

against whom I have at any time uttered imprecations, and grant that the awful curses which, in my madness, I have at any time called down either on myself or on others, may be all done away, through him who was made a curse for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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*Texts to be committed to memory.*

Above all things, my brethren, swear not.  
*James v. 12.*

I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King: neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communications be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.  
*Matt. v. 34—37.*

Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness. *Jer. iv. 2.*

Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. *Matt. xii. 36, 37.*

SERMON V.

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 SOBRIETY.  
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ROM. xiii. 13.

Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness.

IN several of his Epistles, St. Paul powerfully urges the consideration of the light and privileges of the Gospel as an argument for avoiding the sins which were practised during the night of Heathenism, which sins he accordingly terms *works of darkness*. At the head of these works of darkness he names, in the text, *rioting and drunkenness*; and certainly there is hardly any sin more unbecoming a Christian, or more fitly called a work of darkness. *They that be drunken*, says St. Paul in another place, *are drunken in the night*.\* This low sin, which proceeds from the darkness of folly, and the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, ought to be ashamed to show itself in the light of day.

The sin of drunkenness is a sin so shameful in its nature, so dangerous in its consequences, and in every way so opposite to Christian engagements, and Christian principles, and Christian hopes, that I can hardly be too anxious to guard you against it. Allow me therefore to mention

\* 1 Thess. v. 7.



to you, very shortly, some of the evils which belong to the sin, although it must be confessed that they are so plain and evident, that your own sense and observation ought sufficiently to point them out to you.

And, first, one peculiar evil attendant on drunkenness is, its tendency to stupify the mind, to deprive a man of the proper use and exercise of his reason.

Reason is that excellent faculty which was given us for our guide through life, which enables us to distinguish evil from good, which raises us above the beasts that perish, and makes us to approach towards the image of God. For a man to deprive himself of this excellent endowment by drunkenness and excess, is to slight the best gifts of God, and to degrade, to debase himself below the lowest of the brute creation. While he thus sins against God and his own soul, he makes himself an object of pity and contempt to his fellow-creatures. Whatever his rank and station in life, whatever his qualifications, whatever his merits, in other respects, may be, yet by this one vice he undoes the effect of them all, and makes himself the object of the mockery and laughter, not only of those who are in possession of the full use of that reason which he has madly thrown away, but even of children who have not yet attained to, and of idiots who never possessed it. The drunkard makes himself an object of pity and contempt to all;—of pity to the wise and good; of contempt to the unthinking, who without remorse make him the object of mockery and laughter. *Pride*, it is true, was not made for man; but there is a proper feeling of manliness, a sense of dignity, there is what is called an honest pride, which it might be thought

would make a man shudder at exposing himself in such a situation.

Having thrown off the control of reason, the control of religion goes along with it. One of the sore evils attendant upon those who are in the habit of following strong drink, and continuing at it till they are inflamed by it, is, that *they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.\** They throw off their regard for religion, and feel no sense either of the temporal mercies and blessings which they every day receive from God, or of those far greater mercies and blessings which are offered to them through the death of Christ, the *work*, the *operation*, of the hands of God, which he has wrought for the benefit of their souls.

A man who has wilfully thrown away the control of reason and the restraints of religion, cannot hope for the continuance of the preventing and assisting grace of God. The apostle admonishes us not to be guilty of drunkenness and excess, but to be filled with the Holy Spirit.† These two things are placed, as it were, in opposition the one to the other. A man who is filled with the Holy Spirit, who is effectually guided and governed by the grace of God, will not, we may be sure, be guilty of drunkenness. And, on the other hand, he who gives way to this sin, shows that he is not influenced by the aid of the Spirit of God, and does what he can to grieve, and resist, and drive that Holy Spirit from him.

When once a man has thrown off the restraints of reason, and religion, and divine grace, there is nothing left to control the headstrong and turbulent passions of his nature. Accordingly, hardly

\* Psa. xxviii. 5.

† Eph. v. 18.



any crime, hardly any offence against God or man, can be named, to which drunkenness may not lead. In particular, it adds fuel to the fire of rage and of lust.

