

INTEMPERANCE.

Great is the misery, even in this present world, which is occasioned by the stupifying, selfish, sin of drinking to excess.

Strong drink destroys thought and reason, makes a man forget what he owes to his wife, to his children, to his friends, and even to his Maker. Hard drinking cannot do good to a man in health, nor make a weak man strong, but it makes a strong man weak, and turns the heart that was kind and friendly to hardness and bitterness.

Beware of the public house—Beware of the Beer-shop; the outside is generally the safest side of the alehouse door. The company and the drink met with at such places are the likely means to lead you to ruin, if you indulge in them.

Look at yonder old man staggering out of the Beer-shop, his face bloated and red, and his legs swollen and bandaged. Listen not to his words, for they proceed from a wicked heart, and his very breath is tainted with the poisonous liquor he has just been taking. No friendly "good night" is offered him as he passes the neighbors' open doors: he has no friend amongst them. See! he has managed to find his home; but will he find a welcome? Ah! no. He has killed his wife—she died of a broken heart. His daughters would be glad to help him, but his behaviour is so abusive and indecent, that they cannot live under his roof. Poor girls! they dread to think of his situation! they have tried to warn him of his danger, but he will not listen, and his oaths and curses only make them feel still more bitterly the hopelessness of his case. To health and happiness he is a perfect stranger; he is in the constant practice of breaking God's commandments, and if ever he is able to think at all, his feelings of remorse are so terrible, that rather than suffer them, he would pawn his last blanket, and drink till he once more forgot himself. But he must die; and then, oh, then! what awaits him? The flames of hell, the blackness of darkness. Who then shall give him one drop of water to cool his tongue?

Young man, behold this picture. Do you ask whence it was taken? Alas! you need not go far to find such an object; for almost every place has its drunkards. Will you be one of them? You shudder at the thought. Then come not into their friendship; and if you wish not to die a drunkard, beware that you sit not down in a public house with a tippler, and the first time you are tempted to drink for pleasure, remember the drunkard's picture.

Did you ever see a man driving a wedge into a log of wood to split it? He first gets the small edge into the crack, and thereby driving it a little way at a time, he gets it forced in till the thickest part is deep sunk in the wood; and what was at first only a little crack, becomes a deep broad opening, which soon runs right across the timber and splits it.

Just so does the enemy of our soul's happiness contrive to get his temptations into our hearts. When he wants to make people thieves, or drunkards, or liars, or murderers, he does not at once tempt them to do a great wickedness, for he knows they would be afraid and ashamed to do it; but



he begins with some little sin, and then, when a person has done that, he is ready with a greater one, and so on till he has got them to commit the greatest crimes; such as at first they would have trembled to think of. Therefore, beware of his little temptations.

If you wish to keep him from getting in the large end of the wedge, take care that you do not let him put in the little end. Beware and do not play on the edge of the pit of destruction, when you ought to be walking straight on towards heaven.

You would shrink with horror, at the thought of ever becoming a murderer; then beware of passion.

You think it impossible you should ever become a drunkard; then let nothing induce you to take a little spirits because you are cold or wet, or for any such reason. Most drunkards have begun by taking a very little.

Be not persuaded to depart from this rule because you are weary, better take a bit of bread and cheese with a little water, it will in the end be likely to prove far better for you.

You have, perhaps, heard of people in fevers being so strong that it took three or four people to hold them; but when the fever went away they were as weak as a child, and indeed they very often sink away and die.

And it is just so with persons who take spirits. They feel a little better for it at first; they think themselves stronger and more fit for their work; but look at them in a few hours, and all their strength is gone; they want another dram, and so they go on till they become downright tipplers, and often either die in a fit, or by some inward complaint their drinking has brought on them.

Therefore keep out the little end of the wedge,—the little sip of spirits and water.

Think how much happier, how much more useful and better in this world the sober young man is than the drunkard; yet remember, that good as morality is for man, there is a wider, more accurate, and lasting division made by FAITH into the two classes of believers and unbelievers before God.