

Christian Ministers generally were in favour of the principle of total abstinence, its progress would be much more rapid than it had been. It was seventeen years since he had abandoned the use of spirituous liquors.

The Rev. Hugh Bourne, of Burslem, read a paper which he had drawn up, and which he was allowed to read as his speech. Its argument went to rebut the charge of infidelity made at the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance. The quaintness of the style of reasoning gave rise to no little laughter in the Conference.

The proposition was put from the Chair, and carried by acclamation.

Rev. Mr. Tabraham, of Clitheroe, moved the next proposition. For the last twenty years of his life he had been a complete total abstinence, and had advocated the principle from the pulpit and the platform. The resolution was as follows:—"That the use of any kind of intoxicating drink, in business or in social intercourse, but especially at marriages, births, baptisms, and funerals, and at ordinations, and all other meetings of ministers, is a great evil, which has, in multitudes of cases, ensnared the unsuspecting, encouraged dishonest bargains, desecrated and embittered the most endearing relationship and solemn events, and exposed even sacred acts to reproach as well as suspicion, and, therefore, should be religiously avoided by all."

Rev. Mr. Franklin, of Coventry, said that both he and his wife were long-pledged teetotalers, and although in the 76th year of his age and the 50th of his ministry, he was able to preach three times every Sunday, and take his week-day amount of labour in the villages in his neighbourhood. He had been sometimes subject to extreme depression of spirits, even to a state approaching to insanity, and when in this state he was visited by a horrible imagination, and during his sleep to dreadful dreams. He had tried the abandonment of the moderate use of fermented liquors he was in the habit of taking as a means of escape from these torments, and the result was an entire absence of them. He was even in better spirits than ever, and last Lord's day he was able to preach three times. (Hear, hear.)

After a few observations from the Rev W. Roaf, the Rev. Mr. Ellis, a minister from America, said he had lived twenty-four years in the United States, and during that time he had seen not a few laid under the clods of the valley; but at none of the hundreds of funerals at which he had been present did he ever see any intoxicating liquors introduced. (Applause.)

Dr. Burns said that this was a most important resolution, as it had reference to ministerial practices. He reminded the Conference that many ministers were subjected to much persecution in connexion with this thing.

Mr. Scott, of Shelley, hoped the young ministers would be able to act on this principle in the time to come, in the spirit of the resolution.

Mr. Steadman, Stirling, said, that of the 500 ministers of the United Presbyterian Church to which he belonged, 100 were pledged total abstinence men; and of the eldership, it was understood there were 600 pledged in connexion with one society. There were no doubt others pledged in connexion with other societies.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

The next resolution, which was moved by Rev. Benjamin Parsons, of Ebley, was to the following effect:—"That the gift and use of these intoxicating drinks at the elections of parochial, municipal, and other officers, and especially at the election of Members of Parliament, is calculated to demoralise the British public, and to destroy patriotism; to encourage the traffic, and to rivet the fetters, of the licensing system, and to continue the bondage of the nation to those dangerous beverages, and, therefore, it is a solemn duty of all to shun these public evils." The speaker said, that if ever elections were to be conducted properly, Christian men must take a greater part in them than they had hitherto done. There was no reason why professing Christians should not come forward, and throw moral and religious influence into all public meetings and concerns. He begged to say that, demoralisation had not been confined to the masses. He had seen more of it among the higher classes on these occasions than among the lower classes, and that entirely from the use of intoxicating drinks. He had seen ministers demoralised, and members of churches, and they would never put an end to such scenes until they had put an end to the drinking.

The motion, after some remarks, was carried by acclamation, and the forenoon sederunt was brought to a close.

In the afternoon, the Rev. Mr. Solly, of Cheltenham, read an address to Members of Parliament on the subject of Sunday traffic in intoxicating liquors. It referred to the state of the people, from the degrading practice of allowing Sunday drinking on the latter part of that day. The testimony of judges, police officers, and newspaper conductors, was appealed to as proving that a larger proportion of crime was committed on Sunday, from the opening of public-houses, than during any other day of the week.

After some discussion as to whether the question of Government interference should be considered in a religious, or in a social point of view, it was moved and seconded that the address be submitted to the Committee and brought up at a future sitting.

The proposal having been agreed to, the meeting was adjourned.

On Thursday, the morning sitting opened, as usual, at nine o'clock, the Rev. R. W. Shrewsbury, of Retford, presiding.

The Business Committee brought up a draft of a ministerial certificate to be sent out in the same way, and to much the same effect as the medical certificate lately issued. The certificate was read by Dr. Burns, and the terms of it gave rise to considerable discussion, particularly in reference to the question of Sabbath profanation, in which the Revs. Dr. Ritchie, Mr. Steadman, Mr. McKerrow, Mr. Buchan, Dr. Burns, and others, took part. Dr. Burns agreed to the addition of certain words having reference to the Sabbath in the body of the certificate, and the motion having been put with this proviso, from the chair, was carried by a large majority.

Dr. Burns then read the address to the Ministers of the United Kingdom. It is an ably-written and powerful.