

A PLAIN SERMON

ON

DRUNKENNESS.

ADDRESSED TO

THE INHABITANTS OF HATHERN,

Nov. 2nd, 1834.

BY

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MINISTER OF HATHERN, LEICESTERSHIRE.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

The circumstances which produced the following Sermon, were simply these. A poor man, industrious in his business, but accustomed to indulge himself in drinking, having become intoxicated, compelled an acquaintance who was quite sober, to have a round with him at sparring. The first being finished (but without anger on either side) he insisted on a second. In the struggle, both fell on the floor; the drunken man underneath, and the other upon him. The consequence to the former was, a rupture of one of his bowels. Under this injury he lingered in great misery for about twenty-two hours, and then expired; leaving a family of five children, and a widow (a very respectable and worthy woman) far advanced in pregnancy. The sermon was preached on the following Sunday, and the first intention of the writer was to print it for distribution in his own parish: it is now published for sale, in the hope of more extended circulation; and should any profits arise from the publication, they will be applied to the benefit of the widow and her children.

Hathern, Nov. 10th, 1834.



## A PLAIN SERMON.

PROV. xxiii, 29—35.

*Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.*

The Book of Proverbs is for the most part composed of distinct maxims, and wise sayings, referring either to the right management of our temporal concerns, to our intercourse with each other, or to the salvation of our souls. They are like pearls strung together without any reference to order; they are seldom extended beyond a single verse; and the meaning of each is complete in itself. In the beginning, however, and at the close of the book, there occur some exceptions to its general form. The subjects treated of are more fully described, and enforced by the wise man at greater length upon his hearers. The passage before us is an instance of this kind: and the exception marks at least the importance of the subject on which it treats. Of this importance we cannot be ignorant; who live at a time when drunkenness has so awfully increased, and is daily productive of such fatal effects. Since the passing of the late Act, by which beer-shops

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have been multiplied over the land, this destructive vice has been so increased, nourished, and strengthened among us, that every word is doubly valuable, which exhibits it in its true colours, and warns the unwary of the evils with which they are threatened.

On this account, the passage before us, which sets forth strongly and pointedly some of the most striking features and effects of drunkenness, is very important. It will be my object to illustrate the subject of it, by drawing out these features distinctly into view, and adding such further remarks, and references to matters of fact, as may more fully exhibit the true nature of this hateful vice. May it only please God to bless the effort to the conviction of those, who are not thoroughly enslaved to drunken habits, that they may see their danger, and escape in time from that snare of the devil, in which they have been entangled. In considering the subject, I would, first, advert to the nature and immediate consequences of drunkenness, and then direct your thoughts to its final issue.

I. Let me, first, point out to you the nature and immediate consequences of drunkenness.

It is quite unnecessary for me to explain what drunkenness is, or indeed to enlarge much on its nature. When persons say of a man quite intoxicated, that he is "beastly drunk," they plainly declare what they think of drunkenness. It is painful, indeed, to dwell on the nature of this vice: there is something in it so disgraceful to a rational being. It degrades him, in fact, to a condition below that of a brute beast.

I am aware, brethren, that it is an easy thing by exaggerated statements to raise a prejudice against persons and practices, far beyond what they deserve. But, believe me, in thus addressing you, I have no intention to abuse drunkards; and strong as my language is, it is strictly descriptive of the case before us. We may truly say that a man, whilst he is drunk, is the inferior of the brute. For consider: God has distinguished mankind by the gift of a rational soul (Gen. ii, 7). By this, they are capable of comparing things together, of judging between things that differ, of determining what is right or wrong, and thus of directing themselves aright. Whilst the in-

ferior animals are so bound by the law of their instincts, that whatever freedom they seem to possess as to particular acts, they cannot move out of a certain course, but will always be found obedient to their peculiar law. Under the impulse of this law, they will seek relief from hunger and thirst; but when these are removed, the creature is satisfied, and will seek no more. An animal never so indulges his appetite, as to lose his governing instincts. He is always what he was made to be, and capable of that for which he was intended. But when a man indulges the lust of drink, he throws away his guide; he loses the use of his reason, and becomes more helpless and useless than a beast. He is degraded to be his inferior. How pitiable to see a wretched fellow-creature at one time led through the streets babbling all the nonsense of a poor idiot; and at another time imprecating curses on himself and others, in all the madness of rage! now sinking into the weakness of a fool, and then raving with the violence of a madman. Is this voluntary degradation of his nature, the act of a man—a rational being?

