

# Temperance

Abstract of speech delivered by Mr. Bryan at Atlantic City, N. J., May 26, 1911, at the general assembly of the Presbyterian church, the temperance committee being in charge of the program:

I am speaking to an audience of Christians and shall discuss this question from the standpoint of a Christian. I shall begin with the assumption that all Christians accept Christ's measure of greatness, viz: That greatness is measured by service, and are anxious to render as large a service as possible.

The Christian can justify total abstinence on several grounds, or to make it stronger, I may say that several considerations compel total abstinence on the part of the Christian.

First—Drinking is injurious to the body, to the mind and to the morals. It may not be possible to prove the injurious effect of a single drop or a small quantity of alcoholic liquor, but there is sufficient scientific evidence to leave no reason for doubt that even so-called moderate drinking reduces the power of the body to resist disease, impairs the strength of the mind, and weakens the moral element in man. The Christian can not afford to tender a physical wreck as his contribution to the Master's service; he can not afford to offer less than the maximum of physical energy, mental activity and moral health.

Second—The Christian can not afford to spend on liquor money that is so badly needed for other and better things. I do not speak now of the diversion of money actually needed by the family, although that sum is enormous and measures domestic injustice that figures can not estimate. I speak rather of that occasional expenditure of money for liquor which some attempt to excuse on the ground that it can be spared. Who can consider the vast amount of ignorance in the world that money can lessen—the vast amount of suffering that money can relieve—and then insist that a Christian can with propriety invest any sum, however small, in intoxicating liquor? If man is to render an account of his stewardship in what language will he frame a report covering money spent for liquor when he stands before the bar of judgment, and is confronted by those whose lives might have been made brighter, better and happier by the expenditure upon them of money squandered on wine, beer, and whisky?

Third—The Christian can not afford to take the risk of acquiring the habit of drinking. Even a small degree of intelligence is sufficient to enable one to understand that it is unwise to incur any danger where no advantage is to be gained to offset the danger. The appetite for drink grows with indulgence and the number of those who are overcome by it is so great that one must be strangely indifferent to his own welfare who takes the chances of falling beneath the power of that appetite. From the beginning of history alcohol has been slaying its multitudes; we see its horrible work about us everywhere and at all times. Every drunkard is a warning—how can this warning be lost on anyone, especially upon a Christian—who recognizes responsibility to the Creator.

Fourth—The Christian can not afford to set an example that will be hurtful to those weaker than himself. If he were sure that he could spare money for liquor, sure that no more worthy cause needed it; if he were sure he could drink without diminution of his own strength and without danger of becoming a slave to the thirst which drink arouses, still he could not justify the use of liquor because the Christian is responsible for his example as well as for wrongs done in other ways. The great apostle declared that if eating meat made his brother to offend he would eat no meat. Why this declaration? Because his love of brother was stronger than his desire for meat. The Christian should so deeply feel his obligation to this brother and love him so devotedly as to be willing to make for his brother's sake whatever sacrifice total abstinence required. If the Christian drinks but little it will be but little sacrifice to quit entirely; if he drinks enough to make total abstinence a real sacrifice he should stop on his own account and on his family's account as well as for his brother's sake.

If one makes up his mind to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquor there is no reason why he should hesitate to sign the pledge. There is every reason why he should openly

take his stand with those who touch not, taste not, and handle not.

There is no humiliation about signing a pledge. We do not hesitate to sign other pledges and take upon ourselves other vows. It is no reflection upon our veracity that we are requested to take an oath when we go upon the witness stand; it raises no suspicion as to their good faith when parties uniting in marriage exchange vows in public; a man's honesty is not impugned when he is asked to reduce a financial obligation in writing, on the contrary, it would excite suspicion if one refused to make a note when he acknowledges a debt. A pledge helps the person who signs it and it helps those who know of it. A man is the stronger when he feels that he can not with honor accept an invitation to drink, and he is not so apt to be invited. The signing of the pledge marks one's entry into the company of teetotalers. There is no other visible sign of separation from those who drink. I began signing pledges before I can remember and have improved every opportunity I have had to sign since. I believe that we ought to have a pledge book in every church and in every Sabbath school and encourage the signing of the pledge by every man, woman and child.

I have spoken thus far upon the individual's connection with the liquor traffic; this is fundamental and admits of less dispute than questions of legislation. Whatever may be said in regard to the effect of laws intended to restrain the use of liquor no one will deny that total abstinence lessens to the extent that it is practiced the evils of intemperance.

