

The Influence of Alcohol by Annie Besant

Published in 1892, 1912 and 1930
Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai [Madras] India
The Theosophist Office, Adyar, Madras. India

Publisher's Note

Some requests have been received to provide the T.S. Order of Service workers with a suitable pamphlet in the cause of Temperance and so a second edition was issued. It was originally a lecture delivered in the Livesey Central Temperance Hall, London, on 7th February, 1892, under the presidency of Mr. George Ling of the Temperance movement.

[Page 1] FRIENDS, when I was asked to speak from the platform of your Hall — when I was told that your association took the broadest lines in not compelling or trying to compel the assent of any one to views on subjects outside that which you are united to support — when I learnt that you were thus liberal in your views, I was ready and glad to take the opportunity of adding my voice to the many voices that are heard all over the country protesting against the use of alcohol, and against the influence exerted by that use, not only on the bodies, but also on the minds of those who take it. My own position in the matter is very likely founded upon principles that may not be identical with those held by many of you; but then I am not sure that it may not be at once useful and interesting to hear the way in which the question presents itself to one whose views of the universe at large may be different from the views of many present. I am not going to proceed this morning on the lines of argument that will be most familiar to you. I am not going to deal with the drink-question in its bearings on the subject of poverty. I am not [Page 2] going to discuss drinking in relation to the misery it spreads throughout the country, or the crime of which it is the source. I am not going today to point you specially to the misery of the drunkard's home, or contrast in appearance, in health and in mental endowment, the children of the drunkard and the children of the abstainer: all those are useful aspects of the subject; are arguments that everyone of you may well have at your fingers' ends when you are trying to combat this great enemy of our race — strong drink, — but the lines which I am going to follow may possibly suggest to some of you fresh arguments with which to supplement the others; and even those of you who may disagree with the foundation on which they are based, may yet find in the arguments themselves useful reinforcement for your general line of thought. And now so far as I am concerned, I am a Teetotaler because I am a Theosophist; that is to say, it is part of the working out of the Theosophical view of the nature, the constitution, and the destiny of man. The views I hold with regard to man's nature, the views I hold of the relationship of one man to another, joined, as I believe them to be, by a bond of brotherhood that nothing can avail to break — the influence that is, which one man has upon another — it is these views which have led me to become an abstainer. Then the view of the body as the mere tabernacle in which dwells the Intelligence that is the real man; such I say, are the [Page 3] views, roughly, that lead me to the standpoint of teetotalism in practical life; and it is these views that I am going to put to you as possibly affording argument that may be to some extent unfamiliar, but which will work into other arguments more familiar to you, and so strengthen your own position as against those who advocate the use of alcohol — those who say it is an article of diet, nourishing and so on, and that it is useful to be taken. You may then show them that it is not useful but mischievous; not of the nature of a help but of a hindrance, and that what is wanted is the absolute cessation of the drink-habit; not merely what is called temperate or moderate drinking, and so on. I hold that alcohol itself is essentially a destructive, mischievous agency, and therefore its use ought to be entirely opposed, entirely renounced, as of no benefit in the economy of the human body. That is

the position I am going to take up.

