

every church on earth. It first sent down holiness to a world which lay in sin, and it first sent a Saviour to those who were not able to save themselves. It sent him not a stranger, but a brother and a friend—God in heaven—but born, notwithstanding, a man on earth, and a native of the land where first on earth the gospel was preached. And whether therefore from the instance of Moses, learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and in deeds—or whether from the instance of the Saviour himself, learned in a far higher wisdom, and mightier in words and in deeds than Moses, or any creature ever was—are lessons given for the practical work of the evangelisation of the world, which all who love the gospel of the Saviour would do well to learn. And if you have never learnt them yet, you have now an opportunity to begin. It is an opportunity which becomes less available every day you live. The nearer we draw to the grave, so much the shorter does our time on earth become. We cannot glorify God, or build up his holy temple, or send forth labourers to the harvest, when we make our home among the mansions of the dead. Whatever, therefore, our hand findeth to do, we are to do it with our might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither we are all going.

INTEMPERANCE.

Is the very able Report drawn up by Dr. Burns, Convener of the Committee on Synodical Visitations, we find the following remarks, under the head "Prevalent Sins":—

"In almost every instance intemperance was found to be the proximate or direct cause of those sins which rendered the exercise of discipline necessary; and the Committee would strongly urge that, in any pastoral letter which the Synod may issue, the subject of intemperance should be very particularly dwelt upon. . . . O how many young people are corrupted, to their utter ruin, by the vulgar ribaldry and the profane scoffs and jests to be met with daily and hourly in the well-known haunts of intemperance! Your Committee, however, observe, with pleasure and gratitude to our heavenly Father, that, in several districts, the decline of intemperate habits is specially noticed. . . . The Committee wish it were in their power to speak thus of the general state of the Province, but their impression has been that the sin of intemperance has been of late generally on the increase."

The following communication on this important subject, from the pen of the Rev. P. Gray, Norval, came to us very opportunely, and we would bespeak for it the attention and prayerful consideration of our readers:—

ROMANS, XIV. 21.—"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

The Church of God has been opposed in all ages by the same enemies—the devil, the world, and the flesh; but these enemies, while they have continually assailed the whole fabric of religion, have, at different times, varied their mode and point of attack according to circumstances.

Christ and his Apostles were opposed chiefly by the unbelieving Jews; the early Church by Paganism. At the era of the reformation, the mass of sin strove, with too much success in many quarters, to check the progress of the truth, and to stifle it where it had been received. Some time after that, infidelity, in the garb of pretended philosophy, battered the gates of Zion. And, in our day, besides other hostile measures, the hosts of Satan have disturbed and polluted the church, and have made awful havoc of the souls of men by means of intemperance.

At all times the powers of darkness and sin concentrate their forces more especially upon certain points. Then and there, when iniquity is coming in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord lifts up a

standard against it, and we are verily guilty if we neglect to range ourselves under that banner, and oppose a steady front to the advancing desolation.

Suppose that a country were invaded by a foreign enemy, and that the people of that country set to and fortified some strong positions on the frontier to arrest, if possible, the progress of the foe:—When the enemy approached one or other of these fortified positions, and saw that there would be trouble and loss in forcing it, and saw at the same time that other approaches were left unguarded, he would leave the strong position untouched, and enter by the undefended pass. And suppose that the men of this invaded country continued to busy themselves in strengthening their positions, minding nothing else, while the enemy was already behind them, in the heart of the country, laying waste with fire and sword,—whatever we might think of the zeal of these men, we would lightly esteem their discretion; we would pity the land that had only such for defenders.

Now the church—the professing people of God, that do not oppose sin wherever it appears—that do not specially oppose the prevailing and prominent wickedness of their day, are acting just such a foolish part; and there can be no folly of this kind without guilt: the fool of the Bible is not an harmless idiot, but an enemy to the truth of God.

Intemperance in the use of intoxicating drinks is one of the great evils of the present day—a deadly enemy to the gospel of Christ, and also, apart from higher considerations, one of the sorest plagues to our fellow-creatures as denizens of this world.—It is, therefore, our instant duty, as men who would desire the welfare of our fellows—above all, it is our duty, as professing followers of the Lamb, to oppose, by every means in our power, the progress of this desolating plague, ruinous alike to the bodies and souls of men. If there be any true benevolence in our hearts—if there be any true love to Jesus, we cannot but count intemperance our enemy, even as it is the enemy of Christ, and the destroyer of man. Our duty then, as soldiers of the cross, is at once to set ourselves against this foe, with the determination of opposing it in every form, till vanquished it quits the field. And with regard to the path of duty—the means to be employed for the suppression and eradication of the vice, we are not left in the dark. The Word is a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our path. That holy word, blasphemously and vilely prostituted by ignorant and wicked men, to support and encourage the drunkard gives no uncertain indication, but clearly points out to all who will be guided by it, what course they should pursue in this matter. That we may be led to see this path of duty, let us endeavour to direct our minds of prejudice, and let us come in the Word of God with that reverence and humility, and that sincere desire to be guided by its precepts, which God demands of us.

