

CAUTION TO DRUNKARDS; OR, THE SIN OF INTEMPERANCE CENSURED.

EPH. 5:18. *Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.*

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INTRODUCTION.

SUCH a discourse as is professedly upon the sin of drunkenness, needs no other apology for its appearance in the world, than an appeal to the times in which we live; times when the conduct of many professors is notoriously loose; the affections of many others but lukewarm; the glow of apostolic zeal, and the strict holiness of primitive Christians, almost eradicated. Strange it might seem to those unacquainted with it; yet true it is, that we have in our days professors, who can indulge to liberties unknown to our ancestors in the faith. Some are on one hand patriots fully engaged in the popular quarrel; others are statesmen and courtiers, using every sophistical art, uniformly to vindicate all the proceedings of our governors; whilst true and undefiled religion is left to the pursuit of others, less engaged in the transitory concerns of worldly states. Others there are, who profess not to be either patriots or statesmen, who are evidently in as hot pursuit after the good things of this world, as if they had never heard of objects more valuable, or of a world to come, where neither the riches nor honours of this world are admissible. It is strange to observe, that some, who profess to have heaven and an eternity of glory as the ultimate objects of their attention, should be as deeply immersed in the cares of life, as those who never heard of the adorable Jesus, and salvation by his atoning blood! Yet so it is, they will rise up early, sit up late, eat the bread of carefulness,

and upon no account whatever miss an opportunity of getting, and still profess to have no continuing city here, but to be pilgrims and sojourners on earth, as our fathers were, seeking a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is the Lord.

Others still profess the firmest attachment to divine truth, the most full persuasion of their personal interests in the blessings of new covenant grace, who, notwithstanding, can very cordially join in the company of mockers, and men of this world, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame. Such you will find seated where only the scorner should sit, and standing where sinners assemble, without bringing the least degree of uneasiness on their own consciences, or once suspecting that they do wrong. Having utterly forgot, Jam. 4:4. "that friendship with the world is enmity against God; that we cannot take fire' (Prov. 6:27.) into our bosom without being burnt, or 'touch pitch without defilement. These are spots (Jude 12,) in our solemn feasts (as Jude saith), clouds without water, carried about of winds, trees whose fruit withereth, (yea) without fruit. These are not only useless members, but really injurious, more to be guarded against than those that are without; seeing an enemy in our own camp, who holds correspondence with our enemies, is by far more dangerous to our interest than numbers of avowed enemies. And churches ought to guard especially against such persons, if they would stand firm, rather than against notorious opposers. Our vines are sooner spoiled by little foxes than by great Leviathans; and the cause of Jesus suffers more from things, by some deemed trivial, than by all the notorious sins and oppositions of the day.

Some, indeed, are daring enough, upon being found fault with for their frequenting of taverns and public-houses, at once to exculpate themselves, by laying the blame upon Divine Providence; alleging, that such is the nature of their business, that they are under a necessity of company-keeping in those interdicted places ; and further, that they can spend an hour or two

there, with as little guilt as in their own houses, which, by the way, they would find very difficult to prove. But they ought to consider in the

1st Place, that the business which cannot be carried on without a direct breach of Christ's laws, is either in itself unlawful, or it is unlawfully managed. If in itself unlawful, it is not of God's ordaining, therefore ought to be laid aside; if in itself it is & lawful business, and unlawfully managed, care should be taken to rectify what is amiss in our management of it, seeing that all our worldly business ought to be governed to the Redeemer's glory. Nothing is more common in the mouths of drunkards than this excuse, yet nothing is, in truth, more impious, and hath a more direct tendency to dishonor God, and give mankind an unfavorable idea of his moral government of the world. But we may, with young Elihu, be in God's stead, against those impeachers of his righteous ways, and will ask them, "Do you allege, that the infinitely holy and just God hath forbidden the drunkards admission into the kingdom of heaven, and at the same time hath, in Providence, fixed the station and occupation of a man, such as lay him under an unavoidable necessity of being a drunkard?" Yes, you allege this, when you father your intemperance upon the business in which Providence has fixed you, unless you utterly deny his superintendency over human affairs. This excuse, therefore, is so far from extenuating your guilt, that it actually makes it double what it would have been, without such an impeachment of Divine Providence; by adding impiety (not to say blasphemy) to your intemperance. 4 But be not deceived, drunkards shall not "inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6: 10). If, therefore, a man that is addicted to intemperance charges his ungodly conduct upon his business, he is, in the strictest sense, a disorderly walker, not to be permitted within a gospel church; but must be withdrawn from, lest his conduct, as an infection, diffuse its baleful influence abroad, and, as a root of bitterness, should defile many. In order for the conviction of offenders of this kind, and the better dealing with them, by the several churches burdened and grieved by their

ungodly conduct, I shall consider this subject under the following heads, each of which shall occupy a distinct part or chapter of this Tract.