And now, first, as regards the body. We look on the body, of course, from our standpoint, as an instrument of the spiritual Intelligence which we regard as the man himself; that is, looking at ourselves, we regard the body as the coating, the garment, the instrument, used for work in the physical world, so that the efficacy of the work will very largely depend upon the integrity of the instrument. Just as no workman could perform a good piece of work if he were using, say a blunt [Page 4] chisel, a twisted screwdriver, or a hammer whose head fell off the moment he struck a blow with it; so cannot the real man, the inner man, the true man, do effective work on the physical plane, if the instrument whereby that work is to be performed is injured, spoilt, blunted, or stunted by any habit which injures physical life. With regard to the body, we study it, in its formation, in its living functions, and in its influence over the whole of the men and women — the whole of the animal, plant, and mineral world around us. We allege that man, as regards his body, is part and parcel of the world around him — that between the man's body and the bodies of all other men (I use the word, of course, to include women also) and things, having physical shape and form, there is a constant interaction going on — that all these are built up of what the scientist speaks of as *atoms*, and *molecules*, and that when you come to consider these atoms and molecules you will get to understand what they are. Studying them as we do from a double point of view, we say that an atom, like the man of whom it forms a part, is a complex and not a simple thing, that it is essentially a living thing — that your bodies are built up of innumerable lives — that all these atoms that go to make up the physical body are living things — *lives* in themselves, and that, according to their health or lack of health, will be the general health, or general lack of health, of the body which they gradually build up. It is an old Theosophical [Page 5] teaching, that all the world is made up of these lives; that the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and the man differ not in the material of which the body is composed, but *in the way in which that material is organized*; that you have these atoms at one time in the mineral, at another in the vegetable, and at another in the human body, and that it is the difference of their arrangement, and of the way in which they are held together which makes the total organism take on one or another form of living thing. Now western science very much agrees with us in its investigations on this point. Those of you who have followed the investigations of our most eminent physicians will notice how, more and more, during the last few years, they have been studying what are called *bacteria* and *microbes*; those minute bodies, those tiny things that are only seen by aid of the strongest microscope — these, we have been lately told by physicians, are at the very root of all the diseases in men, so that when people come across a disease, the doctor goes to look for the microbe that causes it, and whether it is cholera, hydrophobia, influenza, or cancer, we are always being told that our advanced scientists are searching for the microbe which is the root of the mischief; because, if they can find what is acting in this destructive fashion in the human body, then they will be able to deal with its ravages better. They have gone a step further. They have found out that very often a fight goes on in our [Page 6] bodies between the microbes that are *constructive* and those that are *destructive*, so that if you get into your blood a destructive kind of microbe that would poison you, and gradually kill you as it multiplies, that may be met and stopped by starting against them an army of constructive microbes who build up where the others try to destroy, and who conquer this power for mischief by their stronger power for good. So that gradually science is making us look at our bodies as a kind of battlefield, in which all these lower lives are fighting, the one against the other, and always coming and going; so that our entire body is really a kind of country, into which come immigrants from other countries, and out of which go emigrants to other countries, and on the character of the immigrants will largely depend our condition; and if from other countries and neighbouring countries, there are all sorts of bad immigrants coming in — immigrants who are pauperized, drunken, and laden with every form of mischief, — then they will poison the population of our own country, and spread in that healthy population the diseases which they bring with them from other lands. Now this, which almost sounds like a fairy-tale, is really a scientific fact. There is no better

fairy-tale teller than science — science which observes and coordinates facts, and gives out its result to the world. The Theosophists, studying this view of the body, find that it works in with their own view. [Page 7]

It is exactly the teaching which, for thousands of years, has formed part of their own philosophy; so that our body is made up of these millions upon millions of tiny lives which are always coming and going, always changing from one position to another, and there is not a moment in your life or in mine, in which we are not sending out swarms of these lives into the atmosphere around us, and receiving from it in return other swarms of lives. Science again will tell you that your physical body changes in every single atom in seven years — that every morsel of your body during that period goes away and is supplied by other morsels in exchange. This is done of course in such minute particles that the change is invisible to the eye, but the invisible world is none the less real — in fact, really and truly, the invisible world is by far the most important, for the invisible world is the world of *causes*, while the visible world is the world of effects, and it is in this invisible world that the causes which tend to make us what we are, largely exist. Now for a moment use your imagination in the way that Tyndall suggested, when he spoke of the scientific use of the imagination. Think of your body for a moment, and see it made up of all these innumerable lives. See them (with the eye of the mind) leaving you after they have resided in your body for a time and formed part of it. See others coming in to take their place, as those that have been in your body for a time pass [Page 8] away. Now notice a curious physical fact. Supposing you have had a bad wound that has healed. It leaves what is known as a scar. That scar may remain with you all your life although the wound may have healed perhaps before you remember. As a baby, in trying to stand in my cradle before I had any business to be on my feet, I received a wound on my forehead from the ornamental iron at the top of it, arranged so as to make a kind of canopy. Now that scar has remained with me from that time to the present, and will go with me to my grave. That scar remains though the body that has it has changed so many times — each seven years I have lived since the injury was caused. The scar remains, so that the new atoms that come into the body take the print of the older atoms amongst which they come, and just as those atoms I have received from the world around me take the imprint of my body as shown in the scar, so do the atoms I send out with them carry the imprint that has been put upon them during their stay in my body, and carry with them my imprint so to speak, to the other lives, the living things which may go to help to build up other bodies in the future. So that, to use another simile, the human body is like a mint that makes coin — bullion comes in, and goes out as coin stamped with the mark of the mint. Our bodies are *mint-stamping* every atom that goes out of them with the print and mark we put upon it, to carry [Page 9] that mark with it, and so to leave our imprint on other organisms into which they may go. Suppose that these atoms are always poisoned with alcohol!

