

PRINCIPLES OF THE WASHINGTON TEMPERANCE SOCIETY

Selected from, "The Foundation, Progress and Principles
of the Washington Temperance Society of Baltimore"
written by a member in 1842.

"Without having become outcasts or sots, they (the original six) had all confessedly suffered severely from the frequent and intemperate use of intoxicating drinks—suffered in their estates, suffered in their families, their habits, their feelings and their reputations."

"They knew it was wrong. They saw the evil; they felt it; they lamented it; and times without number did they promise wife and friend and self, that they would drink no more. They were sincere. They meant to be sober. But at some fatal hour they would take one glass again, "just one glass;" and they found themselves as powerless and debased as ever."

"They deliberately weighed the movement about to be made; and then rising in the energy of their still surviving manhood, they resolved that hour they would drink no more of the poisonous draught forever; and that to carry out their resolutions, they would form a society with a pledge to that effect, and bind themselves under it to each other for life."

"... it was resolved among themselves that they would place the temperance cause, so far as they were concerned, in the position of a unit (each group to be autonomous); that the society, as such, was to recognize no creed of religion, nor party in politics; and that neither political nor religious action of any kind, should ever be introduced into the society's operations."

"Personal abstinence from all intoxicating drinks was to be the basis, and only requisite of membership."

"Moral suasion was to be the only means by which they, as a body, were to induce others to adopt their principles."

"Moreover they determined that the regular meetings of the society should be meetings for the detail of personal experience, and not for debates, lectures and speeches; that even on matters of necessary business, as few remarks as possible only would be tolerated."

"The society was thus based on facts, and not on abstraction, and the principle of common honesty was to direct them in all their movements."

"... the founders resolved to hold weekly experience meetings for their own encouragement and benefit, and for the good of others who might be induced to attend."

Quotes —Page 2

"Efforts were made rather to prevent men from becoming intemperate, than to reform them from intemperance. Many doubted the possibility of the reformation of the drunkard. ... The addresses made at temperance meetings, were rather of a tendency to drive away the drinking man. ... as they were made from observation rather than from experience; and too often were the result of a mere speech-making spirit, coming from the head rather than the heart."

"It cannot be denied, that the most eloquent and glowing speech on a matter abstract from the speaker, no matter how deeply it concerns us, is less powerful than a simple, honest statement of a man's own experience on the same subject, however unlearned may be the man who gives the experience."

"Our true motto should be: action, constant untiring action on the part of every member."

"The society does not set itself up as a censor of morals. It occupies but one position. It has only to do with drinking."

"On the same principles, we, as a society, do not wish to identify ourselves with any political movements, intended to result in legislative enactments on this subject."

"The practice of the Washington Society is, not to abandon at once the reformed man, who in an evil hour of strong temptation, has violated his pledge; but to bear with him, and try to reclaim him again—and if he comes back penitent, to forgive him 'seven times'—yea, seventy times seven.'"

"Moreover the drunkard when reformed best knows how to reach the drunkard's heart; for he best understands his feelings."