But the Christian must act in conjunction with others as well as by himself. As a citizen he is jointly responsible with his neighbors for legislation on all subjects and he can not lay aside the obligations of his religion when he goes to the polls. A Christianity that does not make a man a better citizen would be difficult to defend. I shall not attempt to lay down rules to cover every legislative phase of the liquor question, but I venture to suggest a principle that is universal in its application and that can not be ignored at any time, in any place or under any circumstance, viz: That the liquor question is a moral question which must be dealt with as a question of conscience and not as a question of profit. Whatever decision one reaches as to the position he should take on any legislative phase of the liquor question he must be able to defend it before the bar of conscience. No advantage that he can secure in business, no money that he can directly or indirectly make out of his decision, and no advantage that he can win for his party can be allowed to weigh in the balance. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

I shall suggest a few things for your consideration in the way of legislation. I do not go as far as those do who assert that it is morally wrong to license the sale of liquor at any time or under any circumstances. I would deal with the conditions to be met and adopt such measures as in my judgment would most effectively decrease the evils of intemperance and most rapidly establish total abstinence.

Any unit, however small or large, should be permitted to rid itself of the saloon or place restrictions upon the sale of liquor within the unit, the larger unit controlling the smaller whenever its influence for evil can no more be confined to the building in which it is conducted than can the odors of a slaughter house be confined to the block in which it is located.

Treating should not be permitted at any time or under any circumstances. The doctrine of personal liberty can not on any just ground stretch to cover the right to either give or sell liquor to another. That is a question with which the community has an undoubted right to deal. And I may add that the doctrine of personal liberty can not be invoked in behalf of the individual use of liquor to the extent of making him an injury to others or destroying his ability to meet his obligations to family and society.

Legislation can also lessen the evils of intemperance by prohibiting the advertisement of liquors, especially when those advertisements are used to subsidize the press.

We need federal legislation to secure to the states the right to deal fully and freely with the liquor question.

The federal government has driven liquor from the senate and the house. Why not put the government on the side of total abstinence by excluding its use from diplomatic functions. When I visited South America a year ago last winter I was surprised at the cost of the diplo-

## ANOTHER TARIFF FRAUD

Associated Press report: "Washington, June 19.—Frauds amounting to several millions of dollars in duty on importations of cutlery during the last few years have been discovered by secret agents of the customs service, who, under the direction of Chief Wilkie, have been working quietly in this country and in the Follingen district of Germany, whence most of the imports came to the United States.

"Secretary of the Treasury McVeagh started the investigation several months ago, but as it is not completed, it was not said what action might be taken to recover the duties. Neither is it known whether there will be prosecutions.

"Customs authorities say the peculiar construction of the cutlery schedule of the tariff has given an opportunity for immense frauds on comparatively small valuations. A seizure of cutlery made in New York on Saturday illustrates that fact. Although on 43 cases of cutlery entered as having a valuation of \$10,243, an under-valuation of only \$868 was found, yet, on that occasion seizure the government had been defrauded of \$3,397 in duties. The duty on cutlery is very high."

matic branch of the service of the South American republics. It costs them quite a sum to meet present diplomatic requirements. A considerable part of the diplomatic expense goes for entertainment and the cost of wine is a large factor in the cost of entertaining. The smaller countries might hesitate to cut out wine lest it might suggest poverty, but the great Christian nations could abandon the use of wine at diplomatic functions without raising any question as to their motives. Why should our nation not set the example? Why should it not lead the way by throwing the weight of its influence against the use of intoxicating liquor? Our diplomacy is open and honest; we do not have to make people drink in order to deal with them. Our nation is in a position to make the start. Why not do it?

## A WARNING TO PRIVILEGE

Governor Woodrow Wilson, in the World's Work: "It is time that we served notice on the men who have grown up in the possession of privileges and bounties, that the existing order of things is to be changed. It is only fair that we warn them, for they should have time to adjust themselves to the change; but the change must come, nevertheless. And this change is not a revolution, let it be understood at once. It is merely a restoration. \* \* \* That is what the people of New Jersey have meant as they have flocked out, rain or shine, not to follow the democratic party—we have stopped thinking about parties—to follow what they now know as the democratic idea, the idea that the people are at last to be served.

"Do you know what the American people are waiting for, gentlemen? They are waiting to have their politics utterly simplified. They are realizing that our politics are full of secret conferences, that there are private arrangements, and they do not understand it. They want to concentrate their force somewhere. They are like an unorganized army saying the thing is wrong. Where shall we congregate? How shall we organize? Who are the captains? Where are the orders? Which is the direction? Where are the instruments of government? That is what they are waiting for.

"It is an opportunity, and it is a terrible opportunity. Don't you know that some man without conscience, who did not care for the nation, could put this country into a flame? Don't you know that the people of this country from one end to the other all believe that something is wrong? What an opportunity it would be for some man without conscience, but with power, to spring up and say: "This is the way: follow me" and lead them in paths of destruction. How terrible it would be!"

The house should accept at once the senate amendments to the publicity bill. Unless the house can propose something still broader the democrats can not afford to allow the republicans to go beyond them in the matter of publicity.