

of the Holy Spirit of God, by asserting that it was intended to teach us thus to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel? Here, then, is a plain command, easily intelligible to a plain man, and here is a specific opportunity proposed for you to obey it. Here are no abstractions, or barren generalities, but a plain test of Christian obedience, to prove the sincerity of your faith and love.

Again the Apostle says, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but rather reprove them." Now the blackest deeds of darkness that ever were done on earth, are done by intoxicating drinks. Almost all the robberies and murders that are committed, are planned under the inspiration, and executed under the excitement, of intoxicating drinks. "They raise the courage of the burglar to the point of action, and sharpen the steel of the midnight assassin." And he who by buying, selling, or using them, or admitting them to his table, keeps up their respectability, and encourages others to use them, has a kind of fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, unfruitful in all good, and fruitful in every evil, mischief, crime, and misery, that ever cursed mankind. There is no avoiding this conclusion, by all the quibbling in the world, for it is the plain strait-forward meaning of the passage. If the Apostle had written this passage in the spirit of prophecy for the express purpose of enforcing the fundamental principle of temperance societies (I do not say the societies themselves, but the principle on which they are founded), he could not have chosen words more directly appropriate to the subject.

Again the Apostle says, "Neither be partaker of other men's sins; keep thyself pure." Now he who by his countenance, and custom, keeps up the respectability, and maintains the existence of a spirit-shop, whereby another finds his sin and his ruin, is certainly partaker of that man's sin. He who, by his example in the use, encourages another to use that which makes him sin, is certainly partaker in his sin. But it is the special object of Temperance Societies to prevent men from thus partaking in other men's sins. Therefore, the principle of temperance societies is in the very spirit and essence of Gospel morality. I do not here mean to assert that this text makes it our duty to form a society, but I do say that it makes it our duty to resolve, by the grace of God, that we will never, even indirectly, become partakers of another's sin. And if it be our duty to resolve, it is hard to say why we may not tell that resolution to others. It seems very natural that fellow pilgrims, travelling the same road to the same heavenly city, should consult each other in love, and tell each other their plans and purposes for the journey. And if a few Christians declare to each other their resolution, and agree together not to partake of the sin of their country, in this particular instance, by touching the instrument of intemperance, pray what is this but the embryo frame-work of a Temperance Society?

But here it will be said, that this is not the particular instance which the Apostle had in view, when he said to Timothy, "Neither be partaker of other men's sins." Be it so, the particular mode in which one man may be more in danger of partaking of another's sin, may be different from the particular mode in which another may incur the same danger. Moreover, the prevailing sin of the day in which men in general most extensively aid, abet, assist, and encourage each other in sin, and thus become partakers of each other's sins, depends upon circumstances, and these must necessarily be different in different countries and ages of the world. But the plain duty of not contributing directly or remotely to another's sin is binding upon every age, and extends to the end of time. It is the peculiar glory of the Scriptures that they are not like many of the ephemeral productions of man, matters of mere local interest, but that they are written for our instruction, and are of an interest wide as the world itself and coeval with eternity. He miserably cramps the meaning of Scripture, and fritters away these beautiful directions of the Holy Spirit down to nothing, who limits their meaning to the peculiar occasions which called them forth in the days of the Apostles. This is only another ingenious way of admiring the command in the abstract, and getting rid of any obligation to personal obedience to it.

Again the Apostle says, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The world perhaps cannot fully understand the meaning of this command; but the believer understands it well. He knows that it means that his religion is not to be a thing set apart only for the Sabbath, but that it is to enter into all he does, and give a tinge or colour to every thought and action of his life. Will the believer understand what is meant by doing all things to the glory of God. And let me ask him—can he lay his hand upon his heart, and say that

in the present day, it is possible for him to take intoxicating drink, or give it to others to drink, to the glory of God. When he beholds the effects that it produces, the oaths, curses, blasphemies, and crimes that it produces, he must perceive that it can only be drunk to the glory of him who is the enemy of God and man. "Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God!" Christians! are you willing to obey this command in the spirit of it, and to carry it through all the actions of your lives?

Again the Apostle says, "Avoid even the appearance of evil; let not your good be evil spoken of," that is, let it not be of that doubtful character which affords a handle for speaking evil of it. If, in the present day, the Christian uses ever so little of that which is the known cause of almost all the evil in the world, it will have the appearance of evil, and will be evil spoken of. Those who seek a cloak for their own intemperance, or a salvo to lull their consciences asleep, will be delighted to see him drink it, and, however small the quantity he drinks, they will claim a kind of fellowship with such a Christian, and will not give him credit for the purity of temperance.

Again the Apostle calls upon Christians to "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, to God." He thus appeals to the Roman Christians, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Now let any man contemplate the vast mass of the populace of our cities that frequent the gin-shops; let him contemplate the disgusting effect upon their bodies, and the debasing, corrupting, effect upon their minds, and ask himself whether it is possible that they should present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, so long as they frequent such places as these. Is it not evident that they are presenting body, and soul, and all filthy and unholly sacrifices to the devil, to crime, and pollution, and everlasting fire? And it is reasonably to be doubted, concerning even the most respectable member of society, who carelessly gives his countenance to the most accursed traffic that Satan ever set up in the world, whether by so doing he is presenting his own body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and whether it is possible, that the Holy Spirit should consent to dwell

his own heart, while he is encouraging the use of that which drives him from the hearts of others.

Again the Apostle says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Now can any man read the testimony given before the British House of Commons, by the judges of the land, the practitioners at the bar, and the keepers of our penitentiaries and jails, all concurring in the fact that intemperance is the cause of three-fourths of the idleness, poverty, prostitution, and crime, of England—can he make use of his own eyes, and behold the filthy, polluted, degraded, and utterly demoralized state of those who frequent the places where spirits are sold—can he hear these things and see them with his own eyes, and doubt whether spirit-drinking grieves the Holy Spirit of God, and drives him from the heart? Can he read the same testimony from America, declaring that the united experience of the nation has proved that "it scars the conscience, hardens the heart, pollutes the affections, excites all the bad passions, weakens all the motives to do right, and strengthens all the motives to do wrong, is the cause of nine-tenths of all the crime of America; and lastly, that it closes men's ears against the preaching of the Gospel, and prevents their conversion to Christ,"—can he seriously consider these things, and doubt whether spirit-drinking grieves the Holy Spirit of the Lord? Is it possible for a man to imagine a more likely way of grieving the Holy Spirit, and driving him from his own heart, and opposing the spread of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of others, than by using, or by example encouraging others to use this instrument of Satan? Time was when these consequences of the use of intoxicating drink were not known; but now that they are so well known and thoroughly understood, if a man still persists in the use of it, is it at all likely that the Holy Spirit will seal his soul unto the day of redemption? Is it not far more probable, unless he repent of this wickedness, that Satan will set upon him the mark of the beast, and seal him unto the day of damnation?

"Know ye not, says the Apostle, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." Man's soul is the temple of the living God, which must not be defiled. Now what cause on earth is there in the present day, that has done one-thousandth part as much to defile this temple of the living God as the lust of intemperance? And if you have any tenderness for the honour of God, or any love for the souls of men, will