

Temperance Column

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging. Whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.—Prov. 1:20.

RISE AND FALL OF LIQUOR CONSUMPTION

Consumption of alcohol beverages, which during the Prohibition period of 1920-1932 dropped 61 per cent from its per capita peak in 1914, shot up immediately after repeal, reaching by January 1, 1940, a percentage 59.6 per capita higher than the low mark of the Prohibition period.

Nearly 100,000 persons are rejected every year by insurance companies because of alcoholic indulgence.

For every dollar spent for liquor in 1939, there was only 75 cents spent for public education, 50 cents for tobacco, 25 cents for motion pictures, \$1.25 for dairy products, 7 cents for toys; 4 cents for flowers, and 17 cents for confectionery.

While actual deaths due partly or entirely to alcoholism are, according to Government reports, probably three times the number tabulated in official records, the fact remains that the low mark of repeal (2 deaths per 100,000 in 1939) is exactly twice the proportion of deaths due to alcoholism officially recorded in the first year of Prohibition.

The number of traffic deaths has varied since repeal, but the totals for 1938 and 1939 (respectively 32,400 and 32,600) are 6,000 greater each year than the average annual number of traffic deaths during the last 10 years of Prohibition, or 1923 to 1932.

Even on the basis of statements published by the Distilled Spirits Institute, arrests for drunkenness for 1938 were 78½ per cent higher than in 1932, the last year of National Prohibition.—Forward.

"TEMPERANCE" RETURNS

The liquor bill for America in 1939 was \$5,000,000,000, not far short of fifty per cent of the nation's total bill for food and clothing and residence construction—normal living expenses. It is almost unbelievable, but the figures show that there is now in America one licensed saloon for every 209 population, including small children and infants. It is a record never before even approximated in America or in any other nation.—Religious Telescope.

"THEN CALLED I UPON * * THE LORD"

David said, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord." Note the **then**.

I was just reading of some Jews, driven by the terrible persecution from Germany, who, in England, gladly listened to the gospel message—a message which was abhorrent to them as they had lived in the former security of their native land.

There is something about prosperity and safety and comfort which tends to make us forget God and our need of Him. Some who were once faithful in Christian living have not at all been able to understand the gentle zephyrs of everything favorable—a few can do well in both temporal and spiritual things.

But reverses, trouble, how kind are these if they drive us to seek His face!

"THE LENGTH OF THE SERMON"

The following is an outline of an address by Dean Charles R. Brown, of the Divinity School of Yale University, delivered to a group of clergymen of the west coast some years ago. To learn how to make and deliver a better sermon should be the lifelong quest of the Christian worker.

1. The length of the sermon is not measured by the clock. A sermon is long when people are no longer interested in it and when they think it is long.

2. A sermon is short when the congregation wants more. When they wish you would go on. Even if you have preached forty-five minutes the sermon may be considered short if the people are absorbed in it.

3. When a congregation is really interested in a sermon it does not know time or space. The speaker, however, should have a time-piece where he can see it and stop preaching in time for people to go home and attend to their usual duties.

4. A good sermon needs a skeleton to build on, but the skeleton should be hidden within the meat of the discourse. The preacher should aim at something and press on toward it in logical fashion.

5. Do not dwell at undue length on the obvious. Take it for granted that the people have some knowledge and imagination.

6. Be careful in choosing texts. Get short, pointed ones. Long ones bewilder the audience at once. Do not preach in epigrams. People starve on that sort of thing. They need spiritual food.

7. Introductions should be brief. Do not start a sermon by repeating the whole history of the Old Testament in order to get momentum. Introductions are intended to make the speaker and congregation acquainted and then they are to manage for themselves.

8. Conclusions are important. Study carefully how you are going to alight, as the flyer does. You must stop and come down somewhere. Be sure you know when and where and how you are going to do it. Introduction and conclusion are very often the most important and most serious parts of the sermon. They should be planned ahead.

9. The usual length of a sermon is thirty minutes, but under some conditions forty-five or even sixty minutes may be considered too short a discourse. Any sermon is too long if it tires the congregation and the people become unconscious of the purpose and spirit of the preacher. Better keep watch of the congregation and stop while the auditors are absorbed in your discourse. They will want to come back for more.

10. The best preaching is not orating, but rather conversing. The conversational method is about the best way to communicate the preacher's message. Simple language, free from technical phrases, is best. Short sentences are better than long and involved ones. Straightforward, direct and forceful presentation is by far the best method of conveying God's message to men.

THE SOUL'S AWAKENING

The hope of the soul is in getting awakened; to break up the fatal sleep; to rouse it from its lethargy concerning sin, holiness, hell, heaven; to make it sensible of its own nature; capacities of character; its responsi-

bilities, its need of Jesus, its possible punishment and possible blessedness; this is indeed the preparatory work, and the first step toward genuine repentance. Paul cried out to some of the Ephesians, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The splendid heart assuring evidence of a soul waking up is seen in its conviction for sin. Instead of snoring contentedly in sin, he is crying, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" Instead of feeling satisfied with himself and his little world, he prays for forgiveness for his wickedness. What a sinner he is! How great! How just is God's wrath! Thank God, conscience can be set on fire by the faithful preaching of God's Word.—Selected.

THE REAL TASK

Religious statisticians are coming to think that counting only persons thirteen years of age and over as church members is likely to be more accurate than the methods previously followed. On that basis the nation last year had a total church membership of 52,000,000 persons, of whom 15,000,000 were Catholics and 3,000,000 Jews. Among the Protestant family groups, the Baptists had 9,000,000, and the Methodists (minus independent Negro groups), 6,500,000; and, as individual denominations, Northern Presbyterians had 1,800,000; Protestant Episcopal, 1,300,000; American, United and Synodical Lutheran Conferences, 3,000,000; Congregational-Christian, 1,000,000; Disciples, 1,500,000. The Protestant membership of 34,000,000 should be multiplied by 2.2 at least in order to secure Protestant population. To that figure should be added those for Roman Catholics and Jews. The difference between that total and the population of the country will indicate the evangelistic opportunity that is open to the forces of religion. It is obvious that their chief task for some time to come must be the bringing of those nominally associated with them to a vital appreciation of the sacred obligation and thrilling challenge of such connection.—Christian Advocate.

THE PREACHER AND THE WORK

By Bishop C. V. Fairbairn

That I have served the church for years is no reason why I must, whether or no, be continued on circuits regardless of what comes to the work through, by, or because of me. God's work is greater and more important than any man. "Save that man to the work if you can," wrote good Bishop D. S. Warner to me, "but save the work at any cost."

The work! God's work! God's very own work! The church must never dump a man overboard because of infirmity or decrepitude. But, in the light of the judgment, the church cannot afford to retain in her service men who, through outside interests, coldness of heart, indifference, laziness (physical or mental), unwillingness to improve themselves even upon the advice and warning of those who have the work in charge, cease to be useful—possibly become even detrimental to the work, yet they themselves may not be aware of the fact. "Occupy till I come" Thus said Jesus. Anything less than this is disobedience and, when souls are at stake, may even be criminal, and the church cannot afford to condone, endorse, or permit such to continue. Read Romans 13:11-14, please.