

Fifth,—If it were true that you do not hurt yourself, you are hurting the temperance reformation. The temperance movement is now one of generally acknowledged excellence. It stands conspicuous in the march of moral advancement and philanthropic exertion. It is very probable that you consider yourself a friend of temperance, and rejoice in the good it has accomplished; but by drinking, though little and seldom, you are not only standing aloof from the movement, but you are directly sanctioning the use of these pernicious drinks, and discountenancing temperance societies. So far as your influence goes, you are undoing what has been done, and preventing an increase of benefit from being accomplished.

Sixth,—But still further. Suppose it were true that intoxicating drinks do not hurt you, do they do you any good? This is a very relevant inquiry. You cannot affirm that they do, and no man that uses them as a beverage can affirm so, unless he is under delusion. Why, then, expose yourself to temptation? why tamper with that which is so dangerous and delusive? why run the risk of the possibility of enduring all the evils of intemperance, by the use of that which does you no real good? Why expose others to the fearful evil, by continuing in a course that may seriously affect others, when all you can say in favour of the beverage, is the mere negative plea, that you do not hurt yourself; and that, too, a statement which, there is reason to believe, is utterly fallacious.

Seventh,—Even although it were true, that by using intoxicating drinks as you now do, you can do so without injury to yourself or others; and suppose you could continue so, it is not enough merely to do no harm, it is your duty to do good. Our duty to ourselves and others is not the mere negative one of doing no injury, but the positive one of doing good. The word of God declares, “to do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Let the judgment decide impartially, let conscience speak faithfully, and we doubt not but that you will be led to the conclusion, that entire abstinence from all intoxicating drinks, will be not only not to your detriment, but to your advantage.

Abandon, then, a course which, however moderate, is injurious, though you may not think so; a course which may possibly prove the outer edge of a vortex of dissipation and misery—a course that may draw others, perhaps near and dear to you, into the fatal snare, though you should escape. And, then, be assured you will have greater confidence than you can have now, that in this respect at least, you do yourself no harm; and you will have the still happier consciousness, that, by co-operating in the temperance movement, you may do yourself and others very material and permanent good.