

# Mr. Bryan on Total Abstinence

[Address delivered by Secretary Bryan at Philadelphia, March 15, under the auspices of the National Abstinence Union.]

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: (This being a men's meeting there was laughter and applause when the ladies were included in the opening sentence).

You need not laugh at the word "ladies," for there are a few ladies here on the platform, and I am speaking through you to a large number of ladies who, though at home, are as much interested in this meeting as you are. I am proud to participate in this great temperance meeting. I have no reason to doubt the statement that has been made in your presence tonight—namely, that this is the largest gathering of men ever assembled in the United States, at a temperance meeting. The National Abstinence Union is built upon the broadest of foundations. It welcomes to its ranks those of every creed. The two letters read tonight show how comprehensive is the interest felt. I need not emphasize the value of Mr. Sunday's support. Doctor John R. Mott is one of the most eminent of the Christian laymen of America, and I am glad that the movement has his endorsement. I am gratified too that Archbishop Pendergrast has given to this meeting the splendid support of his emphatic approval. Congressman Logue, a member of the reception committee tonight who has long been identified with the temperance movement in this city, informs me that the Catholic total abstinence societies of the city have an enrollment of more than seventeen thousand members. You may be interested to know that the two temperance speeches which I have made in recent years to large audiences were made, the first one at Chicago under the auspices of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of the United States, and the second at Atlantic City before the National Assembly of the Presbyterian church. I hope that this organization may be able to bring into effective co-operation all the believers in total abstinence, without regard to race, creed, or party.

This meeting is held for a specific purpose and that purpose is to deal with one of the great evils which afflict society. It is not to be compared, in its breadth and depth of interest, with the series of meetings which have been held here by Mr. Sunday. He, with the support of the ministers of the city, has been appealing to the men and women of Philadelphia to consider the greatest subject with which man has to deal, namely, religion. Religion has been defined as the relation that man fixes between himself and his God, and nothing else is in the same class with it because nothing else affects, as religion does, the entire life and all its activities. When a man's heart has been brought into harmony with the will of the Heavenly Father, the whole life is regulated because the heart is the center and source of the influences that control life. Tonight we deal with but one of the outward manifestations of this inward relation—with one habit—namely, the drink habit, and I can not hope to present a stronger indictment of the habit of liquor drinking than Mr. Sunday has already presented to this audience. No one can surpass him in portraying the evils of intemperance or the value of total abstinence, but I venture to present the subject as it appears to me, in the hope that I may be able to reach and influence some who have not yet joined the total abstainers. Before taking up the arguments in favor of total abstinence, let me call your attention to the importance of the subject.

It is estimated that the people of the United States spend almost two billion and a half annually for intoxicating liquors. It is difficult for the mind to comprehend so large a sum unless we resort to comparisons. Let me suggest a few.

It has recently been stated on high authority that the cost of the war now raging in Europe reaches the enormous total of three hundred and seventy-five millions a week—or more than fifty millions a day. If this is true the drink bill of the United States would carry on the war for six weeks—and that means that the daily cost of liquor to the people of the United States is more than one-tenth of the toll that the belligerent nations pay because of the awful conflict now raging—the greatest that the world has ever known, whether measured by the number of men engaged, the destructiveness of the implements

employed, or its expensiveness to the nations involved.

The cost of the Panama Canal, the most gigantic engineering feat in history, was about four hundred millions of dollars. Is it not appalling to think that we spend for drink every year something like six times the cost of the Panama canal?

I have endeavored to secure an accurate estimate of the amount of money spent on education in this country, and the figure given me is seven hundred and fifty millions of dollars. This pays all the teachers who instruct the children, from the kindergarten to the university, in this land of more than ninety millions. It provides salaries for the great intellectual army whose inestimable service no figures can describe. If we were to cease these expenditures, this nation, so conspicuous in all that contributes to the civilization of the world, would lapse into barbarism. And yet we spend for drink more than three times as much as we spend for education.

The annual appropriations of the federal government are a little less than a billion and a quarter of dollars. This sum includes the salaries of all of the public officials from the president down. It includes the salaries and expenses of our ambassadors and ministers through whom we maintain diplomatic relations with the entire world; it covers the cost of our consular service which looks after our commerce in foreign lands. It includes the expenses of the treasury, which handles our money, collects our taxes and supervises the banking system of the nation. It covers the expenses of the army and the expenses of the navy. It provides means for enforcing the laws of the United States. It includes the operations of the postoffice department, which carries mail to every village, hamlet and city, with its fifty-six thousand postmasters, its nineteen thousand railway clerks and its seventy-five thousand mail carriers in the cities and in the country. It covers the expenses of the interior department, with its multiplied agencies for dealing with pensions, with the public lands of the country, with irrigation and with Indian affairs. It covers the expenses of the agricultural department with its experimental work and its search throughout the world for that which can be profitably grown in this country. It supplies the needs of the rapidly increasing department of commerce and the vitally important work of the department of labor. It supplies the funds needed by the interstate commerce commission for the regulation of railroads and by the new federal trade commission for the prevention of monopoly. All of these governmental agencies employed in administering the federal government of this great nation are operated at an expense of less than a billion and a quarter of dollars. Think, if the mind can comprehend it, of this nation spending twice that amount for alcoholic liquor?

