

gence it has, and, when it becomes habitual, it destroys religious feeling; it is an evidence of want of grace, if not of utter reprobation in its victim. But it is remarkable that the text is as strictly applicable to intemperance in a literal, as in a moral or spiritual sense. Who goes stumbling along the way! *The drunkard.* Who takes needless offence, and indulges in causeless and often bloody quarrels? *The drunkard.* Whose frame is weakened by profligate decay, and becomes, even in life, a putrid mass of intemperance! *The drunkard's.*

Intoxicating drinks injure and ruin men in every way. In this world, the victim himself, his family, his calling, are all endangered. Three-fourths of the crime committed is attributable to intemperance. The Gospel and means of grace, the great salvation, is neglected through intemperance. And in this world to come, all is lost, and lost for ever—"NOT THINEYS, NOR CONTROLS, NOR DUNNARDS, &c., SHALL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

Intemperance is a gigantic and wide-spread evil; an evil which saps the foundations of health and morality, which is debasing and ruinous to individuals and nations. No man will deny these statements. Yet, when we might expect one universal burst of indignation at the vice and its abettors, there are too many interested in its perpetuation—too many who fancy they see some halo round the wine cup—too many who are steeped in the intoxicating draught, to allow that cry of righteous indignation to ascend. Nay, we have almost been led to look at intemperance as one of those necessary evils to be deplored, but which must exist, and which we need not strive to evade. This is a wrong conclusion. Intemperance shall be overcome in God's good time. But even were it right, it is still the duty of every right-hearted man to seek, by every means in his power, the extermination of the debasing vice. Consider,—of all the evils which assail the human family, there is not one more hideous, perhaps not one so destructive as this. War, stripped of its false glitter with which it is so often bedecked, is a monstrous thing. Visions of carnage, desolation, death, bereaved widows and orphans, start up before us when we see a right this "sport of kings;" but, even in war, there are some redeeming features. Famine is a dreadful visitation of God. The strong man, and the child, pining away for want of bread. The wasted mother, and her dead and dying children, are sights we hope may never be seen more; but famine has called forth some of the noblest feelings of our nature, in the magnanimity of sufferers towards each other, and in the sympathies and charities of the more highly favored. Pestilence is a fearful spirit-crushing affliction. There is terror before, and dumb despair in its presence. There is death—death everywhere, sparing neither cottage nor palace; but pestilence, too, has called forth generous deeds. It has been made, as during the plague in London, the occasion of showing to a craven-guilt world the heroism and self-devotion of the true Christian—the nature of heaven's nobility.

These are three of the most destructive in the long category of human woes. In all of them there has been some bright shading in the dismal picture; something to cheer the sorrowing heart, and to whisper hope in the ear of suffering humanity. But what is there to redeem the blackness, the universal fitness, and the ruinous effects to body and soul of drunkenness? For some generations back intemperance has swept over portions of the earth with a more stealthy, but with as destructive a hand, as any one or all three of these put together. And who was ever bettered by intemperance? It is evil in an unmitigated form. A master-piece of Satan. It debases and ruins the individual who has become slave to the habit—wastes his time—destroys his health—damages his reputation—and unbalances his moral character. So far in this world. But what of the drunkard in eternity? Here a veil is drawn, which conceals his fate from our view; but enough is revealed to fill us with horror. He has passed the dark river—he has gone before his God—while in the word of that God it is written, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God."

The evils of intemperance, as has been noticed, are not confined to the drunkard himself. He has

often a family. A heart-broken, sometimes a demoralized wife, and a wretched family of children. On these he pours his filthy abuse. Against them, whom he has vowed to God to protect and love, he lifts his sacrilegious hand. Even when he does not proceed so far as this, in many cases he is the instrument of bringing up his sons to vice and ignominy—his daughters to a life of infamy and woe; and, in every case, the tendency of his conduct is to produce such results. Here, then, is a family, a number of persons, through the conduct of one debased man, let loose upon the world, nurtured in sin and shame, and prepared for every crime. Here, also, are immortal souls, guided not into the way of peace, but led to everlasting ruin by a husband and a father!

The evils of this deadly vice stop not there either. Though the presence of the reeling sot excites only disgust, and scorn, or pity, yet there is an influence wielded by drinking men, especially by moderate drinkers, which induces others to follow their example; and the better and the more esteemed these men are, the more pointed and deadly are the darts which their example casts against society. Numbers are led away—a widening circle is formed—crimes are multiplied in the land—reigion is checked—souls are perishing in lust, and every land of wickedness. What is there to cheer in the dismal recital of the doings of intemperance? Nothing. Men picture to themselves enjoyment in the wassail-cup, but it is a costly delusion. A poet has spoken of "the feast of reason, and the flow of soul," and this language has been applied to the intemperate feast, and the debauch; but they knew they had first made this application, and they know they lie who repeat it. Surely we may now say that intemperance, and the common use of intoxicating liquors, are causes of stumbling and offence—of weakness—yea, of death to our brethren.

