

Appeal to Christians on the national vice of intemperance : address delivered at the inaugural meeting of the Congregational Total Abstinence Association ... October 1874 / by Edward Baines.

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APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS
ON THE
NATIONAL VICE OF INTEMPERANCE.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL
TOTAL ABSTINENCE ASSOCIATION,

*Held during the Autumnal Session of the Congregational Union of
England and Wales at Huddersfield, October, 1874.*

BY
EDWARD BAINES,

President.

LONDON:

W. TWEEDIE & CO., 337, STRAND, W.C.; W. H. GUEST,
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CONGREGATIONAL TOTAL ABSTINENCE ASSOCIATION.

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CONSTITUTION.

Name—THE CONGREGATIONAL TOTAL ABSTINENCE ASSOCIATION.

Objects—To extend the principles and practice of total abstinence in the Congregational Churches of England and Wales, and to assist in promoting the cause of Temperance throughout the land.

Membership—Ministers and Deacons of Congregational Churches, Delegates to the Congregational Union, and Students in Congregational Colleges and Institutes, who are abstainers. Other Congregationalists, being abstainers, on payment of not less than 5s. annually.

Method—By the formation and encouragement of Temperance Societies and Bands of Hope in connection with Congregational Churches, by Sermons, Lectures, Conferences, the circulation of Temperance Literature, and other suitable means.

Officers—Shall consist of a President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Secretaries, and a Council of twenty-four Members—twelve resident in London and twelve in the country—to be elected annually, at a General Meeting to be held during the week of the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union, when a Report of the proceedings of the Council and a statement of its accounts, duly audited, shall be submitted.

Annual Meeting—The Annual Public Meeting to be held during the week of, and in the same town as, the Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union.

Subscriptions may be forwarded to the Treasurer, or to the Hon. Secretaries, at 337, Strand, London, W.C.

APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS

ON THE NATIONAL VICE OF INTEMPERANCE.

THE Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, to be held in Huddersfield during the present week, affords an opportunity of bringing before that Union, as well as the public, the great national vice of Intemperance, and asking their solemn consideration of the measures which it is our duty, as friends of religion and of our country, to adopt for its repression. At the meeting of the Union held last year at Ipswich, it was resolved by about two hundred of the friends of temperance who met at breakfast, to establish, in imitation of some of the largest religious bodies in the kingdom, a "Congregational Total Abstinence Association," the objects of which were defined to be, "to extend the principles and practice of total abstinence in Congregational churches, and to assist in promoting the cause of Temperance throughout the land." Nearly eight hundred ministers and deacons of Congregational churches have signified their concurrence in the movement; and in the hope that that number will be greatly increased, and the zeal in favour of Temperance strengthened and spread, this first public meeting of the Association has been called, in a town honourably distinguished for generations past by its religious character, and in which a Temperance Society has long existed.

I believe it will be generally admitted that intemperance has lately been much on the increase; that it is the greatest moral and social evil of our country; and that it is the prolific parent of vice, crime, disease, pauperism, and misery, as well as the most formidable hindrance to the growth of religion. Our only comfort is that the enormity of the evil has at length awakened the national conscience, and stirred up a general movement for its counteraction. On such an occasion as this we shall naturally consider first the evil itself, and next the preventive and remedy proposed.

I.—THE EVILS OF INTEMPERANCE.

So abundant is the evidence of the ravages of Intemperance, that it is only needful to refer to them in brief outline; but we cannot, in laying the foundation-stone of our Association, omit to dwell upon them, because it is these ravages that make it our

imperative duty to move ; and because too many amongst us appear either to shut their eyes to their dreadful character, or to assume that they are beyond remedy. The vice prevails more or less in every rank of society, though its grosser forms are seen chiefly in the less educated classes. In the first legislative assembly in the world, the House of Commons, it is notorious that the excited state in which Members sometimes return to their places after dinner betrays that there has been undue indulgence at the table. At public dinners of all kinds there is a very discreditable use of the bottle. In fashionable drawing-rooms, or in preparing for them, as has been shown by a lady of high character writing in the *Saturday Review*, alcohol is resorted to with dangerous freedom to enhance the brilliance of female charms or conversation, or to sustain under exhausting gaiety. Excess is not unknown in the Universities, either among graduates or students. Even the Pulpit is not free from the disgrace, though there exposure is absolute ruin. Among the officers and members of Christian churches, and the superintendents and teachers of Sunday-schools, a lamentable number fall into intemperance. Not a few of the first poets, painters, men of letters, physicians, and even judges, have in our own day sunk into untimely graves under this vice, though medical men and friends have disguised the disease under other names. If individuals could properly be mentioned, the public would be appalled at the stain left on books, paintings, and reputations in which they have justly taken delight. Among the middle classes, though perhaps the least exposed to temptation, many heads of families, and even mothers, whose motives to prudence are so strong and tender, become victims to wine and spirits. The lately-permitted sale of wine, retail, in confectioners' shops, has notoriously laid the foundation of a fatal propensity to drink in many women. High authorities tell us that "drunkenness is the vice of the army;" as it is also of the navy: battles have been lost, and many a gallant ship with all hands has been sunk, through the inebriety of officers.

