

TEMPERANCE.

THE PROMOTION OF TEMPERANCE.

A SERMON BY CANON BUCKLE.

(Continued.)

There are many ways in which help can be given to the great cause of Temperance. There is, first of all, the personal example of careful Temperance in all things; there is the discouragement of occasional drinking, the refusal to offer a glass of wine in compliment to a visitor, or a glass of beer in return for some manual service, or either in the mere transaction of business. There is the removal of one source of temptation by the substitution of other pleasures in the provision of opportunity for social intercourse without the necessity of accompanying it by drink. Then, again, there are the improvements which may possibly be effected by legislation, such as the diminution of the excessive number of public-houses by just and fair arrangements; the careful supervision of those that remain; the employment of them for large and more generous uses by schemes, such as that of the Bishop of Chester which remove from the vendor the temptation to press his wares unduly upon his customers. All these are ways in which members of the General Section may show their zeal for the cause without committing themselves to the pledge of total abstinence. And very needful it is that they should thus show their zeal. It cannot be denied that zeal has hitherto been almost monopolised by the abstaining section. It is by them that the chief work has been done. It is from them that the life and energy: the force and vigour of the movement have come. The other section has yet to prove its sincerity and devotion by greater exertions than it has commonly made. And there is one very obvious way in which they can do this. No great work can be carried on without ample funds. Those who can do nothing else can give their money, and thus prove that they are alive to the misery of this great national sin of drunkenness; of the absolute duty that lies upon all of us to do what we can to subdue it; of the gratitude we owe to the great Society which organises for us the effort which, so long as we make them individually and separately, seem so funny, futile and insignificant.

But let me, in conclusion, add a word of caution against expecting too much from any of these external means. We must use them to the utmost, but we may not rely too confidently upon them. They will help, but they will not do the work alone. It is from within that the real motive power must come. It is only in the changed heart, in the renewed motive, in the elevation and refinement of the whole character that the abiding and effectual force must be sought. These are the processes by which drunkenness has been practically banished from the upper ranks of society. Why should we despair of gaining the same result by the same means in the ranks beneath?

Let us by all means make it easier for them by doing what we can to remove their special temptations and encouraging in them aspirations after better pleasures. But let us remember always that strength, true and firm, comes only from above. It is the spirit of the Church that gives the power of resistance. Faith is the victory that overcometh flesh as well as the world. He who aims at being Christ's purifies himself even as He is pure. The Christian is already bound by an engagement to Temperance more sacred than that of any merely human society; and he has the promise of greater strength than any human agency can supply. Some of us may be about to join the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. This should be the uniting sacrament of our Society, that which its members may be taught to regard as at once their bond of union and their source of power. It is wholly incompatible with intemperance of any kind. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. But the Bread of heaven here bestowed strengthens the soul to tread untired the dry and thir-ty wilderness, and to foil unflinching all the assaults of the tempter. There are two texts we may take as talismans of safety for ourselves in this matter, and of encouragement to the faint-hearted strugglers we would fair assist. One is the Word of the Lord Himself, "Without Me ye can do nothing." The other is the triumphant pen of His victorious servant, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—*Lloyd's Weekly.*

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