

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

OUR WORK AND ITS NEEDS.

[From the Temperance Chronicle, C.E.T.S.]

Before this meets the eye of our readers, the Church of Christ will have completed another year of her warfare; another year of her great account will be laid up in the archives of heaven.

We are concerned only with the branch of the Church planted here in England, and its responsibilities in relation to the national sin of intemperance.

What has the account been? Let us follow out the figure which the word 'warfare has suggested.

In the midst of our land a citadel has been erected, which, only too successfully, has withstood every assault directed against it. It is the citadel of strong drink. It is impossible to look around on the crimes which, whether for number or character, are the disgrace of our civilization—the cruelties, the murders, the suicides, the breaking up of family life, the disorganization of social life, the pauperism, the hidden vices of different kinds, the derivation of these, acknowledged by common consent to be mainly from the free, or excessive, use of strong drink—and not to see that through this one prolific cause the prince of the power of the air has acquired a seat and great authority among us, and has found in prevalent customs and usages and legalized traffics the stronghold from which his emissaries may overspread the land.

It is against this stronghold that the Church of Christ is bound, if she would not abrogate her appointed function of representing her great Head till He comes again, to set herself in array.

What are the conditions of victory?

It is not, it cannot be, by hurling a few weak battalions against the walls, it is not by confining herself to any one mode of attack, that an impression on such a fortress is likely to be made. It is the army itself, taking up its position; the army directed by the counsels and unseen Presence of the Great Commander, and characterised therefore by unity of purpose; the army investing the fortress on every side; bringing to bear every weapon and every mode of attack known to warfare—the sap, the mine, the parallel, the trench, the cutting off of supplies, the preventing the entrance of fresh recruits; and the attack, whether on outposts or on the citadel itself, delivered only when these, in their joint operation, have brought success within the bounds of reasonable expectation.

To drop the metaphor, it is not a single society, this or that, however well organized or largely supported; it is not any single remedy, such as total abstinence, legislative reform, Bands of Hope; that will be sufficient for the arduous conflict that lies before us. These and like agencies are useful, each and all needed, in their place. But the forces of the enemy are spiritual, directed by a master of stratagem; the forces of attack must be spiritual too. It is the 'Church herself,' relying upon,

and seeking the constant direction of, Him who is the appointed Conqueror of Satan; acting through the organization which He has planned; using all the powers and gifts which He has entrusted to His faithful servants; remembering that her weapons of warfare are not to be carnal, but 'mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds'; looking for the co-operation of angelic hosts to confront and hold in check the unseen hosts of the adversary—these are the main conditions of success in the great struggle. How far can we say that the Church in England has risen to them in the last year?

In looking for a favorable answer there are not wanting tokens of real encouragement. That the Church of England, through its appointed authorities, has long since recognised the true character and urgency of the situation needs no saying here. In its diocesan and parochial constitution it has an organization signally adapted to reach every corner of the land; it is by the C. E. T. S. that it proposes to carry on the warfare. It is full of encouragement then to find the Archbishop of Canterbury saying in his visitation charge:—

'So then the Christian Church it would seem—if it is to fight, if it is to conquer—stands now in the midst of a campaign and a peril, in which nothing but the supernatural vantage of Christ's presence amongst His troops would give them hope. To put it baldly—of the entire overwhelming necessity that the Church should strenuously contest the ground with intemperance, there is no manner of doubt. It is in one way the work of this present day of Christ, for, unless it is done, very little else can be lastingly done.' ('Christ and His Times,' page 124).

(To be continued.)

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