1. The sin of drunkenness defined.

2. The real malignancy of drunkenness exposed.

3. The danger to which a man is liable when drunk.

4. The censure of drunkards from God's word.

5. The means of reclaiming professors who have fallen into that sin, and the conduct of a church in case of obstinacy.

1. CHAPTER I.

In which the Sin of Drunkenness is defined

DRUNKENNESS, although a prevailing evil in this our day, in which idleness and dissipation so greatly obtain, is capable of misinterpretation; and one person may be stigmatized as a drunkard, on account of some over-act, perhaps of ancient date, who is in truth no such person; whilst another passeth for a very sober man, notwithstanding he drinketh every day more than nature craves, and religion says is enough. A variety of circumstances may concur, to ensnare a man into an act of vice, to which he is by no means addicted; whereas a robust and hale constitution will support a man above the vulgar imputation of that very vice, to which he is constitutionally and habitually addicted. What I aim at is, to shew that one man may be actually Intoxicated with liquor, without deserving the ignominious character of a drunkard; whilst another who is never apparently drunk or intoxicated, is, in fact, a drunkard. Particular acts do not enter into, or fix general characters; but a series of the same actions constitute habit, and so fix the character, virtuous or vicious, according to the nature of the actions themselves. There is, perhaps, not such a miser alive, as never performed a

generous benevolent action; but one generous benevolent action does not exempt the sordid wretch from the character of miser. So, perhaps, there is no man so truly benevolent, who never in his lifetime was guilty of one oppressive or unjust deed; but one oppressive or unjust act, ought not to prevent the man from being esteemed truly benevolent, if the general tenor of his conduct is such as merit that reputation. In the fixing of characters, the general disposition of the mind, and tenor of life, rather than particular or single actions, however overt, are to be regarded; otherwise, some saints of the highest eminence in sacred history must lose their reputation, so justly given them by the Holy Ghost, and be branded with infamy injurious and unjust. I shall begin with Noah, and a little trace the story.

That righteous man, having preached to his contemporaries for an hundred and twenty years, being saved in the ark from the universal deluge, planted a vineyard, and drank of the juice of the grapes to intoxication; yet could not Noah be denominated a drunkard, as the holy penman recites no repetition of the same evil. Now on the one hand it would be harsh, and beyond the design of the sacred historian, to call Noah a drunkard, because he was once guilty of the sin of drunkenness ; so on the other hand, it is absurd and irrational in those, who live in that more than beastly evil, to plead this instance of that good man's weakness, to quiet their own consciences, and to justify their conduct; seeing, though Noah was overtaken with it as a fault, for which he was censurable, he did not live in it as habitual. Neither will a bare repetition of it fix the character, unless we would account Lot, whose righteous soul was grieved for the wickedness of the Sodomites, to pass for a drunkard, which can never be admitted, notwithstanding he was twice so exceedingly intoxicated, that he lay with his own daughters, and knew not what he did. Abraham twice dissembled, yet he was not a dissembler, but the faithful parent of the chosen seed. David was once in his life guilty of notorious adultery, and Jacob of speaking downright falsehood; yet was not the one a liar, nor the other an adulterer. So then, as the recorded failings of the saints are no precedent for our imitation, they are not designed as a subterfuge for ungodly walkers. Yet of

the greatest use they may be, to a poor broken-hearted sincere believer, who by the force of corruption, hath yielded to temptation; and from his conscious lapse, writes the most bitter things against himself To see that some, even of the greatest of saints, have been like to himself ensnared, may be a means of keeping him from utter despair, into which he must unavoidably fall, were he left to conclude, that no such spots as his were ever found upon the character of any of God's dear children. But what has the habitual sinner to do with this? He is under no such concern, and those melancholy instances can be of no such use to him. By the way, a man may be a daily impenitent offender, where his sin never becomes so notorious, as those failings of God's children above referred to.

There is Potitio, a gentleman of a facetious turn of mind, whose company is courted by people of superior rank. He seldom spends an evening at home in his own family, nor indulgeth his amiable spouse with his company till eleven or twelve at night; so that the sweetest endearments of the conjugal state, and family economy, are but little known under his roof. Yet does he never come home drunk. Blessed with a sound habit of body, he can tarry long at the wine without being intoxicated, and is so mighty to drink strong drink, that he will drink as much as would make three ordinary men to reel, without depriving himself of the use of his faculties, his eyes or his limbs. And because he can walk soberly home, after he has sent his companions staggering away, he blesseth himself in his virtue, and can boast that he never was drunk in his life. That this should be the case with Potitio, is not very strange, seeing he makes little profession of regard to objects superior to sensual gratifications: but that people who profess to have a God to adore, a Saviour to follow, and an eternity in view, should indulge to the same degree of intemperance, and justify their conduct in so doing, is not so safely accounted for. Nor is it easy to say, how they can persuade themselves that they can spend an evening in a tavern or alehouse, once or twice a week, as innocently as in their own houses amongst their families. But if possible to convince men, that they may be in the eye of God's righteous law strictly and properly drunkards, without being

so much as once intoxicated with liquor, I would have it observed, 1. That all things which have not some tendency, either directly or more remotely to glorify God, must undeniably be deemed sinful. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are called to do it to the glory of God; which shews, that there is a drinking to the dishonour of God. Every thing that tends to the glory of God, we are capable of imploring the divine blessing upon, which I think we cannot do upon things that either directly or consequentially tends to his dishonor. Conscience, so far as enlightened, is a faithful monitor, and will give a direct answer to our interrogatories. Let those therefore, who plead for the innocence of spending time at those places, lay their hands upon their hearts and kneel down, if they can, and ask the divine blessing upon what they are going about; or let them cease to justify that upon which they cannot in conscience implore the divine blessing. Perhaps this is the nearest way of distinguishing to ourselves, between things lawful and unlawful; and a way which if attended to, would discover many things to be unlawful which are pleaded for as indifferent.

