

TEMPERANCE

(The item below is by Bro. Dr. Farwell as reported in 1914 Convention Report, page 50.)

I am sure, dear friends, that after we have been walking in the straight and narrow way for quite a while that we will appreciate more what this subject of temperance means to us. Temperance to the natural man would be one thing, and temperance to the spiritual man would be another thing. You know we want to get in the habit of thinking of ourselves as spirit beings, not as human beings.

If we accept the Lord and present our bodies in His behalf we want to consider ourselves as spirit beings, not as human. Having traveled for some time in the narrow way, having made quite an effort for a long time for development of the fruits and graces of the Spirit that the brethren have been telling about, we come to this thought, self-control. What does this mean? How are we to apply it? None of the graces are more important than any of the others, but I do believe though, we might have all of the graces heretofore mentioned [on this symposium] in considerable development and lack in self-control. I don't see how we could ever be overcomers. I don't see how we could make our race.

The Lord is very good to us. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." "Thy word was found and I did eat it, and it was in my mouth sweet as honey." And how true we have found that. God's wonderful provision for the world of mankind, how good it is when it first begins to dawn in our minds the exceeding great and precious promises to us. After God begins to point out our weaknesses and how frail we are, and what poor timber we are, we begin to grow faint and weary, and then we begin to study our Bibles with a new thought in our mind—to apply this word to our own minds and hearts. Previously we were getting the doctrine and plan, and then when we got to a place where we could see our position and what God has for us to do, we begin to exercise self-control, we begin to develop these qualities, and to crowd out the fruits of the flesh which are envy, strife, etc. The apostle tells us of the fruits of and graces of the Spirit, and as we develop them we learn to control ourselves so that they can grow.

Suppose there is a little anger in our hearts, and we set ourselves firmly that we will not express that anger in word or act or thought, and we determine that we will not give expression to it. What will become of that spirit of anger? It will die by the natural law of inactivity; but on the other hand, if we determine all of the time to express and give utterance to it by word and thought, it will become crystallized and developed. How necessary that we take ourselves in hand and practice self-control.

Paul tells us that we have the mind of Christ. And if in anything we are otherwise minded, God will reveal even that to us.

When we first accept Christ and His merit is applied, we think we are pretty good people, and we are a little better than others. God begins finally to show us our defects, and it is up to us to make the corrections. I don't believe anybody is going to be in the kingdom only those who have a strong iron will. "God has not given to us the spirit of fear, but of love and of power and of a sound mind." Suppose you find yourself all at once fearing and doubting and hesitating. Where does that come from? The fallen flesh or the adversary, or the world? That is where our self-control comes in, our temperance, for we have determined not to give expression to anything but the fruits of the Spirit. God has left us in that position. When we were begotten of the holy Spirit, he did not restore our minds to their perfect condition, but left us with the old twisted mind that we have so we could gain self-control. It is wonderful how much control some people have. I remember a business man who had a wonderful development of patience and kindness, and I never knew him in any of the five years that I was connected with him, to speak a cross word to any of his help. I have often thought since what a noble brother he would make, what a noble elder. He always manifested the fruit of self-control. How necessary it is that we develop this. If we do not, we can never be overcomers. As these truths come into our minds they reveal to us our imperfections. There is a scripture that comes to my mind and gives me a great deal of comfort. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." It is those who have become overcomers that are to sit with the Lord in His throne and bring all of these blessings to the world of mankind. Don't you think it is worthwhile?

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, *think on these things.*"