Alcohol happens to be a substance which peculiarly takes up the magnetism of those who come into contact with it. I may speak of it in the chemical sense as a certain definite chemical compound made up of certain chemical atoms held together in a particular way. You may have a variety of forms depending on the number of the atoms that go to make them up, but, whatever the numbers, they always bear the same proportion to each other. The alcohol-radical is made up of two elements — carbon and hydrogen — perfectly harmless in themselves, perfectly respectable members of the chemical family. They only become disreputable in their combination into a particular form, and when you get a particular combination of them and add to them part of the molecule of water, you then get what you speak of as *spirit*, which is of course largely diluted before ordinarily taken, but the mischievous part of this diluted drink is the particular combination of chemical atoms and the proportion they bear to each other, known to the chemist as the alcohol-radical. Whether you get it in methylated spirit, in your beer, wine, etc., whether you get it in still more fiery forms like the potato spirit — which is largely used in the manufacture of the cheaper form of spirits, and is even more destructive and [Page 10] energetic than that which is

ordinarily used — however you get it, *it is always essentially marked by the same characteristics*, and those characteristics cannot be separated from it. They are the direct result of this particular combination of the chemical elements. When taken into the body the alcohol carries with it the magnetism of the different persons who have been mixed up in its preparation. As a rule, persons who are concerned in the making of these drinks are not the most thoughtful, refined, or cultured of human beings. As a rule they show the influence of that in which they are continually working, and get a certain physical stamp upon them that enables you to recognize them as persons who are normally connected with this particular form of industry. I am not saying anything which is exaggerated — every one of you must know it, from your own observation. Anyone of you could pick out a brewer's man from a whole parcel of teetotalers. The physical body is changed by that with which it is continually working. Then again, in order to show in an exaggerated form what I am putting to you, take the habitual drunkard. Do you mean to say he cannot be recognized at once by certain physical marks, by the injury he does to his tissues, recognized always by the impregnation of the whole body, by the odour of the liquids he drinks ? and this is so much the case that any one present who has the habit of absolute teetotalism will know [Page 11] that he has become very sensitive to the whole of those emanations that come from the body penetrated with alcohol. You know it the very moment you come near such a person. If a person who drinks comes into an omnibus with you, you are acquainted with the fact at once. I know it myself, although I have not been a teetotaler all my life. For a great portion of my life I drank the light French wines which have very little alcohol in them, 2, 3, 4, and up to 8 per cent, so that the amount of alcohol there is comparatively slight; but still, taking any at all makes a difference, and I have noticed that difference since I have been now for some years past an abstainer. I have noticed that one very unpleasant result of teetotalism is the greater sensitiveness that it gives with regard to everybody else who drinks. I say unpleasant, because the majority do drink, and in every way you lay yourself open to this extremely uncomfortable result, as you cannot avoid going about amongst people who habitually take some amount of spirituous liquor. Even moderate drinking is perceptible to those whose senses have become very sensitive by long and complete abstention. On Tuesday last, I was lecturing in South Wales, and had to travel back to a certain point at which I wished to catch a connecting train. A football match had been played in the place where I was lecturing, and the players were returning to Cardiff in the train by which I traveled. [Page 12] Unfortunately, almost everyone of them had drunk heavily, and some of them were absolutely intoxicated. The result was, that it made me positively sick to be near them, although you may be sure, I kept as far from them as I could. The strong emanations, physical emanations, that came from the bodies of those people who had been in the habit of drinking, and still continued it, were simply sickening, so that I am speaking not the language of exaggeration, but of physical fact.

It is a literal fact that from everyone of our bodies emanations go out. They fall upon the bodies around them, upon human beings, plants, and minerals, and thus is continuing this constant interaction between all things amongst which we live, so as to make a link between you, and every body, and everything else, and constituting the drink habit not only a curse to the people who drink, but to the community and the nation. It has been said that the drunkard is no man's enemy but his own. That is not true. Apart from the obvious fact that the wife and children suffer, and that the example is demoralizing, the drunkard is a focus of poison to the community in which he is a physical being. I am not yet speaking of the mental and moral mischief, but of physical results, and men who put alcohol into their bodies make the alcohol mark on the atoms of which those bodies are composed. They scatter those atoms, stamped with alcohol, over the whole of the community, [Page 13] and sober people get these atoms into their bodies and suffer in that fashion from the drunken habits of their neighbours. So that it is not a mere self-regarding matter. Nothing is self-regarding really, because we cannot help being linked to each other, but drunkenness is most other-regarding, and a man has no more right to drink, and to scatter these poisoned atoms through the community, than he has a right, if he has small-pox, to go into an omnibus or cab and leave there the