1. Much waste of precious time may be made over the cup, when there is not the least appearance of intoxication; time, which ought to be improved in the counting-house, or shop, in the closet, or in the family. And can that be sinless, which is such a murderer of time, so precious in the eye of a death-bed? In short, all drinking which unfits the mind for the closest examination of its frame and acting's, that hinders meditation, indisposeth for the most spiritual duty in the church, in the family, or in the closet; unfits for or puts family worship any way out of course is sinful drinking, and to be ranked under the head of drunkenness.

2. A man may, by drinking without being intoxicated, be of very great injury to the cause and interest of religion. People of the world naturally form their opinion of religion itself, from the conduct of its professors. Therefore, all drinking that tends to grieve the godly, and to bring the church of Jesus into trouble is sinful drinking, or drunkenness. A man may be persuaded that such a thing is lawful, in itself, to him; but if his being

found in that thing, whatever it be, tends to grieve but one, and that of the weakest members of the church, it becomes unlawful to him; as the Holy Ghost hath left us no toleration to grieve even a weak brother; no, not even in things the most indifferent. It was lawful for Paul to eat flesh, as often as he had occasion; but rather than offend one brother, he would eat no flesh whilst the world stood. How much more ought one professor to abstain from alehouses and taverns, when others are thereby offended? Besides, to advert to what was said before, people of the world form their opinion of religion itself, from the conduct of its professors. It must be awfully sinful, when any part of our conduct gives unto a poor sinner a false notion of the strictness of religion, as if it could bear with the practice of drinking, and frequenting of public houses, or in anywise connive at the abuse of the mercies of God, all of which are to be used with thankfulness and prayer. Who that loves Jesus will attempt to justify that conduct, which tends to harden a poor sinner, and make him tenfold more a child of the Devil than he was before? Yet such a tendency has the conduct of those professors, who frequent taverns and alehouses, and therefore notoriously scandalous and sinful.

The professor of Christianity cannot conform to the maxims of the world, without proportionally to the said conformity confirming world lings in their sinful courses, by the countenance which he gives them. But how much more honorable is it, to seek after the welfare of our poor fellow sinners, by doing what we can to be instrumental of saving them from that perdition to which the world is destined!

To confirm my leading position, namely, that a man be a drunkard without ever being intoxicated, I would have it observed, that in (1 Kings 20: 16), we read, that, "Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the thirty and two kings that helped him. Which words, in the plainest manner, exhibit a charge of drunkenness against Benhadad; yet that he retained the use of both his reason and limbs, and was not what some of our refiners consider as a being drunk, is clear from ver. 20, and

Benhadad, king of Syria, escaped on an horse with the horsemen. He had the use of his reason, being sensible of his danger, and choosing the most rational and likely means of safety. He was capable of fleeing on horseback, and consequently of walking on foot, as upright as those who, after their tarrying long at the wine, boast of the steadiness of their walk; yet the Holy Ghost says he was drinking himself drunk. It will avail but little what a man says in his own vindication, if the word of God sets him down as a drunkard. Tarrying long at the wine, and being mighty to drink strong drink, fall as immediately under censure and admonition, as to be intoxicated. And certainly if drinking, in the manner above described, is sinful and censurable, he that indulges to intoxication has no right to lenity and forbearance. Neither can he be tolerated within a Christian church, seeing drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER II.

In which is shewn the exceeding Sinfulness of the Sin of Drunkenness.

HAVING shewn in the preceding chapter, what we are to understand by drunkenness, I go on to shew in this the heinous aggravation attending it, and the impossibility of a person being addicted to it, without injuring both himself and others.

1. The drunkard of every stage greatly injures himself, if we may give credit to Solomon's testimony, Prov. 23:29, &c. '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 a strange woman, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.' Here is a train of evils which necessarily proceed from drunkenness, or tarrying long at the

wine, which terms are synonymous in the sense of scripture, both of them productive of future remorse, unless hardened to all sense of sin, shame, and folly. Redness of eyes, proceeding from the inflammation of the blood, through the fermentation of abused liquors, designed for a blessing and not for a curse to mankind; as a restorative to oppressed spirits, and not as fuel to inflame the blood.

