

## Temperance Column.

### THE RELATION BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZED WORK.

By the Rev. Dr. LEIGHTON COLEMAN,  
Organizing Sec. Oxford Diocese.

(Continued.)

The declarations required of its members are no new vows, super-added to their baptismal vows; but are the application of these to the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil—the putting into practice of what was promised at the Font. This is equally true of those who, either as an additional precaution against their own intemperance, or as an example and help to others, belong to the Total Abstinence Section; and of those who, in joining the General Section, agree to be temperate themselves and to do what they can towards promoting the same habit in others. Wherein does a specific pledge, e.g., against drunkenness, differ in principle from the general pledge against all sins? Is there weakness of character displayed in the one and strength in the other? Surely, it is not weakness to confess our weakness, and to use well-approved methods to overcome that weakness! And that this Society, as such, has been found by those who have joined it such a method, has been proved over and over again by many who were as brands plucked out of the fire. Many who, in the case of habitual drunkards, have been glad to avail themselves of the help which the Society affords for their reformation, hesitate to take the same step which they recommend to others. Not that they need in every instance to become Total Abstinents; although some, it may be, that think they stand would do well to take heed lest they fall. But evidently we shall have more power in persuading others to join the Society if it be known that we ourselves belong to it, whether as Total Abstinents or not. And as members with them we should naturally feel the greater interest in their remaining true to the pledge which they had taken. Indeed, we should, as such, feel it to be our duty to look after them the more closely, and do whatever was possible to enable them to receive the full benefits of the Society. When faithfully discharged, this duty forms one of the chief advantages of such an organization; a duty which cannot be, or at least is not likely to be, as efficiently discharged by individuals acting independently of each other.

There is a topic in connection with this whole subject which is too important wholly to omit, but to which I can only now briefly refer. I allude to the indirect advantages of our Temperance Society, advantages which in most instances, are almost wholly due to the fact of an organization. Among these may be mentioned: The more intimate and cordial relations between the Clergy and the people, and among the parishioners themselves, by means of the frequent meetings held in behalf of the Society. By

this same means, dissenters have in many instances been made more friendly to the Church; and from the mingling of all classes in the meetings there has been a marked diminution of the prejudices, if not animosities, that too often prevail because of social distinctions. Labouring men especially have been thus led to realize that the Church is concerned as well for their temporal as for their spiritual welfare. The numerous gatherings in connection with the Society have also afforded opportunities to many clergymen and laymen of becoming more ready and effective platform speakers than they could otherwise have been trained to be. The intercourse between the various parishes encouraged by such gatherings has become very friendly, and has led to a more general knowledge and appreciation of each other's work, and of the needs and prospects of the Church at large. The management of our Parochial Branches has been the means, too, of developing the latent energy and capacity of many a hitherto unknown Church-worker, who has proved to be most useful also in other departments. For it ought always to be the aim of those who are chiefly responsible for the success of this Society to urge upon its members the truth that drunkenness is but one out of many sins, and, therefore, that other virtues besides Temperance are to be cultivated and exercised.

Viewed in the light in which I have striven to present it, this whole question is one which no conscientious person can afford to ignore. Too often has it been reproachfully said that drunkenness is (if, indeed, it be not a very contradiction of terms) a Christian vice—some barbarous and heathen nations having been in happy ignorance of it until its introduction among them by the trader or traveller, the sailor or soldier from nations claiming to be civilized and Christianized. Too often, in these latter nations, have God and the Church been robbed of the services of men and women who, except for this one most baneful sin, might have been, by reason of their natural abilities and graces, amongst the most useful and honoured members of the community.

This Society offers, in its various departments of work, to all who are sensible of the manifold evils which drunkenness is causing, the means of discharging one of the plainest duties and of enjoying one of the richest privileges belonging to our Christian profession. Doubtless, outside of its ranks, there is wide scope for individual effort, according to one's predilections and opportunities. Yet I cannot but think that within them will be found the most fruitful field for their labours, and that if its members will be but true to its principles and to the occasions that may present themselves, they may cause a bright gleam to shine upon many an otherwise dark and dreary home, and be the means, under God, of saving many a human body from temporal ills, and many an immortal soul from death—Who made one His temple, and the other His own ineffable life.

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