The judges of the land have for years been declaring that a vast majority of our criminals become such through drink. A large proportion of the patients in our lunatic asylums and hospitals, as well as of the wretched tenants of our prisons and workhouses, are brought there by the same cause. The medical profession testify that most of the diseases which they have to combat, result directly or indirectly from alcohol. Nearly every manager of a mill, workshop, mine, forge, warehouse, railway, and even farm, in the land, would declare that their chief difficulties—the great loss of time and money, the bad work, and the accidents to person and property—are to be traced to the public-house and the beer-shop. The late high prosperity of trade has been perverted to gross excess and demoralisation, and scarcely a newspaper can be taken up which does not record murders and manslaughters (too

often the most unnatural and hideous), with suicides and accidental deaths, committed and incurred when the brain is maddened and the blood inflamed with liquor. The miserable and polluting ranks of prostitution are mainly recruited through the effects of liquor on the seducers or the seduced. The sensual attraction of drink frustrates benevolence, defies religion, and is the chief hindrance to education. Alcohol dogs the steps of missionaries, robs them of their converts, and exposes the very name of Christian to the scorn of the wide heathen world.

It will be observed that there is no position in life which is a sufficient safeguard against liability to fall through intemperance. No force of character; no strength of will; no height of intellect, genius, or attainment; no refinement of taste; no tenderness of heart; no solemn weight of responsibility; no Christian training or duty:—nothing can render a man proof against falling a victim to alcohol. It is so fascinating, so subtle, so insidious, so undermining and overcoming,—nothing, I say, can be an infallible preservative, except resolutely keeping at a distance from the cup. And if this is the case with the most refined classes, what can we expect from the ignorant and the young of the labouring classes, when enticed by jovial companions into the gorgeous gin-palace or the public-house? What, but that they shall be bereft of reason, and reduced to the condition of the brute!

It may be pleaded that not one man in twenty is likely, on any calculation of probabilities, to suffer seriously from drinking; and it may be argued that the other nineteen cannot reasonably be recommended to abstain from a daily enjoyment through fear of being that fated one. My reply is, first, that I believe the proportion who fall is much higher than one in twenty; there is scarcely a family in the land which has not to mourn the fall of a member, and frequently the most gifted and beloved: and, next, that you do not so act in the ordinary concerns of life. If one man in twenty were dying of cholera, the panic would be universal; and no precaution, self-denial, or expense, would be thought too great to avoid or subdue the pest. If one man in twenty were garrotted, the whole community would be up in arms. If one house in twenty were burnt down, every other householder would rush to the Fire-office to insure. Every prudent man insures his house now, though not one house in five hundred is destroyed by fire. How much more, then, should security be sought when the stake is incalculably great,—when it is not merely health or property that is in danger, but life, reason, character, wife and children, the favour of God, the safety of the immortal soul!

Another reply may be given to the above plea. It is a mere delusion to suppose that the refraining from liquor is a loss of enjoyment. It may be so felt for a week, or for a month, or possibly even for two months; but after that there is no consciousness of privation; the liquor is forgot; the man ceases to crave.

Nay, more, it may be stated with certainty that a total abstainer has more enjoyment of the palate and of the stomach, and takes his meals with greater appetite and relish, than if he were taking strong drink with them, and for this sound physical reason, that his digestive organs are in a healthier condition. Many thousands of reclaimed drunkards would confirm this assertion by their testimony and their happy faces.

Still one more reply to the plea above-mentioned for taking intoxicating liquors. *You* may possibly drink in moderation for years, and receive no harm; but hundreds may be encouraged to drink by your example, and of them not a few, including those most dear to you, may contract the habit that will destroy them. I know very many instances of this kind, which it would be harrowing to relate.