2. What evils proceed from excessive drinking, let the gouty, the hectic or hypochondriachal, the consumptive, the paralytic and apoplectic say, for they have experienced it. Though I deny not that these diseases may invade even a temperate person; it may, perhaps, be found; that some people, who deem themselves very temperate, may be chargeable with ruining their own constitution, and bring those diseases upon themselves. Some people are so regular, that at no time do they in the least disguise themselves with any liquor; yet they drink, in their regular way of living, what is sufficient to maintain a febrile motion constantly in the blood; a motion, than which nothing preys more upon the constitution, relaxes the nerves, and unhinges the whole frame of nature. A febrile¹ state, which, according to our best physicians, if not duly attended to, threatens the most fatal and destructive disorders. This same little fever upon the spirits, when its cure is attempted, strictly prohibits the use of all fermented liquors, and indicates balsamic and nutritive broths, which evidently shews that the origin of the disease is the too plentiful use of them, although the physician is prudent enough not to shock the delicacy of his patient, by such a mortifying discovery.

3. But as this discourse is professedly moral, and not physical, I return to my plan of discovering, how injurious the sin of drunkenness is to the party himself. And whatever bad effects it may produce upon the body, those effects are at least equaled by the situation of the mind. What mind, possessed of the least degree of sentiment, can bear, without a great degree of painful mortification, to take a retrospective view of his impertinent

¹ Febrile – Of a person, one who is affected by or is suffering from fever.

babble in his over-night's cups. How thoughtful are his mornings and how disagreeable his reflections, unless he is become absolutely sottish, and has drank away his senses? The disorder which the use of strong drink brings upon the body, naturally tends to fetter and stupify the soul, which can act only according to the position in which the bodily organs are for the time being, which is the true reason why people will do those things, when inflamed with wine or strong drink, which they would be ashamed of at another time. Therefore, Solomon says, "that thine eye shall behold a strange woman, and thine heart shall utter perverse things." And is it not a pity, by sensual gratification, to deprive the only conscious part of man the power of acting? Is it not sinful to fetter the most illustrious part of the human creation which the Most-High God ennobled with his own immaculate image?

4. But it is also an abuse of the mercies of a gracious God; one glutton or drunkard will devour more in wasteful abuse, than would serve to make many comfortable. What pity is it that men and women should indulge to intemperance, when many of their fellow-creature's cannot get a sufficiency of bread to eat, or raiment? To see one of God's creatures wallowing in luxury, whilst another is perishing for want, gives us but a very unfavorable idea of human benevolence. Awful will that audit be, to which our men of affluence will soon be summoned; and tremendous their reckoning with inflexible justice. But they must abide by it and undergo the irrevocable sentence. To have mercies poured in upon one, and those very mercies by a vicious appetite abused, and turned into so many curses, yields something horrid on the reflection. Yet this is the case of the drunkard, whether more notorious or open, or more secret and sly. Divine Providence hath put into his hands the means of living comfortably, and by the perversion of those very means he is unhappy himself, and makes all around him equally unhappy. In this sense therefore, he fights against God, and does what he can to render abortive the gracious designs of holy Providence. But,

5. Admitting that a professor of religion is addicted to that vice of drunkenness, he is injurious in a very high degree; and this age is rife of such scandalous professors, to the great grief of the few who keep their garments clean in the streets of our Sardis. Such a one is injurious to his family, to his creditors, to the church to which he belongs; justly meriteth to be cast out into the world, and held as an heathen man and a publican. Instead of being the parent, protector, and provider for his family, he acts in every sense as their enemy. What a dreadful example does he set his children, instead of going out and in before them in the fear of the Lord! Instead of being a blessing to them, stirring them up to the love of virtue by the amiableness of his own conversation, he is a snare to them by his filthy and beastly example. It is better to be descended from an Hottentot² than from such a professor, whose conduct must, if grace prevent not, inspire his offspring with the most disagreeable idea of religion and virtue. How different is the conduct of such an one, from the tenor of that command, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Young ones are very attentive to the conduct of their parents, and even in the earliest dawn of reason, form from it the most striking conclusions. If we wish well to the fruit of our bodies, we have need to be careful of our conduct; and especially under a profession of religion. But besides the injury done to their morals, he injures them in their property, and is less capable of providing for them, therefore he himself proportionally vergeth towards the character of an infidel. How awful is the conduct of that parent, who, by mere sensual indulgence of his own filthy appetite, neglects the proper education of his children, and guzzles down that which seemed to be designed in Providence to make them happy and comfortable in life! Let the drunkard reflect for a moment, on a wife sitting at home solitary and mournful, deprived of social intercourse with the husband of her choice; children untaught, ungoverned, and perhaps unprovided for, and there read the disagreeable effects of his Intemperance. His business neglected, in proportion to his intemperance, and his creditors

² Hottentot: An uncivilized person.

or family defrauded, in an equal proportion to his neglect of business, and unnecessary expense, plainly shew, that the drunkard is, in the strictest sense, a dishonest man, and no suitable member of a Christian community. Let it be further observed, that both the church and the world expect that the conduct of professors should be, in some goodly measure, different from that of those who make no profession of religion at all; and that, although the families of heathens call not on the name of the Lord, it is expected to be otherwise with such as profess to be followers of the Lamb; more especially with those who are members of gospel churches. But how is it that the duties of family religion can be attended to, by those who delight to tarry long at the wine? The hour is commonly unseasonable, and fatigue depresseth the spirits in such a manner, that little relish for, or pleasure in the duty can be experienced; the family half asleep, rather yawn out their prayers, than worship God in spirit and in truth. What an unsavory and unseasonable spirit for the worship of God must that person be under, who is just come from the impertinent babble of alehouse and tavern politicians. Yet this is the case with loose professors; either the worship of God in the family is altogether neglected, or thus slightly and carnally performed, in such a manner, as is very unlikely to yield edification to any.

