

CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE

'It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor do any thing by which thy brother is made to stumble, or to fall, or is weakened.'—Rom. xiv. 21—Macnigh's Translation.

PLEDGE OF THE MONTREAL TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, DO AGREE, THAT WE WILL NOT USE INTOXICATING LIQUORS AS A BEVERAGE, NOR TRAFFIC IN THEM; THAT WE WILL NOT PROVIDE THEM AS AN ARTICLE OF ENTERTAINMENT, NOR FOR PERSONS IN OUR EMPLOYMENT; AND THAT IN ALL SUITABLE WAYS WE WILL DISCOURTAGE THEIR USE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 15, 1845.

A DELICATE QUESTION.

Can a man be a Christian, and at the same time countenance the drinking system, by using intoxicating drink as a beverage and recommending its use to others?

A few years ago when the nature and effects of alcoholic drinks were little known in comparison to what they are at the present day, this question might safely have been answered in the affirmative. But now after the light of truth has been brought to bear so clearly upon this subject;—after our most intelligent physiologists and experienced physicians have subjected alcohol to a most strict and impartial examination, and as the result, have pronounced their most hearty and unqualified condemnation of it, in any of its forms or combinations, as a beverage for the use of man;—after being aware of the startling fact from the most authentic sources, that more than two-thirds of the deeds of violence committed in our land, have their origin in strong drinks, and that at least three-fourths of the pauperism can be traced to the same cause; and that intoxicating drinks have poisoned and corrupted, brutalized and beggared so many who once were the fairest in community, and shone in the social circles, and in the literary and moral world as stars of the first magnitude. When all these and numerous other evils have been most conclusively proved to be the effects of alcoholic stimulants, how can a man comfort himself as a Christian, and still persist in vending, drinking and recommending alcoholic drinks as a beverage? This is indeed a delicate question, but however delicate, it is one which ought to be answered.

Christianity, if I understand its principles, teaches us to deny ourselves all ungodliness and worldly lusts; to avoid not only what we are confident is evil, and that out of which evil is sure to originate, but to avoid every appearance of evil; to be sober-minded, and to improve our noble faculties to the glory of God; it prompts us to lend our efforts to aid whatever is good, and directly promotes morality and religion, advances human happiness and the glory of God. It prompts us to study the good of our neighbours, even at a sacrifice of pecuniary interest; to labour with becoming zeal to correct the errors and follies that may have crept into the minds of the community; and it makes us willing to embrace truth, and renounce any prepossessions that neither science, philosophy, nor the Bible can justify. If these are truly the principles of Christianity, it follows that whoever knowingly deviates from them, or maintains opposite principles, cannot be a Christian. Now let us compare the conduct of a certain portion of the community, professing to be Christians, and who belong to Christ's visible church, with some of the above named principles, and see how they agree. The word of God teaches us to avoid every appearance of evil. Now if intoxicating drinks bring those who use them into a condition, through the influence of which, they are induced to commit certain acts in direct violation of conscience, the laws of man and God, they must be admitted as the cause of great evil. Indeed no argu-

ment need be adduced to prove this, for all admit it. This admitted then, we have to ask if a man can support the drinking system without violating the above command? Surely he who uses intoxicating drinks, treats his friends, and gives it to his workmen, he who is countenancing and supporting what the Bible teaches him to avoid! "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" says the Saviour, therefore if a man does not keep his commandments, we may naturally conclude that he does not love Him. Now to be a Christian and not love the Saviour is a plain contradiction.

We are also exhorted to be sober-minded, and press on from one state of improvement to another. When under the influence of alcohol a man is not sober-minded. His mind is in a state of peculiar excitement, quite unfavourable to improvement, and when he is intoxicated to any considerable extent, he has neither the disposition nor power to improve his mind. He is often excited to deeds of violence, and does that which he would be ashamed to do when in his sober mind! The mind in this state is deprived of its reasoning powers, is greatly enfeebled, and rarely if ever disposed to contemplate any thing of a grave and serious character. Although a man be affectionate and kind to his family, ardent in his devotions, and zealous in all his religious duties, yet when actuated by alcoholic stimulants, the effects of his religious culture are destroyed! Every thing which made him agreeable to his family, a useful member of society, and a pattern of morality is suspended, and every trace of his divine origin is annihilated.

Christianity prompts us to lend our efforts to aid whatever has a tendency to promote morality and religion, advance human happiness and glorify God. One of the great evils in which the drinking of ardent spirits consists, is that it tends to immorality and irreligion. Therefore those who support the drinking system, do more or less to support immorality and irreligion; while those whose influence goes to check this system are doing more or less to promote morality and religion. For it has been proved beyond a doubt that a reformation from habitual or occasional intoxication, in every instance, has had the effect to improve the morals, and in many instances to lead to conversion. Now if this be true, and Christianity prompts us to aid whatever has a tendency to promote morality and religion, is it not a duty binding on every Christian to put forth efforts to promote the cause of temperance, to be ardent in their attachment to its interests, and active in every duty calculated to extend its influence? No man can occupy neutral ground on this point. He must be either a friend or an enemy to this cause, and the position he takes, establishes which he is. No man who vends ardent spirits, makes use of them as a beverage, or as an article of entertainment, can be considered a friend to the temperance movement. And alas! there are many professing Christians, and indeed many ministers who do these things, and still try to maintain that they are friendly to the temperance enterprise. Said a highly respectable elderly gentleman to me a few days since while conversing upon the subject of temperance, "The temperance society is a fine institution, it has done a great deal of good, and I wish it success, but added he, I believe I'll have nothing to do with it." This is the language of thousands who profess to enjoy religion! Would to God that the scales might fall from the eyes of all such that they might become teetotalers! Then would this heaven-born institution receive a mighty impetus, and speedily rise to its bright meridian glory, and nations would be converted to the principles of temperance in a day! But so long as these oppose the cause, or by their influence hinder its progress, so long will the burning tide of intemperance sweep over the