

The Great Temperance Reform

It was recently said by the Bishop of Lincoln, England, "If we are going to get rid of the poverty, the bad housing, the dirt, the recklessness, the lax morals, the brutality of the slums, we must certainly remove these people from the drink trade or the drink trade from the people. Very much else, indeed, will remain to be done; but until we deal drastically with the drink, all other reforms will be either impossible or futile."

Said John Wesley, the revered founder of Methodism, "Touch no dram; it is liquid fire: It is a sure, though slow, poison; it saps the very spring of life."

The Methodism of Canada has never compromised with the traffic in strong drink. We have always been unfalteringly and determinedly aggressive in the unceasing struggle to destroy this enemy of the health, happiness, homes and hopes of the people. Whether the battle was for personal abstinence or provincial prohibition; local option in a municipality, or the banishment of the traffic from a county, or a larger area; the seeking of amendments to further extend the principle of prohibition in our license laws, or an effort to obtain a provincial prohibitory enactment; the enforcement of the prohibitive sections of the liquor legislation in any Province, in Newfoundland, or in Bermuda, or any other purpose whose object was a victory over the traffic in strong drink. There has been neither hesitancy nor inactivity. The declared principles and recommendations adopted by the General Conference of our Church have been loyally, earnestly, persistently and unhesitatingly followed. Their restatement will refresh the memory of our people and possibly prove of help in future campaigns:—

1. Total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors is the imperative duty of every individual.

2. The liquor traffic is a business antagonistic to every interest of the Church and State.

3. The traffic in intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes is immoral, and it is the duty of the civil government to prohibit it.

4. We condemn the license features of all statutes by which money is accepted for the legal protection of an immoral traffic.

5. The Government (Dominion, Provincial or Municipal) that accepts money for liquor licenses becomes a partner in the business, justly declared to be an enemy of God and man. We protest against the unholy alliance.

6. The only proper attitude of the Christian towards the unholy traffic is that of relentless hostility; and all members of the Methodist Church who possess the elective franchise are urged to use their influence to assure the nomination of municipal and parliamentary candidates known to favor and support prohibition, and to use their votes as a solemn trust to elect such candidates; thus promoting the