And if the families thus suffer, the community to which he belongs is not less a sufferer. Here is no tasting of the spirituality of his gifts, no exerting of himself for Zion's prosperity. He puts it out of his power to contribute towards the support of the gospel, or the relief of the poor, both of which are the duty of every member of a gospel church. Instead of being an useful member, he becomes as a dead weight upon the community. If all were thus to act, what would become of the Lord's poor, and of a preached gospel? The poor might starve, and the cause of religion sink into nothing. But I said, that such an one becomes a dead weight upon the church to which he belongs, so long as he is suffered to continue in it; which is very apparent, as he not only does no good but much hurt among the members. He is a contagious person, who spreads infection wherever he comes; the more serious and pious are under restraints in his presence; the less

guarded are in danger of being corrupted by his example, and drawn into the same uncleanness of conversation with him. His conduct is usually known abroad, before the church becomes acquainted with it; sinners are hardened, the weak are stumbled, and the reputation of the community is wounded, perhaps before the matter comes to their knowledge; and thus a long train of evils necessarily arise from the lust of intemperance. Is there one man, of the least degree of seriousness, who, if convinced of the evil of intemperate drinking, would not rather bridle his appetite, than be the cause of so numerous and so threatening evils?

CHAPTER III.

Which discovers the Danger to which a Man is exposed when drunk, and the Censure of Drunkards from the Word of Gods

I FREELY confess, that I have but little hope of being able to say any thing on this subject, which will serve to reclaim those, who are actually addicted to the sin of drunkenness. But this does not discourage me, seeing there is a probability of something being said, which may be as an antidote against that horrid evil to others, who, although not as yet ensnared, are exposed to the temptation; and if so, I have my reward. Let the reader diligently consider the substance of the former chapter, and also the further representation of the dangers contained in this, and let him say, if there is not a call for him to watch and be sober.

1. A man's judgment is liable to be misled when his body is inflamed with liquor; as, Isa. 38: 7. "They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; "the priests and the prophet have erred through strong drink, "they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink, they err in vision, they stumble in judgment." This account of the drunkards of Ephraim is pertinent and striking; all ranks of people are charged with it. Those that sit in judgment, whom it behoved to have the clearest ideas, and the most perfect use of their reason, in order to dispense judgment and equity. Those who turned the battle in the gate. The soldiers and men of war; the bulwarks of the nation, and guardians of its laws and immunities sacred and civil. The prophet and the priest, whose office it was to make atonement and intercession for the people, and instruct them in things appertaining to the kingdom of heaven. But does not common experience shew, that the heat of liquor will cause as great a confusion of ideas, as the delirium in an high fever will do? Hence that adage, The drunken man is a mad man, incapable of forming a true idea of objects; therefore a wise man will not reprove a drunkard, whilst yet in his cups, lest he get himself a blot, but will wait till he is sober; i. e. till he

regains the exercise of his reason, which was impaired in proportion to the degree of inflammation occasioned by his intemperance.

2. He is in danger of betraying his inward insanity, by the folly of his words. The wise man foretells that the lips of the drunkard shall utter perverse things which was true of Nabal, when David's messenger came to him in a suppliant manner. Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? said he exactly like the blustering of a drunken man. Had he been sober, he would probably have framed a peaceable answer, even if he denied David's request, and not have exposed himself to the resentment of such an hero, as he must needs know the son of Jesse to be; as is clear from the aspersion cast upon him, as one who had broken away from his master. But would a man so covetous as Nabal was, with all his churlishness, had he enjoyed the right use of his reason, have broken through every rule of sound policy, by offending a man who had it in his power to ruin at once all his possessions? How many have in their cups uttered such treasonable words, as have afterwards exposed them to the severe penalty of the law, in such cases provided! And even when nothing materially criminal is uttered, what impertinent babble is there heard in a company of drunkards! There you will find patriots, statesmen, men of all sciences, deep skilled in every mystery; and in truth, every thing is to be found among them besides virtue and Christianity, which have 'long fled the society of drunkards.

3. The drunkard is in danger of bad and vicious actions; "thine eye shall see a strange woman," saith Solomon to the man who abides long at the wine. And I think this we may venture to affirm, that if Noah had never been intoxicated, his nakedness had never been discovered, nor he had the pain of denouncing the curse upon his own seed. Neither had Lot stained his reputation, by lying with his own daughters, had he not first been made drunk through their subtilty. Said Satan once, as some report, to a man in his power, choose thee which thou wilt, murder a man; lie with thy neighbor's wife; or get drunk. The poor man chose to get drunk, supposing it the least criminal of the three. But when inflamed with liquor, he went and

lay with his neighbor's wife, was caught by the husband in the act of adultery, and to cover his infamy, plunged his dagger into the heart of the injured man; and was thus guilty of all that Satan proposed to him at the first. Iniquity in general is like the breaking in of water; you see the beginning of it, but cannot tell where it will end. And some sins (such as drunkenness) have many evils implied in them. And difficult it is to say, what a man is not capable of when he is drunk. It was a scandal, such as will never be purged from that university, which, when one of its members was convicted of infidelity, all edged in his excuse, that he was drunk when he uttered the words; seeing it ought to have been deemed an heinous aggravation of his guilt.