It is to the consequences, however, of drunken habits, rather than to the nature or immediate effects of the act itself, that I would now advert. That these are many and most ruinous, is obvious to every one:—so many, indeed, that there is no calamity which may not at times be dated from drunkenness; and they are so ruinous, as to destroy all social, moral, and spiritual happiness. The difficulty is not to produce examples of such evils, but to select such as may justly exhibit their extent. To do this as briefly as possible, I will endeavour to class some of the consequences of drunkenness under distinct heads.

1. Let me, first, direct your attention to the poverty and distress, which the habits of drunkards directly tend to introduce into their families.

To this, the words of Solomon bear testimony, in some verses which precede my text. "Be not among wine bibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh. For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty, and drowsiness (idle habits, the common fruit of drunkenness) shall clothe a man with rags:" (v. 20, 21) so also in a former chapter he says, "He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man, he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich." (Prov. xxi, 17.)

Drunkenness is an expensive vice,\* from the cost of the articles which minister to it: and hence its impoverishing effect must always be experienced by persons who have to labour for their bread. In the best times they can only hope to obtain by honest labour the common comforts of life; but these can never be secured, when the drunkard must satisfy his craving appetite, before the wants of his family are supplied. When, therefore, times are hard, provisions dear, or work scarce, the family of a drunken man must be deprived of many of the common necessaries of life. But this vice is doubly expensive by the waste of time it occasions. A drunken man, besides the expence of the drink which feeds his lust, consumes much valuable time in his debauch; and then again loses as much in sleeping it off: and as time is the only capital of a labouring man, he must become rapidly poor. It is melancholy to witness the change which drunken habits produce in the very aspect of a poor man's family. Whilst he is sober and industrious, his children are well fed and decently clad. His house is furnished not only with articles of necessity, but with some of convenience. An appearance of comfort is spread over all he has. But when enslaved to this hateful vice, how altered is the scene! As it strengthens and clamours for indulgence, article after article disappears, to be conveyed to the pawnbroker's and exchanged for what will purchase drink: until a few broken pieces of furniture alone remain to mark the desolation of the place, and tell the history of its wretched owner. Wretched indeed he is, though he feels it not: and the more wretched that he can look unmoved on the spreading ruin; whilst his poor disheartened care worn wife (whom he engaged to love and to cherish till death them did part) is gathering with her tribe of ragged and shivering children, around a cheerless fire (obtained from the spoil of a neighbour's hedge) to roast a few potatoes, the only food they can obtain. Such is the misery produced by drunkenness. But there is no limit to the folly, the madness, and cruelty of drunkenness: even, women will sell the very beds on which they lie to purchase gin and tobacco.

\* The inhabitants of the United Kingdom pay more than twelve million pounds annually for British and foreign spirits; besides what they pay for ale and other liquors.

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Drunkenness, however, equally tends to impoverish those who are raised above the necessity of daily labour, as it indisposes them to pursue with diligence the business of their calling in life. They cannot be punctual to their engagements; they are seldom to be found in their proper places; and hence they lose the custom of men of sober and regular habits, who decline to deal with persons upon whom they can place no dependence. The consequence is obvious: the drunkard's business goes to ruin†.

2. Consider, secondly, the crimes to which it continually leads.

It is connected by Solomon with whoredom. "Look not thou at the wine when it is red"—be not ensnared by the goodness of the liquor—"for thine eyes shall behold strange women" (v. 33). Thus it was with Lot; his daughters seduced him into drunkenness, and then he finished his iniquity by the most awful incest. And what is more common now, than for drunkards to adjourn to the haunts of bad women, and perfect their debauch by the addition of another crime, as debasing and destructive as the first?

Again, it is the common cause of quarrels and assaults. "Who hath woes? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath wounds without a cause? They that tarry long at the wine" (v. 29, 30). How many, too, from time to time have fallen in such contests? Even the play of a drunken man, is, as we have seen, full of danger; and who is ignorant of the oaths and curses, and all the violence, which sometimes fills our streets? Whence do they arise? for the most part from the drunkards; who

† I cannot here forbear to notice the effect of some men's drunkenness in impoverishing another and a very different set of persons. It happens not unfrequently, that the hard earnings of the honest and industrious poor are exacted in the shape of poor-rates to support the families of drunkards, and supply the waste made by their profligacy. This ought not to be. The apostle, in prescribing the management of the widows' fund, suffers no one to become a pensioner upon it, whose character will not bear investigation, and has not been proved to be sound and exemplary. (1. Tim. v, 3—16.) The same rule ought to prevail in the application of poor-rates. Character ought always to be taken into the account. It is unjust, that funds should be raised under the authority of the law, to be applied in any case, so as to enable persons to live in the breach of all law, human and divine.

having met professedly to enjoy each other's company, soon manifest their real spirit and principles, by mutual abuse and accusation; till under the stimulus of drink, they break out into phrenzied passion, each seizes the other by the throat, and struggles hard to destroy his companion's life. Thus men first degrade themselves into beasts, and then become converted into devils.