poison of smallpox to be absorbed by the next person who occupies the seat he has quitted. You will see now why I said at the beginning that although I am speaking from a different standpoint from that to which you are accustomed, some of the arguments I employ may be used by you when dealing with drunkenness. You can enforce them by the whole of the later observations of western science with regard to the effect of these tiny atoms on our bodies, if you do not care to take the stronger view I do, that every atom is a life, an organized life, with power to affect everything with which it comes into contact, and when it is a poisoned life, a germ in full activity that may breed further disease in the body with which it comes into contact. This, of course, has to be remembered on the other side. Let us suppose a person with small-pox, or any kind of infectious disease, to scatter about the poison germs. It does not follow that everybody on whom those germs fall will get the disease, because you [Page 14] not only want the germ, but you want the *soil* in which that germ can germinate and fructify. So far, then, we can guard ourselves against being the unwilling hosts of these poison germs. We cannot help them coming, but we can make the soil so un-fructifying that they will starve for want of nourishment. We can do that by making the soil of the body thoroughly healthy; by taking care that we never poison an atom when once it comes into our body; by taking care that we purify the body by always keeping the poison away as much as possible, and so in that fashion — to use a technical term — to sterilize the soil on which otherwise the germ would grow.

To illustrate: The scientific man takes a germ, and puts it into the mother liquid, as it is sometimes called. In that it grows and multiplies; so that you may find some instances in which scientific men have captured a germ or microbe and put it into a bottle filled with liquid which contains all the nourishment that particular microbe wants for its rapid development. The microbe begins to grow, and there are many cases in which microscopical microbe, over-fed, has developed until it has become visible to the naked eye in its full power of mischief, forced into a development truly abnormal. On the other hand it has been put into a liquid which is sterilizing, that is, it has not got the particular form of nourishment it is able to assimilate, and so it grows weaker and weaker until the [Page 15] power for mischief has grown very small. That is only showing you, like a picture, what may happen in the bodies of men. The body of man may be like the mother liquid of the scientist, giving all the materials in which the alcohol microbes, so to speak, may flourish. Thus, when an atom poisoned with alcohol comes to you from some drunken neighbour, and it finds in your body a host convenient for itself, it will grow and multiply in the soil you provide, and will intensify your own predisposition towards the alcoholic disease, by bringing fresh materials to the soil in which that material may increase and grow. In that way drunkards injure each other, *and the very atmosphere of the public-house tends to feed the drunkenness of the people*. On the other hand, if a body be pure, if it does not give the same tendency, the same nourishment that suits the development of this atom impregnated with alcohol, then gradually that atom, if it has no nourishment, will be starved, will slowly change its character, and take on the healthier condition of those other atoms amidst which it finds itself. Hence you can guard yourself against this poison by keeping your own body pure from all alcohol. You may indeed have one that is almost proof against such mischief.

You will readily see from this how difficult it is to break the alcohol habit — how terrible is the struggle when the victim first begins to fight against it — how he will go without drink sometimes [Page 16] for weeks and months, and then suddenly, as by an imperious physical necessity, break out. That is a war, a literal war, that is going on in the bodies of drunkards, and these atoms that by years of drunkenness have been fed and nourished, cannot be suddenly got rid of, and cannot at once be destroyed.

You will see, then, why it is that, as a Theosophist, I am in favour of absolute abstention; how I look on

alcohol not as a food, not as a useful stimulant, but as an absolute poison. The danger of what is called *moderate drinking* lies in this nourishing of the alcohol germ, which may very easily develop, and so if the person come into unfortunate conditions, his moderation may pass into excess, and the ordinary sober man may become a drunkard by this poisoning received from the life around him. Surely also this will show the enormous importance of abstention, to the parents of families. The life of the child, so far as the physical body is concerned, is very largely influenced by the life given physically by the parents. How can a child be born with a body physically healthy, if that body be built up of atoms that are physically poisoned? The father and mother give the germs of physical life and the materials of which the physical body is composed. If these are drink-poisoned, the child comes into the world with the drink tendency physically implanted in the body that the parents have given [Page 17] it. Surely that is a responsibility that no man or woman should dare to take. They have no right to create a physical body which is poisoned in this fashion, before it has a chance for itself in the outer world. They have no right to hand on to a child a body which, by its physical constitution, is already impregnated with the alcoholic tendency. People say to men: "Oh, you should drink to keep your strength up. You should take porter and beer, in order that you may be strong." They might as well say: "You should take poison in order that you may live." All these things not only poison the mother but the child, because the materials are poisoned, and on this point, if you will pardon me a moment's digression, men are very largely to blame. I know a great deal, as you are aware, of life in the East end. My work has been specially amongst women, and one of my greatest difficulties is when these girls of 16, 17, and 18 get engaged. There is no earthly objection to that, for it is natural and right; but the young man, as a rule, likes the girl to drink with him. If she won't go and take a glass, he says she is bad tempered, or sulky, or stuck-up. I have said to the girls over and over again: "I do not believe you care for the drink." (Here let me say we do not allow any alcoholic drink at all in the Club we have, and I find the girls enjoy the coffee and tea thoroughly.) They say: "We do not care for it, but Tom or Will, does not like it, if we won't take a sup with him." [Page 18]

