

may, after all, in the opinion of others acquainted with them, partake pretty freely of the intoxicating cup. There are not wanting cases of individuals who, in the very intemperate use of intoxicating drinks, may fancy the excuse at the head of this paper as applicable to their condition—a sad proof of the tendency of these drinks to delude the mind, to unfit it for calm and impartial enquiry, or for the reception of truth, however plainly and forcibly stated.

Second,—But though it were true that you took nothing to hurt yourself, have you a perfect safeguard that in still using them you will continue in your supposed *inocuous* course? Where is your guarantee, your ground of confidence that you will never follow the legitimate and natural current of intoxicating drinks, namely, from tasting to tipping, and from tipping to habitual and confirmed immoderation. It is not stated that you will do so, but where is your safeguard that you will not? Have not hundreds, as temperate and self-confident, and perhaps as seemingly moral and virtuous, fallen before the enemy? Can you not point to instances within your own circle of observation, however narrowed that circle may be? Scripture says, “the heart is deceitful above all things.” It says, moreover, “wine is a mocker.” How awfully dangerous, then, to be tampering with “a mocker,” a deceiver, when the heart is so apt to be deceived. You remember the case of Hazael when on an errand from Benhadad, the king, to the prophet Elisha, when the man of God, looking steadfastly on him till he was ashamed, told him of all the evil which he would bring on the children of Israel. Hazael, shocked at the mere mention of such atrocities, indignantly exclaimed, “What! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” How many thousands of poor drunkards are there now, who, had they been told what they would become, would have treated the warning as Hazael did the prophecy. Be entreated to see the ground on which you are now standing. Is your footing secure? Have you a complete guarantee that you will never, in your present course, become intemperate?

Third,—Although you were proof against habitual intemperance, who or what will secure you against the possibility of your falling into some peculiar circumstances of temptation, whereby you may be overcome, and you may take something to hurt yourself. Remember that you may hurt yourself in various ways as well as by injuring your body. You may injure your reputation, your means of subsistence, your prospects in life, your morals, or your Christian character, if you are a professor of religion. There is an elevating tendency in the church, at the present day, that regards with growing suspicion the use of alcoholic drinks. Even although there was no chance of your ever becoming a drunkard, may you not under some peculiar