

4thly. *The civil laws by which society is governed.*

There are certain great boundary lines within which men must be kept, or society and nations would run into confusion and mutual destruction. The liberties of men, their property, and the security of their lives and homes, must be preserved. But drinking carries the conscience not only into open rebellion against the laws of God, but also into utter disregard of the civil statutes of society. Drinking engenders idleness and dissipation. These lead to improvidence and recklessness. These will be followed by craft and cunning, by evil associates, and leaguishness with the vicious and dangerous orders of society. Debts will be contracted—the industrious and orderly tradesman will be plundered. Then thefts, processes of swindling, and other crimes against property will follow. Dishonesty and utter disregard of other men's rights, drinking speedily produces. Men often first plunder their own homes, and then the habitations of others. The man who will rob his wife of her raiment, and his children of their food, for drink, is not likely to stop even in that degraded and inhuman position. Hence, nine-tenths of all our criminals are made, and trained, and sustained, and perfected in their lawlessness in the tavern, beer-shop, and the gin palace. The pickpocket, the burglar, and the murderer, are alike dependent for their demoniacal daring on the intoxicating medium. And from the extravagant self-ruined bankrupt to the vilest and deepest blood-stained criminal, there is no instance where drink has not been the main incentive in the business of desolation and horror. How clear, then, that drinking and lawlessness are almost inseparably allied; and this connection is not only between ignorant and illiterate drinkers, but we see it in the self-ruined condition of men of education and intellectual attainments. This is the natural order of things whether the person be young or old; whether among the lofty or the low; whether found among the irreligious, or the professed moral and Christian population. Men, by drinking, have forgotten every law divine and human, who have had every advantage of birth, of education, of station in life. Men have been thus ruined who have swayed sceptres, commanded armies and navies, who have occupied the bench of the judge, the chair of the philosopher, and the desk of the minister. Men of fortune, of fame, of literary pre-eminence, of moral distinction, have fallen in multitudes—men in every profession and class of life, both in the world and in the church, so that we may well say; it is not for kings nor princes, nor senators, nor magistrates, nor men of science, nor for moral teachers, nor Christian professors, to drink wine nor strong drink, lest they forget the law. If evidence were wanting to establish this, I need not descend to the lowest haunts of the degraded and wretched, often the unfortunate members of society; but I would appeal to the testimony of men like Samuel Johnson, the Leviathan of British literature, and to the experience of Addison and Steele, to Pitt and Fox, to Sheridan, to Burns, to Hartley and Coleridge, and to a host of the greatest and most renowned in our country's history, whose moral weaknesses, and in many instances early deaths, would give both fearful scope and terrible intensity to the text: That it is not for any order or class of men to drink wine or strong drink, lest they forget the law. We notice—

II.—THAT THE TRAFFIC IN INTOXICATING DRINKS IS NECESSARILY ON THE SIDE OF THIS LAWLESSNESS.

1st. *It is based on a violation of the laws of reason and gratitude, in the perversion of the bounties of Divine Providence.*

If the intoxicating medium existed in Nature (which it does not), the question would then properly arise: Shall we not confine the use of it to disease, and place it by the side of hemlock and henbane and opium? But that which is the foul curse of the civilized world is not a natural production, but is the result of scientific discovery, a thing made by man's device. It must, in every instance, be manufactured by man, and is therefore altogether an artificial and non-natural production. And we ask: What is requisite to produce it? Not merely human cunning and skill but the perversion of that which is the very staff of life—the bread corn of mankind, sent by the benignant and kind presiding Parent of our race. This, the children's bread, is thus worse than wasted or cast to the dogs; it is perverted into poison. It is robbed extensively of its nutritious properties, and it becomes not the staff of life, but the fluid of woe, desolation, and death. I cannot conceive of any argument, either philosophical or moral, by which this perversion can be vindicated. It would be deemed unnatural to throw the wheat and barley thus prostituted to the dunghill: it would excite general indignation to heap together the untold myriads of bushels of golden grain and burn it; but either of these courses would be acts of mercy to mankind, if by this way the supply of the distillery and the brewery could be stopped. To employ it in the production of intoxicating drinks is a sin against reason, against humanity, against God—so that the very traffic is based on iniquity. Every creature of God is to be used, not perverted, not wasted, not transformed into a deadly evil. The manufacture of idols from the metals of iron, and silver, and gold, is not a more wicked and senseless line of action than the taking God's precious bounties, and rendering them, by man's device, the agents of misery and ruin to mankind.

