

THE CANADA Temperance Advocate.

TEMPERANCE IS THE MODERATE USE OF THINGS BENEFICIAL, AND ABSTINENCE FROM THINGS HURTFUL.

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Selected Articles.

REVIEW OF BISHOP HOPKINS' OBJECTIONS TO TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES.

From the Philadelphia Episcopal Recorder.

We consider the arguments of Bishop Hopkins without the foundation and strength which to make amends for the deleterious result certain to flow from them they ought to have. Not one of them professes to arise from any actual injury which the Temperance Society has produced but only from defects which are seen or imagined in its constitution. It is not pretended that the society has accomplished no good,—that it has not rescued the estates, reformed the habits, restored the happiness, and saved the souls of men. No, all this is allowed, and the evil complained of, the whole evil, for which christians must be warring against the society for which it should be dissolved, and a gainst which die laboured publication of Bishop Hopkins is directed, amounts simply to this, that though the temperance society has done much good, it has not done it upon good principles, nor in a right way. The arguments presented by the Bishop, we propose in a few words to examine.

His first objection is, "That the Temperance Society is based not on religious, but on worldly principles." This objection he exhibits in the following manner. "The temperance society, simply demands a written pledge of abstinence from ardent spirits, as the single condition of membership; from which, it results undeniably, that in this Society, the unbeliever is on equal footing with the believer, the Infidel with the christian. How then can it be called a religious society, when it asks no religion in its members? How can it be called a christian society, when an avowed Atheist might be its president?" The whole principle upon which this objection is founded is that it is wrong for a christian to associate with others, for the promotion of an object, however excellent, unless they all show their union with him upon his own motives and principles. The Bishop supposes the objection not to apply to

mere associations for business or gain, as banks and insurance companies, because their object is not the moral benefit of men. But as "the object of the temperance society is one of the branches of morality provided for by religion itself, it cannot be consistently inculcated by christians in any other manner than that which accords with christian principles." The exception which is here pointed out, must be referred to before the objection itself is considered. According to the Bishop's view, the avowed object of an association is to determine whether it can be consistently encouraged by christians. If it is not to be an association for the promotion of any of the branches of morality already provided for by religion itself, then christians may consistently engage in it. But as religion has provided for all the branches of morality, this exception will amount simply to a permission for christians to engage in associations whose object is not a moral one,—and to a prohibition of their union in any plan for moral benefit, unless those with whom they associate shall all concur to pursue this object upon christian principles and with christian motives.—The exception seems indeed most singular, that a christian may unite with Infidels and Atheists to pursue the gain of this world consistently with his profession.—But he cannot unite with them to do moral good to other men, without violating the principles by which he professes to be governed. We hesitate not to say, that if the Bishop's objection is sound, his exception to it is altogether weak and untenable, and it would be impossible to show, and absurd to attempt to show, the moral character and excellence of the circumstance which made the association inconsistent and improper for the christian. But the original objection is not sound.—It amounts to this. Ten men associate together in an agreement not to use, or encourage the use of, intoxicating drink.—This is a temperance society. Of these ten some are Atheists, some are Deists, and some are Christians. One enters it because he has seen that intemperance produces poverty and suffering; another because he believes it to be the parent of

multiplied vices; another because it has laid the foundation of many and dreadful diseases; another because he knows that it is a transgression of the command of God, and bring eternal ruin upon the souls of men.

Now although the object of their association is acknowledged to be a most desirable and important one, and an inestimable benefit to man, if it can be attained upon the Bishop's principle, it is not lawful for the Christian, whose whole life ought nevertheless to be spent in doing good to others, to enter into the association, until all the other individuals will agree to adopt his principles and profess to be governed by his motives. He may immediately unite with the same ten men, to form a Bank or an insurance company for personal gain, but he cannot unite with them in any scheme of a worldly moral benefit. The Bishop's principle goes farther than this. He must maintain that it is not lawful for the christian to pursue the object of temperance upon any other than the direct principles of religion. The peace, prosperity and health of mankind, which on one side are destroyed, and on the other are to be restored, cannot be allowed to move him, in his efforts to promote the reign of temperance; because all these are declared to be 'worldly principles'. The Bishop declares that "on this point, there is an irreconcilable hostility between the morality of the christian and the morality of the world.—The Christian pursues morality as a part of his obedience to God; the worldly pursues it without any regard to the divine authority for the sake merely of its secular or worldly advantages." He further asks:

"Now, these being the principles of the Christian, is he at liberty to invite men to forsake vice or practice virtue on any other ground? Can he consistently encourage them to reform in their own strength and help them to flatter themselves that they can do a work without God? Can he assist in persuading men that Temperance may be set up by itself, on pure worldly motives, without reference to religious principle, and suffer them to suppose that they are doing right when they submit to