

that gross immoralities are favourable to repentance and faith, or that if the scribes and pharisees had added gross immoralities to their other sins, they would be in a more hopeful state. I think he means that in consequence of their enjoying greater advantages, against which they hardened themselves, they were in a more hopeless condition. In proportion to the variety of men's sins, and the frequency with which they commit the same sins, the more hardened they must be—the more they are confirmed in various evil habits; and these sins and habits may be compared to the numerous and strong roots of a tree, by which it is fixed in the earth, rather than to the branches, which catch the stormy wind, and expose it to be overthrown.

The word of God is addressed to men as rational creatures, and to consider, understand, and believe it, are the highest, the noblest, and happiest exercises of their rational powers. But the use of all intoxicating drinks, by injuring the brain, tends to destroy men's rational faculties in a way which no other sin does. There is, therefore, there *must*, humanly speaking, be more hope of a temperate man's being brought to repentance, than of a man who stupifies himself with drink. It is more easy to get the former to hear the gospel: and allowing both come, and both are in some measure pierced by the sword of the Spirit, there is more reason to hope that the temperate man may be persuaded to flee to Christ for peace, than the man who is accustomed to go for relief to the bottle. We might ask A whether the greatest number of drunkards are brought to repentance and faith in Christ, in places where the gospel is preached, and temperance societies flourish, or in places where his plan is followed? This question is, I think, answered by facts, and by these facts God shows his approbation of temperance societies; and, therefore, it may be said, that in as far as he approves of them, those who oppose them, however good their motives may be, are, in so far, opposing him.

Are there not degrees of wickedness, and these to meet with different degrees of punishment? Is it not better, or a less evil, that unbelievers should be sober, than that they should be drunkards, and a nuisance and a curse to their families and all about them. Would not A prefer a sober or honest unbeliever for a neighbour or servant, rather than a drunkard or a thief?

What A says of the importance and necessity of directing sinners to Christ is very true, and his zeal for this very commendable, as you have admitted; but the clearest view and deepest conviction of this grand truth, are perfectly consistent with the most earnest appeals to men, before they believe the gospel, and in order that they may, in a sane mind, come to hear and believe it, to give up that which is hardening them against the gospel. I think ministers and Christians who are most earnest in promoting temperance, are as careful in insisting on the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus, a change of heart and conversation becoming the gospel, as any of those who in silence are suffering intemperance and drunkenness to desolate the land. The prophets and apostles did not scruple to warn wicked men against particular vices or sins. Isaiah exhorted the wicked to forsake his way, &c., and Paul says, "Be not drunk with wine," and "Let him that stole steal no more." And he is saying so still to every drunkard and every thief who reads or hears the Bible. But they did not give any encouragement to sinners to rest in such partial reformations, neither do the most zealous advocates for temperance and temperance societies. If temperance be a good thing, it is also good that men should unite in promoting it, for no good cause can be promoted with success without union.

But A finds fault for calling abstinence from intoxicating drinks

temperance, because Paul mentions temperance among the fruit of the Spirit—Gal. v. 23. By this, however, he has given another proof of his taking a narrow, partial view of the subject, or of the scriptures. He need not be more scrupulous than Paul in the choice of words. He will not say that those referred to by Paul (1st Cor. ix. 25) had the Spirit of Christ, yet Paul says they were "temperate in all things." They know that it was for their health and strength to be so, and this is a good argument in favour of temperance, proving that it is at least a benevolent thing to promote it. I shall only remark that the scrupulosity which A seems to labour under, is a dangerous thing—leading men to think that there is a lion in the way, or even in the street, when or where there is none. Men are also in danger of ascribing it to superior discernment, enabling them to distinguish things with great accuracy, and thus puff them up with self-conceit, which leads them to despise or pity others as far beneath or behind them. I do not judge A, or charge him with this, but only speak of the natural tendency of things.

I wrote the above, not having the *Advocate* for July 15 at hand, having only a very imperfect recollection of its contents, and thought that A did not observe Paul's using the word "temperate" in 1st Cor. ix. 25; but I see he refers to the words, quoting them "temperance in all things," and he does so to justify himself in passing sentence of condemnation on temperance men, for applying, as he says, to abstinence from intoxicating drinks the terms which Paul applies to the fruits of the Spirit. Now this is astonishing in a man who has come forward to teach and reprove others, and shews how very unfit he is for the task—how little attention he has paid to the connection and meaning of scripture; otherwise that text is the last in all the Bible he would quote for such a purpose, as it justifies our application of the word *temperance*, for the persons of whom Paul says that they were "temperate in all things," were not regenerate men. He contrasts their application with his own—"Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."

He becomes more bitter and confident as he goes forward, which is quite consistent and natural, that the more error he pours forth, the more he should imbibe the spirit of it. He speaks with the utmost contempt of any reformation, which comes short of regeneration; so that, though temperance societies were all composed of believers, it would not screen them from his reproof. According to his theory, the great and good Wilberforce acted foolishly, however scriptural his arguments against slavery might be; for he ought first to have preached the gospel to the British parliament, till they would believe, and then tell them that they ought to abolish slavery! But had he and his helpers done so, how much more evil would have been done, and how much good would have been prevented, for some years back, in the West Indies?

The use of intoxicating drink produces and perpetuates a more dreadful kind of slavery than that which he so nobly and successfully opposed; but no matter, let it alone—let distillers, and brewers, and tavern-keepers, carry on their work of pollution and death, and make more drunkards, and fill the country with crimes and miseries till they believe the gospel. Such is the tendency of some parts of this tract, for which, I have no doubt, those who make gain of this infamous trade, will drink his health and success to his tract.

"A" condemns much higher authority than that of Wilberforce and the leaders in the temperance reformation. The prophets laboured much against the ancient idolatry in Israel—they warned them against burning incense to other gods; God sent them to do so. He says—(Jer. xlv. 4)—"Howbeit I sent you