

The Roaring Lion.

A Plea for Legal Prohibition of Alcoholic Traffic.

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"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith"—1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

In the arrangements of Divine Providence, the means employed are always adapted to the ends designed. In opposition to Him whose understanding is infinite, man either seeks the end without the means, or else, uses means inadequate to the attainment of the ends intended. In no way has this pernicious error been more pertinaciously exhibited, than in the course pursued by the opponents of the temperance reformation. They insist that the moderate use of inebriating beverages is not only innocent but salutary in its operations, and that moral suasion alone, without the aid of human or Divine legislation, possesses power to prevent excess. The advocates of abstinence allege, that moderation leads to excess, and hence exclaim, "have no fellowship with, what in their opinion, is the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them". To illustrate the matter in dispute, it is proposed to employ the apostolic metaphor prefixed as a motto to the present essay.—"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith"—the faith that "abstains from all appearance of evil;" which prescribes "the cup of the Lord," but prohibits "the cup of devils." To this faith, the modern Bacchanals are as much opposed as were the ancient Bacchanalia. The Corinthian and Ephesian churches were forcibly admonished of the impolicy and impiety exhibited in participating with the drunken heathens. They were cautioned against a presumptuous confidence in self control, they were taught the importance of dependancy on God who suffered them not to be tempted above what they were able to bear, but as a faithful guardian, made "a way for their escape." Now if these things "are written for our admonition on whom the ends of the world are come," let us hearken to the inspired apostle, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Let those who trust so much to moral suasion listen to the persuasives of Paul.—"I would not," says he "that ye should have fellowship with devils." Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils."

Peter, in accordance with Paul, represents the devil as the adversary of the Christian faith, and with like zeal, opposes all compromise with the enemy. In truth, the mad rites of the Bacchantes, and the frantic revels of the intemperate are, by inspired authority alike proscribed. They are both infernal machinations. He who awaited the incautious loiterer amid the orgies of the ancients now awaits the unwary advocate of inebriating beverage in the tempting temples licensed by modern legislation. To instil a friendliness of feeling for these beverages together with the laws and usages by which they are sustained, diabolical ingenuity endeavors with unremitting energy, to familiarize the minds of many to the toleration of the monster evil, and a laxity of discipline ruinous in all its beatings. By these means, many, otherwise moral and religious, are reduced from that steadfast faith by which alone the foe may be successfully resisted. To prevent the accomplishment of this insidious scheme, the apostle raises his warning voice—"Be sober, be vigilant!"

Be sober, Nymphs; be abstemious; drink no wine that will intoxicate nor any other inebriating beverage—he vigilant, watchfully guard against the insidious wiles of your adversary the devil, be observant of every thing that "looks like sin, leads to it and borders upon it." Satan, as a "roaring lion," is ever "walking about," seeking, "in every place, whom he may devour." This fearful carnage is not confined to a single class, or to peculiar characters, but is extended to all classes, and to all characters. It is not restricted to a kingdom, or even to an empire, but with relentless ferocity, the monster preys upon the raven of the world. He is not indeed equally successful in all cases. Among the various vices that minister to his depraved appetite, there are some that contribute much more than others to his gratification.

See him in the forests of America, torturing the captive, sporting with his agonies, prolonging his miseries; mark him amid the myriads of Asia, cranching the car-crushed votary of Juggernaut, consuming the wretched widow on the funeral pyre, snatching the helpless infant among the monsters of the Ganges; observe him on the shores of Africa, skulking in the covert, rushing into the blazing villages at midnight, chafing, capuring, carrying off the hapless negro; behold him in Europe and her colonies, walking about in the haunts of intemperance, seeking, at the altars of Bacchus, the immolated millions whom he may devour; carefully survey the whole field of rapine, and say where do you discover the greatest devastation? Ignorance, idleness, and enthrallment, internal incantations, ruin thousands, but intemperance, more infernally infernal, the chartered spoiler, the licensed pet of state, diurnally devours tens of thousands.

In the haunts of intemperance the devil revels as a ravenous lion. Were our country infested by wild and ferocious beasts, patriotism, philanthropy, self-preservation, would alike dictate the most vigorous efforts for their extermination. Circumstances precisely similar in the case supposed, are actually in existence. Creatures, strong, fierce, and sanguinary as lions, led by the adversary, seek our destruction. Instead of using the means provided by divine benevolence, in order to our deliverance, multitudes, maddened by the drinking customs of society, rush into the jaws of death. In the indulgence of a vitiated appetite, numbers sportively approach the lion's precincts. Regardless of his proximity, they drink the waters of oblivion. Overpowered by its somniferous influence, they wander as in a land of enchantment, yielding by imperceptible gradations to its potency, they become in the end utterly disqualified for sober, vigilant, and steadfast resistance. Thus, a predilection for alcoholic spirits, moderate at first, but increasing by degrees, places the unwary victim directly in the path of destruction.

No longer deceived by the specious plea of moderation, temperance, with benignant aspect, seeks by total abstinence to accomplish our deliverance. Under divine direction, she has rescued many from the clutches of the lion. By the zealous exertions of her followers, and the increasing influence of the institutions founded and fostered by her beneficence, precautionary measures have in many instances been successfully applied. Impelled by successful opposition, the ravager appears more cautious in his move-