2ndly. *It provides and offers to men the agent of demoralisation and crime.*

How few would be at the pains privately, and for their own personal use, to make barley into malt, and then to distil alcohol from it. The trouble and inconvenience would go far to prevent men from attempting the labour necessary to produce it. But by the traffic how extensively it is made and sold as one of the needful ordinary things of every day life. It is put before the public in every conceivable form for sale, and at every turn it meets you; it has its market during the whole of the week; it is associated with every device likely to render it attractive; its praises are spread forth in every form of poetry and prose; it is held up as the invigorator of the laborer, the cheerer of the lonely, the solace of the afflicted, and a cordial. It might be more necessary than bread, or more essential than the vital air. Water, the gift of God, and one of the real essentials of our physical existence and health, is condemned in most reproachful terms if mentioned in comparison with alcoholic drinks. This fluid is presented in every variety of color, and flavor, and degree of strength. It is said to be needful for all classes, and ages, and conditions of life. In one form it is clas-

sified with bread and beef, and thus it is offered to the working masses, and they are befooled as to drink it by millions of barrels in a year. In another form it is placed in the sparkling decanter, and it is to be in attendance at the social board of the rich the literary and the great, and without it hospitality, it is said, would wither and die. It is then respectfully conducted into the house of God, and the votaries of piety are taught that not only does it give vigour to the preacher, but it is the best symbol of the precious blood of our redemption. Thus at home and abroad, in the city tavern and the floating steam-ship, in the hotel and in the sanctuary, is this wicked and accursed thing paraded, praised, almost worshipped. Indeed if the preference of the heart constitutes mainly the sin of idolatry, then Britain has her monster national idol, and that idol is unquestionably strong drink, for whose degrading worship our land is crowded with thousands of polluted altars and temples. Having this public and prominent position, is it to be marvelled that the traffic should be the main agent in the demoralisation and crime of the land?

3rdly. *It breaks down the barriers to lawfulness both in the trafficker in drinks and those who use them.*

Men who make and sell these drinks first persuade themselves that it is right to do so. They believe and teach that to produce and sell these drinks is lawful in the most comprehensive sense of the term. Those who use these drinks have similar articles of belief; therefore the way is open for those to proceed, the one in dealing them out, and the other in using them with impunity—no barrier is therefore raised to the wide and dreary scene which drinking necessarily involves. It is thought as righteous, as safe, and as good to make beer as to make bread—to sell intoxicating drinks as any of the ordinary necessities of life. If the dealer does not poison over again that which is in itself a poison, and if the drunkard does not take it in doses so large that he falls its destroyed victim at once, it is all supposed to be right, and respectable, and good. Thus men are most deplorably deceived, and surround this real upas tree as though health and longevity, and not disease and death, would be inhaled from it. Thus men go and walk blindfolded in the midst of the most deadly pitfalls, and snares, and precipices of moral ruin, all the while exulting in the supposed absolute safety by which they are surrounded. And what is the result? Both the dealers and users, in fearful numbers perish. The withering mists of perdition could not be more adverse to moral purity or happiness than the atmosphere of drinking establishments is to those who keep them. The owners and their children live in a region of fearful moral corruption and death. The servants and waiters, as a rule, sink early by the ruin which they are hired to dole out, as a matter of trade, to others; and as is the morally hardened state of those who minister in these temples of desolation, so is the undone condition of a great proportion of the deluded worshippers. In every sense these places, however externally decorated, are wide openings by which the unwary and dissipated descend with fearful rapidity into the gloomy regions of crime, misery, and death.

4thly. *It is the ever present and active accessory in the perpetration of lawless deeds.*

The juvenile delinquent is usually well initiated in the art of drinking. The swindler.