But the drinking habits of the people are not only destructive to individuals, they are a tremendous cost, evil, and disgrace to the nation. The rate of progress at which the consumption of intoxicating liquors has lately been advancing in the United Kingdom appears from the following facts as to the years 1869 and 1873, drawn from a Parliamentary Paper of the present year (House of Commons Return of the 4th June, 1874, moved for by Mr. Bass):—

	Year 1869. Gallons.	Year 1873. Gallons.
Foreign and Colonial Spirits, paid duty for home consumption . . .	8,172,815	10,259,428
Foreign Wines, for consumption . . .	14,726,627	17,900,832
British Spirits, for consumption . . .	21,620,590	28,908,501
	Bushels.	Bushels.
Malt, for consumption	47,704,819	57,267,463

The increase within the five years from 1869 to 1873 in Foreign and Colonial Spirits was 25 per cent., in Foreign Wines, 21 per cent., in British Spirits 34 per cent., and in Malt 20 per cent.

Mr. Hoyle calculates the money expended on intoxicating liquors in the United Kingdom in the year 1872 at £131,601,490, and the calculation seems to be carefully made. In 1873 it must have greatly exceeded £140,000,000—that is, twice as much as the whole amount of our imperial taxation! Within six years this expenditure, so much worse than wasted, would have paid off the National Debt of £800,000,000, which now seems likely to burden future generations! The grain or agricultural produce consumed in making strong drink would, in the form of wheat, feed our entire population with bread for one-third of the year! If an estimate were made of the value of the time lost directly and indirectly in drinking, the above figures would be swelled to an incredible sum.

The number of houses licensed for the sale of strong drinks of all kinds in the United Kingdom in 1870 was no less than 186,096.

The number of persons arrested for drunkenness in England and Wales increased from 94,745 in 1863, to 151,000 in 1872; but this must form a very small proportion of the actual number of drunkards.

The drinking habits of the people have produced effects that threaten their liberties. So formidable are the number, wealth, and organisation of the publicans and the brewers, that those classes mainly contributed, under the influence of resentment for the very moderate Licensing Act of 1872, to change the character of the House of Commons at the election this year; and they were rewarded by the new Government and Parliament for their party service by disgraceful concessions to their demands, and an extension of the hours of drinking; and this was done in the face of reports from the magistrates and police that the Act of 1872 had worked admirably for public morality and order! So shameful a betrayal of the dignity and duty of Parliament has not taken place in my day.

In concluding these facts on the evil and extent of intemperance, I beg to refer my hearers to the "Reports on Intemperance" presented to the Convocations of the Provinces of Canterbury and York, in the years 1869 and 1874, containing great budgets of facts and testimonies, collected with care from clergymen, magistrates, governors of prisons, masters of workhouses, superintendents of lunatic asylums and hospitals, physicians, employers of labour, tradesmen, and constables, illustrative of the extent of this malignant evil. The compilation is most instructive and impressive.

I will only add that the facts which we have been surveying must bring distress and alarm to every patriot and every Christian; and unless we are disposed to ask, with the first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" we shall each anxiously inquire, "What can I do to stem this torrent of evil and sin?"

II.—THE PREVENTIVE AND REMEDY.

Having exhibited the fearful magnitude of the evil of Intemperance, I now proceed to state my view of the course which it is our duty to pursue in order to arrest that destroying evil.

And, first, I must say, that whatever organisation churches may adopt for this end, or whatever parliamentary action they may support,—on neither of which points does our Association dictate—one thing seems to me a clear Christian duty, namely, ourselves to set the example of Total Abstinence. The constraining reason for that conclusion is found in the simple fact that TOTAL ABSTINENCE IS THE ONLY INFALLIBLE PREVENTIVE, AS WELL AS THE ONLY INFALLIBLE CURE, OF INTEMPERANCE.

