# LAWLESSNESS AND THE LAW.

## A Strong Sermon by Rev. W. J. Harris in the First Baptist Church.

### He Vividly Describes the Traps Set for the Young Men Who Come Here.

### Reference to the Extent of Crime and the Best Way to Suppress It.

The Baptist church was filled Sunday with a most appreciative and interested audience. Rev. W. J. Harris, pastor of the church, preached a strong sermon on the general subject of "Lawlessness and the law." His remarks were, in substance, as follows:

Mr. Harris took his text from the 15th chapter of St. Luke and part of the 4th verse, "He became to be in want." The preacher said that while in New York he had visited one of the finest picture galleries there, containing some of the finest pictures in the country, some being worth twenty-five thousand dollars. There was a group of steel engravings which attracted his attention, representing the prodigal's return. There was the prodigal in rags and the loving father was welcoming him home. He had read the parable often, but never had it made such an impression on his mind. The artist had studied well the parable. A picture is often the strongest thing to impress upon the mind a fact or a truth. The artist had pictured another scene. In this picture there was the father and the two sons and all the friends; the occasion was that one of the sons was about to start out from home and was bidding the family goodbye, and this was the picture he wished to consider, this evening, the first part of the story and next Sunday perhaps he would consider the second. It seemed that the young son had become somewhat dissatisfied. He was weary with the monotony of his country life he chafed under the restraints which his father created or perhaps he had heard of the wonderful goings on in the cities, or perhaps he wanted to start out for himself and see what he could do for himself and perhaps he did not wish to be hampered by his father's presence. He wanted to do as he pleased. He had made up his mind to go away from home, so he wanted his father to give him his portion of the goods. The father, seeing no doubt that his son was determined to leave his home, never more expostulates. That son had reached the critical point of his life. There is a trying time with almost every young man, when he reaches this period between seventeen and twenty-four. Then they think they know more than their father or mother or perhaps anybody and nobody can tell them any thing. They will receive no advice, notice from father or mother. This young man had reached this period, so he thought he could go down to Jerusalem and speculate on Wall street and return a millionaire. The father would no longer hinder him and he gave him his portion. If some prophet could have lifted the vail and shown him the future, if he could have shown him the vile dens down in that city of Jerusalem, who had their watchers out trying to trap the young men; if he could have seen the vileness, and the poverty and the want that would come upon him; if he could have seen himself feeding with the swine and his garments in rags, he would then have said the prophet had held up a false picture. If he did believe it he never would have left his home. No prophet was there to lift the veil.

Thousands of young men are leaving their homes every year like that prodigal. Some of them with established characters and well balanced brains. These will succeed. Many of them with unstable characters having no special purpose, impatient for sudden wealth, or reckless and caring only to enjoy the world as they call it. If some prophet would only unveil the dark paths of sin and could show them the men and women as they are now who started as they started, but entering into the paths of vice and iniquity have brought upon themselves disease and leprosy! There is no prophet to remove the veil. The young have been told by father and mother and minister, but they believe they must investigate for themselves. And later the picture held up to us is true and then "Would to God I had listened to it and kept from evil dens." It seems the city was filled with wicked men, houses of ill-repute and dram shops, the same as are still found in the cities of to-day. These had their runners and they brought this prodigal into their homes, they robbed him of his money, robbed him of all he had.

The young prodigal lost his money and he began to pawn away his best overcoat, thinking he could restore the money he had lost, and finally he came to want. Now he is alone among strangers in want, afflicted and accused of all.

