

nence and unchanging life. Time is travelling in pain towards the birth of eternity, and earth will soon pass away in flames, in order to give place to incombustible and incorruptible heavens, where the great Father will make eternal home for His children.

#### WORDS FOR THE HOUR ON TEMPERANCE.

The approach of the holiday season furnishes not only a fitting occasion for a fresh protest against offering intoxicants upon New Year's Day, but for a bird's eye glance at some of the present aspects of the temperance reform. The pernicious custom of setting out wine, punch, etc., before visitors on the birthday of the year deserves no quarter from pulpit or press. It is a flagrant sin against social morality, and without a shadow of excuse. Hospitality does not require intoxicating beverages, as long as ample supplies of coffee, lemonade, and other harmless drinks can be so easily provided. Many a young man takes his fatal first glass of wine on New Year's Day. Many another has had his incipient appetite for alcoholics confirmed by the temptations held out by female hands. It is not too strong an affirmation to say that the woman who deliberately offers an intoxicating glass to a man deserves to suffer the woes of a drunkard's wife or a drunkard's mother. Nor is it too much to say that no one has a right to ask God's blessing on his home while he makes that home a place of perilous temptation to unwary feet and to those which easily "stumble."

2. During the year now closing a considerable discussion has arisen over the question whether spiritual conversion can take away entirely the physical appetite for strong drink. The position that a change of heart does often produce this physical effect has been stoutly affirmed at some of Mr. Moody's temperance meetings and elsewhere. That sporadic cases of this kind have never occurred we are not prepared to deny; but surely they cannot be frequent enough to establish such an extraordinary hypothesis. The appetite for alcoholic stimulants is a bodily craving, often amounting to a confirmed disease. Sometimes it is hereditary; sometimes it is produced and deeply-seated by long indulgence in stimulants. Certain bodily tissues become affected by drink, and so affected that they inevitably thirst for more drink. Now, that the supernatural grace of God may give a man the power to resist the cravings of a physical appetite is in accordance with the Bible and with human experience. The enemy is not obliterated. He is conquered and kept under. This is the glory of divine grace that it "giveth us the victory," not over foes which have no existence, but over those which have a terrible vitality. When Paul struck hard blows to "keep under" his physical appetite he was not fighting a man of straw. John B. Gough—in a late address in Lafayette-avenue Church, Brooklyn—affirmed most distinctly his utter disbelief in the new theory that a spiritual conversion has any such physical effect as to obliterate the appetite for liquor. There is no better authority than this, after thirty-five years of wide observation and severe personal experience. His own appetite for drink is only a tiger chained up by vigilance and the Divine strength.

Every theory is a dangerous one which leads people into the delusion that they can safely tamper with intoxicants. The worst thing about alcohol is its infernal subtlety. It can deceive the very elect. Thousands of Christians have fallen by its sorcery. I knew an otherwise excellent church-member who was often so overcome by his wine-bottle that he could not conduct his family worship intelligibly. A man who had been apparently converted from inebriety has often exhorted and prayed in my own church-meetings, and has then been tracked to the dram-shop, on his way home from the service! A very large number of those who have signed the total abstinence pledge in Mr. Murphy's mass-meetings have already gone back to their cups. All such facts—and we could multiply them indefinitely—only confirm the Bible truth that strong drink "is a mocker," and whosoever once puts himself under its power discovers that it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. We do not deny that many inebriates have been soundly converted; we have the names of such on our church-roll to-day. But every such man should write on the palm of his hand: *I cannot trust God too much, and I cannot trust myself too little.* The vast majority of persons, male or female, who ever become drunkards go down at last to the drunkard's doom. This is one of the most overwhelming and unanswerable arguments in favor of entire abstinence from the ensnaring glass. Is it not about time to stop quarreling about disputed Bible texts, and to rest this moral reform upon the basis of common sense and Christian philanthropy? *I dare not drink for my own sake. I ought not to drink for my neighbour's sake.* This is a total abstinence platform strong enough and broad enough for all to stand upon.

3. Female inebriety is on the increase. When women are once enslaved by liquor or opium they are even more difficult cases to reform than men. Among the occupants of tenement-houses and in the by-streets female drunkenness is appalling. Baillie Lewis testifies before a parliamentary commission that in Edinburgh the principal factor of intemperance among females is the licensed grocer's shop. What is true of Edinburgh and Glasgow is equally true of New York and Brooklyn. The great mass of drinking women (with the exception of prostitutes) procure their drams at the grocery. This fact gives fresh emphasis to the wisdom of the efforts now being made by Dr. Crosby's Society, by the State League, and by the Brooklyn "Brotherhood" to break up the corner drinking-dens. And the further we push this matter the more hideously illogical and suicidal it seems for the civil authorities to license a tippling-house of any kind or under any circumstances. But the refusal to license or to allow tippling-houses of all grades means practical "prohibition." So that Dr. Crosby and his co-workers will soon find themselves confronted with the question: Are we ready for that?