That total abstinence is the only infallible preventive, needs no proof. Where there is no drinking, there can be no drunkenness;

but where there is drinking, drunkenness must be at least possible. Nor can any other effectual preventive be mentioned. And that total abstinence is the only infallible cure for the habit of drunkenness is admitted to be the result of all experience. Every thing else has been tried, and has failed. Religious principle itself, whether real or apparent, if it has been too weak to prevent a man's fall, is certainly too weak to help him up when he is down. Grace can do anything; but the drunkard is graceless: he has thrown grace away. He may recover it, but only (I believe) by availing himself of total abstinence. Acceptable repentance must be accompanied by "works meet for repentance;" and the "work" meet and indispensable for the drunkard's repentance is entirely to abstain from that which led him into sin. State it as we may, the fact is undisputed, that no drunkard can be reclaimed but by total abstinence. If there are any exceptions to this rule, they are so rare as only to prove the rule.

If, then, it is admitted that total abstinence is the only infallible preventive and the only infallible cure of intemperance, surely these two facts ought to persuade every prudent man, and especially every Christian, to adopt it. He should do so, first, as giving himself perfect safety against ruinous sin; and, secondly, as enabling him to save or reclaim others, by his example, from the same sin and ruin.

There are only two ways of evading compliance with this dictate of reason and duty, namely, 1st, by remaining satisfied with something short of infallible safety; and 2nd, by pleading that intoxicating liquors, however dangerous, are necessary for health.

1st. But is it consistent with ordinary prudence, when you may enjoy infallible safety, to be satisfied with anything short of it, and to live in any degree of avoidable danger of losing life itself, both of the body and the soul? Take the chances in favour of your impunity as high as reason will at all warrant; say that the odds are twenty to one in your favour; would you like to game with that tremendous antagonist, the demon of Intemperance, and give him even one chance out of twenty against you? Would you like it, when he is watching you at every jovial board, in every friendly party, even in your own family, under unsuspecting hilarity, under depressing weakness, under distracting care; when the wine is of the choicest vintage; when it stirs itself aright; when the brandy of France seems perfect *eau de vie*, and the whisky of the Highlands true "mountain dew"? Might not the chances shift terribly against you under some of those circumstances, and with that cruel eye which loses no advantage fastened upon the game? Would He who counselled the plucking out of the right eye or the cutting off of the right hand, in order to avoid temptation, approve of this terrible gambling? And is there any way of practically saying, as He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" but by dashing down the fatal cup, or resolving that it should never touch your lips?

2nd. The second way of evading the argument for Total Abstinence is by pleading that intoxicating liquors, however dangerous, are necessary for health.

It is well known that medical men have been brought up with a general prejudice in favour of stimulants as a means of curing various diseases and infirmities; and I do not presume to say that alcohol, in some of its forms, may not be a powerful and even necessary medicine. In this respect, it resembles several of the strongest poisons known in the *materia medica*. Used with great care and temporarily, I will not dispute its value; though many medical men, aware of the extreme danger of giving their patients a taste for stimulants, or ministering to that which they already possess, now substitute other drugs for alcohol where it is possible, prescribe it in stinted doses like medicine, and recommend the discontinuance of stimulants at a much earlier period than formerly.

Sanitary science, in its improved state, lays the greatest stress on the agents which Nature supplies so cheaply and so bountifully,—pure air and plenty of it, pure water, a good amount of exercise, plain, nutritious food, and adequate rest and sleep. And science, as well as religion, inculcates moderation in all things lawful, and abstinence from things dangerous. Feeling, as I do, a strong sympathy with men whose lives are sedentary and whose labours are anxious, I would earnestly press upon them, as a conscientious duty, to observe these simple rules of health, and never to violate them. I well understand the temptation of one who is “fervent in spirit” to continue long and late at the desk, till the midnight oil has drawn largely though stealthily on the oil of life; forgetting that he will have to pay for it to-morrow, if not to-day,—or next year, if not this,—or in age, if not in youth. Oh! prudence is an admirable thing, though so often despised; and its most admirable character is that it not merely averts danger, but is the outwork of our defences against sin.

The changed opinion of the medical faculty on the subject of stimulants has been exhibited in several public declarations of the highest importance. Many years since two thousand medical men, including those of the first rank for science and practice in these Islands, signed the following Certificate:—

“ We, the undersigned, are of opinion—

“ 1. That a very large proportion of human misery, including poverty, disease, and crime, is induced by the use of alcoholic or fermented liquors as beverages.

“ 2. That the most perfect health is compatible with total abstinence from all intoxicating beverages, whether in the form of ardent spirits, or as wine, beer, ale, porter, cider, &c.

“ 3. That persons accustomed to such drinks may with perfect safety discontinue them entirely, either at once, or gradually after a short time.

