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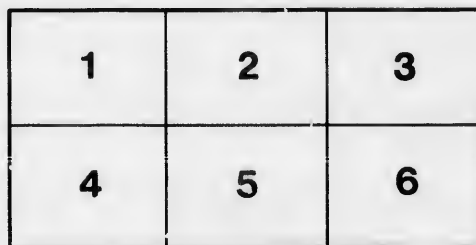
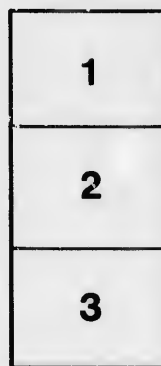
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A STATEMENT

OF

FACTS AND ARGUMENTS

IN

DEFENCE OF THE COURSE PURSUED

BY THE

SESSION

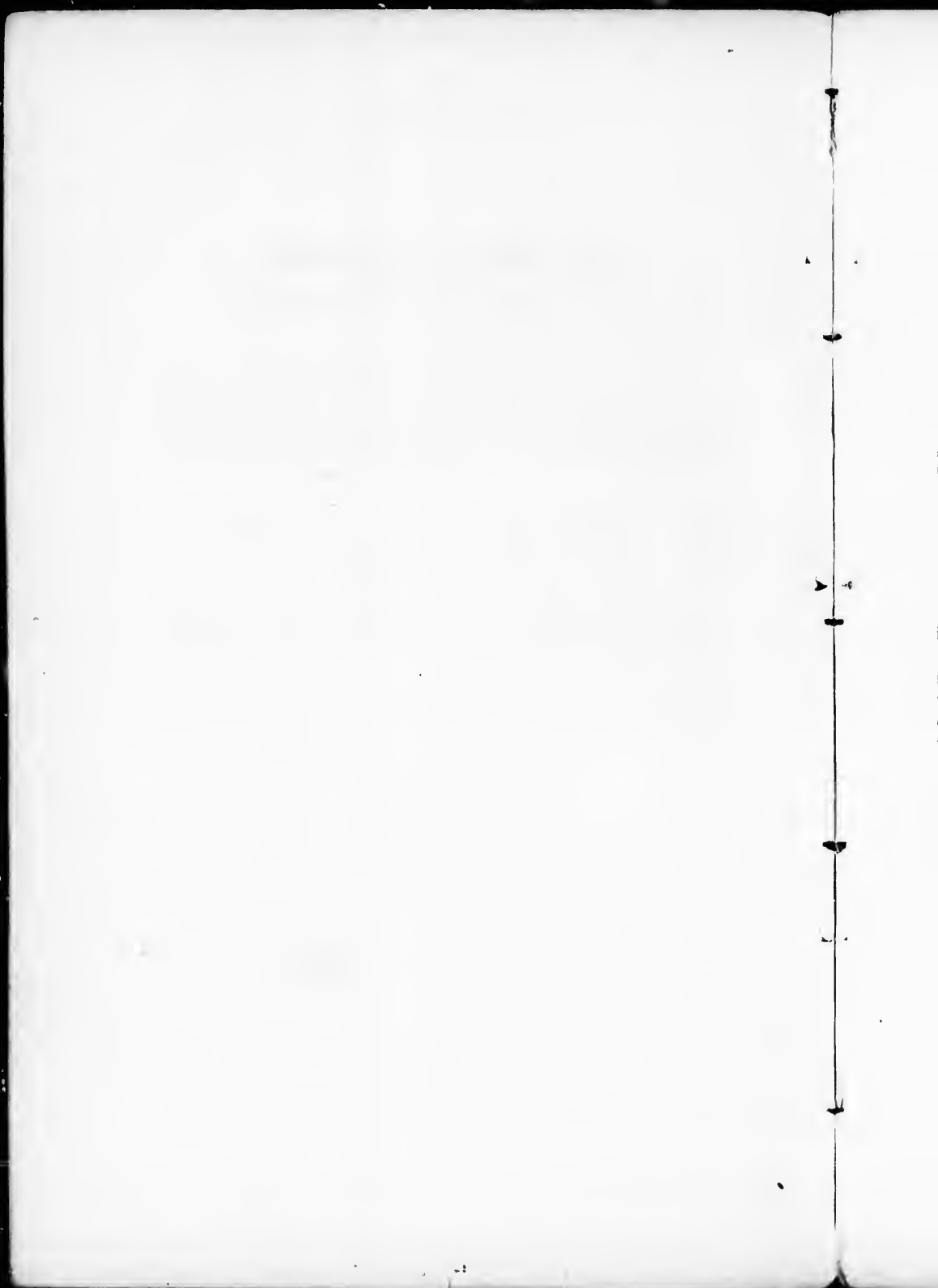
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MDCCCXLVII.



TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.

RESPECTED FRIENDS AND BRETHREN :

The following paragraphs were chiefly taken from notes of my speech before the Synod, at Kingston, in defence of the course of discipline pursued by the Session. Two or three of the quotations from the evidence given before the Committee of the British House of Commons, and some of the Scripture illustrations, were then omitted for want of time.