Here are four comparisons. Do they help you to understand what a drain on this country the drink habit is? According to the estimate given, the average tax laid upon each citizen by the use of liquor is more than twenty-five dollars a year, or, counting five to the family, more than one hundred and twenty-five dollars to the family annually. If any political party attempted to make an annual increase in the taxes upon the people to the extent of one-fifth of that sum, it would be turned out of power by an indignant public. When it is remembered that this tax is not uniform but is, on the average, heaviest upon those least able to bear it, is it not our duty to consider how the nation can be relieved of this enormous burden?

The object of this meeting is not to discuss the governmental phases of the liquor traffic, but rather to deal with remedies that can be applied by the individual without the aid of statute law, and fortunately the plans which we present tonight involve no controverted questions. Whatever the differences of opinion there may be as to legal remedies, no one doubts that total abstinence is, as far as it goes, a complete remedy for the drink habit. Everyone who, by his own resolve, separates himself from those who drink and allies himself with those who do not drink, to this extent lessens the amount of liquor consumed and lightens the task of those who are called upon to deal with the subject through legislation or through the enforcement of law.

Our appeal is to the individual and I ask your

attention while I present a few of the reasons which, to my mind, justify total abstinence.

In the first place, let us consider the physical reasons against the use of alcohol. To begin with, drink brings no advantage whatever to the one who drinks and, since intelligence demands a reason for any course of action, the fact that NO GOOD REASON CAN BE GIVEN FOR DRINKING ought to be sufficient to prevent the use of liquor to any extent.

But the use of liquor is not only unnecessary and indefensible from the standpoint of advantage, but it is objectionable as a beverage even when taken in the smallest quantity. It has been scientifically demonstrated that THE MODERATE USE OF ALCOHOL DECREASES A MAN'S EFFICIENCY. An athlete can not do his best if he drinks at all—this has been demonstrated by experience; a typesetter will make more mistakes when drinking than when sober—this has been established by experiment; alcohol makes a soldier less accurate in his aim, and let me add that the present war is giving conclusive proof that total abstinence has its value on the battlefield. Russia has gone to the extent of abolishing the sale of liquor even though in doing so she sacrifices an annual revenue of four hundred millions in the midst of a war. The German Emperor is an advocate of total abstinence. The British government is refusing liquor to its soldiers and in France the legislature is considering the liquor question. If "John Barleycorn" is a failure in a fight, who can respect him in time of peace! The accidents in industry are increased in proportion as liquor is consumed—these are but a few illustrations of the effect of alcohol, even when but little is taken.

But there is an argument still more easily understood, namely the increasing demand for total abstinence which is being made by employers. On boats, grog used to be furnished to sailors; it is becoming more and more the rule to deny it to them altogether. The owner of a ship can not afford to trust passengers or cargo, or even the vessel, to a man who allows his brain to be befuddled by alcohol. Our railroad managers are applying more and more stringent rules against drink. They can not afford to take the risk of either loss of life or damage to property involved in the employment of men who use liquor. And so on through other industries; the more important the employment the more rigidly the use of liquor is forbidden.

If a young man wants to know public opinion in regard to moderate drinking, let him present a recommendation saying that he is a moderate drinker. Why do recommendations, intended to help those to whom they are given, omit a reference to the fact that a man drinks, if he does drink at all?

I spoke a few nights ago to eight hundred and fifty midshipmen at Annapolis naval academy, and a finer body of young men it would be impossible to find. Not one of them is permitted to use intoxicating liquor. Why is the use of liquor forbidden to those men except on the ground that it would be hurtful to them? They are being prepared, at government expense, for government service, and the fact that they are not permitted to use alcohol should impress all young men who seek to fit themselves for important work.

THE USE OF ALCOHOL NOT ONLY LOWERS A MAN'S PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY BUT IT IMPARTS CONSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESS TO HIS OFFSPRING. Even if the pleasure derived from the use of alcohol were not followed by a pain that overcomes the pleasure—even if it did not manifest itself in the impairment of the individual who uses it—the fact that its effects are transmitted to the child and thus visits an undeserved punishment upon it, ought to weigh mightily with the man who has not decided the drink question for himself.

But there is another reason why one should not drink at all, namely, THE DANGER OF DRINKING TO EXCESS. It can not be truthfully said that every moderate drinker becomes a drunkard, but it is true that every drunkard comes from the number of those who drink moderately; none come from the ranks of the total abstainers. I remember to have heard a temperance lecturer use an illustration when I was a boy; I pass it on to those of this generation. He admitted that there is a difference between the moderate drinker and the drunkard, but he described it as the difference between the pig and the hog—the hog being a little older than the pig.

The drunkard has indulged the habit longer