4. If a man hath enemies, and I know not who is without, he is exposed to their rage when in any wise intoxicated. Benhadad was drinking himself drunk with the kings in his pavilions, when the young men of the princes of the provinces of Israel came upon the Syrian hosts, and smote them. Being taken up with his wine and his company, he and his army fell an easy prey to the Israelites, the discipline of his troops having been neglected. The drunkard hath no care. This particular circumstance was, no doubt, recorded, with a view to teach us the miserable defenseless situation of that man who is intoxicated with liquor. And it ought to be observed as a beacon, to warn all men against a practice so pernicious. Elah, the son of Baasha, king of Israel, was drinking himself drunk in his steward's house at Tirzah, when Zimri his captain rose up against him and slew him; which might not have happened, if the king's drunkenness had not furnished opportunity for perpetrating the horrid deed. How many in our day expose themselves to the attack of robbers, merely by their staying long at the wine; a melancholy instance we had but very lately, in the untimely death of two tradesmen, in the suburbs of the city, by the hands of ruffians, who have now satisfied the law with their lives. Those that are attentive to the disorders of the times, must needs see, that this is an evil attended with the most fatal consequences to those who follow it: and what is still more melancholy, is the rapid progress which it makes, in subduing both sexes of

Britons, both of superior and inferior rank. A progress which threatens the most dismal catastrophe, unless prevented by a spirit of reformation poured down from on high upon us as a people. Unless this happy change should take place, we have all the reason in the world to expect, that the woe denounced against the drunkards of Ephraim, may fall in the most tremendous manner upon the drunkards of Britain. For although vengeance tarry, let the drunkard assure himself that his damnation sleepeth not. As is apparent

5. From the censure which the work of God denounces against them in general. First, They are threatened with poverty; Prov. 23:20, 21. Be not amongst wine-bibbers, amongst riotous eaters of flesh, for the drunkard and glutton "shall come to poverty." And no wonder if we see this threatening so frequently verified, when to gratify a base and devouring appetite, people are at so much pains to destroy their only preservative from poverty. The waste of wine, neglect of business, and accumulated expense, implied in drunkenness, shew how naturally poverty is consequent upon it. How many families have we seen reduced to the greatest penury, by the imprudence and profuse expenses of some men and women, whose proper business ought to have been, to provide for their dependents things honest in the sight of all men. Secondly, There is a woe denounced against drunkards in general. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night that wine inflame them!" (Isa. 5: 11). And ver. 22. Woe unto men that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink! "Compared with (Amos 6: 1-6). Woe to them that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph! "Both compared with (Hab. 2: 15). "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also (i. e. as well as thyself) that thou mayest "look on his nakedness!" From all which we may see, in what esteem the drunkard stands with an infinitely holy God; and the certainty, as well as propriety of his exclusion from the kingdom of God. And oh, Sirs! if God denounce a woe, who is he that can repeal the dreadful sentence, and

exempt the drunkard from the fierceness of his wrath. Hath the Lord spoken, and will he not do it? Hath he stretched forth his hand, and will he pull it back without executing his great designs? His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. His counsel condemns, and his pleasure is to cut off the impenitent drunkard. (Deut. 29: 19, 20). "The anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man who is a drunkard; and all the curses written in this book shall lie upon him, and Jehovah shall blot out his name from under heaven. Little does the drunkard reflect, that the wine, which his intemperance devours, is as so much oil cast into the flame of divine wrath, already kindled as a stream of brimstone to devour him. Little does he consider to what end his licentious courses bear that he is only treasuring up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath, and righteous judgment of God, who is no respecter of persons; no conniver at iniquity; and with whom no un-renewed impenitent sinner can dwell.

The laws of man are, indeed, partial in favor of drunkards; and whilst a miserable half starving wretch is adjudged to the gallows, for forcibly taking the smallest matter on the highway the drunkard may rob his family of their all, without incurring any legal penalty. But the law of God lets not the villain pass with impunity, but adjudged him to death; (Deut. 21:20, 21).

And they (namely, the father and mother) 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. The crimes laid to his charge were not murder, highway robberies, or burglaries; but disobedience to his parents, gluttony or riot, and drunkenness. Attend to his judgment, ye who are guilty of the same crimes. The law of God adjudges you to death, however little ye lay it to heart. Think what heart wringing anguish your parents must endure upon your account, if called upon by the laws of the land, as well as by the law of God, to accuse and witness against you. But remember, if they do it not now, they will witness against you hereafter, at an higher and more awful

tribunal, from which there is no appeal. The death, to which the unhappy young man was doomed, was to be stoned by all the men of the city, to testify their abhorrence of his crime, and to purge themselves of his guilt. Remember it, O young man, that God and all good men have thy ungodly conversation in the same abhorrence, and thou hast the same God to appear before, and to thy sad experience thou shalt find that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER IV.

