

February 28, 1913

## THE KING'S HIGHWAY.

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REV. DR. W. H. SMITH.

REV. DR. W. H. SMITH, PASTOR PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FREDERICTON, N. B., DISCUSSES EVILS OF INTEMPERANCE.

Rev. Dr. Smith in his address spoke in part as follows:

The trend of modern democracy is toward the widening sphere of Government action as expressed in legislation. Formerly the chief concerns of governments were the protection of life and property from the enemy within and without, trade regulation and transportation. Now with the ever widening vision of democracy the range of legislation is correspondingly widened and enemies are found in moral and social conditions. The emphasis falls upon social regulations and the ideal is human brotherhood. One of the great unsolved problems is the liquor traffic. Science has solved its meaning and no doubt remains. The word of God has solved the problem and no doubt lingers concerning the meaning of drunkenness or how alcoholism should be treated. Every drunkard has solved the problem only to find alcohol is his master and a hard master. Every sober man has verified the claim that sobriety is victory. The State hesitates to grapple with this enemy at close quarters. Is the present attitude of the State wise? Is it in keeping with the vision of democracy?

There are two elements in the question. First, the personal. Some men delight in stimulating the physical system. In this sense alcohol becomes the object of craving even though it degrades and curses. It is anarchy in life. Reason fails to check its ravages. Drunkenness is thus a vice and has existed in every age. The solution of this aspect of the question is the elevation of the individual. The family, the school, the church all seek to save and only when a higher type of manhood and womanhood is reached will victory crown the brows of the tempted. Then, second, there is the organized traffic in liquors. This is the product of the commercial spirit which can make money rapidly and with little labor. The spirit is greed. It has developed into a great combine, a trust, an institution which has become a public menace and deadly enemy. It is with this aspect I now deal and in a word of public menace must be met by the strong, enlightened voice of legislation. This is the universal method.

*The Effects of the Liquor Traffic*

A glance at the effect of the liquor traffic upon public well being serves to call the attention to certain phases of the question often overlooked. Many regard it as a very small affair, so that any agitation for its total suppression seems to them fanatical or sectarian. Let me say that such an attitude is based upon either pure ignorance or such complicity with the traffic as blinds to its awful consequences. The evils are too great to be even outlined here but a few facts will suggest the kind of evil being wrought in the country. In the first place there is the evil visited upon the individual. This, too, is many sided. It directly leads to and produces deterioration in character which results in industrial inefficiency. No employer of labor will engage a drinking man if he can possibly get a sober man. Thus the drinker is out of the race, handicapped in his chosen life work. And why? Drinking means loss of time, poor work, danger to self and others, death. The great transportation companies will not permit their men even to visit saloons when off duty. In 1904 the British Parliament appointed a Commission on Physical Deterioration. "Of 61,215 men between 25 and 65 years of age, 1,000 die in one year, but of publicans 1,642 die in one year, while of total abstainers only 560 die." "Insurance statistics show that out of 100,000 persons aged thirty, some 44,000 would reach an age of 70, while over 55,000 abstainers might be expected to reach that age or 25 per cent. more." What an awful tragedy in a nation's life. Then further, alcoholism is the more active cause of disease. Even where there is registration of the cause of death only the most pronounced diseases are noted, no provision being made for the life everyone knows is destroyed by alcoholism. It is also the indirect cause of many diseases. The French Permanent Committee on Tuberculosis reporting in July 1912 stated that of 2192 cases examined, 1229 were due to alcoholism. It is also the cause of much insanity. Statistics vary from 10 to 33 per cent, but even on the smallest figures the horror to humanity is appalling. Then, again, alcoholism has a direct bearing on poverty. The lowest figures of official value claim that 10 per cent., the highest that 50 per cent. of poverty is due to drunkenness. No doubt conditions greatly vary but of the wretchedness flowing from drink there can be no doubt. Then, also, alcoholism is the fruitful parent of crime. Taking the civilized world as a unit it is quite within the mark to say that fully 50 per cent. of crime is chargeable to alcohol.

In the second place, the effect upon the community is equally marked. The saloon is the manufactory of drunkards and criminals. Very few begin to drink outside the saloon. This is due to the fact that the saloon offers the tokens of sociability. It at the same time gives the opportunity of awakening all the dormant abnormal hereditary tendencies. As such it is the breeding ground of iniquity. It is further directly opposed to every worthy institution in the community. It is lawless, openly defying law and authority and making lawlessness a settled principle in civic life. It mars every corporate relation of life and especially the political. It first debauches men and then controls their vote. By treating, which is only another word for poisoning, by bribing, by making promises, and by brutal

threats it has almost if not in many places altogether become the balance of political power.

In the third place it has a definite bearing upon industry. For every million dollars invested in the steel business 496 men are employed; in lumber 726; in leather 580; in transportation 858 but in liquor only 104. In the United States alone if the money now in the liquor business was invested in productive industry over two millions more men could be employed. Labor has no greater enemy than the saloon. The direct loss due in loss of time, wages, sickness and lower standards equals at least 25 per cent. of the earning power of labor. The indirect loss is also great.

These things may indicate the kind of enemy we face in New Brunswick. Its consequences are far reaching. I doubt whether all efforts at immigration have succeeded in filling the gaps made by the liquor traffic. If we could stop this curse, save our people from its influences, develop the resources of the individual there would seem to be little doubt that in a generation this Province would be the banner Province of the Dominion in efficiency.

*What Action Should Be Taken?*

In view of these things what action should be taken? The answer demands a policy and a method. It may be assumed as granted that such an enemy lost to all sense of moral considerations will only be successfully met by the strong arm of the law. To tolerate is to tolerate death to the individual and the highest in life. It is like tolerating the deadly germ. To regulate is to try and regulate the deadly disease germ. The sphere of operation may be restricted but within that sphere and far beyond the deadly poison will act. It seems to me we necessarily face the position of abolition. We prohibit the outlaw, the anarchist, the criminal. We quarantine against the spread of infectious diseases. We refuse to permit contagion to enter the sphere of public activity. We interfere in a case of attempted suicide, we take children from incompetent parents, we stop a drunken brawl, we step in when there is interference with the rights of others and we do it seriously in everything except the saloon. Why exempt the source and direct cause of all other offences? The saloon directly plunges into public life, defies our laws, forces us to spend millions to care for its by-products and yet there are those who claim that the best way is to regulate it. I say that such a position is morally indefensible and has been condemned by all recent investigations into social vice. In view of the tremendous interests involved and the history of toleration and regulation there is only one position which plants its feet on the bed rock of ethical and spiritual reality and that is total abstinence for the individual and total prohibition by the state. Within the individual life freedom must be granted. But a public menace and a nuisance must be abolished. If any man can show how the saloon can be regulated so that it does not become a public nuisance it will be time enough to discuss the wisdom of such a regulation. No such case exists. To assume there is such a case is to contradict the fact of social history. The policy demanded by the facts is the prohibition of the traffic, not only in law but also in administration.

Just a word as to method. There is ground for difference of opinion as to whether prohibition can be successfully accomplished in