed, but the Bishop very kindly furnishes us with the means of refuting them, for along with these charges we find an acknowledgement that Temperance Societies have done good. This single admission is fatal to his argument.

It is here admitted by the Bishop, first, that infidelity can produce something which

we would expect from Tom Paine, but it surprises us to meet with it from a Christian Bishop. It is admitted secondly, that there may be some "good" which is contrary to the gospel, but which is not contrary to infidelity—an admission which is liker Tom Paine still. There may be some kinds of good which are not expressly required in the word of God, but that any thing really good is opposed to the word of God is a sentiment which we maintain has more infidelity than Christianity in it. The good which Temperance Societies have produced is of the following kinds, as will appear from the extracts subjoined to this article,—the intemperate have become sober, and useful, and in many cases religious. Are we to believe that such effects as these are contrary to the gospel, and that the praise of them is to be ascribed to infidelity? Did any person ever become an infidel by joining a Temperance Society? We can point to multitudes who have become religious in consequence of doing so; can the Bishop mention so much as one who has been converted to infidelity in consequence of signing the pledge? How then can the triumph of Temperance Societies be the triumph of infidelity? If infidelity has any triumph in the matter, it is more likely to triumph at the admission by a bishop of the Christian church, that the gospel is hostile to the "good" which Temperance Societies have effected, and that infidelity rejoices in it, than at the universal prevalence of such societies.

Our opponents in discussing the scripturalness of our principles, delight to speak of the gospel and Temperance Societies as if the latter were something *totally distinct* from the former—a new device for preserving men from sin, which the gospel has had no hand in originating. Nothing can be more unfair than this, for it is taking for granted the very point which remains to be proved. The fundamental principles of our Societies—abstinence as a means of preserving men from sin in some cases,—is as old as the gospel itself—its application to the particular sin of intemperance, and by means of public associations, alone is new.

To determine whether any means which are proposed for attaining some object confessedly good, are consonant with scripture, if not specially enjoined, two things only are necessary to be ascertained. First, will the proposed means really accomplish the object in view; and, secondly, are the means lawful in themselves. Our opponents have admitted both of these, respecting abstinence from intoxicating drinks as a means of preserving men from intemperance; and have, therefore, in our opinion, granted all that is necessary. If abstinence is lawful in itself, we may lawfully use it as a means of doing good. If it ap-

pears that it will certainly accomplish any specific good, it is our duty to employ it for that end. And if that good will be more effectually gained by banding together in public association than in single effort, it is our duty to form and sustain such Societies.

We intended to prove still farther, the lawfulness of abstinence as a means of preventing sin, by referring to the abstinence which the Apostle Paul practised and enjoined. We must defer this, however, till another opportunity. We conclude by asking our readers, if, after reading the following extracts, they can admit that Temperance Societies are infidel in their principle. If infidelity really produced, and carries on, and rejoices in the prospect of the coming triumph of such Societies, Satan is surely divided against himself.

From the Temperance Penny Magazine.

GLORIOUS INTELLIGENCE FROM YORKSHIRE.

The question has recently been proposed to us with considerable earnestness,—*What is the usual effect of the diffusion of Temperance principles upon the Christian church?* This inquiry we shall answer by requesting the especial attention of our readers to the following truly interesting communication, from one of the most zealous and excellent friends of the Temperance cause in the empire.

It is to be observed, that Haworth is a populous manufacturing place, in the neighbourhood of Keighley, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It has recently been the scene of vigorous Temperance operations, carried on in connexion with the friends at Wilsden; and with sincere pleasure we add, that the incumbent of the place, the Rev. Mr. Bronte, and both the Baptist ministers, the Rev. Messrs. Saunders and Winterbottom, are advocates of the society. It is necessary also further to state that the principle adopted in this vicinity is that of abstinence from all the agents of intemperance. The following is the pleasing communication of Mr. Nicholls.

"A delightful revival of religion has been going on for some weeks in Haworth and its neighbourhood; Mr. Saunders has about sixty inquirers. He baptized and received into his church eleven yesterday, (March 6,) the first fruits. And in administering the ordinance before a crowded congregation, he testified to the value of the Temperance Society in having rescued two of them from the depths of drunkenness, and a third from intemperate habits. The other denominations participate in the zeal and increase. There is a general crying out, 'What must I do to be saved?' Confession, repentance, gratitude, and love, abound among us. The meetings, which frequently commence at five o'clock in the morning, and at night do not separate until ten or eleven, are always full, and the people always reluctant to go away. Several other reformed drunkards are attending the means of grace, and beginning to pray. The public-houses and jerry shops are eclipsed by the glorious Sun of Righteousness. O cease not your efforts, till Christians know their duty to their Saviour, and conspire against those bulwarks of iniquity and infidelity—those whirlpools of perdition!"

We shall not weaken the impression of this heart-inspiring communication by any remarks of our own. Immortal thanks be given to the ever-blessed God for rendering the Temperance