

Moral Aspects of Temperance.

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The question may be asked, "What constitutes any matter a moral issue?"

According to Herbert Spencer, "Morality, the science of right conduct, has for its object to determine how and why certain modes of conduct are detrimental and certain other modes beneficial."

Morality then takes cognizance of every force or influence that tends to affect human conduct beneficially or detrimentally, and since intemperance or its correlative temperance, does thus affect the conduct of men, we have a right to denominate temperance a moral issue. "Certainly," says one, "such a statement is quite obvious. There is no one in Canada, with the exception perhaps of a few in the province of Quebec, who today would deny that the temperance question presents to us the most momentous moral issue of our national life."

For years the temperance agitation was looked upon as the work of cranks and fanatics.

Persistently these cranks were reminded that what a man drank was nobody's business but his own, any more than what he ate or wore. It was therefore absurd to try to lift this matter into the realm of morals, and make of it a troublesome and irritating issue. But these "cranks" of other days have succeeded in their object until now there is hardly a voice in civilized countries as uncivilized for that matter, to contradict the assertion that intemperance is the crying national evil of the age.

Mr. Gladstone says: "Strong drink is a greater scourge than war, famine and pestilence combined."

Lord Wolsey, declares: "We have great battles to fight, great enemies to encounter, but the most pressing enemy is strong drink; it kills more lives than all our newest weapons of warfare." While Lord Rosebery claims that the nation (British) is being ruined by it. The Archbishop of Canterbury holds that no man who calls himself a Christian can stand aside and say, he will have nothing to do with this matter. Even the yellow journals cry, "Down with rum," while they at the same time take all the whiskey advertisements they can get. The "New York American" formerly "The Journal," one of the yellowest periodicals in the United States, some time ago had a striking editorial on the subject. "The Conquerors and Enslavers of Mankind." Accompanying this strong plea for temperance was a cartoon representing the different vices of men under the form of wild beasts, while underneath were the words, "Whiskey leads the horde."

It is not necessary to go farther to prove that at the present time temperance is regarded almost universally as a moral issue of the greatest magnitude. I wish to indicate a few of the ways in which or through which temperance becomes a moral issue.

Through its Effects on the Moral-Nature.

Character is the result of choices. It is the residue left in our being from every deliberate act of ours. In other words character is the product of our reaction against our environment. A good, a noble, a strong character is the outcome of good, noble and manly habits of thought and life. But a "good choice" can only be made when reason is in free control of all the lower powers, appetites and passions of the man. A drink of liquor is a blow, a stunning blow aimed at "reason". A drink of liquor will daze or even tumble reason off the throne of the mind, lifting at the same time some baser appetite or passion to occupy its place. To make a good choice, the line between right and wrong must be clearly defined, but strong drink obscures or obliterates that line, so that a man under the influence of intoxicants will do that from which he would shrink with horror were he in possession of his right mind. I knew of a young man at College who unconsciously proved this fact to himself. For some time he had been considering the pros and cons of a certain transaction which was very attractive, but which had an element of meanness in it. For days he thought the thing over, but could not bring himself to engage in what he knew to be wrong. Just about this time he received two bottles of sweet cider from a friend. One of these bottles he drank and the other he left in the closet of his bedroom and forgot all about it. About a week later, while still trying unsuccessfully to persuade himself to undertake the questionable business referred to, he came upon the second bottle of cider, which in the meantime had become strongly alcoholized. He drank it or a part of it and he describes the effect on himself thus: "I was not intoxicated, I was not even apparently exhilarated, but I was aware of this, that all the wrong, all the mean features of that shady transaction, fell away and disappeared, and I no longer saw anything whatever objectionable in it. The only effect on me was that the line between right and wrong had been wiped out for the time and I was ready to do, and

do confidently what had appeared before to me, mean and wrong."

This effect of strong drink is well known and the knowledge of it is made use of by the would-be murderer, the gambler, the thief and the briber. Many a man, who would scorn to sell his vote, which is a symbol of his manhood, yet when he has taken a social glass or two from the hand of his political seducer, will then readily also take the "devil's shilling" in exchange for his political soul.