Again; what commonly leads men to poaching and a lawless life? It is the love of drink. Having wasted their time and means in the gratification of this lust, they endeavour to supply the deficiency by depredations on the property of others. When poaching will not answer their purpose, they betake themselves to general thieving and plunder. By the same love of drink, they become connected with the most desperate characters, until not a few finish their course at the gallows. So fruitful a source of crime is drunkenness\*.

3. Reflect, thirdly, on the many diseases of which it is the prolific parent.

There is scarcely any disease, of which it may not be either the remote, or immediate cause; and none which it will not aggravate when formed. How many are carried off by consumptions, entirely arising from habits of drinking! Born with weakly constitutions, but carefully nursed and watched over by friends, they are enabled to struggle through the trying period of youth, when the body, exhausted by its rapid growth, is most exposed to consumptive attacks. They enter, therefore, into life not as strong men, but with a fair prospect of fulfilling the duties of their allotted stations. For the first few years every thing goes on well; but no sooner have they contracted the habit of drinking than all which the care of friends has effected, is ruined; and before they arrive at forty, they fall a sacrifice apparently to their constitutional disease, but die really the victims of intemperance.

There are others, however, whom drink affects in a very different manner. At first, it seems to make them fatter and stouter, giving to their countenances a florid look, and to their bodies a fulness that appears healthy. But

\* Out of ninety-five cases of felony tried at the Preston Quarter Sessions in April last, it was proved upon examination that fifty of them had arisen from intoxication.



all is fallacious: health is not their portion. Their colour is the effect only of feverish excitement, and their increased stoutness arises from a fulness of the vessels, and an unhealthy accumulation of fat, the sign of weakness rather than of strength. Not a few of these are cut off in an instant by apoplexy, the immediate consequence of a drunken revel: and all are exposed to a host of inflammations, with far greater danger than other men. For whilst their feverish condition makes them more susceptible of inflammatory action; their weakened constitutions are generally unable to bear the necessary remedies\*.

Again, how often do we see in towns where spirit shops are opened, a knot of wretched human beings, whom disease and misery have marked for their own—some with emaciated countenances and constant coughs—others with bloated bodies and palsied limbs, which they are scarcely able to drag after them—assembling every morning around the doors of these warehouses of poison, to rouse, if possible, their failing bodies by the help of a dram, and fit them for their work! What has reduced them to this state? the slow and fatal progress of habitual drinking. They were by nature as healthy and as strong as any of their fellow men. But they loved company. Company led to occasional excess. Excess produced sick stomachs, which required an additional dose to keep them quiet. At length, ale lost its power, and they betook themselves to spirits: and now what is their condition? In the morning, they must take the accursed dram of bitters, before they are capable of doing any work; they must drink again at mid-day, for the effect of the bitter is passed off, and their feelings are as wretched as in the morning; they must drink at dinner time before they can eat, and they

\* The brain of a person in health, contains a small portion of limpid fluid diffused in some of its cavities. Upon dissecting persons who have died in a state of intoxication, this fluid has been repeatedly found to smell of spirits, and has actually burnt for some seconds with a blue flame, like common spirits of wine. So thoroughly does the whole system become infected with the poison. There are, indeed, a few well authenticated instances, on medical record, of persons becoming so infected with ardent spirits, as to take fire spontaneously, and burn until reduced to a mere coal; just as an oily sponge would burn to a coal, if dipped in spirits of wine and set on fire.

must drink after it to retain the food upon their stomachs; they must drink in the evening, for they can bear no light or wholesome beverage; they must drink deep at night to make them sleep; and at last they must have the brandy by their bedsides, to prevent the horrors of their many feverish and wakeful hours. This is the progress of drunkards, when they can command the necessary supply. What can terminate such a course, but a wretched death, or equally wretched insanity?

But you will say, perhaps, "surely this is exaggeration!" Alas! the statement is too true. Go visit the wards of our Asylums; mark the varied forms in which insanity preys on man; and then ask, what has wrecked so many understandings? the answer will always be, "more than half have become deranged by drinking." Can we wonder at this! What is the effect of every act of intoxication? It is temporary insanity. What, then, should be the end of habitual drunkenness, but the permanent derangement of the drunkard's mind\*?