Few people are ignorant of the violent passions which are sometimes roused into a flame by excessive drinking, and of the fierce quarrelling which it oftentimes occasions—leading on not seldom to blows, sometimes even to MURDER. *Who hath wo? says the wise man, who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? they that tarry long at the wine,\** they that give way to excess in drinking.

Under the influence of these evil passions, inflamed by drinking, the tongue is apt to give itself vent in clamorous, and noisy, and injurious language; often in the most dreadful curses, imprecations, and blasphemies. Sometimes, under the excitement of drinking, men give way to those *fleshly lusts which war against the soul*; and are hurried into sin, which may not only endanger their own salvation, but may ruin the character and happiness of the wretched partner of their guilt, and plunge her into everlasting perdition.

In short, as there is hardly any sin to which drunkenness may not lead, so of the numberless offences which are actually committed, and brought under the cognizance of our tribunals—our courts of justice—very large, perhaps the largest, proportion is occasioned either by drunkenness, or by the habit of associating with dissolute men in public houses, the haunts and abodes of drunkenness.

Drunkenness being attended with so great

\* Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.

danger, we are strongly cautioned against it in the word of God. In the Old Testament a wo is repeatedly denounced against drunkards. Our blessed Lord, in his well-known exhortation to watchfulness, says, *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day—the day of death, or the day of judgment—come upon you unawares.\** Lest at ANY TIME—our Lord makes no exception for any particular times of festival or rejoicing. And think what it would be, if the day of death were to *come upon you unawares*, when in a state of drunkenness, when you are thus by your own act deprived of reason, and of the grace of God. Many unhappy men have in this sad state been suddenly called to their last account. And what is to become of them? St. Paul again and again tells us, that *drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.†* And we may be well assured, that those men who, according to the language of the same apostle, *thus make a god of their belly, and glory in their shame‡*—take a pride in what they ought to be ashamed of—act like the *enemies of the cross of Christ*, and will in the end be condemned to that outer darkness, that lake of fire, which is the second death.

But perhaps you will allow the truth and the force of what I say, but plead in your excuse the strength of temptation. We know that *no temptation takes us but such as is common to men,§* no temptation but such as, by the grace of God, we may be well able to resist and overcome. But of what nature is this temptation? Perhaps

\* Luke xxi. 34.

† Philip. iii. 19.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 10.

§ 1 Cor. x. 13.



you will say that you drink to drive away care and uneasiness of mind. But of what kind or description are the cares and uneasiness which oppress you? Is it that your prospects in this world are unfavourable? that things go ill with you? that you are apprehensive of not obtaining a sufficiency of the comforts of life? But is drinking to excess the way to better your condition? Does not common sense tell you that it will make it worse? It will make it worse in many ways; in addition to the loss of money, the loss of time, the loss of health, the loss of credit and character, which it is sure to occasion. It will make those who could assist you, less disposed to give you such assistance; and, what is of greater consequence than all the rest, it tends to deprive you of the blessing of God.

Or is the uneasiness of mind which you would drive away by drinking, occasioned by a sense of sin, by a consciousness of your having offended God, and exposed yourselves to the effects of his displeasure?

But is it not absolute madness to seek to relieve the pressure of sin by adding to its weight? *If you have sinned, you have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* If you turn unto him with true faith and repentance, and full purpose of amendment of life, your sins will be forgiven you. But surely it is worse than madness to seek relief from drunkenness, instead of having recourse to the blood of Christ, the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness.

Or do you say that you are urged to it by your companions, whose solicitations you are unable to resist? But are you so far lost to all independence and manliness of character, as not to be masters of your own conduct? Would

you comply, if your companions were, for their amusement, to ask you to drink poison? Strong drink, when taken to excess, IS A POISON, which does not only endanger the health of the body, but is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. Or would you consent, if for their sport and diversion your companions were to request you to cut off your right hand, or pluck out your right eye? But this would be a far less sacrifice than to do that, which, if unrepented of, may cast you, although having two hands or two eyes, into that fire which never shall be quenched.