The present agitation of the question in the church, has suggested the idea to my mind, that it would only be common justice to the Session, and proper respect for you, to lay the same facts and arguments before you, that were laid before the Synod, in order that you may have a clearer idea of the great importance of the subject, and be enabled to give an intelligent vote on the matter which has been submitted for your decision. It will, however, be clearly understood, that the Session, as a body, is in no way compromised by all the views set forth by one of its members, who alone is responsible. And that the Lord may guide all our minds to correct views of our responsibility, as professing Christians, not only on this, but on every other department of our duty, is the prayer of,

Dear Brethren,

Yours most respectfully,

J. REDPATH.





## STATEMENT, &c.

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It will be obvious that the first part of the Statement of the Case is *necessarily* left out.

And now, sir, I think this Court can have no difficulty in perceiving, from the explanations I have given, which are fully corroborated by the document I hold in my hands and by the minute of Session which follows the one in question, that there were other grounds of rejection arising out of the traffic besides the mere traffic itself, and that the rejection ought not to have been recorded, without the facts connected with it. It would be a mere subterfuge to say that the latter minute is invalidated by not being recorded at the time of the rejection. The question for this Court to consider, and the only question is, does the second minute contain a record of facts? and were these facts before the Session at the time the applicants were rejected? Now, sir, no one will have the hardihood to deny, that although it appears to be studiously kept out of sight, the facts contained in that minute were stated before the Session in the presence of the Moderator and two other members of Session along with myself, on the same evening the cases were before us. And you will observe by the records, that the Moderator makes no objection to this minute on the ground of fact, but simply on that of form. The slightest deviation from fact, even by inference, would not have escaped his notice; and he was not the man to have allowed any thing incorrect to pass without entering his dissent, which he has not done, but he says merely "that he does not think the entry regular." The facts, therefore, of the second minute, are left untouched.

Now, sir, I would ask this Court, if we found that our Clerk\* had made an entry in the minutes which might be subject to misconstruction, from whatever cause, and that we had allowed, through inadvertence, such to be engrossed, were we not right—nay, sir, was it not our duty to give such explanations in the following

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\* The gentleman who was the Session Clerk previous to the date of the second minute, was opposed to the other members of Session on this point.

minute as we considered would set the matter in its true light ; What Court would deny any body of men that justice ? and if there were any doubts before, I think we have ample proofs now of its necessity ; and it is only a matter of deep regret, sir, that some of us had not paid more attention to our minutes from the beginning. If we had made that entry ourselves at any after period, doubts might have been cast upon its correctness ; but when you consider that it was done in the very next minute, and before the same Moderator who, as I have said, would at once have detected the slightest inconsistency, I do not see it possible how it can be invalidated on the ground of informality.

The facts connected with the case having now been stated, I will proceed to show you the light in which we regard the question, and the responsibility which we attach to the different departments of the traffic in intoxicating drinks. It is said by our opponents that we have extreme views in regard to the use of and traffic in intoxicating drinks ; and that we have entered into a bond for the exclusion of the traffickers. I will tell you something of the nature of this mysterious bond. At the time of the formation of the Church, those of us who believe that intemperance is the sin of the age, and that the temptations held out by the traffickers are the chief sources of the evil, drew out a declaration to this effect, that if it should ever occur that the Church should adopt a different practice in the admission of members from the view that we held, we should be exonerated from all the evils which might be expected to follow, and that we should be fully at liberty to withdraw from all connection with it, and be no longer bound in any way to contribute to its support.—(See Extract of Minute.)

I had the honour and the privilege of giving my testimony before the Presbytery regarding our views on this subject, and I esteem it a still greater honour to have the privilege of again doing so before this superior Court ; not that I am anxious to occupy a prominent position—the reverse is the case ; but having been dragged before the Church Court, I will not shrink from the duty imposed upon me.

Know, then, sir, that although we deny having established any test for the purpose of debarring from admission to the Church, we readily admit that there are some departments in the traffic that we look upon in the light of sinful occupation, and that it is impossible, in these days of light, for a man to be engaged in them, without knowing that he is engaged in a trade that is

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ruinous to the bodies and souls of men, and without one redeeming feature connected with it. Such is the business of the common tavern-keeper, whose sole occupation is to serve out all kinds of intoxicating drinks from morning to night to every man indiscriminately who comes within his reach. Then, again, sir, there is the distiller, who converts the fruits of the earth, the bounties of the Creator, into a liquid poison, and supplies all these smaller pest-houses from his overflowing fountain. Then, again, sir, there are numbers of the petty grocers, whose business consists in supplying families in larger quantities than the tavern-keeper. Are not these men aware that a great proportion of all the liquor that is sold to the poor families around them is ruinous both to the temporal and spiritual welfare of the consumer? But suppose that only one-half of the liquor sold in this way was the immediate agent of evil, would they be justified as God-fearing men in continuing in a business of such a dangerous character? True, they do not see the same revolting scenes which are continually passing before the eye of the common tavern-keeper; but they, too, cannot help seeing, in the very appearance of their customers, that many of them belong to the abodes of poverty, wretchedness, and woe; and that they are selling them the very articles which are the chief source of their misery. And were they even to look into its effects among many of their more respectable customers, they would find it, silently it may be, but not less surely, undermining the peace, happiness, and comfort, of their families.