No catalogue, however, can be given of the diseases produced by drunkenness; much less of the misery which marks their progress. Could you have seen, as I have seen, the diseased liver of a drunkard, swollen to its monstrous size; and thought of the pain and misery, which the unhappy sufferer must have endured, before the organ could have been changed into such a hardened

\* It once happened to me to call upon a family, the head of which was a drunkard. He had been brought up in the hearing of religious truth, and had himself made a profession of religion. It was not for him, however, that the visit was intended; but finding him unexpectedly at home, and knowing his habits, I began to press upon him the necessity of a change of heart and life, would he be saved; and thence to speak of that work as the effect of the Holy Spirit's operation. When, to my amazement and confusion, he calmly replied, "that the Holy Spirit often visited him, and conversed with him in that corner;" pointing to the place in which he usually sat. I then perceived that he was in a state of partial intoxication.

I have since learnt that spectral visions and mental illusions are not uncommon to drunken people. Their imaginations become diseased by their vice. It was natural, therefore, that the illusions of a drunken professor should turn upon the subjects with which his mind was familiar; but the exhibition was awfully shocking. I afterwards discovered that the poor man in question, was prone to talk upon religious subjects when drunk, though ashamed to do so (as well he might be) when sober. What will not drunkenness corrupt, and what will it not bring into contempt!

mass; surely it had been enough to secure you from becoming the victim of this vice. But let me leave the sickening subject, and proceed with my account.

4. Consider, fourthly, how often drunkenness leads to premature death.

It is said, of the wicked generally, that they live not half their days: (Ps. lv, 23.) and bearing in mind that the language of scripture is popular language, it is unquestionably true. For wickedness must continually bring persons into circumstances of danger, from which they have no safeguard in the providence of God, and will seldom escape. But this is still more evidently true of drunkenness, because it not only exposes persons to the greatest dangers, but at the same time takes from them the power of perceiving the danger, and the presence of mind which might avert it. It was when Elah, the king of Israel, was drunk with his lords, that the conspirators surprised and slew him. It was when Belshazzar was carousing with all his princes, that the four-leaved gates of brass, which protected Babylon, were opened, and the whole city destroyed. And (to bring the matter to home yourselves) but for the unhappy vice of drunkenness, our poor neighbour might have been now among us, supporting his wife and children with honest industry\*.

But should drunkards escape all such dangers, it must be evident to every thinking mind, that, exposed as they are to so many diseases, the natural consequences of their vice, their course must be comparatively short, and soon run. I am aware, indeed, that persons may object to this statement, and say: "Experience proves that drunkards may live to be old. We have seen and known such, and the race is not extinct. Hale, hearty men are still among us, who have always drank hard." All this is, indeed, true: but such persons are exceptions to the general rule, and are noted and talked of, whilst the hundreds of their companions, who have been swept away, are all forgotten. I have just read of a hoary drunkard, who boasted that he had gone to bed drunk night after night, for forty years and

\* The Rev. Mr. Scoresby (once the captain of a ship employed in the whale fishery, and likely, therefore, to be acquainted with such a fact) states in his account of the loss of the *Rothsay Castle*, that more shipwrecks happen through the drunkenness of some part of the crew, than from any other cause.

upwards, and was still comparatively hale and sound. A by-stander enquired of him, "Where are all your boon companions gone?" The brute whispered in reply, "I have seen seven generations of them all to the grave, and am settling the eighth very quickly, for I lost three companions last month, and one very good fellow to-day." A healthy drunkard, therefore, is as rare among his fellows, as a giant among men. In general, he lives but a few years, just long enough to ruin his affairs and his family, and then he dies of some disease or other which his vice has fixed upon him.

5. Contemplate, lastly, the awful power of drunkenness in corrupting the soul.

If a man escape from all its other miserable consequences, he cannot escape from this. If he possess so much property, that drunkenness cannot ruin his affairs; if he can afford to conduct his business by the agency of men of sober habits; if he be raised above the temptation of associating himself with thieves and robbers; or if his constitution be of that iron cast, that it defies all the assaults of drunkenness; he will still find the truth of the apostle's words: "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." (Gal. vi, 8.) Drunkenness brutalizes the human mind.

The prophet expresses this, when he says, "whoredom and wine take away the heart" (Hosca, iv, 11); and so indeed they do: nor is it less the consequence of the latter than of the former. Drunkenness renders the heart callous, and turns it to a stone, by destroying all those kindlier feelings, through which we are prompted to regard with tenderness the wants and wishes of others. It centres a man upon himself, and the worst part of himself, his fleshly lusts; in fact, his belly is his God. (Phil. iii, 18, 19.) It exasperates and embitters the stronger passions of his nature, and renders him furious and vindictive. It robs him even of his understanding: Solomon intimates this, when he describes him "as one that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or that lieth on the top of a mast" (v. 34). And it so disables his conscience, that he ceases to perceive the obvious distinctions between right and wrong. In a word, it robs him of every thing which constitutes the true character of a man, and brutalizes his very nature.