Which considers the Conduct of a Gospel Church towards one who is called a Brother, on his being guilty of this Wickedness.

THE churches of Jesus being composed of men, who are liable to sleep, it is nothing strange nor new, that the enemy, taking advantage of their weakness, should sow his tares upon our field; and that they should continue for a time amongst the principal wheat undiscovered. Neither is it any more disgrace to a gospel church in our day, to have among them a person, whose principles and conduct are diametrically opposite to the integrity of a gospel spirit, than it was to the Lord's immediate disciples, that Judas was of their number; unless they, indeed, should connive at the wickedness perpetrated by such an one. Then they become, to all intents and purposes, partakers with him in his guilt, and shall share too in his punishment. It is never expected, that the members of a church can search the heart, and therefore they can never be blamable in admitting members, who afterwards may appear to 'have been unsound; providing they used every likely means to be satisfied of his integrity before his admission; which a church, studious of its own peace and prosperity, will not fail to do, Even the apostolic churches, to some of the members of which was given the gift of discerning spirits, were not exempted from imposition of this kind; seeing one apostle complains of some who had crept unawares into the church: and another complains of some who had gone out from among them, because they were not of them; for doubtless, saith he, had they been of us they would have continued with us. But because some hypocrites have got into the apostolic church, would it not be an intolerable abuse to censure all its members as hypocrites? And it is no less absurd to charge the members of any gospel church with delinquency, upon any one or more of its members being convicted of a particular evil. Because Peter denied the Lord who bought him, must James and John be charged with the same denial; or, because Demas turned aside after filthy lucre, must it thence follow, that Paul and Barnabas turned aside also? In short, a church can never be

charged with the guilt of individual members, till it actually winks or connives at the evil of such-a-one's conduct. Then, indeed, the guilt is transferred from the individual to the general body; at least they become partakers with him in his sin.

But how shall a church proceed in case of one of its members being justly charged with the sin of drunkenness? To answer this question, I would observe, that there are three things, for which, as ends, church discipline in general, and censure in particular, are instituted.—The honor of the church—The credit of religion—And glory of Christ— The restoration of the fallen brother. That part of discipline which tends not to these ends, is not of scriptural institution, therefore to be rejected as spurious. The honor of the church, and credit of religion, will, at first view, seem to call for an immediate separation from the person guilty of drunkenness; and, as a warrant for this instant separation, the words of the apostle, "He that sins before all, rebuke before all \ will be adduced. If a man is actually separated from the church, he is cast out into the world, and become to the church as an heathen man and a publican. Which seems to be more than the apostle meant, by rebuking him before all; Nothing can be more plain, than that the notoriety of the sin of drunkenness calls for immediate and public rebuke: but that every act of this kind does not call for an immediate separation, I hope to make appear.

1. The ultimate end of all true discipline in a church is to recover the fallen brother out of the snare of the devil; and in this the glory of Christ, who hates putting away, consists more than in cutting off. It hath been observed by some grieved brethren, that the conduct of churches towards supposed delinquents rather indicates a desire to be freed from the trouble of them, than any endeavour to reclaim and restore them; which, if true, betrays a spirit which I would not wish to prosper, were I even concerned in it. When actually cut off from a community that person is no longer an object of the church's care, and consequently no attempts are made towards his recovery and restoration, but he is an heathen man and a publican;

disregarded till he himself shall make some overture towards his reconciliation with the church which cut him off. And thus the leading design of church discipline is prevented or perverted.

2. From all that I am able to learn there is a degree of censure appointed for certain offenders, which is short of an actual separation, or excommunication, as in (2 Thess. 3:14, 15). If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Here the disobedient person was to stand in the relation of a brother, and as such to be admonished; not to be accounted as an heathen man, and publican, or an enemy to the church and people of God. Yet although he was still to be treated as a brother, they are forbidden to keep him company; and if forbid to keep him company in common, much more to communicate with him at the table of the Lord, or to admit him to the highest degree of church fellowship. In like manner, (1 Cor. 5:11). But now have I written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat. Here again, to eat either in common or in church communion, with a brother that is called a drunkard is forbidden; and therefore, although he may for a time retain the relation of a brother, is not to be admitted to the table of the Lord, till, by his repentance, he is purged from his scandal.

