

of all sorts, would greatly contribute to the health, the prosperity, the morality, and the happiness of the human race."

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SERMON ON TEMPERANCE.

BY THE REV. CHARLES MACKAY, NEW BRUNSWICK.

"O thou man of God, there is death in the pot."—3d. Kings, iv. 40; second last clause.

"Whatsoever things" says the Apostle Paul "were written aforetime, were written for our learning." We may, therefore, my brethren, derive instruction from the facts of sacred history, as well as from the principles, the doctrines, and the precepts of the Gospel of Christ. Let us look then at the historical fact, which stands in connexion with our text, and let us inquire what are the *practical lessons*, which, as professing Christians, we ought to deduce from it.

It is mentioned in the chapter from which the text is taken, that God was graciously pleased to honour his servant Elisha by employing him to work several striking miracles, one of which is thus recorded. "And Elisha came again to Gilgal; and there was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, set on the great pot, and seeth the pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went into the field to gather herbs and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage: for they knew them not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. But he said, Then bring meal; and he cast into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot." You see from this history my brethren, that there was a "Great Pot in Gilgal in the days of Elisha, and in a season of great scarcity, and dearth. But there is a greater pot in New Brunswick at the present hour, at a time, too, when the cry of famishing thousands is entering our ears. There was poison in the pot in Gilgal, which for a while remained undiscovered. It has also been found out beyond the possibility of doubt, that there is poison,—destructive poison in the pot, which is amongst ourselves. So soon as the sons of the prophets ascertained that there was a dangerous ingredient mixed with their food, they refused to touch it, although it was an honoured prophet of the Lord that had bidden them partake. And should we not follow their example in this respect, and abstain from a thing which contains the deadly ingredient of Alcohol, whatever be the character, the talents, the learning, the piety or the standing of the man who would thoughtlessly or innocently tempt us to our ruin? The moment the persons around the Gilgal pot perceived their own danger, and the danger of others, they immediately raised a warning voice and exclaimed, directing their eyes to the prophet of the Lord "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot." And should not we, my brethren, who have discovered the life-destroying contents of the pot which is amongst ourselves, go to every minister of the Gospel in the land, and let each hear the warning sound both loud and long, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot?" No sooner was Elisha made aware of the dangerous contents of the pot in Gilgal, than he wrought a miracle to cure the evil, and to make the hurtful food to become safe, and then there was *no harm* in the pot. Should not we do so likewise? True we cannot work miracles now.—The day for miracles is past and gone, but certainly we can do *something*, and surely that "servant of the most High God, that minister of the pure and heavenly religion, which proclaims peace on earth, and good will toward men" will not be held *guiltless*, at the last, if he does not exert himself in some way or other to remove the intoxica-

ting pot altogether, or do something to prevent his fellow men from partaking of the destructive liquor it contains for the piercing cry issuing from the lips of unnumbered broken-hearted widows, and wretched fatherless children sounding awfully in the ears of every gospel minister, and that cry is, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot." Is this sound entering my own ears, and touching and affecting my own heart, together with a deep sense of my responsibility to God, which constrains me to appear before ye this evening, to address you on the interesting and important subject of Temperance.

I am well aware that it is a very common opinion, not only among Christians in general, but even among ministers themselves, that Temperance is not a proper subject for the pulpit on the Sabbath day. This, I confess was my own opinion until very lately; but I asked myself the question—Is temperance a *vice* into which some of the members of my congregation are in danger of falling? Then it ought to be exposed, in its nature, insidious tendency, and fearful consequences even on the Sabbath! Is total abstinence commendable? Is it the best known *temporal* security against the existing danger? Then, it ought to be recommended as a universal adoption even on the Lord's day. But there is another reason why ministers should take up this subject on the Sabbath and bring it before the minds of their hearers and it is this, many men are not their own masters, they have not their own command of time. They are engaged in business till late in the evening. They cannot secure leisure to go to the appointed hour to hear a week night lecture. And, moreover, many men who are their own masters, as who can command the time, are so prejudiced against the subject of Temperance, that they have no disposition to listen to anything we have concerning it. Yet these are the very men we wish to benefit. These are the very persons who are retarding the progress of our cause. These individuals are to be found in our congregations on the Sabbath day. And I ask, in the name of common sense, why we should not seize the opportunity thus afforded us, of endeavouring to interest these men and to enlist their sympathies on our side—by depicting before their minds, in vivid, burning words, the pernicious influence, the evil example, the dangerous tendency of even *moderately* partaking of intoxicating drinks? "It is lawful" says Christ "to do good," any kind of good, temporal as well as spiritual good, "on the Sabbath day."—Temperance, then, in my opinion, is a suitable subject for the pulpit, and I shall from time to time bring it before you as my judgment may dictate, or as circumstance may require. And when, as a church, you tell me that I must not do so, that I must not bring it into the pulpit, and introduce it into any of my Sabbath sermons, then, we shall be prepared at once to separate, and I shall go where I shall be permitted to sound forth the statement without restraint that in our own day, in the present existing state of society I regard the temperance cause as a glorious, godlike cause. I shall go, where, without let or hindrance, I shall be allowed to make it known that in my estimation the temperance reformation stands next in beneficent effects, to the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God." The one regards the bodies of men, the other regards their souls. We do not indeed ascribe to temperance, what the gospel alone can accomplish. But we do say, that in innumerable instances total abstinence has saved multitudes from wreck and ruin in the present life, has prepared them *soberly* to listen to the soul saving truth concerning Christ, has brought them where they have heard these truths faithfully proclaimed, and where, by the grace of God they have been made to feel their power so that they have become not only outwardly reformed, but inwardly renewed—not only saved in body, but saved in soul, not only received into the favour of men, but reinstated in the friendship of God, not only restored to their places in the world, but restored to the confidence of the Christian Church, not only brought