



The Primary Catechism on Beer.

(By Julia Colman, National Temperance Society, New York.)

LESSON V.

THE VARIOUS KINDS OF MALT LIQUORS

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Q.—What is lager beer?

A.—Beer that goes through its last fermentation very slowly and stands a long time.

Q.—Is it intoxicating like other beer?

A.—It is, just in proportion to the alcohol it contains.

Q.—What is its proportion of alcohol?

A.—About four or four and a half percent.

Q.—What do you mean by percent?

A.—So many parts in the hundred.

Q.—What is the proportion of alcohol in common beer?

A.—About five percent.

Q.—What is the strongest malt liquor.

A.—Old English ale, which often has ten, twelve, or even fourteen percent alcohol.

The Ox Sermon.

(Rev. Charles S. Wood, in 'American Messenger'.)

Old sermons have sometimes been spoken of as 'dried tongue.' But there are many discourses founded on divine truth that are a living power long after the voice that uttered them has become silent. Such is the well-known Ox-Sermon, which has had a wide circulation in America and Europe.

It was written by the Rev. David Merrill, and preached in the Presbyterian Church of Urbana, Ohio, more than sixty years ago. This effective weapon of the past has been brought into use in the recent conflict between the friends of temperance and the liquor power in Ohio. It was repeated, March 15, 1895, in Urbana by the Rev. J. B. Helwig, D.D., the pastor of the church once served by Mr. Merrill.

Those who are conversant with the condition of society sixty years ago know how general was the use of wine and liquor in all parts of the United States and also in England. The year 1825 was the culmination of this tide of intemperance.

When the evil was at its most appalling stage the heart of the people was awakened. The organization of the Temperance Society in 1826 was followed by energetic and far-reaching efforts to stay the flood of vice, and temperance reformation in a variety of methods became one of the most powerful and widespread movements in the United States. The Ox-Sermon was one of the forces in this reformation which acted powerfully upon the opinions and feelings of men. It was an original argument, which created and educated public opinion, yet it was simply a new application of principles underlying one of the laws of Moses.

The text is in Exodus xxi., 28, 29: 'If an ox gore a man or a woman that they die, . . . and if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.'

The principle is that every person is responsible for the evils which result from his selfishness and indifference to the welfare of others.

Two points are stated and clearly established:—

1. Is ardent spirit wont to produce misery and wretchedness and death?

2. Has this been testified to those who deal in it; that is, makers and retailers?

The affirmative proof is so powerfully stated that it could not be denied. Then the startling conclusion inevitably follows that they are responsible for the effects of the liquor they make and sell.

One who reads the sermon to-day will not find its positions new or strange; but when it was delivered they were regarded as 'violently new school,' 'dangerously radical,' and 'impracticably ultra.' It aroused considerable opposition and harsh comment. But during his earthly life Mr. Merrill had the satisfaction of knowing that through its influence many liquor sellers at great pecuniary sacrifice gave up this business, and that it made friends and advocates of temperance of many who had been its enemies.

The first delivery of the sermon gave no promise of its future widespread usefulness. The occasion was a temperance meeting attended by less than one hundred persons. It was printed in the 'Urbana Citizen,' a weekly paper. A copy of it was sent to the author's brother in Indianapolis. It was read by Mr. John H. Farnum, who caused a pamphlet edition of five hundred copies to be printed at Salem, Ind. The Rev. M. H. Wilder, a tract agent, sent a copy to the American Tract Society, which passed it on to the Temperance Society. It was published as the 'Temperance Recorder, Extra,' for circulation in every family in the United States. The edition numbered 2,200,000 copies. Numerous editions have been published since.

About 1845 the American Tract Society published it as No. 475 of their series of Tracts, and up to 1890 issued 184,900 copies. They also publish an edition in German. An abridgement of it, under the title, 'Is it Right?' was published, and 100,000 copies of it distributed.