The last twelve-months has witnessed a decided progress of agitation and discussion among the thoughtful classes in Great Britain. The "Church of England Temperance Society" numbers among its supporters the Bishops of Oxford, Exeter, and several more of its influential leaders.

The brilliant Canon Farrar (author of the "Life of Christ") is delivering radical teetotal sermons in Westminster Abbey! Basil Wilberforce is agitating Britain with as much eloquence for total abstinence as his celebrated grandfather did for Negro emancipation. These two clergymen are the most popular orators in the Established Church. The British reformers are far more thorough, scientific, and statistical in their philanthropic movements than we are. They have great faith in parliamentary commissions.

Before the present "Committee of the House of Lords" a very interesting series of answers has lately been rendered by Sir William Gull, the eminent physician of Guy's Hospital. Sir William agrees with Dr. Richardson and Sir Henry Thompson in denouncing the too free use of alcoholic medicines. He testifies that he treats fever patients without alcoholic stimulants; that the use of wine, ales, and brandy by overworked people is useless and dangerous; and that in regard to intellectual labour all such drinks are positively hurtful! Even the moderate use of alcoholic drinks he pronounces to be injurious to the nerve-tissues and deleterious to health. In reply to the question of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Penrhyn, he boldly said that "there is a great deal of injury done to health by the habitual use of wines even in so-called moderate quantities." This is rather radical doctrine to be heard in aristocratic quarters. He denies that alcoholic beverages either improve the intellect, or impart strength, or add nourishment, or supply warmth to the body. He makes a proper distinction between "heat and the feeling of heat." Sir William closed by advocating the immediate abandonment of intoxicating beverages on the same principle that he would the prompt abandonment of poisons.

When such wholesome teachings are heard from such influential quarters, it is time that American physicians began to reconsider their practice of freely using and recommending alcoholic tonics. Some of them do give the weight of their influence in opposition to such tonics; but it is still an undeniable fact that an immense amount of drunkenness is produced by the use of wines and Bourbon as restoratives. Alcohol covers up a great deal; but it cures very little. In medicine, as in the social circle, "wine is a mocker. Whoso is deceived thereby is not wise." A "Happy New Year" would it be if it banished the decanter from every house in our land.—*Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D., in N. Y. Independent.*

#### THE HEM OF THE GARMENT.

He walks in the earth and the heaven,  
The Lord in his raiment bright;  
His robe is crimson at even,  
It is gold in the morning light;  
And it trails on the dusky mountains  
With a silver fringe at night.

High over the people thronging  
Is the light of his pure, calm face;  
Can the uttermost need and longing  
Come fronting that awful place?  
But to touch the beautiful garment  
Is a comfort and a grace.

The tender sweep of the grasses  
Is smoothing away the smart;  
And the light, soft wind that passes  
Is a balm to the very heart.  
Only the hem of his garment—  
But I kiss it for my part!

The seamless blue and the border,  
Where the earth and the heaven meet,  
And the colours in mystic order  
In the broderies round his feet;  
It is but the hem of his garment,  
But virtue is there complete.

He turns, and I am not hidden;  
And he smiles, and blesses low;  
Did the gift come all unbidden?  
Oh, to think he would not know  
(Through even the hem of his garment)  
It was faith that touched him so!

#### "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD."

This passage ought to be printed in great letters in the memory of every reader of the Bible. All the stars in heaven are bright and beautiful, and yet one star exceedeth another star in glory. So also all texts of Scripture are inspired and profitable, and yet some texts are richer than others. Of such texts this is pre-eminently one. Never was there a fuller testimony borne to Christ upon earth, than that which is here borne by John the Baptist.

Let us notice the peculiar name which John the Baptist gives to Christ. He calls Him "The Lamb of God."

This name did not merely mean, as some have supposed, that Christ was meek and gentle as a lamb. This would be truth no doubt, but only a very small portion of the truth. There are greater things here than this! It meant that Christ was the great sacrifice for sin, who was come to make atonement for transgression by His own death upon the cross. He was the true Lamb which Abraham told Isaac at Moriah God would provide. (Gen. xxii. 8.) He was the true Lamb to which every morning and evening sacrifice in the temple had daily appointed. He was the Lamb of which Isaiah had prophesied, that He would be "brought to the slaughter." (Isaiah liii. 7.) He was the true Lamb of which the passover lamb in Egypt had been a vivid type. In short, He was the great propitiation for sin which God had covenanted from all eternity to send into the world. He was God's Lamb.

