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Our Pulpit.

The Demon Alcohol, The Great Demoralizer.

SERMON PREACHED BY
REV. H. F. ADAMS.

In the Baptist Church Fredericton, December 23rd. 1888.

Daniel, 5: 1 & 30 verses. "Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand."
 "In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans slain."

In the character and conduct of this man Belshazzar, is brought before us an aspect of the liquor traffic, that is so wide in extent, that it touches every phase of civilized life, from the Queen on the throne down to the poor wretch who murdered a helpless cripple in Halifax three or four weeks ago. Not only in the lands of civilization, but this curse also penetrates the dark regions of heathendom; turns the once healthy Indian into a full-fledged drunkard, and leaves him a wreck both in body and soul.

This drunken king, and later on this dead king, presents to us this proposition, "What is the relation between strong drink and man's morals?" What is meant by morals? Let us be clear at the outset, and define so simply, that we shall not be misunderstood. By the word moral, we mean the quality or character of a man's actions. It is by what a man does with his tongue and hands, that we call him a man who has good morals or bad morals.

When we speak of God's moral laws, we mean those laws which He has expressed by words, the divine purity and origin of which have been proved by divine actions. These laws were given for the guidance of men. Moral means manner or way, and these laws were given to us that we may so act, that our conduct shall be morally good; that the manner or character of our doings by tongue and hand shall have the approval of the moral Governor of the universe.

In Eccles. 7: 29, we read that "God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." The UPRIGHTNESS of that text refers to man's moral nature. That is to say, when God made man, He made him morally erect; there was no stoop or sin in him, but his soul was morally upright. When we speak of the "Fall of man" we mean that in disobeying his Creator his moral erectness or rectitude was lost; that after his sin, and because of his sin, his tendency was henceforth downward. The earliest proof of this was the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, and later on this moral evil reached its climax, when "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually," and He swept away by water all those antediluvian sinners except eight souls. Even then God did not expunge from man's moral nature, the bad tendency imported into his being at the "fall," for it soon exhibited itself in the very man who had been the saviour of the race, when his sons found him drunk in his tent.

If we say that a man's outward conduct is morally good or morally bad, there must be a cause that makes it so. You must admit that a man is not an automaton, but that he is a free agent, and will act according to his own free choice. Then if a man does an evil thing understandingly, he intended to do evil before he did it, and in his heart there must have been an inward evil motive, which in character corresponded to the outward action.

Now the great question before us to-night is, does intoxicating liquor help men to do right or wrong? Does it exercise any power inwardly that affects man's conduct outwardly? Does it help to make a man morally good or morally bad? Let us look at the man in the text. What was the relation between the wine cup and his morals? Did the liquor which he drank, so inwardly influence him that he acted more nobly, more wisely, more kingly? When the liquor was not in him how did he act? When sober he ruled like a king; when drunk he committed a deed that was a great insult to the God of heaven. His father Nebuchadnezzar brought from the Holy Temple at Jerusalem, the gold and silver vessels, which were used by the Priests in the services of God's sanctuary. Nebuchadnezzar had too much reverence for those holy vessels to use them for anything, but kept them carefully guarded in the house of his gods. Yes, and so did his son when he was sober.

But there came an hour when Belshazzar sat down to feast in the royal banquetting house, surrounded by a thousand of his lords, each arrayed in court robes bejewelled and costly. The tables groaned beneath the weight of superbly prepared viands, and the silver tankards glistened, and the golden bowls dazzled as they reflected the brilliant light of the great candelabra. By the liveried servitors the ruby liquor was poured

from the tankards into the cups, then lifted to the lips of king and courtiers, then of its own free will it crept upward and brainward till it made the king jolly and jocular.

Half drunken men generally like to have some "fun," and in this state of rollicking frenzy, the king thought it would be great fun to briag out those Jerusalem vessels, drink out of them and praise his idols. In a fatal moment he gave the order to bring those vessels of gold on to the banquet table. With trembling hands, I think I see the servants place them before the king, then fill them with the fire-water, and the jolly king quaffed the mocking wine. He handed the same to his princes, his wives, and to his concubines, and all drank to the honor of his dumb gods.

