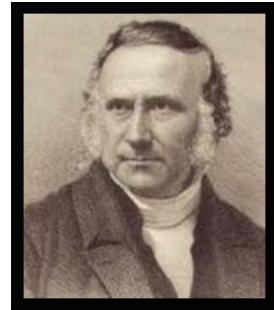


# *Religion and Rum*



A man about forty years of age, with whom I had previously but a slight acquaintance, called upon me one evening, in the greatest anxiety of mind. Seldom have I seen a man more agitated. He had become suddenly alarmed on account of his condition as a sinner. His feelings quite overcame him. He wept much. I answered his questions; and urged him to repent and flee to Christ, now in the ‘accepted time.’

He was an intelligent, well-educated man, who had seen much of the world, and evidently had moved in good society. He conversed with much fluency and correctness, evidently possessing a quick and ready mind. His parents, as he told me, were communicants in a neighboring church, and until about three weeks before he came to my house, he had been accustomed to attend church with them. He had a good degree of intellectual knowledge on the subject of religion. He was evidently a man of sound understanding.

He continued to call upon me frequently for some months; but he attained no peace of mind,—no hope in Christ. I was surprised at this. He appeared, from the first, so sincere, so earnest, attended all our religious services so punctually, and in all respects manifested so much determination, that I had confidently expected he would become a Christian indeed. And as he continued in much the same state of mind, I aimed to teach him the truth more carefully, and examine into his views, and feelings, and habits, in order to ascertain, if possible, and remove the obstacles, (whatever they might be,) which kept him from yielding to the Holy Spirit. But I could not even conjecture, why a man, who appeared to

know the truths of the gospel so well, and feel them so deeply, should not make some progress in his religious attempts. I noticed nothing peculiar or remarkable in him, unless it was some degree of fitfulness, and the ease and frequency of his tears. He wept more than I had been accustomed to see men of his years weep.

I mentioned his case to one of the officers of the church, with whom I knew he was acquainted, and requested him to converse with him. He complied with this request. He had several conversations with him; but he was disappointed and perplexed, as much as I had been. "He weeps," said he, "and that is pretty much all that I can say about him."

A few weeks after this, and while his tearful seriousness continued, I saw him one day in such company, that the thought was suggested to my mind, whether he did not indulge himself in the use of intoxicating drink. I made inquiry about this, and found it was so. The next time he called upon me, I told him, as plainly as words could possibly express it, that I had not a doubt, but his drinking was a device of the great adversary to keep him from salvation. He appeared to be surprised—did not deny drinking, but positively denied that he ever drank to any excess. I aimed to convince him, that any drinking at all of stimulating liquors was an excess for him. Again and again, I urged him to quit. He promised he would, but he did not. On one occasion he confessed to me, that he had resorted to brandy, in order "to sustain himself," as he expressed it, at times when his "mind was burdened and cast down with the thoughts of another world." I explained to him the folly, the danger, and wickedness of dealing with his serious impressions in that way. lie promised to do it no more. But he kept on,—he lost all regard for religion,—he forsook the church,—and now he is ten years nearer death,—an irreligious man, and probably an intemperate man.

Mr. Nettleton once said to me, "if a hard-drinking man gets a hope, it will be likely to be a false hope."