

JOHN B. GOUGH



JOHN BARTHOLOMEW GOUGH, an eloquent and powerful Anglo-American temperance lecturer and orator, was born at Sandgate, Kent, England, Aug. 22, 1817, and died at Frankford, Philadelphia, Pa., Feb. 18, 1886. His youthful education was meagre, and in 1831, when thirteen years old, he came to the United States, where he learned the bookbinder's trade. After a time he lost his employment, grew dissipated, and was fast becoming a hopeless drunkard. In 1842, however, he was induced to take the temperance pledge at Worcester, Mass., and at once became a reformed man. He had great natural gifts as a speaker and now utilized them in the temperance cause, becoming the foremost advocate of temperance in the United States. In 1853, he made a lecturing tour of Great Britain, and returned there in 1857, remaining and lecturing for three years, and paying a third visit in 1878. In the latter part of his career he lectured upon other topics than temperance and met with equal success. Temperance reform was nevertheless the work to which he devoted his main energies, and in the work of reformation he relied wholly upon moral influence and the pledge of abstinence to obtain results. He was thoroughly, intensely earnest, and mingled humor and pathos in his speeches in a manner that always found favor with his audiences. His home for many years was at West Boylston, Mass., where, from the savings from his lectures and literary work, he had purchased a little estate. His published works include besides an "Autobiography" (1853), a collected volume of "Orations" (1854); "Temperance Lectures" (1879); "Temperance Dialogues," "Platform Echoes" (1885); and "Sunlight and Shadow; or, Gleanings from My Life-Work."

TEMPERANCE ADDRESS

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I STAND before you, ladies and gentlemen, to-night, as a trophy of the temperance movement. I am the servant of this movement, and I will be, God helping me, to the day of my death. But I stand here also as a trophy of this temperance movement. Last November I had spoken in the City Hall of Glasgow to twenty-five hundred people. I was staying at the house of one of the merchant-princes of that city, and, when we came down-stairs his carriage was at the door, silver-mounted harness, coachman in livery, footman in plain clothes. You know it is seldom teetotal lecturers

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ride in such style, and it is proper therefore that we should speak of it when it does happen for the good of the cause.

As we came down the gentleman said to me: "It is so drizzly and cold you had better get into the carriage and wait until the ladies come down." I think I never had so many persons to shake hands with me.

"God bless you, Mr. Gough!" said one; "you saved my father."

"God bless you!" said another; "you saved my brother."

Said a third, "God bless you! I owe everything I have in the world to you."

My hands absolutely ached as they grasped them one after another. Finally, a poor wretched creature came to the door of the carriage. I saw his bare shoulder and naked feet; his hair seemed grayer than mine. He came up and said:

"Will you shake hands with me?"

I put my hand into his hot, burning palm, and he said:

"Don't you know me?"

"Why," said I, "isn't your name Aiken?"

"Yes."

"Harry Aiken?"

"Yes."

"You worked with me in the bookbinder's shop of Andrew Hutchinson, in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1842, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"What is the matter with you?"

"I am desperately poor."

I said, "God pity you; you look like it!"

I gave him something and obtained the services of Mr. Marr, the secretary of the Scottish League to find out about him. He picks up rags and bones in the streets of Glasgow

and resides in a kennel in one of the foulest streets of that city. When the ladies came to the carriage and got in I said:

"Stop! don't shut that door! Look there at that half-starved, ragged, miserable wretch, shivering in the cold and in the dim gaslight. Look at him!"

The ring of that audience was in my ears, my hands aching with the grasp of friendship from scores, my surroundings bright, my prospects pleasant, and I said:

"Ladies, look there! There am I but for the temperance movement! That man worked with me, roomed with me, slept with me, was a better workman than I, his prospects brighter than mine. A kind hand was laid on my shoulder in Worcester Street in 1842; it was the turning-point in my history. He went on. Seventeen years have passed and we meet again with a gulf as deep as hell between us."

I am a trophy of this movement and I thank God for it.

