

**The Viper in the First Glass.**

One of the latest contributions to the literature of the bottle which I have seen is the following note:

"My dear sir: I am sorry to inform you that I have again fallen, and am now held at Jefferson Police Court, Sixth Avenue and Tenth Street. Will you come and pay my fine and deliver me? Please come at once; I will repay you. I am sick and almost beside myself."

The author of the above distressing note is a young man of fine family, fine education, and attractive manners. He was for a short time a student in a theological seminary. Twelve hours before he was locked up in "Jefferson Police Court" as a street drunkard he was at Dr. King's "Christain Home for Inebriates," in Seventy-eighth Street. For several weeks he had been an inmate of that excellent institution. Knowing how often the wretched youth had fallen before, Dr. King secured a good situation for him to keep him from the temptation of idleness. Before sundown he had slipped away from his new place of employment, and was arrested for drunkenness in the street. And all this, too, in a young man of gentle, refined manners, not yet out of his twenties.

What are the lessons of this last text in the ever-enlarging chapter of ruin by the bottle? Several lessons. The first one is that when a drunkard has "reformed" and fallen quite as often, he gets tired of falling. His will grows weaker every time, like a rope that has been broken repeatedly and is the worse for every breaking. He becomes hardened in conscience by every blow given to conscience. His self-respect has been wounded so often that he grows reckless. He has broken so many good promises that he does not really believe himself when he signs a pledge for the fifteenth or twentieth

second lesson from my fallen friend's is that drunkenness becomes a horrible disease. It is as much a self-inflicted consumption would be which is caught on by sleeping on the wet

This young man tells me that the appetite clutches hold of him he is unable to resist. He is swept away like a log on the rapids of Niagara. This impotence makes him the more desperate. Bitterly has he learned what the word meaneth—"Whoso committeth himself is the slave of sin." What miracle of the grace of God may yet work for my friend no one can predict; but up to this time no efforts, prayers, or promises have been of any avail. The demon of the bottle still hurls him into fires and into blood; and when cast out he returns with seven other evil spirits, and the worst state of the man is worse than the first.

There was a time my friend A—was a sober boy, untainted with the cup. When he let it alone he was safe. He saw that when he drank and began to tamper. His excess opened perdition to him. Touching at first glass was like touching a snake of yellow fever; it was fatal. That was the man which sent him into a police court but the last drop of his first drink.

Every day I see God's truth written upon the more and more vivid lines of fire on the sky—"Look not on the wine when it is red; for at the last it biteth like an adder, and stingeth like a viper." Total abstinence is the only gospel of salvation from the bottle. We have got to preach it from our pulpits, and teach it to our Sunday-schools, and enforce it in our homes—that the viper lies coiled up in the first glass.—Rev. T. L. Cuyler.

If the first moments of the morning, the very first thoughts of the day are given to prayer, it will be found, at least in many cases, to give direction to the feelings of the whole day. The key-note of the day is struck early, and simple as it may seem, we have forced a few moments in the morning to hold the day to its course, as a rudder does the ship.

True Prayer is grounded on God's will. It is not a device to overcome his reluctance or to bring about an alteration of his decrees. It is faith laying hold upon God's promise. Prayer on our part assumes that God's will towards us is "good will," his pleasure "good pleasure," hence in every prayer we remember that its spirit must be "not my will, but God's will be done."

It is the privilege of God's children to bring their desires to the Throne of Grace whatever may be the subject of them, God will sift our words and arrange what should remain. Say all your heart feels, God will do all your heart needs. We may be uncertain whether our petitions are wise and whether the granting of them would be for our good, nevertheless speak them out and tell God what you think best, asking him to do what he knows to be best.

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