Now, sir, all this may be well enough, and may be considered the legitimate business of the man of the world, sanctioned both by law and custom; but we are now called upon to ask ourselves, Is it the legitimate business of the man who professes to have given himself to the Lord? or can it be said to be the Lord's work that he is engaged in? Would it not be a solemn mockery of God to bend the knee, and ask of him to bless and prosper such a business?

This, Sir, is as great and as grave a question as ever came before a church court, great inasmuch as it effects the well-being of thousands of our fellowmen—grave, inasmuch as it effects the well-being of the Church of Christ. It is of the utmost consequence that this Court should weigh the matter well before coming to a decision, as that decision may involve the most serious consequences to the church in this land. Nothing, I believe, would be a greater triumph to the enemies of the Cross than any decision which should seem, even by implication, to give countenance and support to this soul-destroying traffic. I pray, therefore, that the

Spirit of the Lord may guide to such a decision as will promote His cause, and redound to His glory. I need not assure this Court that we are actuated by no selfish motives, but by a conscientious conviction of duty; and there is nothing farther from our minds than to injure the congregation to which we belong, by endeavouring to carry out any particular views of our own in this or any other matter; although we believe that the safety and efficiency of a church depends much upon great care being exercised in admitting to membership.

I beg, therefore, that the Court will bear with me a little, while I endeavour, as briefly as possible, to bring under their observation a few of the arguments which may be adduced in support of our views of the nature of the traffic in intoxicating drinks; and in doing so, you will readily see that I must state the evils resulting from the traffic as it is now carried on, before I can clearly bring out its dangerous nature. But before doing so, lest there should be any misapprehension, I would now say one word about those who are opposed to us. I would not have the Court to understand that I have any accusation to bring against them; there are amongst them gentlemen whom I respect and esteem, although I am far from approving of the unconstitutional means they first adopted to carry their point; neither can I agree with them in the statement made in the memorial, that we have injured the congregation; yet that we do not see eye to eye on this question, is no reason why we should not esteem and respect each other. And I have no doubt that if each of us is sincerely desirous of knowing what is the mind of the Lord, and earnestly seeks for the guidance of his Spirit, we shall soon approximate closer to each other's views in this matter.

I will now proceed to lay before you a few proofs in support of the views that we hold; and whatever is not found in strict accordance with the spirit of God's Word, you will not allow to weigh a feather in the scale.

First, then, we have the testimony of Scripture in regard to intoxicating drink. Whenever we know to a certainty that intoxicating drinks were used, the results were disastrous. Let us first take the case of Noah, which resulted in a curse upon the third part of the human race, which remains to this day. Take the case of Lot, which resulted in the incestuous origin of two nations that seemed to be doomed to destruction from their very birth. Take the case of Nabal; when his heart was merry with

wine the Lord smote him. Then take the case of Elah, in first Kings xvi. ch. 9th and 10th and various other passages of like import.

Again, sir, what says the wise man?—"Look not on the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup; for at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging." Intoxicating drinks are mentioned as a great cause of declension and ruin of souls in the visible church. The greatest inflictions of God's wrath are represented under the symbols of wine—the filling of every bottle being the acme of the Lord's indignation. "Therefore thou shalt speak unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine? Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the Lord; I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them." Jeremiah xiii. 12—14. Now, sir, look at the opposite. Wherever we find mention made of those who abstain from these drinks, we shall find them enjoying the favour and friendship of the Lord. Witness the cases of Samson, the Rechabites, Daniel, John the Baptist, and others. Then, again, to my mind, by far the strongest of all proofs for our rule of conduct, are the commands laid down in the New Testament for the Christian walk; but these I shall reserve for the close of my observations. I have already shown you the effects of intoxicating drinks, and their condemnation in the Old Testament; and I will now proceed to show you that habits of drinking are still more prevalent with us in these days than in Old Testament times, and the results equally terrible and disastrous, especially among those nations professing the Christian name; and to show this, I will adduce three kinds of testimony;—first, that of judges and jurors; second, that of medical men; third, that of the ministers of the gospel. In the first place, I would refer you to the testimony of the Select Committee, appointed by the House of Commons, in England, consisting of thirty-eight members, amongst whom will be found the name of Sir Robert Peel, and some of the most celebrated statesmen of the day.

After taking a mass of evidence from persons residing in different parts of the kingdom, and in various ranks and conditions of life,

they made up a report consisting of fifty-nine distinct clauses, under ten separate heads, a few of which I will quote, as bearing directly upon the subject before us.

1st clause gives the extent of the evil :

“ It exists to a great extent in the population of England, Ireland, and Scotland, in the sea-ports and manufacturing towns, as well as in the rural districts, including, in its victims, men, women, and children.”