There are cities to-day full of just such evil places. The speaker did not know whether Omaha had more than any other city, but he and others lived in that city, their homes are here, and it is their duty to know of the things that exist in Omaha. It was well known, he said, by every man in that congregation that there are places in this city which are destroying more men than the churches can save. There are men in this city putting forth their efforts day after day and night after night to ruin some father's sons and daughters, if not theirs, and perhaps they would soon reach their door, and their sons and their daughters, and bring those sons and those daughters to ruin. Thousands of young men come from the east, leaving their pleasant homes, and soon after they reach the city he was sorry to say they were too often brought into contact with evil associations. If they have money their society is courted. They want their money to spend in the saloons and in the gambling dens and from thence perhaps to the house of death. Bye and bye these young men come to want. The young man from the country goes to a gambling den and says to himself, "See how easy money is made here. I will make a little money here. I want these people to know, though I have been raised on a farm, I know one card from other." He stakes his money and he wins and the very first money he wins he exclaims, "I am in luck." He stakes and wins again. His pulse now becomes quick and his face pales with excitement. All fear is now gone. He loses. He loses again. Fortune turns and he wins again. That young man has now no control over himself. There is a hand unseen that holds him. He loses again, he loses all. Then flashes upon him the dreadful fact that his money is all gone. He turns to a stranger near by who is one of the gang connected with the game and asks him to lend him a dollar. The stranger refuses. He leaves the place alone; he staggers down the street. Those young men who had got him there have left him now, his money is gone. While his money lasted his friends were plenty. His blood boils with rage. Money gone, courage gone, self-respect gone, friends gone. And the young man exclaims, 'Would that I had died at home where I would have had my father's and mother's sympathy. I have squandered my fortune and I cannot go home."

The preacher pictured that young man walking the floor of his room like a crazed tiger. Finally he resolves to pawn the Bible that his mother gave him when he left home, that he may watch that his father made him a present on his twenty-first birthday, and that he may get some drink to strengthen his nerves. Hundreds of young men have similar experiences as this every year.

The preacher gave several instances of the depravity prevailing among certain students. He knew of one occasion where some were locked up and brought before the judge. They were exceedingly anxious that their names should not be published, but an ubiquitous reporter duly published them. He was glad of it. He thought it did a deal of good. He would like them published in capital letters.

This parable is true to fact, it is in perfect harmony with all we known in life, when it proceeds to state that lawlessness is wastefulness. The young men should carry with them the circle of home influence. If they do that they will be kept from temptations with which they are surrounded and their future will be one of prosperity, instead of adversity. Young men often applied to him and said they had tried to get situations and they have failed some how. One young man said to him: "I cannot understand it. I have applied at different places, and some how they have always found out my record before I got there." He had been discharged for drunkenness.

He wished to point out to them that when they came into a strange city they should seek only good companions. If they heard any one ridiculing the sanctity of home associations, they would know such a one was no fit companion for them. If a man ridiculed the Bible, the Sabbath and Christianity, then they might be sure he was a dangerous man to associate with. Trust only those who respect and love their father and mother, who love home, who love the truth, who honor God and his home. Shun every place of evil and seek only that which is pure and live only for noble purposes and then we would never come to maternal want.

The older members of the congregation would not think it strange that so many young men are brought to ruin when they considered the many dancing houses, gambling dens and houses of resute and other places of iniquity that were permitted to go on.

He believed there was more power in the hands of the lawless than in that of the law-abiding citizens. If a meeting of business men was called where something was to be done to put down vice or crime, men make excuses to say they cannot do it. If you will only get fifty or a hundred men to sign it we will do so. They point to the murders that have been committed, and especially the murder of Watson B. Smith, and they say that we are not safe. This is apparently the truth. There are men enough in this city, law-abiding, who can rise up and say that they shall rule and not the lawless. I believe the time is come when it shall be proclaimed broadcast, for its business prospects and for its honor and integrity, that the city of Omaha is ruled by the best of its citizens, and that law and order shall be maintained.

Mr. Harris then read an editorial which appeared in a recent issue of THE BEE on the subject of the enforcement of the law and said he very glad to see that article. He believed it expressed the sentiments of the best portion of the city to-day. The time is come when the law must be enforced if ever it is to be done. They all knew what intemperance was and he was not there to commend those saloon keepers who are now obeying the law because they had no license no more than he would commend the prisoners in Lincoln prison. Some had seen fit to give the editor of THE BEE a new title, Rev. E. Rosewater. He thought he might have a worse, but it was given him as a slur, but he was glad to see that he had had the courage to put in a remonstrance against the applicant. He believed if every man had put in a remonstrance our city might have been saved that disagreeable scene at the very hour that the wife of the ex-mayor was about to be buried, there was a wagon with a brass band going round the streets throwing out its advertisements, calling the attention of the boys to what he was told was one of the lowest of the dens of this city, but it assembly ought never to have been allowed to have marched one block. He heard of one woman who had been trying to close this place up because it had ruined more boys and young men than any other place in the city.