That action was a great sacrilege; it was morally a bad deed, for it was sinning against the God of heaven, thus to prostitute, what he had sanctified, to the low purposes of the debauching banqueters. When Belshazzar was sober, he would never have thought of using those sacred vessels for such a purpose. With a brain free from the blighting power of strong drink, he would no more have thought of drinking out of those consecrated cups, than of cutting off his right hand.

While the carousing monarch was having some "fun" in making a breach in the moral law, the God of the moral law was preparing to execute the penalty thus incurred, on the guilty king's head. Like a flash of lightning there "appeared the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN."

"God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it."

"Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting."

"Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

The king saw the hand that wrote; his countenance changed; and his thoughts troubled him; for he awoke from his drinking reverie to a sense of the awfulness of that God whom he had so basely insulted, but too late to avoid the doom he merited. Listen to the grand charge which the great Daniel brings against him while translating the mysterious writing. Referring to his father's exaltation and humiliation by God, he says to the offending king, "And thou, his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but has lifted up thyself, against the Lord of heaven, and they have brought the vessels of His House before thee, thou and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, and brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in Whose hand thy breath is, and Whose are all thy ways, HAST THOU NOT GLORIFIED."

"In that night was Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans slain."

Now sirs, what is the relation between intoxicating liquor and man's morals? Is it not the same relation as that which exists between a fiend and an angel? Between Christ and Belial? between heaven and hell? Who murdered Belshazzar on that memorable night? Darius? No, no, no. According to the reasoning of a common school boy, any one can see that strong drink did it. He was a great man, a mighty man, but the ruby wine laid him low. He was an intelligent man, surrounded by culture and refinement, but the mocking draught turned him into an idiot, and under the spell of its frenzy he wrought an evil deed that like the boomerang returned in destructive force on his own head.

"But" say you "he chose to drink the liquor, and therefore he was responsible for its effects on his brain and consequent death." I grant you the correctness of your argument. I never said that Belshazzar was not responsible for taking that which he knew would stupefy him. I know that he who drinks liquor is a suicidist, while alcohol is at the same time a murderer. Belshazzar's death was a joint work between his will and his wine. What I have said and have proved is this, that liquor so affects a man's brain, that mighty organ of thought, that under its muddling influence he loses his manliness, and all control of his passions, and gives expression to words of the vilest character, of which he is ashamed in his sober moments; and often conducts himself in his actions more like a devil than a man. What I have asserted and have proved is this, that when a man voluntarily becomes a slave to alcohol, like a mighty tyrant, it lowers the moral tone of his heart, forces his moral trend downwards, and so completely demoralizes him, as to move his tongue and hands to say and do that which we all call immoral.

Now I have proved my case, we will illustrate it.

In yonder city of Halifax is a motherless family. Never again will those dear children see their young mother's face, unless it be for a moment at the judgment bar of Almighty God. Could you have gazed for a moment on the countenance of a once fair girl, as she

lay in her coffin you surely would have lifted a prayer to Almighty God, that no child of yours might drop into a drunkard's grave, as did poor Eliza Nixon. What an awful epitaph will be written on her past. "She drank herself to death," so said the newspapers.

I ask you men and women, old and young, "What was the relation between strong drink, and the morals of Eliza Nixon?" It robbed her of her womanhood; it crushed out all the noble instincts of a mother; it withered and blighted and blasted all the prospects of that little home, and hurled with pitiless tyranny those poor helpless children on to a cold world, to sink or swim in the struggle for existence.

There lies in a culprits cell in that same capital of Nova Scotia, a man who once had a brave British heart. Who never fled from field of battle, he never. No danger withered his soldierly courage; and before no foe would his martial spirit cower. Like a great-heart he strode the field intent on victory to the British arms. But when well-directed shot missed his heart, and the flashing sword could not succeed, a glass of liquor over-powered his once heroic spirit, and turned the British hero into a British devil. He beat his poor hard-working wife, bruised his half-starved children, and wound up with the murder of Frank Norgraine. As you gaze upon that poor victim of strong drink in his cell, and outline with your mind's eye the scaffold from which he may swing, I ask you in the name of heaven, "What is the relation between intoxicating liquor and the morals of William Summers?"

