

[TEMPERANCE ADDRESS

Delivered at a meeting of the Temperance Society at Circleville, by  
N. Smith of Lancaster, May 27.]

LADIES & GENTLEMEN:

It is unnecessary for me to say that the cause of Temperance is one of the greatest importance in which we can engage. All who are capable of forming a proper judgment on this subject admit its high claims. This subject has been so often and ably discussed that I do not flatter myself with the idea of presenting anything new, or very original. What I shall say has no doubt been said a thousand times.

The object sought to be obtained by the Temperance Reform, is total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. The necessary use of ardent spirits for medical, mechanical or chemical purposes is not prohibited by the Temperance pledge. The pledge simply prohibits its use as a beverage.

I will offer some reasons which I hope will be conclusive, in support of the position that we should voluntarily agree to abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks.

The first and great reason which I shall offer, is that as free colored people we have a character to form, and if we wish ever to show to the world that our condition is better than that of our brethren, and if we wish ever to show to the world that our condition is better than that of our brethren in bondage, we must form that character upon Temperance principles.

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ples. Our freedom must show itself in the fact that we are not slaves to intemperance.

You know that assertion is frequently made by our enemies that the colored people who are in slavery and kept in ignorance that they may the more quietly submit to their wretched condition, are "better off," and consequently, more happy than we are.

Now on what is this opinion founded certainly not upon the principle that slavery and ignorance are better than freedom and intelligence? But from the fact that many of our free brethren are slaves to ardent spirits, and unwilling to improve their minds by reading and study. Nor does it exist in the fact that the white people have no confidence in our moral integrity and ability to discharge the duties of freemen, or that we have no capacity for improvement; but from the fact that a great majority of our people in some parts of the country are addicted to bad habits and do not make the necessary exertions to elevate themselves.

There is nothing prevents any colored man from being respected by all whose respect is worth having, but his own bad conduct and negligence. May I not say that the principle cause of this, is to be attributed to intemperance which creates other bad habits and induces idleness, poverty and crime. This every gentleman here will admit, and hence it is not necessary for me to spend time in showing the pernicious effects in this particular.

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When we see the ruinous effects of intemperance upon the souls and bodies of men, ought we to hesitate for a moment in regard to what is our duty in reference to this subject.

If there is a vast river running through the heart of our country and spreading out its branches through every county and town of every State, which would poison all that would drink of its waters; what would you do? would you not determine never to touch its deadly waters? This would be the resolve of every one.

This fiery river of death does flow through our country, and it not only poisons the body but the soul; and those who continue to drink it will perish forever.

The antidote to this poison is the Temperance pledge. Resolve never to touch, taste or handle the accursed thing, and you are safe.

Temperance is the moderate use of that which is in itself good, and total abstinence from that which is evil.

Every blessing of God is good, and was designed to be used with moderation; but ardent spirits are not to be regarded in the light of a blessing from God. It is not found in a natural state and hence cannot be regarded as a blessing of God, but is the fruit of an agency which if we should judge from the effects it produces is infernal.

Men competent in every way to judge of its effects upon the human system, describe it as a poison, slow, but sure in its operation,

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Men competent in every way to judge of its effects upon the human system, describe it as a poison, slow, but sure in its operation,

disturbing the nerves and brain, reducing the body to the helplessness of childhood and the mind to idiocy.

Ardent spirits also destroy the moral sentiments and change the entire moral character.

They harden the heart and many instances might be given where kind and affectionate fathers, who were ready to supply all the wants of their children have abandoned them to wretchedness and poverty.

An evil of such alarming magnitude ought to call forth every exertion for its suppression. All who are friends of good order and well wishers of society, should not hesitate for a moment to use their utmost endeavors to exterminate this evil.

If a foreign enemy were to invade our land and destroy but the tenth part of the number of our citizens, which intemperance yearly destroys, the whole country would be up in arms to expel that foe.

May we not engage in this subject? are we not equally interested? May we not like our brethren at the battle of New Orleans, bear arms in defence of our country.

But, thank God! we are not called upon to engage in deadly strife, the weapons of our warfare are the weapons of truth, and temperance. With them we can pull down the strong holds of intemperance. We have but to resolve and pledge ourselves to the support of our resolves, and the battle is fought, the victory won.

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The true secret of success is to be found in that influence which one individual exerts upon another. Every man has his influence, it may be great, or small; but all possess some influence, and for that influence an account will be required. Where much has been given, of such, much will be required. Where little has been given, but little will be required.

If one man possesses an influence over but one or two of his fellow men, he ought to exercise that influence for good. He may not be addicted to habits of intemperance. He may not be in the least danger of becoming intem-

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