He also desired to commend the coroner's jury on Hammer's case for putting their remonstrance against granting license to that saloon where the murder was committed on Christmas morning. He believed there was a thousand men who would be willing to sign their remonstrances against granting licenses to low groggeries. He was glad that the excise board felt the public pulse, against which remonstrances had been entered.

But intemperance is not the only great evil. The state licenses the houses of ill repute, thus legalizing vice, and takes this blood money to pay the lady teachers of our schools, to train up our children in this city. He was ashamed. He wondered who made that law. He had no wife or daughters; if he had, he could never have made that law.

Thieve houses bring ruin on our daughters as well as our sons.

The question was asked, Why don't the city authorities put an end to these places? He was not in the political ring; he could answer better from observation. It was a good deal of wheel within wheel; you pat me on the back and I will pat you. You vote for me, I will vote for you. You get me an office, and whenever there is a chance I will get you in.

Then we are told it is difficult to get the law enforced. He thought if they had been in the city office last Tuesday they would have thought so indeed. It was wonderful how many of the officials had lost their memories. They could not tell what had been done on Monday morning. Policemen, too, almost forgot whether they had been on a certain beat or not. Then they had to have a written statement to refresh their memories as to whether they had arrested certain men.

He was not there, however, to find fault. He had come to the conclusion that the law is never enforced until public sentiment demands it. He put the blame on those who are voters. He did not blame the police altogether. If he was a policeman he would try to keep out of dangerous rows as much as possible. But if ten policemen were not sufficient, let us have five hundred; if necessary every citizen can become a policeman. Brooklyn has something over a half a million of inhabitants and seven years ago the citizens were determined to put down this evil. When they commenced the work prominent men and the police said it was useless to make the attempt. The commissioner said it can be done.

And those who kept these gambling dens and houses of ill-repute were driven out of the city. He had been informed the work had been kept up ever since. In a city of thirty-five thousand you cannot do it. I am ashamed to say it. I believe it can be done. If the police would go down to these places and gather up the men and the boys and march them up the streets, and have their names published in the papers it would make a vast difference.

What we need in this city to-day is a rising up of citizens to counsel the public authorities to do their duty. Let them then tell the police force to go ahead and do your duty, and we will back you with our lives.

Some would say it is no good making war against these evils; they have and will always exist. Small pox has always existed, and hence it is no use taking preventives.

But they say this is a different thing. This is whiskey—you would not popularize it; you would not wish to handle it with kid gloves.

He had accomplished his object, if he had put the young men and women of his congregation on their guard, helped them to shun the places of vice and sin, and lead them into the paths of purity. It is a great deal easier to fall than to rise again.

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# A DOGS FATAL BITE.

## The Terrible Death of Young Henry B. Comly.

The death from hydrophobia of Henry Comly, at his mother's residence, No. 109 South Twentieth street, on Sunday morning, was peculiarly distressing. The deceased, who was a nephew of Seth I Comly, the well known commission merchant, was the only son of a widowed mother, his father, Aaron W. Comly, having died some years ago. The following particulars of the affair were given to a Press reporter by the uncle of the unfortunate youth: Some time in July, 1878, young Comly, then in his eighteenth year, was bitten on the hand be a small dog, which had run into the office of the Girard Life and Trust Company, where the young man was employed as clerk. The dog immediately thereafter ran out of the office, but its actions alarmed the clerk, who feared that the dog was rabid, although the bite he had received was in itself very insignificant. The young man accordingly walked to the dispensary on Fifth street, below Library, to have the wound cauterized, but finding a number of persons ahead of him did not wait, but proceeded to a neighboring druggist, who burned the wound with nitrate of silver. So far as is known, the wound gave no further trouble until the symptoms of the dread disease which caused his death appeared. Some of young Comly's fellow clerks, however, state that he occasionally recurred to the subject of the bite, and it is thought that he brooded over it somewhat, although he never even mentioned to his mother that he had been bitten. Thursday morning last he complained of feeling unwell, and left the Girard Trust Company's office early in the afternoon, being unable to continue at his work. That evening Dr. Harrison Allen was called in to attend him, and immediately pronounced his symptoms those of hydrophobia. On Friday morning, Dr. Henry L. Wood, professor of nervous diseases in the University, was called in consultation. His diagnosis coincided with that of Dr. Allen, and every effort was immediately taken to alleviate the youth's terrible sufferings. Opiates were given internally and hypdermically, and though they did not entirely control the convulsions much relief was afforded. The young man was unable to swallow but a very small quantity of liquids of any description from the time the first symptoms manifested themselves, owing to the spasmodic contractions of the muscles of the throat and chest. Enemata were given, but were also rejected; and although the youth was able to swallow some solid food, it was not sufficient to keep up his strength. All the efforts of the physicians to save his life proved futile, and he died shortly past midnight of Saturday, after nearly three days of suffering.