Now if a man who is engaged to a girl practically forces her, either by chaff or jeering, or in any other way, into occasionally taking a glass, he has no right to blame the wife when she keeps up the habit. I have never yet found the man who liked his wife to drink. And yet they all want the sweetheart to drink! Well, you cannot cut people up in that way. If you start them before marriage they will go on afterwards, and no man has a right to complain of a drunken wife, when he has jeered at the girl's first refusal to take any drink at all. So that after all, this is a question not only that concerns the woman who drinks, but that concerns other men and women; and there are none of those divisions that people are so fond of making. All questions really interest men and women alike in their issues, and this drink-curse is a thing they must fight together hand in hand, here as elsewhere, trying to make the world better by the influence they exert over those with whom they live.

There is another standpoint from which I am also strongly an abstainer. This again is Theosophical in its origin, and I do not know that you will be inclined to follow me even so far probably as you have agreed with my former argument — with the principle of it, at least. I said at the beginning that we regard man, not as a body but as one who *uses* a body. The body is the house while the man is the tenant, and we allege that the man passes from body to body, and that he makes in [Page 19] each human life practically the house he is going to inhabit in the next. So that during one life he builds up his next habitation, and by the intellectual and spiritual activity of one human existence *he modifies the physical conditions of his next experience in human life*. That of course is what is called the doctrine of reincarnation. It is one that many thoughtful people accept as throwing an extraordinary light on many of the problems of human life. Let me show you how it bears on this drink question. We say that the power in you that really makes you human, is THOUGHT; that that is the power that moulds action and life; that a man is what he *thinks*

much more than what he *does* — that what he does very largely depends upon the circumstances about him, but that what he *thinks* governs his reaction on those circumstances. For instance, supposing a man is not honest in his thought — that is, suppose he is ready to take an undue advantage, if he can do it without discovery, suppose he is not thoroughly upright in his inner nature — whether that man is outwardly a thief or not depends very largely on circumstances. If he gets the chance he will be a thief, because in his thought he is a thief; and as a matter of dry fact, there is many a man who commits a theft who is not nearly as much a thief as others who go down to their graves and have the epitaphs of honest men. Now what the man thinks is what he *is*. [Page 20] Some of you may hold special religious views, but there is not one great religious teacher in the world who has not laid stress on the thought far more than on the action of man — the thought of the man is the most important, for it governs the action. As a man thinks, so he acts. Now on that foundation, and based on a large number of experiments with which I cannot trouble you this morning, the Theosophist has come to the absolute knowledge of the fact that, as you think, you are continually creating forms of ethereal matter not visible to ordinary eyesight, but visible under certain peculiar conditions, even of the nervous system. Take a man who is suffering from *delirium tremens*. It is not a fancy that he sees. That man is in a real world, although not in the objective world you are most acquainted with. He sees certain things by a certain faculty which is asleep in the ordinary man, but which can be stimulated into abnormal power under certain conditions, for good or evil. One of those conditions is the continuous drink habit, which has this peculiar physiological result, that it brings into activity this ordinarily latent sense of sight, and under those conditions he sees thought-forms of a very low and horrible character, but still thought-forms. You may have noticed the very peculiar fact that the type of things seen in delirium tremens is the same, whoever the person may be. The kind of thing the patient sees is of the same sort. These things are real, [Page 21] in a particular form of existence which is veiled from you in the ordinary body, and with which you only come into contact under these very abnormal conditions. Now your mind is always making forms in this ethereal matter, perhaps the matter spoken of as a possibility by Professor Clifford. Various experiments have been tried to prove that this really does exist, and that every time you think you are producing in the mental world a form that is the image of your thinking. If you look closely into *hypnotism* you will soon get the idea. The patient sees a thought-form, and is able to describe it, although no word is spoken, and no contact between the thinker and seer takes place. Sometimes you get it in what is called the medium, who is able to see a thought-form, and speaks of it generally as a *spirit-form*, but it is only a form of very subtle matter. Now these thought-forms we say persist, and the true, the real man, has the character which is made up of them. They go to mould even the outer body. Notice the difference between men whose lives have been noble or base in the outer world, when the man comes to be old. You can tell the one from the other. The beauty of the noble old man or old woman is not a beauty of feature — it is a beauty of general expression and appearance. It is the inner character, shining out through the mask or veil of the body. That is what persists — that inner form which the true man makes for himself, and it is that ethereal [Page 22] form that very largely models the physical form of the next incarnation. This means that in your life you are making your own future tendencies, and that when you come back to a new life's lesson, you will be marked with the tendencies that you have been making in your present life, so that those tendencies will form what is called the innate character. Children are not born like sheets of blank paper, but with strongly marked characteristics, sometimes vicious, and sometimes virtuous. Now, every man gets vicious or virtuous tendencies somehow. There are three alleged ways in which they can get them. There is one way that the purely physical scientists will tell you of, that man gets them by physical heredity. If that be so, it is a very sad truth, because it means that a child may be born into the world doomed by the actions of other people to vicious characteristics and tendencies, against which he will have to fight. Others say that it comes by virtue of the gift of an over-ruling Providence, who gives the soul or spirit to the child with all its tendencies, and so you come to a terrible injustice, if it is true that men are thus handicapped by an outside power at the start; but if neither of these views be correct; if the real view be, that you and I, by our own actions and thoughts in the past, have moulded the character which in the