“4. THAT TOTAL AND UNIVERSAL ABSTINENCE FROM ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES OF ALL SORTS WOULD GREATLY CONDUCE TO THE HEALTH, THE PROSPERITY, THE MORALITY, AND THE HAPPINESS OF THE HUMAN RACE.”

It would scarcely be possible to express in stronger terms either the evils of drinking or the benefits of total and universal abstinence.

In December, 1871, a “Medical Declaration respecting Alcohol” was signed by 269 of the first physicians and surgeons in London and the provinces, in which it is said:—

“As it is believed that the inconsiderate prescription of large quantities of alcoholic liquids by medical men for their patients has given rise in many instances to the formation of intemperate habits, the undersigned, while unable to abandon the use of alcohol in the treatment of certain cases of disease, are yet of opinion that no medical practitioner should prescribe it without a sense of grave responsibility. They believe that alcohol, in whatever form, should be prescribed with as much care as any powerful drug, and that the directions for its use should be so framed as not to be interpreted as a sanction for excess, or necessarily for the continuance of its use when the occasion is past.

“Being also firmly convinced that the great amount of drinking of alcoholic liquors among the working classes of this country is one of the greatest evils of the day, destroying—more than anything else—the health, happiness, and welfare of those classes, and neutralising to a large extent the great industrial prosperity which Providence has placed within the reach of this nation—the undersigned would gladly support any wise legislation which would tend to restrict within proper limits the use of alcoholic beverages, and gradually introduce habits of temperance.”

In the course of last year, the Archbishop of Canterbury, at a meeting held in Lambeth Palace to consider what steps ought to be taken to arrest drunkenness, read a letter which he had received from Sir Henry Thompson, Surgeon to University College Hospital, and Surgeon Extraordinary to the King of the Belgians, who stands at the head of one branch of his profession, containing the following statement:—

“I have long had the conviction that there is no greater cause of evil, moral and physical, in this country, than the use of alcoholic beverages. I do not mean by this that extreme indulgence which produces drunkenness. The habitual use of fermented liquors, to an extent far short of what is necessary to produce that condition, and such as is quite common in all ranks of society, injures the body and diminishes the mental power to an extent which I think few people are aware of. I have no hesitation in attributing a very large proportion of some of the most painful and dangerous maladies which come under my notice, as well as those which every medical man has to treat, to the ordinary and daily use of fermented

drink, taken in the quantity which is conventionally deemed moderate.* There is no single habit in this country which so much tends to deteriorate the qualities of the race, and so much disqualifies it

* An able Physician, a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, in extensive hospital and private practice (Dr. WARDELL, of Tunbridge Wells), has favoured me with the following important remarks on the effects not only of excessive, but even of moderate drinking :—

“ Medical men are now more than ever impressed with the extent of the havoc which is caused by alcoholic and fermented liquors. The advance of science has conferred far greater certitude and accuracy in judging upon the conditions and causes of diseased parts ; and this knowledge has shown them more and more indisputably how much more formidable and widespread are the results of intemperance than once was supposed. And again, it is the opinion of many of the leading names in the profession that *the foundations of many complaints are laid, not only by excessive drinking, but by moderate drinking*, and in persons who would regard themselves as scandalized if they were to be denounced as intemperate. Constant and habitual stimulation, though in limited degree, sows in the system the seeds of disease and premature decay. The effect tells upon some organs and tissues in the long run. The affection known as cirrhosis of the liver, and which so generally ends in dropsy and death, is so commonly caused by spirit drinking as to be named in medical works “ gin-drinker’s liver.” Dr. Murchison says :—“ This disease can almost invariably be traced to the abuse of strong spirits.” The same high authority asserts that great drinkers of ardent spirits are subject to fatty heart ; and the celebrated German physician, Frerichs, found, out of thirteen persons who had died of delirium tremens, that in six of the cases the liver was morbidly fatty. It is commonly accepted that the heart becomes fatty from the same cause. It has lately been abundantly proved by some of the most experienced pathologists, that the most fertile of all causes in the production of that grave and frequently fatal affection popularly known as Bright’s disease, is spirit drinking. Our great hospitals prove this fact beyond all dispute. The kidneys also undergo that morbid degeneration known as the fatty change, when anasarca, or, in non-technical language, when general dropsy supervenes. Physicians now clearly point out that what is termed artheromatous decay of the arteries, and more especially of the arteries connected with the heart and brain, is very often associated with addiction to alcohol, and so frequently does the coincidence occur that spirit-drinking has been assigned as a cause. Professional authority gives evidence in the most emphatic manner that patients who have been intemperate have by no means the same chance of recovery when affected with any of the types of fever as those who have not been habituated to indulgence in strong drinks. It is beyond dispute when such maladies as erysipelas, carbuncle, and pyæmia, which are regarded as blood-diseases, prevail, that the hopes of restoration are very greatly less in those whose vital organs have been injured by drink. In such patients there is a greater putrid tendency. The vital powers are rendered lower in their tone by the poisonous effects of alcoholic stimulants, and in all acute diseases more especially, patients succumb who, had they been temperate, would struggle through. Those dreaded complaints, consumption and cancer, are at least promoted by this cause. Softening of the brain and wasting of the spinal cord not uncommonly eventuate as the result of continued drinking. And if reference were made to the books of any lunatic asylum in the country, the sad tale would be told that drunkenness was regarded as one of the most rife causes of insanity. Delirium tremens—or, in more common language, the delirium of drunkards—is seen with melancholy frequency, not only in hospitals and amongst the poor and ignorant, but, as every medical man too well knows, in private practice and amongst the upper classes. Most physicians from time to time are witnesses of the awful ending of those sad and pitiable votaries to the cup ; and they know but too truly that not only is the physical man debased and rendered prone to disease, but that the moral man becomes correlatively degraded, as the loss of self-respect and the loss of truth follow in the train of evils. It is from the deep and growing conviction of the enormous evils, physically, socially, and morally, which are produced by drink, that the medical profession are becoming far more careful in their recommendation of stimulants than at any anterior period.”