2d. Remote causes of its production :

“ That among the remote causes of the intemperance which still prevails, may be enumerated the influence of example, set by the upper classes of society, when habits of intoxication were more frequent in such ranks than among inferiors in station, and the many customs and courtesies still retained from a remote ancestry, of mingling the gift or use of intoxicating drinks in almost every important event in life—marriages, funerals, &c., and even in the commercial transactions of purchase and sale.”

3d. Immediate causes of intemperance :

“ That amongst the immediate causes of the increased prevalence of this vice among the humbler classes of society, may be mentioned the increased number and force of the temptations placed in their path, by the additional establishment of places at which intoxicating drinks are sold ; the number now being ascertained, from the average of several districts in England, Scotland, and Ireland, to be not less than one such place for every twenty families throughout the United Kingdom.”

4th. Consequences to individual character :

“ That in consequence of the vice of intoxication among the humbler classes, and the prevalence of intemperate habits, and pernicious customs encouraging such habits among the middle and higher ranks, so many and so fearful to contemplate, it is as difficult as it is painful, to enumerate even the outlines ; and to pursue them in all their melancholy and frightful details, would require a volume.”

5th. “ That the following are only a few of the evils springing from this baneful source.”

6th. “ Destruction of health ; disease in every form and shape ; premature decrepitude in the old ; stunted growth and general debility in the young ; loss of life by paroxysms, apoplexies, drownings, burnings, and accidents of various kinds, delirium tremens, one of the most awful afflictions of humanity ; paralysis, idiocy, madness, and violent death, as proved by numerous medical men, who have made this the subject of their long and careful investigation.”

7th. “ Destruction of mental capacity and vigour.”

8th. “ Irritation of all the worst passions of the heart ; hatred, anger, revenge ; a brutalisation of disposition, that breaks asunder and destroys the most endearing bonds of nature and society.”

9th. “ Extinction of all moral and religious principle ; disregard of truth ; indifference to education ; violation of chastity ; insensibility to shame ; and indescribable degradation, as proved by *clergymen, magistrates, overseers, teachers, and others, examined by your committee on all these points.*”

10th. “ That in a national point of view, as affecting the wealth, resources, strength, honour, and prosperity of the country, the consequences are as destructive of the general welfare of a community, as they are fatal to the happiness of individuals. Amongst others, the following evils may be distinctly traced.”

11th. "The destruction of an immense amount of wholesome and nutritious grain, given by a bountiful Providence for the food of man, which is now converted by distillation into poison. The highest medical authorities, examined before your committee, being uniform in their testimony, that ardent spirits are absolutely poisonous to the human constitution; that in no case whatever are they necessary or even useful to persons in health; that they are always in every case and to the smallest extent deleterious, pernicious, and destructive, according to the proportion in which they may be taken into the system. So that not only is an immense amount of human food destroyed, while thousands are inadequately fed, but this food is destroyed in such a manner as greatly to injure the agricultural producers themselves, for whose grain but for the perverted and mistaken use of it, there would be more than thrice the demand; for the use of the now scantily fed people, who would then have healthy appetites, and improved means to purchase nutriment for themselves and children in grain as well as all the other varied productions of the earth."

12th. "The loss of productive labour, &c."

13th. "The extensive loss of property by sea."

14th. "The comparative inefficiency of the Army and Navy."

15th. "The injury to national reputation, &c., &c."

16th. "The diminution of physical power, &c., &c."

17th. "The increase of pauperism in its most fearful shape."

18th. "The spread of crime in every shape and form; from theft, fraud, and prostitution in the young; to burnings, robberies, and more hardened offences in the old, by which the jails and prisons, the hulks and convict transports are filled with inmates; and an enormous mass of human beings who under sober and moral training would be sources of wealth and strength to the country, are transformed chiefly through the remote or immediate cause of intoxicating drinks into excrescences of corruption and weakness, which must be cut off and cast away from the community to prevent the gangrenous contamination of its whole frame, leaving the body itself in a constant state of that inflammatory excitement, which always produces exhaustion and weakness in the end; and thus causing the country to sacrifice every year a larger portion of blood and treasure than the most destructive wars occasion; the innocent population thus made criminal, like the grain subjected to distillation, converted from a wholesome service of strength and prosperity into a poisoned issue of weakness and decay."

19th. "The hindering of education, the weakening of good example, the creation of constant and increasing difficulties in the propagation of the gospel both at home and abroad, according to the testimony of teachers, pastors and others, examined before your committee. The sum expended in intoxicating drinks in the city of Glasgow alone, according to one of the witnesses, is nearly equal to the whole amount expended in public institutions for charity and benevolence in the United Kingdom."

20. "The loss to the nation, may be fairly estimated at fifty millions sterling per annum, exclusive of the cost—say fifty millions more."

From the 31st to the 57th clause inclusive, are contained the remedies and suggestions of the committee. The remedies are under two heads: 1st, Immediate remedies, Legislative and moral; the 2d, ultimate or prospective remedies. From these I shall only make two or three quotations, and to the last I beg your particular attention, as being the voice of a most influential body thirteen years ago.

