

Original Articles.

ON THE COMMON USE OF ARDENT SPIRITS.

From an unpublished address by the Rev. T. C. Wilson, of Perth, U.C.
(Concluded from the December number.)

But it is now time to be drawing these remarks to a close. The object of our present meeting is to endeavour to promote the cause of temperance in the world, and particularly among ourselves; and more especially to persuade those who have hitherto opposed or refused to assist us in our attempt to bring about total abstinence from ardent spirits, as a principal prevailing means through which drunkenness and all its manifold evils are caused.

It is, therefore, especially to you, who rank among this number, that these observations ought to be addressed; and we ask you in simplicity and sincerity of heart, What good do you propose to do to yourselves or to the world? What benefit do you expect to produce to the bodies or souls of men, to their temporal, spiritual, or eternal concerns, by making, or furnishing the means of making, or selling ardent spirits, or by drinking them, or giving them to others to drink, or by encouraging their use, or by refusing to assist in putting them out of use, or by opposing those who are endeavouring to do so?

We ask you, what good do you expect to yourselves or others from your conduct in thus acting?

As much, do you think, as will outbalance and make compensation for the inconceivable wretchedness and innumerable woes which the common use of this fiery poison has produced, and is daily producing in the world? If you do not expect this amount of good to arise from your use, and encouragement of this sorrow working drink, then are you bound by the law of God, which tells you to love your neighbour as yourselves, to renounce and abjure, and try to banish from the earth, the cursed cause of such misery and woe.

We must still in charity hope, that of you who oppose us, or who will not assist us in the temperance cause, or who will not abstain, nor persuade others to abstain from the use or encouragement in any other way of intoxicating drink, there are some who stand out upon conscientious, or what you consider scriptural grounds; and while we verily believe that you are in the wrong,—most grievously in the wrong,—we still wish to reason with you with all meekness and forbearance, but with earnestness of soul, and we ask you this simple question, and we beg you to ask yourselves in all simplicity and sincerity, even as if your answer was to be given at the

judgment seat of Christ, do you seriously think that it would injure yourselves, or others, in soul or in body, were you now to abstain from the use of ardent spirits?

The fact of so many now living in health without them, is sufficient to prove that abstinence would not be productive of injury. Did you ever hear of any being injured in this way? Never. And is there any thing in scripture which pronounces it unlawful to abstain from what we feel to be productive of no good? Much less would scripture forbid us to abstain from that which is hurtful to ourselves, or whose use we know to have been ruinous and fatal to multitudes in time and through eternity? and even though you love it, dearly love it, and think that it does you good, O be not so selfish as live only to the pleasing of yourselves; try if you can make this little sacrifice for the good of your fellow men. Do you call yourselves followers of Christ? Did not he deny himself for you? Did he not make many sacrifices, and at last that mighty sacrifice of himself upon the cross in behalf of guilty men? And will you who profess to be his servants, and call yourselves by his name, refuse to follow his example? Will you refuse to give up what you can well do without, even when you know how much it must tend to the welfare of others? He left you an example to follow his steps, and one of his apostles says, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

In conclusion, we call upon you who now see it to be your duty to abstain from and otherwise to discountenance the use of ardent spirits, to consider, also, the further step of declaring this your opinion and consequent resolution to the world, by adding your names to the list of those who are associated together for the promotion of this end. A temperance society is just an association of those who think it their duty to abstain from the use of and otherwise discountenance intoxicating drink; it is the medium through which such principles and opinions are more permanently held forth, than could otherwise be done. By this associated example and declaration of sentiments, the evils which the use of ardent spirits has caused are held up to the view and execration of the world, and a rallying point is fixed, and a banner unfurled, around which the friends of temperance may muster, and more powerfully direct their united efforts to deliver the world from one of the greatest barriers to the temporal and spiritual prosperity of man. Let your conduct now shew that your minds are made up to make war against this foe, and abstaining from all in-

toxicating drink, to rally round the banner which now waves so triumphantly in many a land.

ON THE TRAFFIC IN ARDENT SPIRITS.

NO. II.

In the last number of the Temperance Advocate, I took the ground that *the traffic in ardent spirits, except for manufacturing, chemical and medical purposes, was immoral*. This position, though resting on the clearest proof, may seem not only untenable, but in the highest degree absurd. I shall therefore, in this paper, instead of continuing the statement of evidence, lay before the reader the opinions of other men on this subject.

The following extract from Wesley's Sermons, will shew the world in what light that venerable man viewed the sale of spirituous liquors:—

"Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbour in his body. Therefore, we may not sell any thing which tends to impair health. Such is eminently all that liquid fire commonly called drams, or spirituous liquors. It is true, these may have a place in medicine; they may be of use in some bodily disorders; (although there would rarely be occasion for them, were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioners.) Therefore, such as prepare and sell them only for this end, may keep their conscience clear. But who are they? Who prepare them only for this end? Do you know ten such distillers in England? They excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder his Majesty's subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell, like sheep; and what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who, then, would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them—the curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of them. The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell. Blood, blood is there: the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou art "clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day;" canst thou hope to deliver down thy fields of blood to the third generation? Not so; for there is a God in heaven: therefore thy name shall be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, "thy memorial shall perish with thee."—Wesley's Works, Vol. 6.—Sermon 56, page 128, third edition, with the last corrections of the Author.—London, 1829.

Extract from the Rules of "The Society of the People called Methodists," to be read in each class, once in every three months.

"It is therefore expected of all who continue therein," (the Societies of Methodists) "that they should continue to evidence their Desire of Salvation, by avoiding evil in every kind, especially such as" "Drunkenness: buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity."

It is a singular fact that the followers of