Let us take heed that in all our thoughts of Christ, we first think of Him as John the Baptist here represents Him. Let us serve Him faithfully as our Master. Let us obey Him loyally as our King. Let us study His teaching as our

Prophet. Let us walk diligently after Him as our Example. Let us look anxiously for Him as our coming Redeemer of body as well as soul. But above all, let us prize Him as our sacrifice, and rest our whole weight on His death as an atonement for sin. Let His blood be more precious in our eyes every year we live. Whatever else we glory in about Christ, let us glory above all things in His cross. This is the corner-stone, this is the citadel, this is the rule of true Christian theology. We know nothing rightly about Christ, until we see Him with John the Baptist's eyes, and can rejoice in Him as "the Lamb that was slain."

#### SOURCE OF MINISTERIAL POWER.

Among the truths which with special earnestness you should ask God to reveal to you by the light of His spirit, so that you may have a direct and original knowledge of it, is the truth of Christ's presence with you in your work, His own words—"Lo! I am with you always"—words which express a fact rather than a promise, are directly connected with the command to disciple all nations. It this presence is revealed to you, all your ministerial work will be transfigured. The weight of anxiety which, if you are alone will almost crush you; the consciousness of weakness, which, if you do not see that Christ is near, will sometimes force from you a bitter and despairing cry for release from the responsibilities of the ministry, will vanish. Saturday night comes, and you are thinking of the services of Sunday. Your heart will leap when you say to yourself: "Christ will meet the congregation with me." You may be troubled by the fear that the fervor of your earnestness for the salvation of men has cooled; but, while seeking to rekindle it, your trouble will be lessened, for you will say: "Christ will be with me, and Christ's earnestness will be intense as ever." You have done your best in the way of preparation; but perhaps you have been interrupted in your work, or your brain has been sluggish, and you know that in what you have prepared there is less than the usual force and fire; but you will not be despondent. You will say: "I have done what I could. Christ will be with me, and he can invest this poor discourse of mine with power." Your own sense of Christ's presence may not be so vivid as it has been; but you will say: "Still he will be with me, and he will bless the people beyond my hopes and theirs."

It would be of no avail for us to preach at all if he were not with us. We shall preach to little purpose if we do not believe that he is with us. It is still true that "he that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man." Only as we are filled with his life and his thought shall we preach anything that will deserve to be called a gospel. If we always have the consciousness of Christ's presence, our congregations will discover it, and the discovery will assist to strengthen their faith in him.

It may be that there are laws which determine the manifestations of the supernatural power of Christ. It is clear that these manifestations are related to the truth which is preached, to the spirit and manner in which we preach it, and to the earnestness and faith with which we treat him to have mercy on mankind. We have to discover and to satisfy the conditions on which the success of our preaching depends. But, after all, the quickening of the souls of men and their sanctification are as truly the personal acts of Christ as were any of the miracles of his earthly history. It is he who must forgive the sins of which we speak to our people; it is he who must renew their hearts; it is he who must give them strength for right-doing. It is not truth merely, no matter how sacred; it is not spiritual motive merely, no matter how urgent, how pathetic, how glorious, how appalling; it is not our own earnestness, no matter how deep and how impassioned, that will move men to penitence, draw them to God, enable them to keep the Divine law. We have to rely ultimately on the power of the Spirit, and the power of the Spirit is the revelation of the presence of Christ. The presence of Christ is assured to us by his own words. To disregard it, to think only of how we ourselves can stir the hearts of our hearers and instruct their understandings, is to be guilty of an atheistic presumption which will utterly destroy the effectiveness of our ministry.

Gentlemen, yours is a noble vocation. To be the ally of Christ in his great endeavour to save the world; with him to assert the authority of the throne and law of God; with him to support human weakness in its vacillating endeavours to do the divine will; to inspire the sinful with trust in the divine mercy; to console sorrow; to awaken in the hearts of the poor, the weak, and the desolate, the consciousness of their relations to the infinite and Eternal God; to exalt and dignify the lives of old men and maidens, young men and children, by revealing to them the things unseen and eternal which surround them now, and the mysterious, awful, glorious life which lies beyond death—this is a great work. There is nothing on earth comparable to it. Whatever genius you have, whatever learning, whatever native moral force, whatever energy of spiritual inspiration, will all find their freest and loftiest service in the work to which you are consecrated. And in the ministry even the humblest faculties, if used with devout earnestness, may, through alliance with the power of God, achieve great results.

However obscure your ministerial position may be, to whatever discomforts you may have to submit, however bitter may be your disappointments, I trust that your work will be always invested with the dignity and glory which now invest it, when in your noblest and most sacred hours you anticipate in imagination the years which are stretching before you. Give Christ your best. Be faithful to him, be faithful to your people, be faithful to yourselves, and you will not have to exclaim, when your life is over: "All is vanity and vexation of spirit. You will thank God that he appointed you in this world to a service which was the most perfect preparation for the larger life, the loftier activities, the everlasting glory of the world to come."—*Dale.*

The greatest sinner, who trusts only in Christ's blood will assuredly be saved. The best man in the world, who trusts in his own goodness, will be lost.