

TEMPERANCE COLUMN.

SERMON IN ST JOHN'S CHURCH, ON NOVEMBER 17, 1889.

BY REV. DR. CARTER, RECTOR.

"To knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience."—2d Peter, i., 6.

Let us take soberness in the restricted sense in which it is used by the Society, as applying to the use of intoxicating liquors, and the criminal records of the courts, and the far sadder experiences that are never told, will prove the need of soberness. Is it not a fact that much of the present literature, both in books and in the papers, tends to lower the ideas concerning purity, and to consider the high regard at which it should be held as old-fashioned and illiberal? Does any one need proof that reverence in church and in the family, in social life and on the streets, is becoming only an experience of the past? Not that I would assert that the present age is worse in these respects, or in any other, than all the ages which have preceded it; but even if it no worse surely that is not enough. With all the advances made in every line of living, surely this age should not be content merely to prove that it has not fallen back in soberness, purity and reverence. All people think that something should be done to promote these virtues; some have one pet scheme, some another; among them the Church Temperance Society put forward its claims to be heard. With its pass word, "Temperance obligatory, total abstinence discretionary," it would teach the principle of strength by inculcating self-control; and depending chiefly upon the grace of God, it constantly asks His blessing upon the means employed to save at least the bodies and perchance the souls of weak humanity.

Let us consider the methods proposed to be employed by the Church Temperance Society. That is, the human methods, so to speak, for the grace of God is above and beyond all others; sometimes no other seems of any use whatever. In a former parish there was a vestryman who became addicted to the excessive use of intoxicating liquors. Naturally I was very anxious to try anything that might reclaim him, and I consulted those two men, Rev. S. H. Tyng, Jr., and William E. Dodge, so well known in what is called the temperance movement. I was willing to urge him to join any total abstinence society, should they recommend such a course, but rather to my surprise they would not do so, and on my asking a reason for private advice which was apparently so contradictory to their public teaching, they both told me that they considered nothing but the grace of God could avail to work a cure. I talked to them without either knowing that I had consulted the other, and it strengthened my convictions that in many cases human methods are powerless, unless, perhaps, we can call prayer a human

method, not only from the lips of those who drink, but from the wounded and grieved hearts who plead with God to save the sinner from his worst foe—himself. Perhaps the grace of God is the only means that can work an entire reformation; the others may help, but it seems to me that they are valuable chiefly as preventives.

As secondary means the society recommends systematic teaching on the physical, social and moral evils of intemperance. As to physical evils harm has been done by exaggeration. Fanatical people declare that alcoholic drinks are absolutely and invariably hurtful to the physical part of man, and when others of well balanced minds, whose learning and truthfulness cannot be questioned, say that such drinks can be useful and in some cases even essential, then the crowd which is swayed by any argument, which agrees with its desires, rushes to the other extreme and uses these drinks as if they were always beneficial, and the larger the quantity, the greater the benefit. Now whatever may be said about the harmfulness of such drinks when used in moderation, I think there can be no question about their damaging effects upon the body when used in excess. Did we need one lesson taught by last year's epidemic that the habitual drinkers to excess were among the first to fall victims? Will not all physicians say that in every attack of severe disease the drunkard has but one chance of recovery, while the other man has nine?

I wish the social evil were as plainly seen and as clearly established; that they are not is largely the fault of society itself, which has too low a standard of admittance to its companionship; and I can not help believing that the young ladies themselves are greatly responsible for this. When intelligent and refined they make the charm of society which charm they carry with them, increasing and widening the older they grow; but, alas! how it is lessened when they will accompany to a place of amusement, or to a social entertainment the man who but a few days before, had been so drunk as to forget he was not only a gentleman, but even a man. Should the ladies decree that habitual drunkenness must rigidly close the doors of society, it will be one of the most effectual means for promoting temperance.

(To be continued.)

Lecordaire wrote of his conversion: "Once a real Christian the world did not vanish before my eyes. It rather assumed nobler proportions, as I did myself. Instead of a great, fleeting, empty theatre of ambition, I began to see therein the suffering needing help, and could imagine nothing comparable to the happiness of ministering to it with the help of the cross of the Gospel of Christ." The Christian should love the world much, not for itself, but because of the opportunity it presents of noblest service for the glory of God. For even God himself 'so loved the world.'

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