

World-wide Prohibition

[The address of General Superintendent Doctor P. A. Baker at the opening of the International Conference for the Organization of a World Movement Against the Liquor Traffic, Columbus, Ohio, November 19, 1918.]

Twenty-five years ago, the liquor traffic was the most potent single influence in the legislative bodies, municipal, state and national, in the United States. It was arrogant, defiant, dictatorial and triumphant. It elected mayors, aldermen, sheriffs, judges, state legislators, congressmen, and United States senators. It dictated the enactment of laws and controlled the enforcement of laws. It conducted the policies in the cities and towns and controlled the politicians. A candidate for Governor in the commonwealth of Ohio boldly stated that he would rather have one saloon for him than ten churches, because the saloons always delivered the votes. The grogshop was the center of political influence, and the saloonkeeper was often the party committeeman, and the party caucuses were held in, over, or in the back room of the saloon.

DIFFICULTIES TO BE OVERCOME

The use of intoxicating liquors had increased from 4.17 gallons per capita in 1840, to 22.79 gallons per capita in 1907. Drinking and drunkenness, crime and poverty, had increased in like proportions. The drinking house had come to be regarded as a necessary evil; likewise a substantial contribution to the commercial prosperity of the community. It had been impressively dinned into the public ear that to abolish the saloons meant to bankrupt the town and dry up its revenue. The commercial interests, always timid when moral issues are involved, were, with few exceptions, lined up with the drink traffic. Temperance organizations and societies were at cross purposes; some of them scolding, others vituperative, and all of them seriously but selfishly seeking their own prestige and doing their own work without reference to the efforts of any other. There was no co-operation and little kindness between organizations. All the while, the drink traffickers were moving in one compact body without opposition sufficient to create discord in their own ranks. Clashing and discord in the ranks of temperance reformers had well nigh eliminated the church from active participation in the conflict. The ministry, usually right at heart, was denounced as in league with the brewers because they could not and would not speak a given shibboleth. Business laymen were timid because of the futile, but threatened, boycott of the liquor interests, and wishing to move along moral lines in the direction of least resistance, they not infrequently let drop the hint for the preacher's ears that the tenure of his incumbency in that particular church depended upon his conservative utterances on the liquor question. Not a few preachers and others of heroic mold were shot down because they cried out and spared not this destroyer of American homes.

MARTYRS TO PROHIBITION

Amongst these martyrs for prohibition may be found the names of such men as Rev. J. R. Moffet, temperance editor, killed at Danville, Virginia, in 1892; S. E. Logan, an officer, attempting to arrest violators of the liquor law, was killed in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1897; Roderick D. Gamble, editor of a prohibition paper, Jackson, Miss., after several attempts had been made on his life, was finally assassinated in Jackson in 1887; William K. Glover, Lithia Springs, Ga., as an officer enforcing the law, was killed by an illicit liquor seller 1893; Rev. Charles H. Edwards, a missionary in Alaska, was assassinated in 1892 by a liquor dealer; Doctor W. Schumaker was killed at Ackerman, Miss., in 1893 by a speakeasy keeper; Rev. George C. Haddock, murdered at Sioux City, Iowa, in the night-time by a liquor dealer; Colonel Watson B. Smith, killed at Omaha, Neb., as the results of his efforts to secure the enforcement of liquor laws; Judge D. R. Cox of Malden, Mo., was murdered in 1907 on account of his leadership in a local option campaign that carried his county dry; Doctor J. W. Beal was shot and killed the same day by the same murderer that killed Judge Cox.

These are but a few, from the record of many names, who have given their lives, or been

maimed for life, to secure the overthrow of this rehdanded traffic.

THE DRY BONES OF TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

It filled our almshouses with 60 per cent of our paupers and our jails with 80 per cent of our criminals. It has been the most prolific source of poverty, and the fostering mother of delinquency. There is no law it has not defied and no virtue it has not befouled. It is the social mephitic as well as the political hystrix of the nation. Its crimes and misdemeanors so haunted the records of the entire republic that the day of reckoning appeared on the horizon. The prayers and tears of a patient womanhood and the helpless cry of outraged childhood gave warning that God Almighty was becoming impatient with us. Then it was that above five and twenty years ago, a modern Ezekiel was led out upon the highlands of faith and hope to view a valley of dry bones—"and they were very dry." A careful survey of the valley which revealed as many factions and societies, that made for division and strife rather than unity and co-operation, as there are bones in the human body, suggested the important inquiry, "Can these bones live?" The Anti-Saloon League of America is the answer to that inquiry. The task of knitting them up, bone to bone, and putting flesh on the bones and skin on the flesh, and breathing into this reconstructed body the breath of life and causing it to stand erect and move unitedly and harmoniously forward, was an undertaking sufficient to challenge the faith and vision of a seer. But it was accomplished beyond the fondest dreams of the most sanguine. Not all of these recalcitrant members have united. There is a shin bone here and a sliver yonder that prefers to remain "very dry," and to dwell in the valley rather than to be a component part of a great, allied, victorious whole, forcing the unconditional surrender of the chief foe of humankind—the home-wrecking liquor traffic.

