

## CANADA TEMPERANCE ADVOCATE

"It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor do any thing by which thy brother is made to stumble, or to fall, or is weakened."—Rom. xiv. 21—*Macnight's Translation.*

## PLEDGE OF THE MONTREAL TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, DO AGREE, THAT WE WILL NOT USE INTOXICATING LIQUORS AS A BEVERAGE, NOR TRAFFIC IN THEM; THAT WE WILL NOT PROVIDE THEM AS AN ARTICLE OF ENTERTAINMENT, NOR FOR PERSONS IN OUR EMPLOYMENT; AND THAT IN ALL SUITABLE WAYS WE WILL DISCOURTAGE THEIR USE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.

MONTREAL, SEPTEMBER 1, 1845.

OBJECTIONS TO A CHRISTIAN'S JOINING A TEMPERANCE SOCIETY, CONSIDERED BY "OMICRON."

To the Editor of the Temperance Advocate.

DEAR SIR,—In proportion as a writer professes a regard for the word of God, and the more sincere and ardent his regard appears to be, the more he needs to study it, and be very careful that what he writes be, indeed, the real and full meaning of the texts discussed, and not a partial view of them. There is a weakness, (to call it by no worse name,) in many good people, leading them to receive what is advanced by one whose piety they admire, without any examination, or with implicit faith, which is contrary to the command of Christ, "Call no man father or master on earth," and is a species of idolatry.

This thought occurred, in consequence of reading the part of a tract contained in the number of the *Advocate* for July 1st. The writer professes a great regard for the word of God, and I am far from calling in question his sincerity; but I think he labours under something like a squeamish scrupulosity, which is likely to keep him back from engaging in many good works, lest unbelievers should be doing the same thing, or giving something to promote the same work. This unhappy state of mind is cherished in him by a misapplication of 2d Cor. vi. & 14—16. The more we revere the authority of God in his word, the more pernicious will a wrong view of it prove, as in that case error will have all the sacred sanction and power in our mind which belong to truth. The writer of the tract, whom I shall call A. seems to be very much scared by the word "yoke" in the text. He says "yoking together is defined as expressive of fellowship, communion, concord, argument." Fellowship, communion, &c., in what? Here is a sad omission—an omission by which he misrepresents the apostle, entangles himself, and misleads his readers. 2d. He would have us believe that Paul forbids believers engaging in promoting any object, however good, or in preventing any mischief, however great, if the means used be such that unbelievers can unite with them. Would this morbid, self-conceited scrupulosity, tend to gain unbelievers, or recommend the religion of Christ? Christians are called to be "Ready to every good work;" but this would teach them to wait till they ascertain not only that the work is good, but also that all who are putting their hand to it are believers! As his mistaking the apostle's design in the above passage, is the foundation on which he chiefly relies, to shew the fallacy of his view is enough to destroy the foundation, or to show that he has been building on a foundation of his own laying, supposing it to be that of the apostle. It is fellowship, or communion in religious worship, the apostle speaks of, as is evident by the mention in the passage of the temple of God and idols. The apostle then is forbidding believers having any fellowship with men in idolatry, and also uniting with wicked men in the worship of God as church members, and thereby profaning the ordinances of Christ, and hardening men in sin and self-delusion, by practically acknowledging them as brethren in Christ—compare 2d

Cor. vi. 14—16 with 1st Cor. v. 11, 12, 13. Against this conduct believers cannot be too careful, nor can religion prosper while this is neglected. But what has this to do with endeavoring to persuade men to lay aside all intoxicating drinks? Do believers, by uniting in such efforts with unbelievers, acknowledge them as brethren, or give them any encouragement to think that they are so. Some may speak and act absurdly in promoting temperance, just as men may do in promoting religion—they may encourage the wicked to join a church, as putting them in a more likely way of being saved, instead of the very reverse; and those who know of such delusion are bound to protest against it. But are all Christians responsible for such conduct, or, to avoid a profession of Christ, to avoid such responsibility? The mischiefs arising from the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, are so manifest, so manifold, and so awful, that it would be very consistent in a benevolent atheist to do something to save his fellow men, from a regard to their present welfare, and the peace of society; and it would be as consistent in Christians to unite with him in this, as it would be to unite with him in trying to save a shipwrecked crew from drowning, or in erecting or supporting a light-house on a dangerous rock to prevent such calamities. Can men obey the command of God in Prov. xxiv. 11, 12—Jude 22, 23, and neglect such efforts. If they disapprove of the means used by temperance men, why do they not "show a more excellent way"? It is cruel to sit still and do nothing, and hinder those who are doing the best they know.

It is lamentable to observe with what imposing confidence A. speaks. To teach a Christian what societies to join, he says—"Let him look away from the object they propose to attain, and fix his eye on his yoke-fellows, and if they are joined together by some pledge or bond, which an unbeliever in Christ can take as well as a believer, then he may be sure that that is no place for him." This has just as much appearance of truth as makes it ensnaring to persons of weak minds. He speaks of it as a simple rule given by God, just as if it were laid down in the Bible in so many words, or were a self-evident truth. But as it is a mere assertion, grounded on a complete misapplication of the apostle's words, a simple denial is a sufficient answer to it. You have already shown the absurdity to which it would lead if followed out. The lovers of alcohol are not only unfitting themselves more and more for all the duties they owe to God, but are also preparing themselves for dishonouring their parents, if they have them, for committing murder, perhaps suicide, for uncleanness, theft, lying, and for coveting what belongs to their neighbour; and we must not argue with these insatuated beings, from reason and scripture, to stop them in their horrid course, because unbelievers may use wrong arguments to stop them! Why this is absurd. But the evil is in being in a society with unbelievers. Believers may and do use foolish arguments, and therefore in so far as the objection refers to the means used, it lies against uniting with any fallible creatures in any cause. Being in the same society with unbelievers does not bind us to use wrong means, nor yet to approve of any wrong ones used by them, but gives us a better opportunity of instructing and warning them, than A. can have, who seems to stand aloof from the same.

Under objection 2nd, if I understand him, A. seems to think, that it is not wise or safe to teach men to cease to do evil, till they first learn to do well, or abhor that which is evil, till they begin to cleave to that which is good; or that if men would give up drunkenness and other evils, without believing the gospel, they would be ready to think themselves safe, and so be unlikely to become believers afterwards. Christ, indeed, has said that publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before self-righteous scribes and pharisees. But I cannot think that he thus teacheth