

they are not worthy to be called by any honest name. Even wine of the purest kind needs careful handling; and in ordinary cases abstinence is advisable as the path of safety. The question how far law can go in coercing men and forcing upon them the rule of life which so many Christians willingly adopt, does not come within the range of our present subject.

Paul was not an ascetic; he met persecutions and privations when they came in his way, but did not seek them. He felt so thoroughly the solemnity of life that he could not waste his time in trivial pleasures. He was called to consecrate himself completely and absolutely to the preaching of the gospel; but he was not a monk secluded from the world's busy life. He was full of humanity and gracious sympathy; he longed for companionship; he delighted in friendship. His religion worked from within outward; he had lost faith in the power of petty rules to restrain passion or save the soul. He did not pride himself on self denial for its own sake; but he was ready to suffer for the cause of Christ. It is probable that he took very little wine; but his method of attacking evil is not to preach exact rules, and binding pledges.

Paul's preaching bears upon conduct by the setting forth of great principles. He does not give a complete programme or dictate a number of petty rules, because these things are stiff and cold; they do not inform the mind or stir the heart. Living principles can be adopted to varying circumstances; and the very effort to do this quickens the intelligence and conscience. He bids men realize that under the inspiration of Christian love they are building a character for eternity.

The Apostle feels very strong the positive nature of the Christian life, "the exclusive power of a new affect on." He does not make much of mere abstinence. "Thou shalt not steal" is good as far as it goes; but note the splendid swing of Paul's statement, "Let him that stole steal no more but rather let him labour working with his hands to give to him that needeth." And so over against the drinking of wine, which leads to recklessness and wantonness he places the drinking in of that Holy Spirit which creates joyful enthusiasm and inspires true strength. These two things he places in opposition to each other—intoxication and inspiration; they are wide as the poles asunder, yet there are points of resemblance between them, and at times the one is mistaken for the other. On the day of Pentecost the Apostles were filled with the new wine of the Kingdom; but some in that case mistook inspiration for intoxication. Both are states of exaltation, when the subject is lifted out of life's prosaic routine; but in one case the force is devilish, in the other it is divine. Intoxication produces the dare devil courage that leads to ruin; inspiration begets the sacred self-abandon that makes men heroes and martyrs. There are some men so constituted that they must have one or other of these forms of excitement. Abstinence does not meet their case; nothing can save them but the legitimate excitement of real inspiration. Behind the drink habit in many cases there is this craving for excitement and distraction, the desire to get away from oneself. The only satisfaction thus gained is the demand for more of the same artificial stimulant. If Timothy had been a man of this type, Paul would probably not

have recommended even a little wine for his stomach's sake; for there is no more shameful thing than that the man who ministers at God's altar should be degraded by the allurements of intoxication.

Men drink because for the time being it lends a little artificial brilliancy to their life; speech and song flow more freely; and even shallow thought has a deceptive glitter. It is no doubt a dull business to look back upon, but for a little while they seem to dwell in an enchanted land. They drink also for solace in times of sorrow; sharp distress and carping care are left behind; but alas, they come back again with heavier burdens. Some poets have degraded themselves by glorifying intoxication, they have sung about it as a state of inspiration, the gift of the gods. The ancient idolatries had great power, because they allowed occasional intoxication and glorified it in the name of religion. All such sensuality, and impure excitement is condemned by Paul as foreign to the very thought of religion; he, however, knew quite well that when men are weak and weary they turn to such false excitement unless they have a real faith and a living hope.

The tree is known by its fruits. The brightest pages of history show what was the work of men quickened by the inspiring spirit. Now what is the work of intoxicated men? Is it anything that anyone can be proud of? Surely not. Many of the vilest deeds have been done under the influence of fiery stimulants. Even if nothing tragic comes out of it, men come down from the fantastic world of intoxication weaker and poorer. When it becomes a habit they are degraded and brutalised.