present life we are using for helping or hindering our development, then there is no more talk [Page 23] about injustice. There is no longer injustice at the heart of things, as in the other two ways of looking at it. We are responsible for our own characteristics and that which we have *made* we must live through as best we can. That is the view of human destiny which makes man master of his own life. Bit by bit he builds up a noble character; by continual carefulness and self-sacrificing love of others, he builds up a character of sympathy, of strength, of willingness to help, and of desire to improve. He is born into his next life-experience with this character that he has built during a previous life, and so has made himself a better instrument wherein he may progress yet further, gaining new powers, new growth, fresh progress for himself and for others. That is our Theosophical view of life — evolution, continually progressing, our bodies moulded by this inner life, and made a better and better expression of all its capacities in life after life, the body reacting under this influence and changing for higher and higher possibilities, until, millennium after millennium, the human race is built better and better, for a dwelling beyond that which it now occupies. And so you trace upwards as you trace individuals, and you have in this system of evolution, the reason for the progress of man.

You can understand then, how, with such a theory of life, we should be strongly against drinking habits everywhere, for it is as though [Page 24] in building a house you deliberately took bad materials and poisoned substances to build into your walls, so that when you came to dwell in the house its very walls should be poison-giving instead of health-giving. That is the other side of the question — the re-action on the inner man of the dwelling he fashions for himself.

Whether you take my first line of argument — the body built of these atoms that we impregnate or stamp; or whether you regard it as a dwelling-place of this true man — the inner self — you will see why the Theosophist is likely to be a teetotaler, and why he throws all his influence against the cursing of man by drink.

That, then, friends, is *why* I am glad to come this morning, and perhaps add some new weapons to the arsenal you are accustomed to use against this enemy of man. I do not ask any one of you to accept the peculiar side of my views without thought and investigation. I am not putting it to you as a propagandist might desire, to convince you of the truth of his views. I have only tried to lay before you a definite reason why this position against the use of alcohol altogether should be taken up by those to whom I myself personally belong; and without accepting my theories as a whole, I think you may find some of the arguments useful — at any rate, in putting them before you, you will judge them for yourselves, for you, I am sure, like [Page 25] myself, will not form your opinions merely upon an hour's lecture, but upon long and careful investigation. I have put before you views I honestly hold, and ask none to accept them until their reason judges them to be right. I ask none to take them, until their own intelligence endorses them. I speak to you as one human being to another, believing that these views are useful. I leave them to your judgment, but do not desire to dominate any one. I do not wish to force them upon any, but simply to express my views of man's nature, and in doing so, to give you fresh reasons to justify the propaganda you are carrying on in this matter. If we do not agree on all points, we are united on one. We are agreed on this, that in the present hour we are all practical creators, and to be a drunken creator is so ghastly a possibility that, when once realized, I am sure it never will be faced.