The drunkard cares not whom he sacrifices. A father will not scruple to starve his children; a husband his wife; and a son will ruin a parent to gratify his lust of drink. The drunkard cares not whom he assaults. We have already noticed the furious quarrels of such, among themselves: but there are more scandalous assaults than these. The shrieks of wives have been heard in our streets (may they never be heard again), suffering under the hands of brutal husbands; whilst the only fault of the poor sufferers has been, an earnest desire to extricate their besotted husbands from their vile associates. And how deep is the malignity of such characters! There is, in truth, no crime which he, who has fallen under the habitual influence of drink, is not ready to commit\*.

There is one instance, however, of the debasing effects of drunkenness on the human character, which I must not omit. It makes men delight in sin, not from the personal enjoyment they derive from it, but from the pleasure of seeing others commit it. Men will even take pleasure in the drunkenness of others, and use every artifice to make them drunk: than which we can hardly conceive a more vicious propensity. A heathen nation of old was wont to make its slaves drunk, and expose them in that state to their children, that they might learn to abhor the vice. It never entered into their thoughts, that any could love the sight of drunkenness. Yet even to this degraded state of mind will drunkards sink: and this it is which stamps on them the deepest mark of corruption. The apostle, when summing up the melancholy account of heathen principles and practices, closes the whole with this particular, — furnishing the strongest evidence of their corruption; — that though they knew the judgment of God, that all who committed the iniquities he had enumerated, were worthy of death, they not only did the same, but had pleasure in those who did them. (Rom. i, 32.) But the drunkard seems to exceed even this measure of iniquity; he not only knows that the judgment of God is against drunkenness,

\* In August last, a man of the name of Charles Kimmers was executed in front of Fisherton Gaol, Wiltshire, upon his own confession, for setting fire to the stacks of a neighbour. And when just about to be launched into eternity, what did he publicly declare to the people? That beer-shops and public-houses had been his ruin. He dated all the evil of his life from the habit of drinking, which he had acquired in them.

and yet is ready to commit it, and can take pleasure in those who will join him in his debauchery: but he can find a pleasure in making others drunk, whilst he keeps himself sober! What, however, does the Scripture declare? "woe to him who giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! thou art filled with shame for glory, drink thou also, and let thy forehead be uncovered: the cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory." (Habak. ii, 15, 16.)

Similar in principle to the conduct thus strongly reprobated in the word of God, is the practice of those, who, engaged in the sale of beer or liquor, will endeavour to add to their gains, by alluring persons to their houses, and encouraging them to stay till they become intoxicated; or who will admit a person already affected with drink, and supply him with more liquor, till he is utterly bereft of sense. Let not such persons think that they shall escape; the judgment of God, the cup of the Lord's right hand, shall be turned to them; they may count their gains, and glory in their shame, but he will bring them to account for their iniquity: and not unfrequently it will be found, that their very success becomes their ruin.

Such are some of the temporal—the immediate effects of drunkenness. I pass on to consider,

#### II. Its final issue.

After what has been already said, you will be prepared to hear, that it ends in the eternal ruin of its victims.

1st. It necessarily leads to that end by its natural consequences.

If flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God:—if they, who are in the flesh, who are in their natural state, as born of the flesh, cannot please God; however moral they may be in their lives and external demeanour:—if they only who are born again of the spirit, and are spiritual, can have enjoyment in God, and dwell with him (John, iii, 3—6; Rom. viii, 6—9): how can brutalized flesh and blood, brutalized human nature, human nature corrupted by drunkenness, have any access to God, or partake of his kingdom? "Blessed are the pure in heart, said the Saviour, for they shall see God." (Matt. v, 8.)

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"Without holiness, says the apostle, no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. xii, 14.) And another apostle declares, that every man, who has a just hope of seeing God as he is, purifieth himself even as he is pure. (1. John, iii, 3, 4.) God is a holy God; the angels are holy spirits; and into heaven, their spiritual abode, shall in no wise enter any thing that defileth. (Rev. xxii, 27.) But is a drunkard a holy person? see him staggering in his vomit, void of sense and insensible to shame, and say, is he a holy character, a meet candidate for heaven? I could as soon believe that a hog had been transferred thither from "his wallowing in the mire," as that a soul infected with the spirit of drunkenness had been received into heaven\*.