DR. WOOD'S STATEMENT.

"It was undoubtedly a case of hydrophobia," said Dr. Wood to the reporter. "When I was called in on Friday morning the boy was suffering terribly. At intervals of a few minutes the muscles of the throat and chest contracted spasmodically, giving rise to a fearful agony. We administered powerful opiates and injected morphia and other anesthetics hypodermically. This gave the young man much relief and eased his sufferings considerably. The only hope we had of saving his life was that the hydrophobic symptoms had been superinduced, as is sometimes the case, by his morbidly brooding over the subject, in which event his recovery might have been effected by a proper treatment for the nerves, but I learned his disposition was not such as to warrant that theory, and we devoted ourselves to giving him such relief as was in our power. He had but one or two general convulsions, and although he was more or less delirious throughout his illness, he would at times recognize those about him in the room."

"Was it not remarkable that the disease should have manifested itself so long after the bite was was received?" asked the reporter.

"Yes," replied the Doctor, "but instances have been authenticated where the disease has made its appearance after an interval of ten years. It is quite common for hydrophobia to manifest itself one year after the bite has been received; after two years it is less common, and such instances as that of poor Comly are very rare."

"Why it is that the disease lingers so long in the system?" asked the reporter.

"Well, Youatt, the best authority on hydrophobia we possess, states that it is because the virus is retained in the wound, and in some instances does not become absorbed into the system until years have elapsed. He states that if the wound is thoroughly cauterized at the time the wound is received, or is reopened and burned out at any time before the hydrophobic symptoms manifest themselves, no danger need be feared.

"For instance, if young Comly's thumb had been amputated even a week before the first symstoms appeared, he would not have died from hydrophobia. But as it happened, it was too late to do anything to save him, and all we could do was to alleviate his sufferings."

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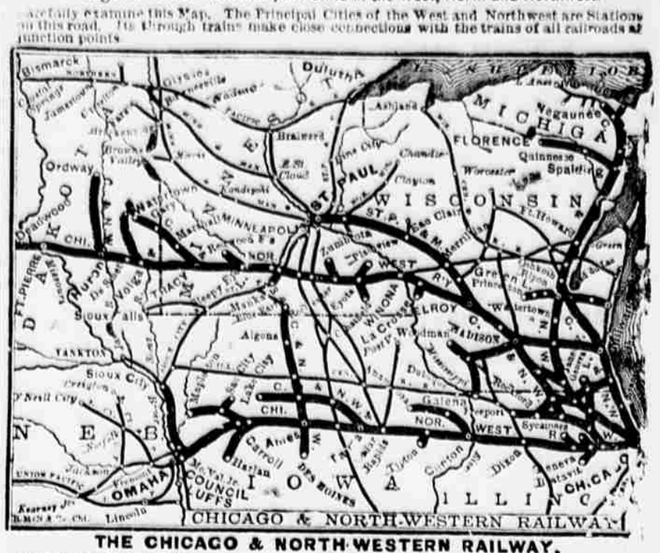


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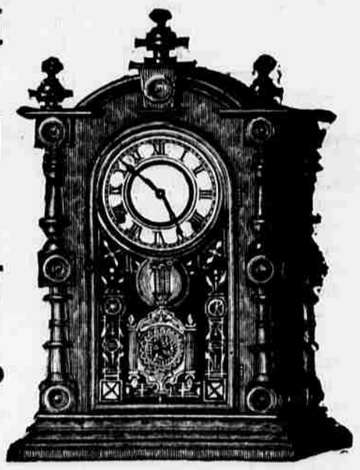

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