When I was leaving England five weeks ago last Wednesday night, they gave me a farewell in Exeter Hall (and there are some in this audience who saw it); and the reformed drunkards who had signed the pledge at my meetings during the ninety-five lectures I had delivered in that hall subscribed the means to buy me a Bible. A Bible from reformed drunkards! It is one of the most precious gifts I have ever received. I have brought it here for you to look at. That is it. A Bible from reformed drunkards, presented to me by a judge of the court of sessions for Middlesex County! A Bible!

I had had a presentation of a Bible once before; and I told them when they gave it to me, that I would put the books together. A Bible! Thirty years ago nearly, when I left England for America, I had this. Here they are! As

much "glory gilds the sacred page" in this (the small one) as that. There has been more comfort derived from this than from the other. That was my mother's Bible. When I was a boy twelve years old, and went from England to the United States to seek my fortune, she put that in my hand. Here on the cover I read,

"JANE GILBERT, born August 10, 1776.
"JOHN GOUGH, his mother's gift on leaving England.
"JANE GOUGH."

My mother had nothing to give me but that. That book was lost for years and years and years; but at last it was found in a garret in Bristol by Rev. Dr. Choules and his daughter kindly sent it to me.

I look at this Bible and I find marks all through it. They are very old; the ink is very brown; but there are marks round such passages as these: "Where the poor and needy seek water and there is none, I the Lord will hear them; I the God of Jacob will answer them. I will open fountains of water in dry places." And again: "For thy redeemer is thy husband, the Holy One of Israel." Mark after mark; and I love to look at them. That was the comfort of my mother, whose whole life was spent in battling for bread. Yet she had faith and patience and courage and love to the last. Her only child except myself, a sister, is present in this house, and, by the mercy of God, has been recently brought to receive the redeemer of her mother as her Saviour and her king. I glory in this.

I speak of these things because I have endeavored as far as I have been able (I speak now of myself) to base the whole work of reform upon this book. The Bible first, and everything else in subservience to this. And in Great Britain I have sometimes been pretty severely taxed because they sus-

tain the drinking customs of society by the Bible. My great object (and you will allow me to speak personally just now) is to advocate a sure plan for the removal of the evil of drunkenness; and I believe that the plan we adopt, of personal abstinence, is the best.

“Believing that the use of intoxicating liquor as a beverage is not only useless, but hurtful to the social, civil, and religious interests of the community, and that while it continues to be used as a beverage it will never be done away, we do therefore agree that we will not use it.”

That I consider to be the basis, the grand foundation, of our efforts—total abstinence from intoxicating beverages and a hatred and antagonism to drink wherever we find it, whether it is on the side-board of the wealthy merchant, on the table of the clergyman, or in the dram-shop. Wherever I see the drink used as a beverage I hold myself ready to battle it to the death.

Now in England we have objection brought against that principle from the Bible; and as my pastor has told you, and as you all know very well, I am not a learned man: I do not understand Hebrew or Greek. If you show me a Greek and a Hebrew word, they are both Greek to me; and if you get them mixed up I am sure I cannot separate them again. I respect learning in others, and I wish I had more of it myself; but I do not understand what you mean by “tirosch,” “yain,” or “oinon.” But unlearned men must have a position which they can hold against the learned, and I believe that the prudent position for a man to occupy is not to advocate a question any further than he understands it. A person once came to me in England and said to me:

“Ah! Mistar Gough—ah!—why don’t you give us a physicológico lecture?”

“I suppose you mean,” said I, “a physiological lecture; and the reason why I don’t is because I don’t understand physiology.”

If I should undertake to talk about the pathology of drunkenness, and the influence of drink on the brain, the stomach, and the blood, I might talk away very learnedly and not understand a word I was saying, and when I had got through, a gentleman who is a physiologist might upset me entirely with two or three hard words which I did not comprehend. He is wrong, and I am right; but he has got the sympathy of the people because I have attempted to argue a question I don’t understand and have got beyond my depth.

I wish to say here that the clergymen of the Church of England are positively doing more for the temperance movement than dissenters, and the same is true of their wives. I was invited to church with a clergyman who is now the Bishop of Carlisle, and we had a discussion for about two hours. A titled lady was present, and she helped him. I was alone and had to bear the whole brunt of the battle on the scriptural argument.

“The Bible permits the use of wine,” said he.

“Very well,” said I; “suppose it does.”

“The Bible sanctions the use of wine.”

“Very well; suppose it does.”

