

should be established in sound and holy principles, having their origin above. Evil ones, like weeds, need neither planting nor nurturing care;—their existence, already, being by far too obnoxious. Our views on moral questions should be clear, luminous, and rooted, characterized by no loose swing of accommodation, and our action efficient, zealous, and with purpose. An individual of marked and decided character, whether identified upon the side of virtue or vice, preponderates weightily in the scale on which he leans. Mind is more accessible to error than truth, and recruits will ever be found swelling the ranks of both. The propagation of sentiments entertained is one of the leisure employs of life, and by this means the mass of mind is brought in contact, directly and socially; and in proportion to the amount of truth elicited and developed, will these collisions result in good.

There is a native power in truth, which, when lodged in the soul, will ultimately ripen, and produce its legitimate convictions. Who have not felt its power, at least in part! Reader, have you ever sat down, composedly, to listen to truth, and been suddenly awakened by sentiments uttered, which have touched an according unison in your own heart, and for the time a moral electricity pervaded the soul and held spell-bound and captivated its powers? Such was the influence of truth, fruitful in its repository upon earth, and fruitful for the garnering of heaven!

Of course we need hardly remark that the utmost caution in selecting pure companionship, and care for our personal influence should be exercised. W. L.

California, August, 1852.

**A CALL TO PROFESSING CHRISTIANS!
ON THE USE OF
INTOXICATING DRINK.**

BY A. DICKENSON, D.D., OF NEW YORK.

In *professing* the religion of the Bible, we covenant with God to make HIS word our rule of life. This requires us to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God;" to "purify ourselves, even as he is pure;" to "give none occasion of stumbling to any brother;" to "give none offence to the Church of God;" to love our neighbour as ourselves;" to "do good to all as we have an opportunity;" to "abstain from all appearance of evil;" to "use the world as not abusing it;" and "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God."

If any think these precepts too strict for frail men, be it remembered, God is too *benevolent* to prescribe rules of action *less* holy. He has given them, and they are "the same that shall judge us in the last day." Any *indulgence*, therefore, not consistent with these divine precepts, is actually

sinful; is *inconsistent* with a holy *profession*, and must disqualify us for "standing in the judgment."

That the habit, which some professing Christians still indulge, of drinking and tempting others to take intoxicating drink, in this day of peculiar light, is inconsistent, must, on examination, be perfectly manifest to those who admit the binding authority of God's precepts.

I. The use of such liquor, instead of enabling us to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable," *actually degrades, impairs, and prematurely destroys both body and mind.* The most eminent Physicians uniformly tell us it is poison. Dr. Rush, after enumerating various loathsome diseases of mind and body, adds, that these are "the usual, natural, and legitimate consequences of its use." Dr. Choynce says—"Pure water is the most suitable for man." Sir Astley Cooper declares ardent spirits to be poison, and the most frightful source of disease. When taken freely, its corrupting influences are strikingly manifest. And even when taken moderately, very few *now* pretend to doubt that it operates as slow, insidious poison, and inevitably shortens life. Nothing can be clearer than that he who, by any sensual indulgence, willfully cuts short his probation of life, is as truly a suicide as if he slew himself violently. He is by the law of God, "a murderer." And can this character be consistent with that religion which teaches, that *no murderer shall inherit eternal life?*

2. This habit of drinking is *incompatible with that desire of eminent holiness and growth in grace, which a consistent profession implies.* The great Founder of Christianity enjoins "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." A soul, animated with such heavenly desire, and aspiring to the image of God, will have no relish for any counteracting spirit. God's mandate is universal; "Be ye holy, for I am holy." And all professing Christians are solemnly *pledged* to abide by this rule, and make it their constant efforts to be like God.

To this end all men are charged to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul;" to "mortify their members which are upon the earth;" to "exercise themselves rather unto godliness;" and to "be kindly affectioned toward all men." But who does not know that intoxicating drink not only "eats out the brain," but "taketh away the heart," diminishes even "natural affection," and deadens all the kindlier feelings; while it cherishes those very passions which the Holy Spirit so pointedly condemns? And how can one "professing godliness," and aspiring to the divine image, drink that which tends to destroy all that is pure, and spiritual, and lovely, while it kindles in body and soul the very flames of hell?

3. The use of this liquor is inconsistent with anything like pure and high spiritual enjoyment, clear spiritual views, and devotion.

Abstinence from highly stimulating liquor or food has ever been regarded as indispensable to that serenity of soul and clearness of views so infinitely desirable in matters of religion. Hence the ministers of religion were solemnly commanded not to touch any thing like strong drink, when about to enter the sanctuary. And *this*, it is added, shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations; that ye may put difference between holy and unholy; clearly shewing God's judgment of the effect of temperance on spiritual discernment.

4. The use of intoxicating drink by professing Christians is inconsistent with the good order and discipline of the Church. A minister of great experience in ecclesiastical concerns, gives it as the result of his observation, that nine-tenths of all the cases calling for Church discipline, are occasioned by this liquor. This is a tremendous fact. And can it be right to continue an indulgence that is bringing tenfold more disgrace on the Church, than all other causes united? Do not these foul "spots in our feats of charity" clearly say, "Touch not the unclean thing?" "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh."

5. The use of *intoxicating drink* by professors of religion is *inconsistent with the hope of reforming and saving the intemperate.* The *Christian* knows that every soul is inconceivably precious, and that drunkards cannot *inherit eternal life.* He knows also, that hundreds of thousands in this land now sustain, or are contracting this odious character; and that if the evil be not arrested, millions will come on in the same track, and go down to the burning gulf.

The *Christian* who drinks just so much as to make himself "feel well," cannot reprove the drunkard, who only does the same thing. The drunkard may say to him, "My appetite is stronger than yours; more, therefore, is necessary to make me 'feel well;' and if you cannot deny yourself the *little* that seems needful, how can I control a *more* raging appetite?" This rebuke would be unanswerable.

All agree that total abstinence is the best hope of the *drunkard.* But is it not preposterous to expect him to abstain, so long as he sees *professing Christians* and other respectable men, using the poison? With mind enfeebled, and character lost, can he summon resolution to be singular, and live even more temperately than his acknowledged superiors?—thus telling to all that *he has been a drunkard!* This cannot be expected of poor sunken human nature. No; let moderate drinking continue, and in less than thirty years, according to the usual ratio of their deaths, armies of drunkards will go