for endurance in that competition which in the nature of things must exist, and in which struggle the prize of superiority must fall to the best and to the strongest."

Before a Committee of the House of Commons, Dr. Forbes Winslow said:—

"I look on alcohol as a poison. Every means should be had recourse to to limit or restrict the sale of a poison, as you interfere with the indiscriminate sale of opium, prussic acid, or arsenic. Alcohol is not a necessary of life."

Surely testimonies like these, from so many of the highest medical authorities in the kingdom, so deliberately, carefully, and strongly expressed, and applying to the moral as well as material interests of the population, ought to sound almost like a voice from heaven in every conscience and heart of a Christian community.

But so deep-rooted is the prejudice that wine and beer contribute to health and strength, that it may be useful to name a few well-known individuals, classes, and nations, whose experience should banish that delusion. The following cases (out of thousands) are taken from almost every variety of circumstances:—

Joseph Livesey, of Preston, the founder of the Total Abstinence movement in 1832, is living, at fourscore, to attest the virtues of the system. Mr. Vine Hall, author of the "Christian Friend," and father of the Rev. Newman Hall, after living till forty a slave to alcohol, survived to eighty years as a hard worker for Temperance, and then died from an accident. Canon Babington is living at eighty-three years of age, to tell of forty-three years' abstinence, with incessant labour, and without a headache. Many of the first converts to Total Abstinence, forty-two years since, survive after active lives, to enjoy a green old age. I know you will not think I violate modesty if I tell you my own experience; and if any one likes, he may cross-examine me. I never knew excess, or suffered from liquor; but, anxious to rescue a person from the ruin to which he was hastening, and having recommended total abstinence as his only hope, I resolved to try the power of example. I at first tried the experiment for a month; and, finding myself as well at the end as at the beginning, I tried it for another month; and thus I went on practising total abstinence and enjoying perfect health, until, on the 9th of next month, I shall have abstained thirty-seven years. And my boast is, not that I have done anything meritorious or self-denying, but that I have enjoyed my food more than I should have done if I had taken strong liquor,—that I have had unvarying health, vigour, and activity, with a head always clear and never aching,—and have done, perhaps, more work than the average of public men or men of business. For fifteen years, when already somewhat advanced in life, I have borne the hard work, bad hours, irregular meals, and constant excitement of the House of Commons, whilst representing one of our largest industrial constituencies.