“Our Saviour made wine.”

“I know he did.”

“Why, we thought you were prepared to deny this.”

“I do not deny it; I can read.”

“Wine is spoken of in the Bible as a blessing.”

I replied, “There are two kinds of wine spoken of in the Bible.”

“Now, then, you are not a learned man, prove it.”

"Well," I said, "I know there is."

"Prove it."

"I know there are two kinds of wine spoken of in the Bible."

"Prove it."

"I do not know that I can, but I will tell you what it is: The wine that is spoken of as a blessing is not the same wine that is called a mocker; and the wine that is to be drunk in the kingdom of Heaven cannot be the wine of the wrath of God; so that although I cannot prove it learnedly I know it is so."

Now, there are others who go farther than I go; but you will please let me go just as far as I can understand it, and if I cannot go any farther don't find fault with me. I hold that the Bible permits total abstinence, and I would rather search the Bible for permission to give up a lawful gratification for the sake of my weaker-headed brother, who stumbles over my example into sin, than to see how far I can follow my own propensities without committing sin and bringing condemnation upon any one's soul.

Another gentleman who came to me for a long talk said: "I have a conscientious objection to teetotalism; and it is this: Our Saviour made wine at the marriage of Cana in Galilee."

"I know he did."

"He made it because they wanted it."

"So the Bible tells us."

"He made it of water."

"Yes."

"Well, he performed a miracle to make that wine."

"Yes."

"Then he honored and sanctified wine by performing a

miracle to make it. Therefore," said he, "I feel that if I should give up the use of wine I should be guilty of ingratitude and should be reproaching my Master."

"Sir," said I, "I can understand how you should feel so; but is there nothing else that you put by which our Saviour honored?"

"No, I do not know that there is."

"Do you eat barley bread?"

"No," and then he began to laugh.

"And why?"

"Because I don't like it."

"Very well, sir," I said; "our Saviour sanctified barley bread just as much as he ever did wine. He fed five thousand people with barley loaves manufactured by a miracle. You put away barley bread from the low motive of not liking it. I ask you to put away wine from the higher motive of bearing the infirmity of your weaker brother and so fulfilling the law of Christ."

I wish to say that that man signed a pledge three days afterward.

I only mention this that I may give you some idea of the manner in which we have to advocate the movement in Great Britain.

Then there is a class of persons there—and I believe there are some in this country—who say, "Ah! you teetotalers are putting temperance in the place of religion." What do you think Mr. Spurgeon said to his people? I refer to what he was reported to have said in the papers, and I believe it; for I have it from an eye-witness that he drank a whole bottle of champagne at a dinner and ridiculed teetotalism; and if he can ridicule temperance publicly we may speak of him in public.

He said, "drunkenness is the curse of Great Britain; but total abstinence, my friends, is not the cure for drunkenness!"

Why, there is not a booby in the kingdom who does not know better than that. Now, I advocate teetotalism as a cure for drunkenness: I do not advocate it as a cure for anything else. A man may be a teetotal thief, a teetotal liar, a teetotal slanderer (and we have proved that, I think, within the past three years, pretty effectually); he may be a teetotal sabbath-breaker or a teetotal infidel, but he cannot be a teetotaler and a drunkard; can he? The principle I advocate cures drunkards; it cures nothing else, and we say it is folly for a man to tell us that we are putting temperance in the place of the gospel and undertaking to do that through its instrumentality which can only be accomplished by the grace of God. As the blood in my arm circulates upward, contrary to the law of nature, by the power of life that is in me; so the grace of God, operating upon a man's heart, changes the whole nature of the man. Teetotalism does no such work as that. We look upon teetotalism as one of the greatest agents to remove one of the most terrible hindrances to the hearing of the gospel; and if we look into Great Britain we shall see it. What is the great hindrance there to men's hearing the gospel? Drunkenness stood more in the way than any other agency; and, if I advocate teetotalism, I advocate it as an agency to remove one evil and only indirectly to do other work. To give you an illustration:

I spoke in Dundee to the outcasts of that town. The Right Honorable Lord Kinnaird and his lady were instrumental in getting up that meeting. It was such a meeting, I suppose, as you cannot see in this country; at least I never saw such a one. If such an audience can be gathered to-

gether here, I should like to see it and to address it. The town missionaries had got together a large mass of men and women, and you would have looked almost in vain to find one lingering trace of human beauty left. It seemed as if the foul hoof of debauchery had dashed it out. It was a horrid sight to look at,—rags, filth, nakedness,—a festering, steaming mass of putrefying humanity.

