

# The King's Highway

Moses D Hillman, Jan 55

## AN ADVOCATE OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS

VOL. XXXVIII.

MONCTON, N. B., OCTOBER 15, 1955

No. 374

### Why Do We Pretend?

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In "New York Temperance Action"

A change has come in the meaning of the word temperance during the last twenty-five years.

A generation or so ago it meant just one thing—total abstinence. Temperance people were teetotallers—Blue Ribboners. A temperance hotel was a hotel where no alcoholic liquors of any kind were sold. A temperance pledge was a pledge to abstain from the sale or use of intoxicating beverages altogether.

Today there is a very different idea of temperance abroad. As a result of nation-wide advertising and educational programs, temperance in many circles is now understood as moderation. People in all walks of life have been taught to believe that a temperate person is one who has learned to drink intelligently. Consequently, the stress now is on polite and controlled drinking.

This may sound like an orthodox return to the dictionary definition of temperance. Actually it is an invitation to unsuspecting alcoholism. This cultured emphasis on controlled drinking, as a part of social and business transactions, betrays thousands of people into tragedy beyond description. No stage jokes or would-be humour can conceal that fact, however much we may roar with laughter at the comedian three sheets in the wind. Unless the Christian church lifts the temperance banner again in a ringing crusade for total abstinence, the life of our nation is undone.

#### Journalists Cannot Escape Responsibility

The public press has a serious responsibility in this matter. Newspapers that print sage and pious editorials regarding the work of Alcoholics Anonymous, at the same time that they accept thousands of dollars for the liquor advertising that defeats the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, are under obligation under God to examine not only their conscience but their sanity. The ethics of journalism are at stake. We shall never get to first base on this whole question of temperance and sobriety until we come to grips with the economic issue involved. The sordid fact about alcoholism is that it is not only a result of personal weakness on the part of individuals, but a product of the deliberately planned sales program of giant economic monopolies that do not hesitate for one moment to sacrifice every value of religion, character, and family life at the altars of huge financial profit. The newspaper and radio and television world should face the facts.

We appeal to the men of the advertising and

journalistic world. Have you no heart of compassion? Why don't you lend us a hand in an honest to God fight against the whole evil of the liquor business, instead of romanticizing about the theory that "there are some people who are allergic to alcohol?" As if alcoholism were nothing more than a kind of diabetes, and alcohol no more a problem than sugar! Why will you not recognize that there is a conscienceless exploitation of human weakness going on all the time, by commercial agencies that for the sake of money, multiply alcoholics faster than we can rehabilitate them?

#### Alcoholism Is Not An Illness

Let us not get the idea that every alcoholic is some kind of sick abnormal person. This is a notion that the liquor dealers and trade journals like to seize upon. For the most part, alcoholics are basically fine people—generous, sociable, and friendly.

They were not emotionally sick people at all until drink got hold of them. It was gracious social example, and highly psychologized advertising, and irresponsible religion, that made them what they are. We might as well face the fact that we have completely bogged down on this whole subject of "temperance." We need more total abstainers—a solid block of people who will develop a 100 per cent sales resistance to every glamorous beverage appeal of the bill-board, radio, television, newspaper, and magazine advertisers. Once this army of total abstainers has been recruited, by sheer force of public opinion the liquor business will go—banished by the power of conscience and spiritual desire, as it should have been banished long ago.

#### Saboteurs of Our Way of Life

This is as big a challenge to the church as communism, war, race prejudice, or any other major social evil. Bigger, in many ways, for it is an evil that cuts across all racial lines, economic barriers and political ideologies, confusing men and angering them at the very moment when we need more calmness of mind than at any time in the history of mankind. If a liquor dealer sells a customer a bottle of intoxicants that results in an automobile accident that smashes up half a dozen lives in one evening, is not that seller just as much a saboteur of our way of life as if he were a communist? Certainly he is. The task ahead of us in this whole area of temperance is too large an assignment for science, medicine, psychiatry, or education to handle alone. This is a job for religion, and an appeal to the will. It is not just a secular matter. It is a moral question, rooted in the nature of God, and the universal character and compassion of the eternal Christ. Unless we see it in those terms, and in the shadow of Calvary's cross, we cannot approach the issue with adequate resources of faith.

### Travailing For Souls

By Charles H. Spurgeon

"As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children."—Isaiah 66:8

Before there has fallen a great benediction upon God's people, it has been preceded by great searchings of heart. It was so with the work of Nehemiah. His book begins with a description of the travail of his heart. He was a patriot, a man of nervous, excitable temperament, and keen sensibility for God's honour, and when his soul had felt great bitterness and longing, then he arose to build, and a great blessing rested on his efforts.

In the early dawn of Christian history, there was a preparation of the Church before it received an increase. Look at the obedient disciples sitting in the upper room, waiting with anxious hope. Every heart there had been ploughed with anguish by the death of the Lord. Each one was intent to receive the promised boon of the Spirit. There, with one heart and one mind, they tarried, but not without wrestling prayer, and so the Comforter was given, and three thousand souls were given also.

And this, dear friends, while it is true on the large scale, is true also in every individual case. A man with no sensibility of compassion for other men's souls, may accidentally be the means of a conversion. The good word which he utters will not cease to be good because the speaker had no right to declare God's statutes. The bread and meat which were brought to Elijah were not less nourishing because the ravens brought them, but the ravens remained ravens still. A hard-hearted man may say a good thing which God will bless, but as a rule, those who bring souls to Christ are those who first of all have felt an agony of desire that souls should be saved.

This is imaged to us in our Master's character. He is the great Saviour of men, but before He could save others, He learned in their flesh to sympathize with them. He wept over Jerusalem, He sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane. He was, and is, a High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. As the Captain of our salvation, in bringing many sons unto glory, He was made perfect by sufferings. Even Christ went not forth to preach until He had spent nights in intercessory prayer, and uttered strong cryings and tears for the salvation of His hearers.

His ministering servants who have been most useful have always been eagerly desirous to do so. If any minister can be satisfied without conversions he shall have no conversions. God will not force usefulness on any man. It is only when our heart breaks to see men saved that we shall be likely

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