

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.
EDUCATING THE CONSCIENCE ON TEMPERANCE.
 BY REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D. D.

If such laws as are proposed in our Commonwealth are to have value, their main value must be in the education of the conscience of the people in relation to the whole great subject so strongly pressed now upon the people's mind. A thing we must rejoice in is the awakening conscience of the people. The real wonder of the life of this past twenty-five or thirty years has been the awakening of the conscience, so that multitudes of men and women, with reference to the subject of intoxicating drink, are living under a control of self-denial, more or less burdensome to them—but that is a matter of personal concern—a control of which they did not dream years ago. There is thus a real power, a real strength, which must ultimately save our nation from the curse of intemperance. To many of us it seems as if restrictive legislation, which is not prohibitory legislation, but which is continually educating the restraining process upon the restraining consciences of men—upon those inclined to self-indulgence in intoxicating drinks, and those restraining themselves for the benefit of others—as if such legislation without prohibition is the true policy. But we will not discuss policies. If there is any subject in regard to which, while one feels the necessity of restraint—one would even in sober moments be naturally indulgent towards the most intelligent fanaticism—the subject is the indulgence in drink and the curse it brings. I have no reproach to bring against the most extravagant of temperance reformers. I may differ from such a reformer as to the means it is for the interest of the State to adopt, but I understand with all my heart the intensity of feeling with which it comes to seem to him that there can be no measure too sweeping, too radical, too venturesome for the suppression of that which lies at the basis and root of so much sin and misery that beset our land. There should be awakened broadcast the feeling and its expression that the people live for the State, not for themselves; that no desire of self-indulgence shall stand in the way of any measure by which they would struggle to put down that which is a curse to the country, that which those engaged in it prosecute without conscience, without consideration for public welfare, without public spirit, in the intense selfishness of their vulgar greed—that these shall not be allowed to stand in the way of the development of our land in every good interest, in every best prosperity, and in that character essential to them all. Let us take the position that to us seems best with a large toleration for our brethren. Let us have that conscientiousness with regard to the whole subject that shall make whatever measures we may have to adopt by the will of the majority

efficient, with a real strength behind them of popular conscience, with such a power in them that, being enforced by the strength of the community, they shall prove themselves to be either right or wrong, and either secure their stability, or give way to better measures as the judgment of the people inspired by its conscience, shall decree. The earnest desire of men for the best interests of the State easily passes into partisanship. Let us keep ourselves pure and broad—pure in the desire that society shall attain what God desires in it; that it shall be the image of his life and the theatre of his purpose—broad in order that we may be ready to accept any trust and best method by which at the time it may seem those great purposes may be achieved.—*Parish Monthly.*

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