The experience of several Life Insurance Offices, which distinguish the classes of insurers, proves that the deaths among the abstainers are considerably fewer than among the insurers generally; whilst it appears from other evidence, as might be expected, that the publicans are among the shortest-lived of all classes, and several offices wholly refuse to insure them. I have been told by foremen in the largest ironworks and glassworks of England and of Wales, where, perhaps, the labour is the most severe of all kinds of toil, that the abstainers among their workmen (of whom there are hundreds and thousands) have much better health, and live longer than the drinkers. It is the same with the drivers of locomotive engines, with the navvies who make our railways, and with the London coalheavers. In London, there are now 800 cab-drivers, exposed to all weathers, who entirely abstain from liquor. Ancient and modern athletes practised abstinence during their training. The Governor of York Castle told me that he never knew a single instance of the health of a prisoner suffering from his being at once deprived of intoxicating liquor. Dr. Livingstone told me that during his first four years' exploration across Africa on the line of the Zambesi, he had fever thirty-one times, and recovered without any strong liquor. Going from Tropical to Arctic travellers, Captain Kennedy, of the Prince Albert exploring expedition, performed a winter journey of 1,200 miles along the coasts of the frozen seas, with the thermometer far below the freezing point of mercury, without seeing the sun for months; he did not lose a man; and, in his official despatch, he ascribed the good health of his crew to their all being strict abstainers. Dr. Sandwith, who had charge of the hospital at Kars, in Asia Minor, during the heroic defence of that city against the Russians in the Crimean War, when it was crowded with the wounded and with men dying of cholera and famine, told me that he found total abstinence from liquor most conducive to his own safety. My old friends, Cobden and Bright, with Colonel Perronet Thompson, in the hardest part of their Anti-Corn Law campaign in Scotland, when they spoke several times a day to crowded meetings in-doors and out of doors, found it necessary to forego all alcoholic liquors.

Colonel Conran, of the Bengal Artillery, stated at a public meeting in Leeds that, when he had a canteen for the sale of liquor, he three times buried his company during his stay at a certain station in India, and that, when he banished the canteen, he did not during the same length of time lose a man. The heroic Havelock lived for many years in India an abstainer, and at the head of abstainers; and when he and Sir Robert Sale took refuge, with a small detachment of the army that had been lost in Affghanistan, in the city of Jellalabad, and had to rebuild the fortifications thrown down by earthquake, and to resist the overwhelming forces of their pursuers, the historian tells us that nothing could have saved

them but the fact that there was not a drop of liquor in the city to interfere with their health and discipline. The same great and good commander overthrew the armies of the mutinous Sepoys day after day, and saved the garrison of Lucknow.

At the same time, Delhi, the capital of Upper India, was taken by other generals; but our forces were within a hair's breadth of fatal defeat, which might have involved the loss of India, owing to the soldiers having fallen upon the beer-barrels in the streets during the height of the conflict.

Many of our missionaries, having found the "fire-water" to be the greatest obstacle to their success, have adopted abstinence, with advantage both to themselves and their work. Total abstinence societies have been formed, both in the army and the navy, principally through the efforts of those admirable women, Miss Robinson, the soldiers' friend, and Miss Weston, the sailors' friend; and there are now in the army eight thousand abstainers, and in the navy five thousand—men who, in their country's defence, will be, like Cromwell's praying "Ironsides," the hardiest and the bravest of our forces.

In the United States and Canada, total abstinence has gained far more adherents than in England; and such is the public opinion of what is becoming in Christian ministers, and conducive to their success, that they are all but universally abstainers through the length and breadth of English-speaking America.

But what are these achievements of temperance, in comparison with the notorious fact that nearly all the great and ancient nations of Asia and Africa, with many times the population of the Western world, have immemorially abstained from intoxicating drinks; and that these hundreds of millions include some of the strongest and finest races on the earth? It is a deep stain on European civilization, that Western conquerors have introduced intoxicating liquors into many lands, to the utter destruction of not a few tribes, and the counteraction of all Christian teaching.

Yet I may conclude these facts by stating that there are hundreds of thousands—I hope millions—of total abstainers in the United Kingdom, many of whom have been reclaimed from drunkenness, and are the most zealous of the abstinence band, because they feel the misery and ruin from which it has redeemed them. To their personal experience I appeal in support of every fact and consideration I have urged. They will tell you that drunkenness is the consummation of wretchedness and the high road to despair; they will also testify that total abstinence is the only possible way of escape; and they will beseech all the friends of religion, and especially its ministers, by joining the abstinence band, to render perhaps the greatest benefit they can to their fellow-men.

I must add that there are scores of thousands of young persons in "Bands of Hope"—certainly among the most hopeful of the rising race. May God save them from breaking their pledge, though

foolish and wicked men on every side are tempting them to their ruin!

