

**Temperance Column**

We take from our valued and able Exchange *The Church Record* of Connecticut the following interesting letter from that great Temperance worker of England, Robert Graham, Esq.

**FIRST PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH TEMPERANCE WORK.**

**THE BIRTH OF THE MOVEMENT.**  
In the year 1872 the Church of England, recognizing the vast importance of the question of intemperance, appointed a committee to investigate the extent, the causes, and the remedies for the great national vice. Later in that year the committee reported to a meeting held in Lambeth Palace, under the chairmanship of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and on the basis of the report then presented was formed the Church of England Temperance Society as the exponent of the Church in carrying on the work of Christian temperance reform. The Church Temperance Society of America is based upon the same lines and worked upon the same methods. The basis agreed upon was broader than that of any previously existing temperance organization, being a union on perfectly equal terms between those who use temperately and those who abstain entirely from intoxicating liquors as beverages. The two objective lines of the work were the rescue of the intemperate and the removal of the causes from which intemperance springs.

**THE PLEDGE.**

Two questions were from the first left out of consideration—first, the Scriptural lawfulness or unlawfulness of intoxicating drinks; second, the lawfulness or unlawfulness of vows or pledges. The pledge in our societies is simply, as regards the man himself, the record of a resolution made in dependence on the help of God that he will abstain from that which is ruining him. If, through the weakness of his fallen nature, he breaks this resolution he is not taught that he has committed a still more unpardonable sin, and so driven on to despair; he is urged to lay his full where the broken resolutions of Christian people whose spiritual standing is very different from his are daily laying theirs—at the cross of Christ—with earnest prayer for greater strength in time to come, and with the assurance that he has only to persevere in that course to obtain the final victory. As regards his fellows, the pledge is a token of mutual agreement. He has been ruined in time past by association in drinking customs; he needs now the power of association to help him in his newly-formed resolution of abstinence. He finds it in the Church Temperance Society. In considering the part assigned to the pledge in the ultimate restoration of the drunkard, we claim no single part which properly belongs to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But the Gospel must not be credited with powers to which it never lays claim. It

never claims to remove the stumbling block from the sinner's path. It preaches repentance, urging him by every consideration to put the cause of offence from his path, and then promises him all needful help for the final victory. The pledge of total abstinence in the Temperance Society is the drunkard's first answer to this. It is the flocking together of the frightened sheep in the first moment of their terror, when they see that the wolf is upon them, and when they are looking to every quarter for help.

It is for the shepherd of the flock to lay hold of them there, and to draw them into the fold of Christ. The Temperance Society, rightly viewed, is the recruiting ground for the Church, just as the drinking saloons have become the recruiting grounds for Satan. It is when the evil spirit has lost for the time the advantage over the man which the drink gave him, when for the time being he is in his right mind, that we can tell him of the Good Shepherd, and lead him on step by step, till in the persevering use of the appointed means of grace, he can realize in his own person the blessed truth; "Stronger is He that is in you; than he that is in the world." The pledge of abstinence has been the door through which he is admitted to the Master's presence; but all his salvation, from first to last, will have been through Him.

**TEMPERANCE AND TOTAL ABSTINENCE.**

The ground upon which a temperance man, as distinguished from a total abstainer, may be asked to join our society is not as a measure of asceticism, as though there were anything in itself meritorious in renouncing this or that indulgence; but solely on the ground of expediency again—in the face of a great "present distress"—and this expediency to be judged of by every man for himself. Claiming the liberty to abstain for ourselves, we recognize the same right of Christian liberty in our brother man; we have no word of condemnation, no pharisaic assertion of superiority for our own practice, if he walks by a different rule. But we invite him, nevertheless, first and above all, in view of the kind of temptation he will be exposed to, we invite the young to grow up in ignorance of the taste—generally an acquired one—for intoxicants, and then other Christian men and women to come and take part with us in fighting the Lord's battle against the national sin.

**WORKING BASIS.**

After this statement of first principles the question arises as to what is the best method of application. We have on our side at the outset the fact that the Sunday-school system and the parochial organization of the Church provide exactly the machine we need. This is emphatically a Church work, to be carried on upon Church lines and by Church methods.

The first imperative object to be gained is a conviction on the part of the clergyman of the parish of the needfulness of this work. This step gained, initial difficulties

speedily disappear. The next necessity is to call a meeting of parishioners, rich and poor alike, and explain to them their Christian duty of abstinence for the sake of others. The effective way to begin is first to reach the young.

Remember that all these juvenile pledges are taken with the consent of parents; that they continue only so long as the card of membership is retained, and that when the young person reaches the age of sixteen, or the time of confirmation, he or she may elect to belong to the total or the partial abstinence section of the society. The importance of this action will be seen from the fact that since the formation of the society, in England almost a new generation has arisen who have not acquired the taste for intoxicants. Now, in England there are 500,000 juvenile members, and an almost equal number of adult members. The nation's drink bill has been reduced by \$125,000,000, and 5,000 clergy and 9 bishops are pledged total abstainers. In America the society has received the adherence of 54 bishops, and there are organizations in 31 dioceses.

**THE SCOPE OF THE SOCIETY.**

Going to the broader basis of the society, we have endeavored to make this question not only a matter of Christian duty but one appealing to all citizens. We have to endeavor not only to reach and to rescue the individual man, which can only be done and can be best done by personal example and personal effort, but we have by combination to meet that infamous extension of licenses which in the city of New York has opened 10,000 places of legalized temptation, and in the city of Philadelphia an equal, if not a larger, number in proportion to the population. Clearly in carrying out this second line of action you can utilize the influence of all citizens, whether total abstainers or not, and it is mainly because of the infinite value which such a broad and representative public opinion bears that we claim the wisdom of the twofold organization of the society.

**WOMEN'S WORK.**

The work of Temperance reformation both in this country and in England has had no more loyal, constant, and self-denying helpers than the church women. The reason is not far to seek. It is found in the fact that women have had forced upon them with peculiar, and often with painful, personal directness the terrible evils which follow in the track of the drink traffic. There are two objects which the Church Temperance Society has in view, first personal effort in endeavoring to reach individual cases, and the formation of societies in all our parishes; and second, arousing and strengthening public opinion as to the necessity for all licensing authorities doing their utmost to enforce the existing law in its entirety and strictness, so that the evils of the drink traffic may be minimized to the greatest possible extent.

ROBERT GRAHAM.

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