

REV. PREBENDARY GREER ON
INTEMPERANCE AS A
NATIONAL SIN.

There are two ways in which a sin may be national.

1. A sin is properly so called, if it is characteristic of a nation. If in any country it is to be found in every part of it and in all classes of society, if it spreads there from man to man, and goes down from generation to generation, from father to son, if it is witnessed without indignation and committed without remorse, above all if it is lamented as ineradicable, and is the natural result of immemorial customs, it rightly deserves the name. In some parts of the world lying may be so regarded; in others, theft; in others, lust; and amongst ourselves, drunkenness, one of the vilest sins that ever disgraced humanity, the prolific source of lying and theft and lust and every evil work.

2. But again, a sin is properly so called if it is committed or encouraged by the Executive of a nation; for when this is the case, the people are almost invariably, more or less, partakers of it. "A government," justly remarks a modern writer, "cannot morally be either a great deal better or worse than those whom it governs;" and I very much doubt whether, even in those lands where the Monarch is absolute, he could pursue an utterly wicked policy without the guilty connivance of his people; but assuredly in England, where the institutions are representative, it is folly for citizens to think that they are not responsible before God for whatever evil the nation may do in its corporate capacity. The blame of an unjust war would rest not exclusively with the Government, which declared it, but with the people, who placed that Government in power and kept them there, and did not so emphatically protest against their design as to prevent its being carried into execution. Oh! who can estimate or think without alarm of the heinousness of the crime perpetrated by the English people in deliberately supporting a Government which had resolved to force a demoralising trade on a heathen race with fire and sword! And, alas! we to this day are implicated in that bad deed. For it has never been repented of: China is still obliged to allow her people to be poisoned with opium for the pecuniary advantage of Christian England. Again and again have efforts been made to put a stop to this monstrous iniquity; but the people have never with one voice demanded that it should cease; if they did, their demand could not be resisted, and until they do, they are involved in the accumulated guilt of a sin, which no one will attempt to defend, and which has gone on destroying thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-men, body, soul, and spirit, for more than a quarter of a century. Again, drunkenness is a national sin, for the governments whom we support multiply and maintain incentives to the vice, and refuse even to allow their removal where the inhabitants of a place desire it and are prepared to vote, for it by a large majority; nay, they will not permit it to be effected on the Lord's own day. My brethren, so long as these things are so, I do not see how we can maintain that we are free from the blood of those who are murdered by intemperance. If in a country where there were, say, a thousand persons, afflicted with a suicidal mania, the law allowed implements of destruction to be freely used and readily obtained, the law, and therefore those who had the power of controlling it, would be accountable to God for the result. In England there are at least six hundred thousand unhappy beings afflicted with a passion for strong drink. Is it wise, can it be right, must we not be verily guilty before God, to leave them surrounded—and surrounded often against their will—with implements of a destruction which extends beyond the body, which after it has killed the body, cast both body and soul into hell?

Deaths.

CAMPBELL.—At Mills Village, on the 22nd February last, John K. Campbell, Esq., aged 85 years. The deceased was for many years a prominent merchant at Mills Village, and was always characterized by zeal for the welfare of his Church, of which he lived and died a consistent member, receiving at the hands of the Rector of the Parish in his last moments, the last rites of the Church. The interment took place on the 25th, and after the Service of the Church had been said, the remains were handed over to the Masonic Body, when the impressive Ritual of the Order was proceeded with. He leaves a sorrowing widow and a large family to mourn their loss.

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