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, etc."—*Vide text.*

The occasion that called for this precept was this:—The Church of Rome was composed of various classes of converts; some had been Jews or Gentile proselytes, and some Pagans; some were well-informed strong-minded men; others were comparatively ignorant and weak. They were surrounded by idolatry and idolaters on every side; the very usages and customs of the times were to them causes of annoyance and temptation. The sacrifices and oblations that were offered in the heathen temples, after a part had been consumed upon the altar or poured out before the idols, became the property of the priests, and as they could not make use of all the meat and wine procured in this way, the residue was sold in the public markets for their benefit; and the people who purchased these for necessities of life, not only satisfied their bodily wants therewith, but considered that, in partaking of these things that had been offered to the gods, they were also performing a religious duty to the honor of their idols. Some of the members in the Roman Church, who knew that an idol was nothing, were in the habit of using such meats just as they would any other; others, weaker in intellect and beset by superstitious fears,

were horrified to see their brethren giving countenance, as they thought, to idol-worship; and a third class, with all the weakness and superstition, but without the firmness, of the second, were carried away, by the example of the more enlightened, to do that of which their consciences disapproved—urged also, perhaps, to this course by the desire of securing the good will of their heathen friends and neighbours; in their state of mind they thus actually gave a kind of involuntary worship to the false gods of the Pagans, principle was subverted within them, they had not the answer of a good conscience toward God, they were made weak and stumbled, and very probably, many from this beginning were led by degrees into total apostasy. It was in such circumstances that the Apostle, moved by the Holy Ghost, gave this injunction, "It is good," &c.—that is, it is morally right—in such circumstances it is a sacred duty.—"neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine," &c. "No harm in the practice of itself in this case, but since it is the occasion of stumbling to the brethren, we must abstain from what in other circumstances would be an innocent gratification of appetite. Observe here that the Apostle does not mean that we are to neglect any command-duty, nor that we are to forego any necessary usage in order to please the unreasonable or the factious—God must be obeyed and pleased rather than man—but the flesh and wine in such cases could be got another way, or people could live without these articles of diet. From this passage we deduce the following doctrines:—

1. It is the duty of professing Christians to abstain even from lawful and innocent gratifications, if these prove the means or occasion of ruin or hurt to others, so long as they do not, by seeking to please others, injure themselves, or become unfaithful to God. And it follows from this,—

2. That every soul that sees this duty, and yet neglects it, has the guilt of disobedience to God—self-pleasing—and the death of souls to answer for.

By bringing these doctrines to bear on the matter in hand, our duty, in regard to intemperance, will plainly appear.

One point more to clear up before advancing further. Some have been heard to contend that, because this text had a direct reference to meats and wine offered to the idols, it cannot be applied to the subject of intemperance at all! It is an evident sign of a bad cause when its advocates, in all other respects of a sound mind, make themselves ridiculous in supporting it. Such an argument would never be used by an intelligent man, had he not a deep interest in maintaining the wrong, and did he not largely presume on the dullness of his opponent. In our text the Apostle lays down a broad principle, which will apply to every offence and cause of evil that may occur. It needs not that wine be mentioned; take that word away, and the injunction does not lose one iota of its force, "It is good not to do any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth," &c., therefore, "It is good" not to touch the intoxicating cup. But it is said that the text is directed against idolatry—its real or apparent encouragement. And is not intemperance idolatry, more debasing, and as ruinous to the soul, as was the worship of all the gods of Rome? To this idol—whose temples, reared everywhere in Christian lands, are reeking with the blood of souls—to this grim idol men come and offer up their substance, their health, the peace and welfare of their families—any feeling of affliction—any fear of God that may be in their minds,—nay, more, they immolate their very souls, the precious soul that worlds cannot purchase, before the vile image that Satan has set up. Therefore, again we say, "It is good" not to touch the intoxicating cup.

But now, in application of the doctrines of the text to the matter in hand, we observe:

1. That intemperance, the use of intoxicating liquors, does offend our brethren—causes them to stumble—makes them weak. These words in the text, "stumbleth," "offended," "made weak," are used in a spiritual sense, and have much the same signification, implying a hindrance to the progress, or an extinguishing of religion in the soul. Such is intemperance, even in occasional indul