In the 31st clause, the committee recommend the entire separation of the sale of spirits from groceries and provisions throughout the United Kingdom. In the 32nd clause, the committee recommend the discontinuance of ardent spirits, except as medicine, to the Army and Navy, and to every other body of men employed by or under the control of Government; the abolition of all Garrison or Barrack Canteens at home and abroad. In the 40th clause, the encouragement of all Abstinence Societies. In the 41st, the diffusion of sound information on the extensive evils produced by this beverage. In the 44th, a national system of education, which in addition to the various branches of requisite and appropriate knowledge, should embrace as an essential part of the instruction, accurate information as to the poisonous and deleterious nature of intoxicating drinks in every form and shape.

These are some of the immediate remedies; now mark the ultimate or prospective remedies recommended.

Forty-sixth clause recommends the absolute prohibition of the importation from foreign countries, or from our own colonies, of distilled spirits in every shape. Forty-seventh clause, the equally absolute prohibition of all distillation of spirits from grain, the most important part of the food of man in our own country; and in the forty-eighth clause is the restriction of distillation from other materials to the purposes of the arts, manufactures, and medicine, confining the wholesale and retail dealing in such articles to chemists, druggists, and dispensaries, alone.

In the concluding paragraph it is recommended that an abstract of the evidence obtained by the enquiry be given to the public in a cheap form, and extensively circulated; to shew that the national cost of intoxication and its consequences is ten-fold greater in amount than that of the poor rates, pauperism itself being indeed chiefly caused by habits of intemperance, of which it is but one out of many melancholy and fatal results.

I have quoted largely from this document, as its authority and correctness is indisputable, being part of the Records of the British Parliament in 1834, and it clearly shews that the extent of the use and disastrous effects of intoxicating drinks are in no way diminished in the present day, but are, in all probability, far greater than when the Scriptures were written. I will follow the quotations from this document, by one from the speech of the honourable mover of the resolution for a committee of inquiry.

After enumerating a number of the most appalling facts connected with the traffic, he says:—"These are but the outlines of



this great chart of misery and degradation which drunkenness has traced out for our survey, the details of which are too full of sickening horror to be painted by any pen, or uttered by any tongue."

"As a matter of public economy—the lowest and narrowest light in which it can be viewed—let a calculation be made of the national cost of all this evil, and it will be seen that if the revenue derived from it were ten times its present amount, it would be far out-balanced by the tremendous loss which it inflicts on the nation. It is estimated, on carefully collected data, that not less than fifty millions sterling is expended, in a single year, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, in spirits, wine, and beer, and other intoxicating and fermenting drinks, not a single drop of which is necessary either for the health or strength of man; but every glass of which is, in its degree, absolutely prejudicial to the health of the consumer. Here, then, is fifty millions of capital wasted—a sum equal to the revenue of the whole kingdom—as much thrown away as if it were sunk in the depths of the Atlantic; nay, worse than that, for there it would be merely thrown away, and no more; but from its being expended in intoxicating drinks, it gives rise to a long train of expenses besides, equal to sixty millions more. It may, therefore, be asserted without fear of contradiction, that the aggregate expenses entailed, and the losses sustained by the pernicious habit of drinking, exceed a hundred millions, annually, and that in a mere pecuniary and economical sense, it is the greatest blight that ever cursed our country, and like the canker-worm, it is eating out its very vitals.

"But let us see, says the honorable member, how this increasing consumption of ardent spirits alone decreases the supply of human food.—Taking the legally and illegally distilled spirits at home at forty millions of gallons annually, it would require twenty millions of bushels of grain in a year. Here, then, is not merely a waste and destruction of that very food of which the laboring classes in England have not enough, and which they are demanding to be admitted duty free; but it is a conversion of one of the best gifts of Providence—a wholesome and nutritious article of sustenance—into a fiery flood of disease and crime, and of physical and mental destruction. We hang by the hands of the common executioner—the ignorant rick-burner who destroys the hay or straw laid up for the winter-food of cattle, while we encourage and enrich the distiller and the vender of that far more destructive fire which consumes 20 millions of bushels of the best food of man, which spreads its exterminating lava over

the whole surface of society ; which kills the body and destroys the soul, and leaves no one redeeming or even palliating trace behind it."

Now, Sir, I think the examples which I have quoted from our own native land, may serve as a specimen for others, especially of the land in which our lot is cast: the nature and extent of the evil is clearly set forth, and also how the manufacture of and the traffic in intoxicating drinks is looked upon by the wise Legislator, and the philanthropist, leaving out of sight the religious view of the question ; and, Sir, does it not present a fearful and appalling picture to every man of common humanity. But what is the picture it presents to the God-fearing man ? I leave it for this Court to answer the question.

I intended to have given you the address of the late respected J. S. Cartwright to the Grand Jury of this City, a few years ago, but I have not been able to lay my hand upon it. I might also have given you the testimony of Justice M'Cord in the Quarter Sessions in Montreal, had time permitted ; both of these documents go clearly to prove that the causes of five-sixths of the crime and misery which exists in the country, are precisely from the same sources as those in our own native land, namely, intoxicating drinks, and more especially the vast number of places at which these drinks are sold.