3. Admonition in such cases has by some been thought unwarrantable, supposing that it is enjoined only in the case of an heretic, who, after the first and second admonition, we are commanded to reject. It is in this case expressly instituted, and it is in no case forbidden; therefore, it can never be unseasonable, if dispensed in a gospel spirit, with a single eye to the Redeemer's glory. Besides this forbearance in the church, and study by seasonable admonition, to rescue a fallen brother out of the snare of the devil, is most like to the conduct of Jesus in the parable, who would not cut down the barren fig tree, till he had digged and dunged about it, to see if it

would bring forth fruit. But church admonition is expressly enjoined in cases of disorderly walking, as well as in cases of heresy in the above cited (2 Thess. 3:15). And consequently fixes a standing rule for the conduct of a church in every case of disorder. Such a rule as is perfectly consistent with the nature of a gospel church, and by their refusing to eat, or accompany with a disorderly brother, the church maintains its own honor, bears a testimony against the offender's sin, and shews that holiness only can become the house of the Lord: whilst, at the same time, they manifest bowels of mercy towards the party, by admonishing him as a brother. Only by the observance of this rule, a church can be said to distinguish between the person of a fallen brother, and the sin into which he hath fallen. Let every Christian community bear their warmest testimony against sin of every kind, but let them never forget, that restoration is the leading object they ought to keep in view.

4. Notwithstanding a church of Christ hath no warrant to proceed further at first, than to withdraw in point of communion at the Lord's table, and in respect to all unnecessary society with an offender; yet, so as to lay him under admonition as a brother, it may become necessary that an actual separation, cutting off, or excommunication should take place; the obstinate apostate be cast forth into the world, the kingdom of Satan, and the relation between him and the church entirely dissolved. If after digging and dunging about it, the fig tree still continues barren, it must be cut down and cast out of the vineyard. But this cannot be done, but in case of obstinate and impenitent continuance in an evil, for which the party has been duly admonished, and called to repentance. In such a case, a bare withdrawing from him, as a disorderly walker, is not an adequate censure; as he now assumes a different character, and becomes a troubler of the church, and therefore is to be cut off. Such an one continuing obstinately impenitent, under church admonitions, either professeth or professeth not faith: if he professeth not faith, he is to be cut off, or cast out as an infidel; if he does profess faith, and yet continues in his sin, he holds the faith in an evil, or guilty conscience, and as such, ought to be delivered unto Satan, i.e. cast

out into the world over which Satan presides. He doth not hear the church, and therefore is to be dealt with as an heathen man and a publican.

5. If admonition has the desired effect, and our fallen brother is made sensible of his sin, what shall we do? The case is plain. The Lord hath blessed the discipline of his house, and given repentance to him that sinned. That very repentance is a proof of his God having received him; and shall any false notions of the honor of the church induce us to reject him whom God hath received. No, if thy brother repent, let his sin have been ever so notorious, and turn to thee by confession and repentance, thou shalt in any wise forgive him. Are we not to wait and see whether his repentance is abiding; and is it not prudent to stay till his scandal is purged by a course of well-doing, before he is restored to his place? This is, indeed, very agreeable to carnal policy, but no way consistent with the word of God. The apostles did not tarry for proof of Peter's repentance, before they acknowledged him as a brother; neither is it lawful for us to doubt the reality of any man's repentance, till future acts shall render it dubious; for only by their fruits are men to be known.

To pretend to judge of the sincerity or insincerity of a man's heart, any further than open facts do make it manifest, approaches too near to the Almighty's province of searching hearts, for us to pretend to it. If a man is sincere in his professions of repentance, his sincerity will discover itself in the holiness of his future conduct; and if insincere, the word of the Lord will soon find him out, and the dog shall return to his vomit, the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire again. The scandal of the offender being purged by repentance, his former sin is with the church, as it is with the church's God, as if it had never been; cast behind their back, never more to be seen or remembered by them.

From all that has been said we may see, in the

1st Place, the abounding of this so very pernicious evil of drunkenness, and how far it is the duty of every professor to watch against it with

sobriety. If we would walk consistent with the Christian profession; if we would act consistently with manhood, it behoves us to watch against all temptations to this horrid, this beastly sin; and at the same time to solicit the protection of that immaculate Being, by whose grace alone we can be upheld in the hour of temptation, and preserved from the evil.

1. The need there is for gospel churches to watch against all tendency to looseness and levity in its several members, in order to prevent the infection spreading, may also appear evident. When the place of any one is found frequently vacant, it may justly be concluded, that the heart is in a backsliding frame, and that therefore it is expedient to seek after him in time, before the whole soul is alienated from God, like Ephraim's when in the house of his idols; and his neglect of means has been followed by the prevalency of outward and scandalous sinfulness.

2. If admonition and exhortation prove fruitless, and the delinquent is obstinate in his rebellion, the way of the church is plain, and expedition in their proceeding is indispensably necessary. A withered member must be a burden to the body whilst it remains; a mortified organ must endanger the whole system: and surely it is better that one member be cut off, than the whole body should perish; as must eventually be the case, if the mortification is not checked by a seasonable amputation, and the servant of sin turned forth into the world, whose maxims he follows with allowance.

[John Macgowan (1726-1780) was a Scottish Baptist minister and author. Macgowan was born in Edinburgh, received an education, and was apprenticed to a weaver. He subsequently settled in Bridge Street, Warrington, as a baker. He had early become a Wesleyan; he now joined the Methodist movement as a preacher. At a later period he was attracted by the Independents, but finally joined the Particular Baptists. He ministered at the old baptist chapel at Hill Cliff, near Warrington, and then at Bridgnorth.]