\* I may appear to use strong language, but it is not extravagant language; it is the language of truth. I can conceive of a person dying in a state of intoxication, without necessarily supposing that he is lost for ever. Had Noah died when drunk with his new wine, he had not perished; for he does not seem to have been aware of the nature or strength of the liquor, and certainly never intended intoxication. He had not the spirit of a drunkard. (Gen. ix, 20-27.) The same may be said of Lot: he had not the spirit of a drunkard; he was no habitual drunkard. His case, however, is very different from that of Noah. He was seduced into drunkenness by his profligate daughters, and then led to incest. Of the latter he seems to have been unconscious. This was again repeated the following day. (Gen. xix, 30-38.) Now, though he might be the object of pity on the first occasion, he became the object of judgment on the second: for he could not be ignorant of the fact, that they had made him drunk, and therefore ought to have taken good care that they should never have the power to betray him the second time. Lot is an awful example of a backsliding believer, and of the folly of every one who professes to be a follower of God, and presumes to go into the world and mix himself up with its practices, in the notion that he shall come out of it unhurt. What a finished picture of such a character is given us by the prophet! "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not; yea, grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not." (Hosea, vii, 9, 10.) Noah, doubtless, was greatly grieved for what had happened, and ashamed of its consequences; but the fact recorded against him, does not destroy his character. The record of Lot is (to say the least of it) that of a man strongly leavened throughout his course with the spirit of covetousness; and we cannot conceive him to have been finally saved without deep repentance and bitter sorrow of heart. What horror must have seized upon his mind, when he came to know the full extent of the iniquity, into which he had their land promised him the greatest gains. Indeed, if the apostle Peter had not rescued his character, and given him the title of a

Mistake not, however, my meaning. I do not say that every one who is now a drunkard, must of necessity perish. What is true of every wicked man, is true of the drunkard. Let him forsake his way, and renounce the evil thoughts of his mind, so long exercised in making provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon. (Is. lv, 7.) "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I. John. i, 9.) God forbid, therefore, that we should be supposed to deny repentance to a drunkard, or to affirm that no drunkards have ever been converted and saved. We should contradict the direct testimony of the apostle, who, after expressly declaring to the Corinthians, that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God, immediately adds, "and such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." (I. Cor. vi, 10, 11.) Some of these Corinthians, then, had been drunkards, but were subsequently brought to repentance, were converted, and saved. The blood of Jesus Christ had cleansed them from all their sin. The same blessed change may, by the grace of God, be still wrought in the

righteous man, christians had probably judged him to have been an apostate. (II. Peter, ii, 7, 8.)

These observations have their application to individuals and their circumstances in the present day, and may teach us caution in 3  
 been led! How deeply must he have regretted the day when he lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, even as the garden of the Lord, and chose to pitch his tent among a race peculiarly wicked, because 2  
 3 judging of others, or rather to forbear from it altogether. We all know how easily a person of sober habits, and unaccustomed to drink, may be led unawares into intemperance, and become intoxicated. Such a person ought not to be termed a drunkard. A man in a weak state of body may be so immediately affected with liquor, as to be surprised into intoxication; but he is not, therefore, animated with the spirit of drunkenness. Either of these persons may, in the providence of God, die in this state; but to surmise of either that he is, of necessity eternally lost, would be a most unchristian judgment. It is the spirit of drunkenness, and the habit to which it leads, that brands a man with the title of drunkard. He that has this spirit, that loves liquor and indulges himself in it, though it be only occasionally taken to intoxication, is a drunkard, and let him die drunk or sober, he is lost for ever.



souls of such sinners now, and their sins washed away in the blood of the cross. Oh! that it may please God to effect it in the many that surround us!

We do not say, therefore, that the drunkard cannot be converted and saved. Let him cease to be a drunkard, and believe the Gospel, and he shall be saved. But we do say, that a drunkard dying in his iniquity, is eternally lost: aye, and we say, that a drunkard dying in that spirit of mind in which he has lived, unchanged and impenitent, is equally lost, though throughout his sickness and his previous declining health, he may have been as sober as the man who never drank any thing, but water. The fact is, death does not change the condition of the soul. By dropping the body, the soul does not lose that spirit of mind, which it has contracted in connection with the body. Hence, the soul of a drunkard is incapable of heaven, because destitute of the holiness, which can alone make heaven a place of happiness. Drunkenness, therefore, *necessarily* tends to the eternal ruin of its victims.

2dly. I add, that by the just judgment of God, it *inevitably* terminates in their ruin.