Now, Sir, for the testimony of the Medical men. In the same document it is recorded that the following testimony signed by no less a number than 589 Medical men of the first eminence in the principal towns of the United Kingdom, is at once conclusive and irresistible :

"We, the undersigned do hereby declare, that it is our opinion, ardent spirits cannot be regarded as a necessary, suitable, or nourishing article of diet ; that they have not the property of preventing the accession of any complaints, but may be considered as the principal source of numerous and formidable diseases, and the principal cause of the poverty, crime and misery which abound in this country ; and that the entire disuse of them except under medical directions, would materially tend to improve the health, amend the morals, and augment the comforts of the community."

Sir Astley Cooper says:—

"I never suffer any ardent spirits in my house—thinking them evil spirits ; and if the poor could witness the evil consequences of drinking, that I have done, they would be aware that spirits and poison were synonymous terms." Dr. Paris says : "that the art of extracting alcoholic liquors by distillation, must be regarded as the greatest curse inflicted on human nature."

Dr. Douglas and 17 other Physicians in Quebec, say "that intoxicating drinks may be considered as the fruitful source of the numerous and formidable diseases, and the cause of the poverty, crime and misery which afflict the country."

Here, Sir, is the testimony of Physicians in Britain and in Canada,

and I might quote thousands from the United States to corroborate the facts.

Let us now see what is said of the dreadful nature of this traffic by two or three of the most eminent Ministers of the Gospel—men whose praises are in all the Churches.

First, let us take that of the Rev. John Wesley. In one of his sermons he says :—

“ All those who deal in spirituous liquors in the ordinary way, are poisoners general—they murder His Majesty’s subjects by wholesale, and drive them to hell like sheep. Neither does their eye pity nor spare—and what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves.—A fire that will burn to the nethermost hell.—Blood, blood is there! the foundation, the walls, the roof is stained with blood, and canst thou hope, O, man of blood to deliver the fields of blood to the third generation—not so; there is a God in Heaven! Like those whom thou hast destroyed body and soul, thy memorial shall perish with thee !”

Secondly, let us take the testimony of the late Rev. Mr. McCheyne, he says :—

“ Public houses are the curse of Scotland! I never see a sign licensed to sell spirits, without thinking it a license to ruin souls—they are the yawning avenues to poverty and rags; and as another has said—the short cut to hell. Is it to be tamely borne that these pest-houses and dens of iniquity—these man-traps for precious souls, shall be open on the Sabbath! nay that they shall be enriched and kept afloat by their unholy traffic.”

The next is the testimony of Archdeacon Jeffreys, of Bombay. He says, “ 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 the 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 demoralised state of those who frequent those 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 ‘ sears the conscience, hardens the heart, pollutes the affections, and excites all the bad passions, weakens all the motives to 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?—opposing the spread of Christ's kingdom in the hearts of others, than by using, or by causing others to use, this instrument of Satan." Is the testimony of these men in accordance with the Word of God? That is the question for us to consider: we shall take one proof.

"Wo to him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken." Habakkuk ii. 15.

Now, sir, I think I have clearly proved from Scripture the disastrous effects of intoxicating drinks; and I think the proof must be equally conclusive to every unprejudiced mind in this assembly, that the prevalence of this great evil is in no way diminished; but that there is strong presumptive proof, that it is of far greater magnitude now, than when the Scriptures were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Spirit. I have also shown in what light the indiscriminate sale and manufacture of intoxicating drinks is viewed, even independently of religion. We shall just glance at some parts of that evidence, and first see what is said of the manufacture of this article.

It decreases the supply of human food to a fearful extent. The consumption of grain for brewing and distilling in the United Kingdom, for the past year, 1846, according to the best collected data, taking into calculation what might have been grown on the ground occupied for the growth of hops, would have fed six millions of the people, more than double the number that have been suffering from the famine which now afflicts certain portions of our native land, and of which we are already witnessing some of the fearful effects, among the poor immigrants landing on our shores. But even this may be only the beginning of sorrows. May not this, sir, be looked upon in the light of a judgment of God on the land, for converting the wholesome and nutritious food, which his bounty has provided for their sustenance, "into a fiery flood of disease and crime, wasting and eating out the very vitals of the nation?" How applicable are the words of that speech to the present eventful crisis; it speaks to us like the spirit of prophesy. Then again, sir, look at the number of houses licensed for the sale of intoxicating drinks. One to every twenty families in the land!—making 250,000 houses, more or less engaged in this kind of traffic! and these pest houses are distributed throughout every town, village, and hamlet, like small reservoirs, sending forth their poisonous streams, to pollute and destroy man, who was created in the image of God. Is it possible, sir, that Christian men can shut their eyes to the evils consequent

upon this trade? at the bare recital of which even our common humanity shudders; and which is so strongly condemned by all who have given the subject their attention and unbiassed consideration. Is there not sufficient ground, sir, to condemn the traffic on the score of benevolence and humanity alone, independent of religion? When we take it in a religious point of view—in the light of God's Word—what shall we say of the man who professes to be a "member of the body of Christ"—a "living temple of the Holy Ghost," that would defend the traffic, on the ground that there is nothing in the Word of God where it is specially prohibited by "Thus saith the Lord," Ye shall not sell your neighbour drink, when the whole of the doctrines and precepts contained in that blessed Word are contrary to, and directly opposed to, everything of a doubtful character? How much more then, is it condemnatory of that which is of a dangerous and destructive tendency, without a redeeming feature, as we have already shown this traffic to be, as it is now carried on; and as is admitted by many mere worldly men.