On the moral and social question it is scarcely possible to quote a higher authority than that of John Bright, who has been an abstainer for five and thirty years, but whose feeling heart has never sapped the stern strength of his reason, and who last May thus expressed himself at the yearly meeting of the Society of Friends in London:—

“His view differed much from that of very many Friends. He found that they were almost always looking to Parliament for a cure for the great evil. *He believed that the evil would never be touched until all thoughtful religious men, beginning with the ministers of the Gospel throughout the country, should come to the conclusion that this was one of the great evils which it behoved all Christians to attack.* It would be of enormous advantage if all the ministers, and all those who go to Sunday-schools, all who cared for any thing that was good, would take this matter up.”

I am thus brought to the specific object for the consideration of this Conference, namely, what Congregationalists ought to do as a religious body towards suppressing intemperance. If we admit that nothing in this country is so dishonouring to God, or so ruinous to the souls of men, as the vice of drunkenness, it seems to me that a religious body like ours is called upon to use its utmost influence in withstanding that vice. We have been in the habit of taking part in social questions affecting religious interests. No such question can present itself of greater importance than this, which menaces our churches, congregations, Sunday-schools, and foreign missions, as well as the whole population. Yet it is right carefully to consider our mode of action.

The promoters of the present movement have decided—and, I think, wisely—not to ask the “Congregational Union” to take up the question as a “Union;” but they propose to form an independent and voluntary organisation among Congregationalists, “to extend the principles and practice of total abstinence in the Congregational churches of England and Wales, and to assist in promoting the cause of temperance throughout the land.” They propose that the method of action should be that so familiar to us as Independents and Voluntaries, namely, “by the formation and encouragement of Temperance Societies and Bands of Hope in connection with Congregational churches, by sermons, lectures, conferences, the circulation of temperance literature, and other suitable means.” And for these purposes they propose a Committee and officers, to be annually elected, with an “Annual public meeting during the week of, and in the same town as, the Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union.”

In forming this Association our hope is, that we shall promote the interests and happiness both of ministers and people, and advance the cause of the Redeemer in the world. We earnestly

desire to see our ministers at our head; by which means we believe their influence with their flocks, and the estimation in which they are held in the world, will be promoted. We deprecate, in the strongest possible manner, any division or controversy arising out of this question. No dictation, no moral compulsion, will be sanctioned by the principles of the Association. Every man will act according to the light of his own conscience. Our means of influence will be the truly Christian ones of the presentation of the truth, persuasion, and example.

Though for convenience' sake we act as Congregationalists, our spirit is the very reverse of sectarian. We are followers, not leaders, in the great Christian army on behalf of Temperance. The Episcopal Church, with both the archbishops and both Houses of Convocation, with not a few bishops and a large body of clergy, thought it their duty to organise themselves; and their marching orders date from Lambeth. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, with whom I have acted for years (as well as with the Archbishop of York) in the Sunday closing movement, and who is one of the boldest and most zealous of the enemies of drink, has long been in the field. The Wesleyans, acting in the very spirit of their great self-denying leader, John Wesley, are eager to do their duty, have held many enthusiastic meetings, and will soon be thoroughly organised. The Baptist Total Abstinence Association has stolen a march upon us, and issued its eloquent manifesto last week. The General Baptists were still further ahead, having taken the field at their annual meeting last year. The Presbyterians of every name, Scotch, Irish, and English, in Kirk, Free Church, and United, are all on the move, though their organisations are yet incomplete. The New Connexion Methodists, the Primitive Methodists, and the United Methodist Free Churches, are bringing up large bodies of members to the Temperance cause. The Society of Friends, that small but sacred band of the philanthropic army, are one in spirit, though hesitating as to means. Several of the Training Colleges for Clergy and Ministers contain majorities of students in favour of total abstinence. The Army and the Navy, so long deemed hopeless under the sway of grog and red tape, are sending large reinforcements to the war against Drink, and the best of all is that their organisations are decidedly religious. Then there comes up, as a rearguard of the force, a blooming and smiling legion from our Sunday Schools, the Bands of Hope, —young Hannibals pledged to life-long hostility to the worst enemy of their country.

Shall we, then, resign hope, or shrink from effort in this holy war? Or shall we not rather, in the name of our Great Captain, and in the spirit of our Apostolic teacher, "provoke each other to love and to good works;" and do valiantly against all the forces of the Wicked One?