

The Family Circle.

SIX REASONS FOR TEETOTALISM.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

Some time ago a professor in one of our literary institutions published a very plausible treatise to prove that we "*ought to use vinous and fermented liquors.*" There are half a dozen reasons why every kind of intoxicating drink should be let alone, except on those rare occasions when a wise physician prescribes an alcoholic medicine. The wiser the doctor, the more careful will he be not to create an appetite which may be as fatal as the disease he is contending with.

(1) The first reason is that no healthy human body requires alcohol, and the best work of the brain and of the limb is done without it. Alcohol stimulates, but it neither feeds nor strengthens. So far from being a true food, it interferes with alimentation. It absolutely lessens the muscular power. The young athletes in collegiate boat clubs, when training for regatta races, are not allowed to use alcohols. A famous pugilist once said: "When I have *business* on hand, there is nothing like cold water and the dumb bells." I once asked a celebrated pedestrian what beverage he drank during a walk of a thousand miles for a wager. He replied that he drank nothing but water or cold tea, and that if he had even drunk a glass of wine, he would have lost his race. He found that alcoholic liquors disturbed and wasted his vital forces. Whatever is gained by the first spur given by the alcohol, is more than lost by the reaction that follows it.

(2) Every glass of wine that contains a considerable amount of alcohol, and every glass of brandy or whiskey is an *irritant*. Our system recognizes the presence of an enemy, and tries to throw off and expel the drink as an intruder. Thousands of people call for liquors in the restaurants, or provide them on their tables with the mistaken idea that they promote digestion. Some persons cling to this delusion long after the alcohol has burned out the coats of their stomachs. Instead of helping digestion, the liquor hinders it; instead of warming, it increases the tendency to freeze, as has been proved by Arctic explorers over and over again. Dr. Livingstone, the heroic African missionary, was a physician himself, and he testified that he "could stand any and every hardship best by using water, and water only." Sailors and soldiers can endure hard fights in tempests or on battle-fields better with hot coffee than with any amount of grog. I have naturally a very frail system, but I have stood nearly fifty years of hard work, with plenty of sound sleep, and not a drop of alcoholic stimulant.

(3) A third reason for letting intoxicants alone is that they strike directly to the *brain*. Some drugs have an affinity for the heart and others for the spine. A glass of strong wine or brandy makes for the brain as a hound makes for the deer in the forest. When it reaches the brain, it overturns the reason and transforms the man into the fool or the maniac. A small dram will upset many people. I have seen young ladies in a social party whose tongue had been unloosed by champagne until they were unconscious objects of ridicule or of pity. No human brain is proof against alcohol; and when like the "shot between wind and water," it strikes the brain, it reaches both body and mind and soul, and sends them all to the bottom. The Church of God is bound to war against alcoholic drinks as the enemy who sends myriads of souls to hell. Total abstinence is to-day the strongest of all allies to evangelical

religion; the saloons are damning as many as the churches are saving.

(4) No one is absolutely safe who tampers with an intoxicant. It is always a deceiver. The deception lies in the fact that every glass of liquor increases the desire for another glass. A loaf of bread, a dish of beef, a draught of milk satisfy hunger; they do not breed a ravishing appetite. This fact makes it so difficult to use wine or brandy without running into excess. A habit of drinking is formed and confirmed before the drinker is aware. A famous Presbyterian minister, long years ago, used port wine to make him preach more effectively, and the stealthily ally overmastered him at length in the pulpit, and he was led home drunk and disgraced! He reformed, but it was only by the most rigid pledge and practice of teetotalism. Men often say that alcoholic beverages are "good creatures of God," so far from that God's *law against alcohol* is written on every human body in this fact that alcohol arouses a depraved appetite that demands more and more of the poison. Where one person is positively cured of disease by alcohol, there are a thousand killed, although the verdict of the physician or the press may often be, "Bright's disease," or "heart failure," or some other current cover for alcoholism. It is not easy to jump half way down Niagara.

(5) Another powerful reason for total abstinence is that you and I are responsible for our *example*. If the glass of wine on my table tempts any young man to drink, and he falls into drunkenness, I am largely responsible for his ruin! If he "stumbleth or is made weak" (as Paul expresses it), he stumbles over me. I am an accomplice in his destruction, even if he sees me drinking the social glass, and is influenced by my example. No sophistry can explain away or excuse my guilt. If we professing Christians tempt our fellow-creatures by our direct offer of intoxicants, or by our example into the *habit* of drinking, we just so far help to shut them out of heaven! On the other hand, an example of total abstinence helps to strengthen the weak and give courage to the irresolute. "Don't you ever take wine?" said an hospitable and rather jovial bishop to his neighbor at table, before whom he pushed a decanter. "Are you afraid of it?" No," replied his neighbor, "I am not afraid of the wine, but I am of my *example*." Every person who touches a glass of intoxicants fails to remember his "brother's keeper." When every Sunday school and day school teaches the wisdom and duty of total abstinence, when parents banish the poison from their own houses, then we shall see a revival of Gospel-temperance reform that will change the face of society and save myriads of precious souls. These six reasons for teetotalism are founded on common-sense and Christian duty; as such, I commend them to the conscience of every one who reads them.

"When weary of our work, it is well to take counsel of God. A season of prayer puts life and courage into the soul and brightens the future. It brings God into our activity, and imparts renewed vigor and strength. The trouble with us is that too often we try to do too much in our own strength, and so burdens multiply, and discouragement and despondency grow upon us. The more duty becomes lightened with a Saviour's presence, and is done in his name, and by his grace, the easier it is of performance and the more enjoyment it affords."

Every man feels instinctively that all the beautiful sentiments of the world weigh less than a single lovely action.—James R. Lowell.