I would not presume, sir, to judge, and far be it from me to say, that there have not been and may not even now be, some truly Christian men still engaged in this trade, and that have not yet had their eyes opened to its destructive tendency; but I do say, sir, with the light that is now thrown upon the subject, ignorance cannot be pleaded as a valid excuse for continuing in it? and I believe, sir, that every Christian man so engaged, who will carefully, prayerfully, and without prejudice, examine his occupation in the light of God's word, will at last come to the conclusion that he cannot be engaged either in the manufacture or in the indiscriminate sale of intoxicating drinks without causing ruin, destruction, and misery to numbers of his fellow creatures—and *that* just in proportion to the extent of his commerce in that article. I believe, sir, that there are degrees of guilt in this trade; just in proportion as a man sees the evil before his eyes, is he culpable; and it may depend, also, in some measure, on the degree of light he has had on the subject: but this is rather dangerous ground to rest upon. Neither would I compare the sale of wine or beer to that of ardent spirits. But, sir, although these are of a much less hurtful nature in themselves, inasmuch as they contain less alcohol, yet if any man will examine the evidences taken before the Committee of the House of Commons, (from which I have so largely quoted) he will see the most fatal results arising from the use of even these milder beverages; and what is more, that they too often give the appetite

which nothing but the strongest stimulants will afterwards satisfy.

I would sum up these observations by saying, that the worst departments of the business appear to me to be actually sinful occupations, inasmuch as the invariable tendency is evil ; and with regard to the others, I would say, that under present circumstances, it behoves all Christians to set a good example before the world, and especially not to be engaged in any traffic whereby men may be tempted to sin.

Now, sir, what is the remedy for this great and terrible evil ? Is the church to do nothing in the matter ! Is she to sit still with folded arms, and leave the civil power to stop the torrent ? Is her department to deal only with the drunkard, and take no cognizance of the drunkard-maker—the man who sells the tempting draught, and pockets the unholy gain ? This is the question that the Court is called upon to decide, who is the more guilty of the two—the poor, lost inebriate, whose passion for strong drink has become so great as completely to shut up the avenues to reason and conscience, or the man who wilfully deals out to him the tempting draught, for the sake of gain ? Can any man doubt which of the two is more guilty in the sight of God ? I know, sir, the plea that is set up by those professors who countenance the trade. Only find out that they keep a disorderly house, and make people drunk, and we will at once agree that such a man is unfit for church membership ; but, say they, it is contrary to Scripture to make the selling of strong drink, in itself, a sin. The same argument is used by the defenders of American slavery—namely, that it is not a sin *per se*. I do not think it at all necessary to combat so specious an argument. I think it sufficient for our purpose to take the broad ground, that the indiscriminate use of intoxicating drinks, as it is now carried on in most of the houses that are licensed for that purpose is one of the greatest evils which afflict humanity at the present day ; and this being the uncontroverted fact, I proceed to put the question—is it a legitimate business for the man who professes to have separated himself from the world, and given himself to the Lord, (as every man who seeks admission into the visible church professes to do), to be actively engaged in a traffic from which such a fearful amount of evil invariably flows, and is the church acting consistently with her high calling when she readily receives within her pale the man who is actively engaged in the traffic that is causing such numbers of his fellow-men to stumble and fall, while she casts out of her pale the poor, lost inebriate, who has fallen through the temptation by which these men have beset his path.

Let us refer to the law and the testimony. St. Paul says—"If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth; lest I make my brother to offend;" and again, "but judge this rather that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way." Now, sir, is there anything that has caused so many offences as this traffic? Is there anything that has been so great a stumbling block, and caused so many of our weaker brethren to fall and perish, as the indiscriminate sale of strong drinks? Let the evidence that I have brought before you, this day, answer the question.

Every man is responsible to God for the evils which result from his selfishness or indifference to the welfare of others, as will be found clearly illustrated in Exodus xxi. 28, 29—"If an ox gore a man or woman that they die, the ox shall be stoned, but the owner shall be quit; but if the ox were wont to push with his horns in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or woman, the ox shall be stoned, and the owner also shall be put to death." If a man could justly plead ignorance of the results of this trade, he too might go quit; but where is the man that is so utterly ignorant as not to know its destructive results, who can shut his eyes to the fact, that strong drink has long been goring mankind right and left, without mercy, and that it has long been, and still is, preying on the peace and happiness of individuals, families, and nations. It is true that we are not under the same law as far as our civil rule is concerned; but that, on the contrary, men receive licence from the government to carry on this soul-ruining trade; nay, more, that it has got so deeply interwoven into the habits and customs of society, as greatly to palliate the evil in our own eyes, but will this satisfy an accusing conscience, when the Lord cometh to make inquisition for blood, and every man's work shall be tried as if by fire. Who shall be able to stand that terrible inquisition, but he that hath clean hands and a pure heart? I know, Sir, that none shall be able to stand on that day, but those who have been washed in the Blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God; but who can contemplate without horror the fearful amount of guilt that will rest upon the head of those who have been instrumental, by their traffic, in sending so many souls into eternity unprepared to meet their God, unless they have repented and forsaken this course. Now if we except the false teachers who send their deluded votaries to hell with a lie in their right hand—where shall we find any other body of men, of any other trade, profession, or calling, that has ruined so