2. Our use of intoxicating drinks is at least a thing indifferent. We are not enjoined to use them by God.

I do not, for my part, think that the common use of such liquors is an indifferent matter; the tendency of the evil custom is directly to injure and brutalize the man; and if so, it is a sin to use them—a *sin per se*. But this is not insisted upon now. The most strenuous advocates for the use of spirituous liquors have all they can ask for, when we speak of such usage being at least an indifferent matter to an individual. And this is sufficient to make the case clear. God has not commanded us to use intoxicating drinks. No man considers that he commits sin when he refuses to drink them.

3. We can live in the full enjoyment of health, and in the comforts of life.—We can fulfil our duties in every position to God and man as well without intoxicating drinks. None are more healthy and happy—none have bodies and minds more vigorous and better fitted for earthly business, than those who never taste the wine cup. None are better qualified for glorifying their God, serving him with sobriety and faithfulness, than they.

Spirituous liquors may be of service in some cases of sickness. I do not judge of that; but then they are lawfully resorted to when prescribed by a physician, or, at least, when honestly used as a remedy. They are not necessary for the healthy performance of the functions of life. We can do without them.

Now, mark the conclusion. We have seen,—1. That the use of intoxicating liquors is a cause of stumbling, offence, weakness; yea, the cause of misery, crime, and death, and eternal ruin to men.

2. That no duty would be neglected—no disobedience to God—no guilt incurred by not using them. And 3. That we do not necessarily require them. It follows then, irresistibly, if the doctrines propounded be truly found in the Bible, justly inferred from our text, that it is the duty of every professing follower of Christ, for the truth's sake, out of love to perishing souls, and at the command of him whom he calls Master, to abstain from the common use of intoxicating liquors, and to mark his abhorrence of drinking usages in the strongest manner. And if this be duty, then, every moment

that it is neglected after a knowledge of it, we live in wilful—known sin.

I will notice here a few objections that I have heard urged against total abstinence, and endeavor to answer them:

Obj. 1. "Are we to curtail our enjoyments because infatuated men abuse the gifts of God, and make them ministers to sin?" Yes, if we are Christians. We are to bear each others burdens. Like Christ, we are not to please ourselves. And if indeed the mind that was in Christ be found in us, we'll give up many things for the salvation of a soul and the glory of His name. It is also worthy of observation, that there is a remarkable similarity in this objection to a question which Cain once put to the Lord, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Obj. 2. "There is no express command in the Bible to abstain." There are abundance of inferential ones just as obligatory, and one very pointed in the text. But the whole word of God, as it condemns theatres, immoral publications, &c., and as it enjoins Missionary and Bible Societies, and kindred institutions—condemns what leads to evil, and enjoins the contrary—in this case enjoins total abstinence.

Obj. 3. "Godless and worldly men are engaged in the cause of abstinence, and speaking and doing evil in promoting it." If the conscience of a professing Christian, who employs such an objection, be not seared as with a hot iron, his cheeks should be suffused with shame when he speaks. What was the Church about? What were our Professors, who shrink at the touch of godless men, about, when these godless men had to take up the cause of sobriety? If godless men had done their duty, they would have forestalled the wicked. Let every honest man now see his duty, and seek to remedy his past neglect.

In conclusion, let me urge upon every reader the pressing duty of engaging with all his heart in the promotion of temperance principles. Men will tell you that we speak more of temperance, and seem to set a higher value on that virtue, than on the gospel of Christ. Would to God that we heard less of gospel from such lips, and saw more of it in their conduct. Temperance is one ray from the Sun of Righteousness. Pray that the beams of that glorious sun may soon irradiate every land and every heart, and then intemperance, and false brethren, and every evil, will depart.

Shun the temper and the intoxicating cup. We want it not; the idle vagabond may need it to wile away his time in beastly stupefaction; the cowardly miscreant, who dares not confront a man, his fellow, may need it to put him into a proper temper to abuse his innocent wife and children; the assassin may need it to nerve his hand and steel his heart, when he aims the deadly weapon at the heart of his victim; the murderer may seek its lethæan mixture to drown the voice of conscience, and to shut his eyes from the blood that haunts his footsteps; but I trust, dear readers, that you need it not, and that, as honest God-fearing men, you will abjure the sinful custom, and seek to banish it from your neighbourhood, and drive it from the earth. Consider all again. Test it in the hour of secret prayer with your God, and see whether I have spoken the words of truth and soberness, and then act in the matter as in the sight of, and in view of your accountability to, the Judge of all.

We understand that the Hamilton Presbytery have gone vigorously to work, visiting the congregations within its bounds on behalf of the Sustentation Scheme, a deputation of ministers, named by the Presbytery, obtaining the assistance of one or more laymen to accompany them.

Cannot all our Presbyteries do likewise?

Philip Henry was wont to observe, for the encouragement of such as had meetings in their houses, which sometimes drew upon them inconveniences, that the ark is a guest that always pays well for its entertainment.