LET THE SILENT CORPSE OF FRANK NORGRAINE ANSWER.

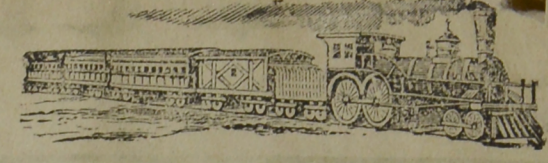
How does the liquor traffic affect the morals of those who make and sell strong drinks as a beverage? Are the brewers and distillers the leaders in the great work of lifting fallen humanity on to a higher platform, spiritually, morally, socially, and financially? It is they who inaugurate and carry on the blessed works of philanthropy among the degraded poor? Do the muscle and nerve of aggressive christian efforts to save men from hell, derive their strength, from the magnates of the liquor traffic? Whoever heard of a brewer or distiller or a saloonist being a teacher in a Sabbath school? or a worker in the numerous missions which are directed to the uplifting of the wretched poor? The real truth is, that these are the very men who make most works of charity a necessity. The jail, the hospital, and the asylum are in large part needed and occupied by the victims of their traffic. What kind of inner life can such manufacturers of criminals, physical wrecks, and lunatics experience? What degree of moral purity, and heart elevation can such men enjoy? 'Tis true some of them are in Parliament. So is Bradlaugh. Some may be in a church, so was Judas. Others may move in the highest circles of society, so did Herod.

Those who make liquor and those who sell it, as a rule experience bad effects on their moral nature. An analysis of all the saloonists characters by no means presents any redeeming features to this statement. In New York of all her six thousand saloonists over two thirds have been criminals, and many of them are under police surveillance. And while an examination of the moral standing of the saloonists in these provinces would not reveal such an appalling state of affairs, yet it would be found that they have the lowest moral standing of any in society, perhaps I ought to say out of society, for both saloons and saloonists are regarded by all wise people as foreign to the true interests of man's social condition. It is not therefore extraordinary that distillers, brewers, and saloonists are always associated in the minds of people with a low tone of morality, because the results of the nefarious traffic is the production of a low tone of morals among the men and women who patronize them.

What is the effect of the liquor traffic on the moral power of professed ministers of the Gospel who consent to it as a legitimate business, and who even patronize it? Show me an ecclesiastic who winks at the traffic, or uses beer, spirit, or wine, and I will show you a man who is shorn of all the Christly greatness that ought to be his heritage. Such a man is not only not a help to the true work of a ministry but is a positive hindrance to the progress to the kingdom of God. I am sorry to know of such men occupying positions of great social influence, who ought and might have great moral power over others, if they apprehend the true genius and spirit of our holy religion. It is a sad sight to see any man stripped of the real greatness that belongs to manhood by the liquor traffic, but to behold a man professing discipleship of the self-denying Christ in the sacred office of the ministry, abrogating his more than royal power and moral strength by alliance with the drink traffic, is a sight that evokes the pity of angels, and the sorrow of christian men and women everywhere.

When I was in college, I once supplied what might be considered one of the higher class Baptist churches in London,

Continued on third page.



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- 8.45 A. M.—Express for Fredericton Junction Vanceboro, Bangor, Portland, Boston and points West; St. Stephen, St. Andrew's Houlton, Woodstock, Presque Isle, Grand Falls, Edmundston and points north.
- 12.50 P. M.—For Fredericton Junction, St. John and points east.
- 3.40 P. M.—For Fredericton Junction, St. John and points East.

ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON

- 11.35 A. M.—From Fredericton Junction, St. John and points East.
- 3.10 P. M.—From Fredericton Junction, Vanceboro, Bangor, Portland, Boston, and points West, St. Andrew's, St. Stephen, Houlton Woodstock and points north.
- 6.15 P. M.—From Fredericton Junction and St. Stephen.
- 6.30 P. M.—Express from St. John, and intermediate points.

LEAVE GIBSON.

- 6.50 A. M.—Mixed for Woodstock, and points north.

ARRIVE AT GIBSON.

- 4.45 P. M.—Mixed from Woodstock, and points north.

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