many bodies and souls as the manufacturers and venders of strong drinks have done ?

How different their condition from that of the Apostle Paul, who could say :—I am clear from the blood of all men ! One would suppose that any man professing to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ would shun such a dangerous path, as the watchful mariner would shun the rocks and shoals that lie athwart his course ; but it is a lamentable fact, that this is not the case—why ? Because as I have already said, the drinking usages of society have got so interwoven into all its frame-work, that for the Church to interfere with the manufacture and sale of strong drink, even in its worst aspect, is to raise the cry of “a heresy that will ruin the Church”—“an innovation on Christian liberty”—“You are wise above what is written,” and interfering with the standing of the Church. But, Sir, I hold it to be neither unscriptural nor contrary to the standard of our Church. I hold it to be in accordance with the word of God, which says—“Abhor that which is evil—follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.—Take heed, says St. Paul, “lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak, and through thy knowledge the weak brother perish.” Could we find language more pointed in answer to the charge of interfering with Christian liberty. I hold it to be the Church’s duty to take cognizance of every thing whereby her members are brought into temptation.

I cannot see how it is possible that any truly good man, if at all enlightened on this subject, can continue in such a course ; I fear, Sir, that, as professing Christians we are yet but very imperfectly acquainted with the amount of responsibility that attaches to us as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What says the Apostle James—“Pure religion and undefiled before God is to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” Will any man be bold enough to say that the sale of strong drink is not in its effects directly opposed to that precept ? Is there any thing on the face of the earth that has made so many widows and fatherless children as this has done, and that, too, within the pale of the visible church. Ah, sir, I fear the church has a terrible account to render for her delinquency in this respect. In our Lord’s prayer, we pray, “Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.” Is the sale of intoxicating drinks not directly opposed to the coming of the kingdom of Christ in the heart, in the church, and in the world ? Any person acquainted with the horrors of this trade, and the misery



that it has caused upon the earth, can scarcely conceive it possible how any man can be found to advocate such a cause, far less to advocate it on the ground of its being in accordance with God's holy word. The whole spirit of the Gospei is love; the whole tendency of this we have clearly shown to be evil.

These, sir, are the views we hold regarding the traffic; but let us not be misapprehended, we do not say that a man cannot drink without sinning,—we never held any such doctrine, although we do say that on the ground of expediency there is a loud call on all who love the Lord Jesus to set a good example before the world, and to lift their testimony against the besetting sin of the age, and the plague spot of the Christian church. Neither do we say that a man cannot be engaged in the sale of it without sin. It is the indiscriminate sale to every man who will buy—the trade as it is now generally carried on, that we condemn. How it might be carried on without danger is not for me to say. There is, however, one safe course that I would recommend, and that is, for every man to wash his hands entirely of any connection with it, except for purposes of necessity and mercy, and these would be found to be very few.

There is only one other view of the case that I would wish to bring before this Court, and that is one of expediency. Let us see how it effects our situation as a church. The Presbyterian church of Canada is in its infancy, and struggling, as it were, for existence; the church is entirely dependent on voluntary support, and in many places the congregation are said to be too poor to support a minister. Well, sir, tell me if there is any congregation that does not spend more in intoxicating drinks than would support the Gospel efficiently in the midst of them. If there are *any*, I believe there are very few. Again, sir, you have an infant college, on whom the report of the Committee says that the future prospects of the church, under God, almost entirely depend, and that it is necessary to its very existence, that a large sum be raised every year for its support. In this report I fully concur, and feel deeply impressed with its importance, and I think the question might be fairly put to every member of the Church—do you love the Lord Jesus Christ sincerely? if you do, will you not deny yourself some portion of your wonted indulgences, especially such of them as tend to evil, for the sake of supporting the college to train up young men for the work of the Lord, and enable the church to supply the destitute portions of Canada with a preached Gospel. I feel assured, sir, that were men calmly, and without prejudice, to examine this question as in the sight of God—and view the ruin and desolation which the traffic carries in

ts train, instead of looking for arguments to prove that it is not expressly forbidden by any particular statute in the word of God, their search would be to find out whether it was in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, and whether there were any express command that bound them to follow such a dangerous course.

With these remarks, sir, I close my observations. I have to return this Court my sincere thanks for the patience and attention with which they have listened to my feeble attempt to defend our position, and may the Lord give light to come to a right decision in this matter.

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