

London—

Year 1900—10 ozs. per patient.

Year 1923—1.5 ozs per patient.

Scottish—

Year 1900—6.2 ozs. per patient.

Year 1923—0.76 ozs. per patient.

Australia and New Zealand—

Year 1900—4.5 ozs. per patient.

Year 1923—1.8 ozs. per patient.

It is often said that our Lord laid down no rule of total abstinence from alcoholic beverages, therefore, it cannot bind the Christian. The reply to that is obvious. The fact that our Lord laid down no rule forbidding the use of such liquor is no proof that He approves of it now, any more than the fact that He laid down no rule prohibiting slavery is a proof that He would approve of slavery now.

There are certain Christian principles by which this matter is to be judged. There is the Christian doctrine of the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. That doctrine is verified in experience. There is within every human being a spirit which warns against the evil and feels the tug of what is good. That is Holy Spirit, and the business of all is so to live that every aspect of his life is governed by that spirit within. The body is its temple. But alcoholic beverages are detrimental to that temple. Modern scientific investigation has put it beyond all doubt that alcohol is a poison and not a food; that it is prejudicial to muscular efficiency, interfering with the tone and co-ordination of the muscles and diminishing the quantity and quality of muscular work; that its effect upon the heart and the digestion is deleterious; that it is the cause, direct and indirect, of much impaired health and many serious diseases; and that taken in small doses it impairs memory, and diminishes intellectual judgment. That being so, and the Christian view of the body being that it is the temple of the Holy Spirit, abstinence rather than moderation is the true application of Christian temperance.

Further, there is the principle that the life of the Christian is an abundant life. Less than a hundred years ago, an insurance company actually refused to accept the lives of the total abstainers on the usual terms, as they thought the risk too great.

To-day, the abstainer is regarded as a better risk than the moderate drinker. The British Institute of Actuaries, making an estimate on 125,000 lives covering a period of over 60 years, recently declared, that on the average, the death rate among moderate drinkers exceeds that among total abstainers by over 40 per cent. Abundant life, taken in its narrowest sense of mere longevity, being therefore more possible to abstinence than to moderation, the course for Christian temperance seems most clear.

Once again, there is that definite principle laid down by Christ warning against causing others to stumble. In this connection, Dr. A. E. Garvie has some forceful things to say. He points out that the moderate drinker does undoubtedly lead others to underestimate the dangers of the use of alcoholic beverages, and encourages their use by others. It may be that for himself the danger is not very great. But there are others, whom the craving is already making slaves, who are led by him to make light of or laugh at their own danger. There are certain facts which, taken in this connection, seem to point the way most clearly. During the years 1925 to 1927, inclusive, thousands of people were arrested and convicted of drunkenness in New Zealand. Not a day passed during that period, but it happened to nineteen men and one woman. Every ninth day it happened to somebody under the age of 20, and every ninth hour to somebody under the age of 30. Every sixth hour during that same period, a prohibition order was taken out against somebody or other.

But people say to me, "I am not responsible for that." In a community where the right and opportunity is given the people to say whether the sale of alcoholic beverages shall continue or not, it seems to me impossible for anyone to absolve himself of the responsibility for the evil which follows the consumption of those beverages. The moderate drinker, however, cannot possibly absolve himself from responsibility. It is obvious, that if boots were not worn, boots would not be sold. It is equally obvious, that if alcoholic liquors were not consumed, they would not be sold; and if they were not sold, this Dominion would not have the harvest of drunkenness which its statistics reveal. The

moderate drinker keeps the trade of retailing alcoholic beverages going. Therefore he is responsible for the evil harvest, which has to be reaped upon its operations.

The Prophet Zechariah, warned a certain people in his day that God was sore displeased with them, because they "helped forward the affliction." Is it not a matter for divine displeasure, when men and women help forward in the community the affliction of drunkenness and related ills? On the other hand, there is Christ, in whom God is well-pleased. Life in the sphere of Christ will then exclude attitudes and activities which help forward the affliction of drunkenness and the other ills which attend the consumption of alcoholic beverages. All of which means, I am sure, that Christian temperance in its application to the question of alcoholic beverages, is to be interpreted and practised as being abstinence and not moderation.

IT CAN!

There're a thousand "Can't-be-don-ers"

For one who says, "It can!"

But the whole amount of deeds that count

Is done by the latter clan.

For the "Can't-be-don-ers" grumble,

And hamper, oppose, and doubt,

While the daring man who says, "It can!"

Proceeds to work it out.

There isn't a new invention

Beneath the shining sun,

That was ever wrought by the deed or thought

Of the tribe of "Can't-be-done."

For the "Can't-be-don-ers" mutter,

While the "Can-be's" cool, sublime,

Make their "notions" work till others smirk,

"Oh, he knew it, all the time!"

Oh, the "Can-be's" clan is meagre,

Its membership is small,

And it's mighty few see their dream come true,

Or hear fame's trumpet call;

But it's better to be a "Can-be"

And labour and dream and die,

Than one who runs with the "Can't-be-dones,"

Who haven't the pluck to try!

—Berton Braley.

Chapter III. of our story, "A Fateful Promise," is held over, and will appear next month.