There is a general woe pronounced on drunkards in the word of God. I have already rehearsed to you one from the prophet Habakkuk. There are similar declarations in other prophets. "Woe," saith the Lord by Isaiah, "to them that rise early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them:" and again, "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink:" and again, "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, that are overcome with wine. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet." (Is. v, 11, 22; xxviii, 1, 3.) The expressions are peculiar, but they plainly intimate that such characters are encompassed with evil, and shall never see good. How strongly it was denounced under the law, as a crime to be punished by the magistrate, and in the severest manner, is evident from the judgment decreed against the drunken and rebellious son. "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him,

will not hearken unto them: then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city: this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice, he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put away evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear." (Deut. xxi, 18—21.) Whatever peculiarity may be attributed to this statute, as designed to answer the purposes of the Mosaic law; no man can rationally question that the judgment of God, who enjoined the special sentence to be inflicted on a certain class of these offenders, is in reality against all such sinners, and will finally be executed on them universally. Obvious, however, as this conclusion must be to every reflecting mind, the Lord foresaw that drunkards would not draw the inference, but filled with their own delusions, would still promise themselves safety in their sins: He has therefore provided the necessary warning, in one of the most awful passages of his word. "If there be among you man or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away from the Lord our God,—and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law." (Deut. xxix, 18—21.) A sentence more tremendous than this can scarcely be conceived. It specially lies against drunkards. Let them hear and tremble at their own delusions.

But is the same severity of judgment directed against drunkards, under the Gospel, as was exercised under the law? We ask in reply: What is the Lord's judgment against careless and dissolute ministers? "But, and if that servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming: and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to

eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day in which he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv, 48—51.) The judgment, indeed, is not denounced on drunkenness alone; but drunkenness forms a part of the wickedness on account of which it is to be inflicted. The declaration, however, of the apostle, is final. Read his address to the Corinthians: "What, know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor *drunkards*, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi, 9, 10.) Again, writing to the Galatians, he says: "the works of the flesh are manifest; which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, *drunkenness*, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in times past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. v, 19—21.) It is certain, therefore, that drunkenness terminates in the eternal ruin of its victims. It renders them morally incapable of enjoying heaven; and it is the direct object of God's judgments.

Let other sinners, however, remember that it is not the only object of His judgments. Let them not dream that they are in safety, because they are not the slaves of drunkenness. It is one of the crying sins of our land, debasing our moral and religious character, and calling down God's judgments upon us: but it is not the only sin. In the enumeration of evil practices, which exclude offenders from the kingdom of heaven, there are many more, and some very compatible with a decent character in the world; which may indeed add to our reputation in it (for men will praise us, when we do well to ourselves); but which are equally fatal to the eternal happiness of all who live in them. Let not the man, therefore, who is animated with the spirit of envy; whom emulation stimulates to exertion; or whom covetousness urges to unremitted diligence and care in his worldly business;—let not such a man flatter

himself that he shall escape. If the drunkard bears the brand of Satan's service openly on his forehead, and glories in his master's chain; the other carries his mark as truly, and is as really enslaved to his service; though the mark be concealed within his hand, and the chain be invisible to our eyes. The end of both, therefore, must be the same.

It is with drunkenness, however, that I am now concerned; and having finished what I intended to say of its nature, consequences, and end, let me give one word of warning to all in respect of it.

You have need, brethren, of warning; for it is to many a most seductive vice. The drink itself is to some persons very seductive. Solomon seems to intimate this, when he says, "Look not thou at the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright;" or to use terms suitable to our customs; "Look not thou at the liquor, when it is bright, when it giveth its colour in the glass, and is fresh and sparkling, for in the end it will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder." Never indulge the cravings of appetite; satisfy the wants of nature (and they are soon satisfied); but never feed its lusts. You can never say to indulged appetite, "thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." It is soon inflamed, and when inflamed, is like the mad horse, that mocks its rider. But if you escape the violence of intoxication, the love of drink, once generated, is sure to increase. It steals insensibly on the wretched victim, till it has obtained complete dominion over him. The company assembled together is to other persons an object of attraction. It wears the aspect of a social meeting; though it has continually a most unsocial and brutal end. But whatever may be the temptation of the liquor or the company; remember that neither can prevent the consequences; the serpent's bite, the adder's sting, must follow. Poverty will come upon you like an armed man, that cannot be resisted: the bitterness of quarrels will rankle in your bosom: disease, in some form or other, will infect your frame: your mind will be harassed by the imminent dangers into which you fall: your course may be soon stopped by death; and whilst you live, your moral nature will be more and more corrupted: you will daily lose more of the character of man, and acquire that of a brute; till at last you become desperate and irre-

coverable. It is the peculiar misery of those who walk in this way of iniquity, that they so seldom retrace their steps. Age cures some vices, but it does not cure this. The consequences of other crimes, sometimes carry with them their own correction; but the drunkard is for the most part incorrigible: he may for a time be stopped in the pursuit of his vice, but he is seldom cured. Solomon describes him to the life, when he sets him forth as despising correction, and saying: "they have stricken me, but I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