And here I must address a few words to those who thus urge, and almost compel, their companions or their guests to drink—in direct opposition to the precept of Solomon—*for drunkenness and not for strength.\** Ought you not to shudder at the idea of urging a fellow-creature to do that which, of all things, is most hurtful to him—**TO SIN AGAINST GOD?** Ought you not to tremble at the idea of taking upon yourself the office of the devil, at the idea of becoming a TEMPTER, of making yourself the devil's minister and servant, in doing his work of ruining men's souls? *Wo unto him,* says the prophet, *that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken also. Thou art filled with shame for glory.†* If this is done from trusting to the superior strength of your own head, there is another wo still reserved for you: *Wo unto them,* says Isaiah, *who are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.‡*

Let me then entreat you to be ever on your guard against this shameful and destructive sin of drunkenness. If you have in any degree

\* Eccles. x. 17.

† Hab. ii. 15, 16.

‡ Isa. v. 22.



given way to it, lament your weakness with shame and deep humility, and resolve and pray for God's grace that you may be guilty of it no more. *The time past of your life may well suffice you to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, wherein ye walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.\** And, for the time to come, endeavour to do works meet for repentance, and to pursue such a line of conduct as naturally springs from a real and lively faith in Jesus Christ. *Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.†* Recollect that drunkenness is one of the works of darkness, one of the works of the flesh, which are utterly inconsistent with the Christian character. Recollect that it degrades and sinks a man to the level—indeed *below* the level—of a brute. Recollect that drunkenness may occasion, not only all kinds of calamity in this life, but transgressions and crimes, at the bare idea of which you would, in your sober senses, shudder; and that it exposes you to eternal perdition in the world to come; for we are assured *that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.‡* *Watch and pray, therefore, against this dangerous, this disgraceful sin. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.§* *Let us, who are of the day, be sober.||* *Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.¶*

\* 1 Pet. iv. 3.

† Gal. v. 21, and 1 Cor. vi. 10.

‡ 1 Thess. v. 8.

† Luke xxi. 34.

§ 1 Pet. v. 8.

¶ Rom. xiii. 14, 15.

*Prayer for Temperance.*

O Almighty God and gracious Father of men and angels, who openest thy hand and fillest all things living with plenteousness, teach me to use thy creatures soberly and temperately, that I may not by excess make the temptations of the enemy to prevail against me, or my spirit unapt for the performance of my duty, or my body unhealthy, or my affections sensual and unholy. O my God, never suffer that the blessings which thou givest me, may either minister to sin or sickness, but to health, and holiness, and thanksgiving, that I may cheerfully and diligently serve thee, and be accounted worthy through thy grace to be admitted to thy table hereafter, at the marriage supper of the Lamb, thy Son Jesus Christ, in whose name we beseech thee to hear our prayers.

*Texts to be committed to memory.*

Let us walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness. *Rom. xiii. 13.*

Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. *Eph. v. 18.*

Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? they that tarry long at the wine. *Prov. xxiii. 29, 30.*

Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares. *Luke xxi. 34.*



Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. vi. 10.

Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also. Thou art filled with shame for glory. Hab. ii. 15, 16.

Wo unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. Isa. v. 22.

The time past of your life may well suffice you to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, wherein ye walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banqueting, and abominable idolatries. 1 Pet. iv. 3.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Pet. v. 8.

## SERMON VI.

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CHASTITY.

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1 PET. ii. 11.

Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

THERE is hardly any sin against which young men more require to be warned, than the very dangerous—the *deadly*—sin of fornication. At the same time it is difficult to write or to speak of this sin, or indeed even to name it, without some offence, some violation of purity. *It is a shame*, says St. Paul, *even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.*\*

Still, where the evil is so great and so prevalent, some attempt must be made to check it. The admonition, the warning against it *must* be given. Young men must not be suffered to be guilty of this sin, without being told of the sad consequences which it entails both in this world and the next, of the awful danger to which it exposes them.

Young people are strongly urged to the commission of this sin by their natural appetites and passions, and they derive a sort of encouragement from its shameful prevalence, and from the numbers of the guilty. They perhaps hear it treated,

\* Eph. v. 12.