THE CHURCH IN THE REFORM

When the history of this reform is finally and correctly written, the verdict will be that the Anti-Saloon League was one of the most timely, strategic and successful political, social and religious movements for the solution of a great world-wide moral and governmental problem that was ever instituted. To combat an evil, national in scope, must have uniform, national treatment if the treatment is to be successful. The optimism of party or society cannot affect a remedy; the optimism of christianity must be seasoned with the dogmatism of religion to successfully conduct a great national moral reform. In other words, the church cannot and must not attempt to lead the state in her governmental policies, but the church in the state must so influence the public mind on moral issues as to point the way for the state and the statesman. It is the business of the church to initiate moral issues and build the sentiment to sustain them. It is the duty of the state to crystalize that sentiment into law and then enforce the law. "Salt is good, but if the salt (the church) has lost its savour (its power) wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Witness the church in Germany which, because of the doctrine it has been preaching for a half century, has lost its power and has ceased to be a christian institution influencing the state to lofty conceptions and policies. It has become the vassal of the kaiser and the mouthpiece of the Prussian junkers. What a spectacle when a hundred of her professors from her supposedly christian colleges signed a document endorsing the unspeakable atrocities of the German army on land and sea! It is not strange that Germany has gone mad.

Turn to Russia, betrayed, butchered, bleeding and starving; without order and almost without hope, and not one single distinct voice of authority lifted from that old Greek church either of protest, admonition or hope. The church in Russia is as dead as the Romanoff.

We are hearing much about a lasting peace, and this being the world's last war. It may be possible to civilize and christianize Germany and Russia and the millions of China and of Asia without further wars, but if so, there must be within these countries a very different kind of church than the ones that are now there, and

they must preach a different kind of gospel. The church that eliminates from its creeds the reasoning of "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come" until the modern Felix trembles, is a candlestick that must be removed.

THE TWO ESSENTIAL FACTORS

The prohibition reform in America has had behind it two factors, both of which have been and are absolutely essential to complete victory:

First: It has had the organized backing of the christian womanhood of the nation as officially represented through the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. With mountains of prejudice to overcome and tremendous obstacles to clear away, they have, with a persistence, intelligence and devotion unsurpassed, forced the fighting for nearly a half century until prejudice has disappeared and obstacles have been cleared away and they stand the consistent champions of a triumphant cause.

Second: The prohibition movement in the United States has had the backing of the church, or that part of it, at least, that counts for vital Godliness. No great moral reform in any country can make durable progress without the backing of the church. Prohibition is not a fundamental tenet of the church in America. But it is the overflow of the church, and from any church, that is consecrated to the task of the world's redemption. The church that can look with indifference upon the ruin wrought by the drink traffic and not put forth its best efforts to destroy that traffic, is a church that is hateful in the sight of God, and in this enlightened age deserves the anathema of mankind. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League and other temperance and prohibition organizations have no ecclesiastical connection with the church, but by virtue of the fact that they were born in the hot hearts of consecrated, christian men and women, and fed and fostered by the church, they are the direct overflow from the church, without which they never could have wrought and conquered this chief ally of the devil. When the christian womanhood is aroused and the church is enlisted, the battle against rum is more than half won in any country. Until this is accomplished, the cause will move like one with a broken tooth and a foot out of joint.

The first great victory against the drink traffic to be won in most countries is to commit and enlist the church. To accomplish this the ministry must be won; not dragooned, but won; not by harsh words and unchristianizing them, but won by overwhelming them with the facts concerning prohibition where it has been tried out, and by appealing to their love for, and interest in humanity and for the square deal for helpless childhood. All who are worth hearing can be won.

RECONSTRUCTION

We are approaching the day of the world's reconstruction when this nefarious and slimy traffic will offer itself as a willing subject for taxation in an effort to buy its way back into the good graces of the peoples who were compelled to make war upon it before they could successfully make war upon its ally the German government. With towns and cities knocked to pieces, with emptied treasuries, with the crushing burdens of taxation, with sources of revenue wellnigh exhausted, the appeal even from this "road hog" of the world will find attentive ears. It was during the Civil war, while the guns were thundering at Bull Run and Antietam, that representatives of the traffic in this country assembled at Washington, under the very shadow of the capitol, and volunteered their traffic as a subject for taxation. Out of this came the enactment of the internal revenue law which caused Lincoln to correctly say: "If this traffic becomes rooted in the revenues of the republic, it will give us more trouble than slavery," but which he permitted to become a law as a war measure, under the promise that when the war was ended it would be repealed, but when the war was ended Lincoln was in his grave, and the traffic had become so deeply rooted in the revenues of the country that congress dared not repeal it. The state, and cities, and villages, finding it a willing subject for taxation, followed in the footsteps of the federal government and begun to draw heavily upon it for revenue under the hypocritical guise of making it bear the financial burdens of its own ravages. This brought it into the arena of politics, municipal, state and national, with unlimited money and no scruples in the spending of it. The result was a reign of corruption and lawlessness in the cities of the country, the evil effects from which