The fact that we are empty and hungry is a terrible reality. We crave for rapture, we long for joyful excitement. Only a pure religious life can meet this need. The Spirit of God inspires life in the believing souls. When we taste this pure inspiration earthly revelry seems a low, coarse thing. Moved by the higher life men have broken off from old habits; they have faced the world's scorn; they have sung in darkest dungeons, and triumphed over sharpest pain.

This life not only gives secret rapture, it also creates pure sobriety and a noble enthusiasm; it thrills through the communion of Saints. This life is musical, God has provided psalm and hymn; and there are still inspired men to express for us the old truths in new songs. To carry music in their hearts is the privilege of God's people, who being filled with the Spirit find their joy in helpful service.

If one mission of the Christian Church is to save men out of drunkenness then by sound logic it ought to be still more its mission to save men from falling into drunkenness. Every pulpit ought to speak out just as freely and frankly against the temptation of the wine cup or the social glass against the temptations to gambling or dishonesty, or Sabbath desecration, or licentiousness. Suppression of the saloons never will be enacted and never enforced unless God's people put their conscience and their courage in to their citizenship—Theodore L. Cuyler.

All other things considered, a Christian who knows how to use the Word of God increases his usefulness and power one hundred fold. The value of all who will not know their bibles must be below par.

Sparks From Other Anvils.

Lutheran Observer: We will never know the peace and power and joy of the Christian life until our religion ceases to be vague. It will not be what God meant it to be until it is personalized.

Presbyterian Witness: No nobler vocation can be allotted to a man than that he should be an "ambassador for Christ," commissioned by Christ to speak for God to men. It is a most arduous calling, demanding heart and soul and body, demanding every thought and aspiration, every hope and desire.

Herald and Presbyter: Some devout souls commune with God in forms which others find empty and profitless. An idol may be of gold or lead; it may be magnificently adorned or very plain. Our own service, simple as it is, may, if rendered without heart, become a mere form as empty as the baldest ritualism.

Christian Intelligencer: God has never yet failed to own His Word and to reward the consecrated efforts of His servants, and He never will. His Word faithfully preached, and diligently taught; its precious truths being daily illustrated in the lives of preachers and teachers and all true believers, will ever prove itself to be the power and wisdom of God unto salvation.

The Interior: The ancient ritualistic phrase, "For us men and our salvation," ought to be present, by spirit, at least, in all preaching. The minister who proclaims the salvation of Christ for "you men" will win few to the Saviour. The sermons that convince and convict accompany the faithful saying that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" with Paul's solemn supplement: "Of whom I am chief."

Presbyterian Banner: All that is good and permanent and helpful in Lent we should make our own, while we reject the worthless shell of mere formalism. Many men have approached Holy Week with clarified minds, and a better appreciation of the rational, self-denying life of a Christian, for the exercises of those forty days. Fasting may be a helpful accompaniment of prayer and as such is commended by our own symbols. Our business as Christians is to grow and "bear much fruit," and every occasion which serves as a stimulus to such growth should be hailed with eagerness.

United Presbyterian: When Jesus wept with the bereaved sisters, he wept with a great multitude of sorrowing ones. His tears mingle with ours, his words of comfort speak to our heart. He is a Saviour that walks with us and imparts to us of his own grace, even though centuries have passed since the cloud received him out of the sight of earthly eyes. Is not this feeling of his presence, this consciousness of strength from him conclusive proof of his divinity?

Christian Guardian: It was a sad sight to the thoughtful citizen of Ontario to see eight hundred or one thousand liquor makers and dealers, last January, marching up to the Parliament Buildings in Toronto, to say to the Government: "Let us alone." The electors must rebuke this influence, and overthrow it, or be dominated by it to the great detriment of the country in all its highest interests.

United Presbyterian: We have received unnumbered blessings, but the store is not exhausted, and God is waiting to give yet more abundantly, if we serve him in truth and humility.