It has also been circulated in Canada, in England, in Germany, and in other countries, but the foreign circulation is unknown. Few, if any, sermons have been so widely read, and probably none has had so great an influence in moulding public sentiment.

The recital of this discourse awakened such an interest that a request was made for the sermon on the text, 'Neither be partaker of other men's sins,' known as the mate to the Ox-Sermon.

His First Chance.

A young man had just joined the church. He was in the very first glow of religious elation, and eager to do something definite and important to prove himself worthy of the Christian name. It was a country church, old and conservative. There were few young people in it, and there did not seem to be any opportunity for practical every-day Christian work.

In the congregation was a man who had been a drunkard. To use a common phrase, he had reformed, and had become a changed man. He was thinking seriously of uniting with the church when his probation had ended.

One day, in stress of temptation, he was overcome by his old appetite. He remained under its debasing influences for about a week. Then he went in great trouble to a friend and said: 'What shall I do?'

'Do?' said the other. 'There is but one thing to do. Go to the prayer-meeting. Take your usual seat, rise at the usual time and tell the whole story. Ask the pardon of God and of the church. Do this, if you are sorry. If you are not sorry, stay away.'

The poor fellow went, and did as he had

been advised. Tremblingly he told of his temptation and of his fall. With tears he offered his confession, and asked that the petitions of God's people might be offered for Divine help, that he might never again be overcome by temptation; but not a word of encouraging response or a prayer in his behalf was offered by any of the members.

The meeting ended. The people filed out past him on their way from the church. Not one of them approached him. It seems incredible—but this is no fiction. They who had vowed to cherish and help the penitent and the fallen went out and left their erring brother standing alone in his shame in the House of God.

'It can't be true. He must be a hypocrite,' one said to another, as an excuse for this neglect.

'It is no use to coddle such men. They are a disgrace to the parish,' said a third.

The young church-member passed out with the rest. Some feeling of sympathy agitated his heart. He watched the retreating figure of the abashed and humiliated man as he slunk away from the church with bowed head. The sight troubled him. He went home, but could not stay. He wandered out again, and his anxiety led him to the drunkard's house.

He hardly dared to knock at the door. He grew hot and cold, wondering what he ought to do. At last, he thought he heard a woman weeping within, and summoning all his courage he rang the bell, and then wished himself a thousand miles away. He had never spoken to the man in his life, and he thought that probably his intrusion would be considered impertinent.

The wife admitted him, weeping.

'Oh,' she said, 'help me! Maybe you've come in time to stop it. John is going away. He's packing up. He's going for good! He's leaving me and the children! He'll never come back. He says he'll never set foot in this town again. He's so ashamed for what he has done, and the way they've treated him. He never can hold up his head again. Oh! can't you plead with him, and prevent him from going?'

The young man forgot his timidity. 'I will try,' he said. He went into the room with the discouraged penitent and shut the door. The sounds of pleading—then of prayer—came through the partition to the wife's eager ears. An hour later the visitor came out. Behind him walked a man whose head was erect.

'Well, Jennie,' he said, 'seems I've got one friend left in this place. As long as he sticks I'll try to stick, too.'

Hope and determination were stirred. Another attempt for permanent reform would now be made. The unselfishness of the young Christian, in doing what others did not do, had accomplished this. The man was saved to his family. His soul had been strengthened in its fight with evil. Such consecrated work by every Christian would win supreme honor to Christianity and hasten the universal reign of Christ in the hearts and lives of men.—The 'Family Circle.'

The saloon-keeper in many cases abhors his business, but puts on his apron because 'there is money in it.' The town hates the saloon and fears it, but answers not a word when 'money talks.' A church must be popular or go behind financially, and a church that must be popular is worthless—as a church. I reckon that millions of people in America see the validity and value and virtue of the argument for the prohibition of the saloon. But the money devil whispers, 'That is all right, but what about the saloon-keeper's trade? What about your salary, your seminary, your chance of office, your subscription list, your new church?' and they break down at the 'money question.'—John G. Wooley.