A woman sat at my feet, and the place was so crowded that I touched her. Her nickname for years had been "Hell-Fire." The boys called her "Fire," and she was known by no other name in the vicinity of her wretched residence. Fifty-three times she had been convicted and sentenced for from six days' to four months' imprisonment.

The ex-provost of the town (George Rough) said to me: "I never sent one policeman to take her; she was never mastered by one man. She is a muscular woman, and she will hit right and left. She has been dragged before me, time after time, with the blood streaming from her face."

The Rev. Mr. Hannay and Mr. Rough said to me:

"If she kicks up a row, as she probably will, you will see one of the most comical rows you ever beheld. It is dreadful; but there is a comicality about it; she has such power with her tongue that it is amazing. We have seen men who could stand any amount of common swearing run when 'Fire' began to blaspheme."

She sat there at my feet, and as I went on she interrupted me a little. I told that audience what they had been, what they might be, and what God meant they should be. I showed them that they were thwarting God's good designs toward every one of them. I asked that mother if she did not remember sending that half-starved little child for a pennyworth of oatmeal and four pennyworth of whiskey. I

asked that young man to remember what he promised when he married that girl, and to go and look at that bed of rags to which he had brought her. Some of them lifted up their naked arms and said, "Oh! that is all true."

By and by the woman at my feet looked up and said, "Where did you learn all that?" Then she looked as if she had some important communication to make to the people, and she said, "Thet man kens a' about it. Would you give the likes o' me the pledge?"

"To be sure I will," said I.

"Oh, no, no!" said some; "it won't do for her to take the pledge."

I said, "Why not?"

"She can't keep it."

"How do you know?"

"She 'll be drunk before she goes to bed to-night."

"How do you know?"

"Madam," I said to her, "here is a gentleman who says you cannot keep the pledge if you sign it."

The woman flew into a rage. Said I, "Before you fight about it, tell me, can you keep it?"

The reply was, "If I say I will, I can."

I said, "Then you say you will?"

"I will."

"Give me your hand."

"I will."

"Then," said I, "put down your name."

After she had done it I said, "Give me your hand again."

She did so and said, "I will keep it."

"I know you will," I said, "and I shall come back again to see you."

"Come back when you will," said she, "and you will find I have kept it."

Some three years after, I went back. Lord Kinnaird presided over the meeting. The woman was there. After the meeting I introduced her to Lord Kinnaird, not as "Fire," but as Mrs. Archer, a very respectable Scotchwoman. She had on her white cap, and her cloak pinned across her breast. He shook hands with her. I went to her house. I wish I could tell you what she told me; I wish I could make you feel as she made me feel. She said, "I am a puir body; I dinna ken much; and what little I did ken has been knocked out o' me by the staves of the policemen; they pounded me o'er the head, sir. I dinna ken how to pray—I never went to God's house these twenty-eight years—I canna pray—but sometimes I dream" (and then her eyes filled). "I dream I am drunk, and I canna pray; but I get out of my bed, sir, and I kneel by the side of it, and I never get back to it until day-dawn; and all I can say is, 'God keep me!' I canna get drunk any more."

Her daughter said, "Ay, mon; and I have heard my mother, at the dead of night, on the bare floor, in the bitter winter-time, cry out, 'God keep me!' and I said, 'Mother, go to your bed;' and she said, 'No, no; I had a dream, and I cannot go and drink any more.'" That woman is now to be seen going every Sabbath to hear God's word preached,—she who had not entered God's house for twenty-eight years!

Teetotalism is not religion; but I thank God it has removed a hindrance to many a man and woman hearing that truth which must be believed, and must be heard before it is believed.

They are doing a grand work in England. Mrs. Bailey, the authoress of "Ragged Homes, and How to Mend Them," and Mrs. Wightman, authoress of "Haste to the Rescue," are noble women. Mrs. Bailey found poor wretched