We have need, then, to be warned of the beginnings of this vice. May you take the warning, and profit by it! If, through long confinement at your work, you become exhausted, send for what is necessary to recruit your bodily strength, and share it with her, who shares your toil and care. It is said, indeed, that men are sometimes driven to a public house, by the scolding tongues of their wives. I believe it is far oftener the case, that the bad ways of men fret the tempers of their wives, and give rise to these scoldings. The truth is, that the temporal happiness of women is derived entirely from the comforts of domestic life: and there are few women who will not dearly love the husband, that is a domestic man; and will make her, as she was designed to be, the partner of his life. But when men spend their leisure hours away from home, and leave their wives alone, they are necessarily disappointed, become fretful, and will naturally, though not wisely, express their disappointment in intemperate language. The evil, however, generally begins with the man. But if it be otherwise, if the woman be indeed a scold, he is a weak and cowardly man, who to avoid the anger of such a woman, will run into intemperance and drunkenness, and incur the judgments of God. Cultivate then the love of home; prize your own domestic circle; and avoid an alehouse as you would a pest-house.

I would press this especially on the young. It is an awful moment, when a young man first enters a public house for the purpose of drinking. It is often a turning point in the history of his life, and generally a turning point to evil. Constructed as society now is, such places may be necessary for public convenience and the transaction of business;

but they are grievous evils, and ruin far more than they serve. They may have their various signs, and bear their different names; but there is one name which is the proper title of every ill-conducted alehouse: it is this, "Satan's workshop." There the devil and his agents are always actively engaged in forging chains for all comers; and they are commonly in the end rivetted so fast, as never to be got rid of. Remember then, young men, the true name of such houses of resort; and avoid them, if you would not become Satan's slaves.

But you must do more. Not only avoid the places, but avoid the society, also, of those who frequent them. You cannot make them your companions, and not be beguiled to follow their ways. In this respect the command of the apostle is peremptory. He forbids us to keep company, or even to eat with a brother who is a drunkard. (I. Cor. v. 11.) Separate yourselves, then, from all such society, not only from the inveterate, but from the more respectable class of drunkards; who, of all drunkards, are the most injurious. There is in almost every place a set of men, who drink regularly, but, as it is said, respectably; that is, so temperately, that they seldom become intoxicated. Such persons are valuable customers at the houses they frequent, not only from the money which by regular drinking they spend, but because their supposed respectability serves as a decoy to others. Publicans will point to these characters, and tell the young that no harm can follow, if they drink in such company, and imitate their example: for they only drink to do themselves good, and never to be drunk. But be not you deceived by any shew of respectability, or by such specious declarations. No man ever drank regularly in an alehouse for his good. Remember, also, it is this regular and respectable drinking, which lays the foundation of utter drunkenness. It is the school into which Satan first leads those, whom he designs to perfect in the vice. Be not you, therefore, their companions; have the firmness to decline all intercourse with *such* respectable characters. You cannot be a christian without fortitude. You cannot act the part of a man without courage. You must learn to say "no," to seducers, and abide by it: if you would not be ensnared by sinners, and share in their ruin.

But a word to these *respectable* drinkers—to such, I

mean, as are accustomed to frequent public houses, and drink to a certain point, but very seldom become affected with their liquor. However you may wrap yourselves up in your fancied respectability, and insist upon your sobriety; though you may say, that you only go to the alehouse to have a *social* glass, and enjoy the company of some of your acquaintance, men as respectable as yourselves,—the truth is, the spirit of drunkenness (which is the love of drink) is as really in you as in the rest. If it were not so, the alehouse would not be the place of your meeting. The company commonly assembled there, does not favour the intercourse of friendly conversation or kind feelings. The private parlour or the common room of a private house, would suit the purpose far better. Did you not, therefore, love drink, common sense would lead you to see your friends in another place, and another way. And be assured that the love of drink, which binds you to your club, will work out the same end for you, that it has wrought for thousands before you. Should you become men of strength to drink deeply, without betraying the usual symptoms of intoxication; your bodies will in the end show what you are. Excited beyond the measure of healthy excitement, they must gradually be enfeebled, will crave a greater measure of indulgence, and you will sink into the very character, which you now so strongly reprobate,—the drunken sot. In the love of drink, which already possesses you, there is the essential part of the drunkard's character. Time and circumstances only are wanted to draw it out, and complete it. Oh! then, (to use the strong language of Solomon) put a knife to the throat of your lust, before conscience is wholly overpowered, and you are fast bound in your misery. Be not deceived: you are not respectable characters, and till recovered out of the snare of the devil in which you are entangled, you cannot recover your respectability. Depend upon it, the world gives you your right name. Those, who make a gain of you, know the end that awaits you; and with all their civilities and busy attention, secretly laugh at the weakness, which can be beguiled with so evident a delusion. Awake, then, out of your dream. It is a question of life or death; if you persist, you sacrifice the soul to the body, and must perish.