Because alcohol attacks the very citadel of the moral nature, paralyses the conscience, obliterates moral distinctions, its use therefore becomes a vital moral issue.

Through its Effects on the Home.

The home is a school not only of manners, but of morals. It is the training ground par excellence of the future. It is the real university from which men and women graduate into life. We can forget much but we cannot forget the morals that father and mother uttered in the sanctuary of the home. Home influences is the moral atmosphere we have absorbed into our very being.

Now, anything which has an injurious effect on home life, becomes at once a live, a tremendously live moral issue. It is probable that no other influence so tends to destroy the home as the liquor traffic. Of 10,000 murders committed in the United States in 1903, 3,000 were of wives killed by drunken husbands, says Dr. Gordon of Montreal. The same speaker tells us that one out of every five of our boys is destroyed by strong drink. What is the atmosphere of a drunkard's home? Is it not made up of sorrow, suspicion, suspense, dread anticipations, on the part of wife and children, coupled with profanity, irregularity, tyranny and often brutality on the part of the father who drinks? Surely no strong and pure characters can flourish in such an atmosphere as this. Of course there are exceptions to every rule but the rule is that "like produces like."

Before a young man will drink, there must be formed within him a more or less favorable mental attitude toward drinking. Here is the secret of many a young man's downfall. And further that mental leniency with reference to liquor develops unconsciously in many of our most respectable homes. The boy often hears slighting remarks from his parents, (who do not take liquor themselves) about the temperance workers, their faults which no doubt are many, being criticized and held up for ridicule. By and by the boy begins to regard the whole temperance movement as extreme or fanatical. With this feeling he goes out into the world, and at the first assault of the enemy he falls. Parents should be careful indeed, as to the bias they may give to their children's thoughts by unconsidered words. Let the attitude of parents be clear, decided and uncompromising in their homes toward this traffic which is ever the bitterest enemy of domestic happiness and peace!

Through its Effects on Civic Life.

"Behind the walls of Sparta" said the king of that country to a visiting ambassador, as he pointed proudly to the ranks of his citizen soldiers drawn up on the plain. Citizens are indeed the walls of any country; but walls are no stronger than the individual bricks out of which they are composed. In other words a nation is powerful as it possesses men, strong, true, faithful, for "a free state exists" only in the virtue of the citizen. Citizenship is the greatest fact in nationality, and virtue or character is the greatest fact in citizenship. The moral element cannot be excluded from either economic or civic. Temperance, therefore, becomes a great moral issue from its vital relation and influence upon character, the basal fact in citizenship. Intemperance, rather than poverty, war or pestilence, is the destroyer of strong and progressive citizenship. It was this that enervated successively, the men of Samaria, of Babylon, of Greece, and Rome. Lord Rosebery claims that it is ruining the British citizen today. The conclusion is plain. No man can be a good citizen who drinks liquor. He cannot be, because liquor destroys the bloom of character, and character is the foundation of true citizenship.

Again, no man can be a good citizen who in any way may favor or abet the liquor traffic. Can a man be a good citizen who favors a business that runs homes, that steals the bread from children's mouths and the cloth from their backs? Can he be a good citizen who helps along a business that builds jails, penitentiaries and insane asylums and fits men and women and boys to fill them? Can he be a good citizen who abets a traffic of which nothing good can be said? Surely not. We can never therefore, hope for the highest type of citizenship until the evil of intemperance has been abolished and thus at this point the temperance problem meets us as a moral issue of surpassing moment.

Temperance and Religion.

Cardinal Manning the great English Catholic divine, has this to say about the antagonism between religion and alcoholism. "For thirty-five years I have been priest and bishop in London, and now I approach my eightieth year and have learned some lessons and the fact is this—the chief bar to the working of the Holy Spirit of God in the souls of men and women is intoxicating liquor. I know of no antagonist to the Good Spirit, more direct, more

subtle, more stealthy more ubiquitous than intoxicating drink."

This antagonism is manifest in the attitude of the liquor interests toward the Sabbath. If these interests could prevail they would have open Sunday saloons with the accompanying carnival of disorder, godlessness and vice. The liquor men by persistent evasion and defiance of the laws have almost succeeded in secularizing the Sabbath in the United States. In 1903, an attempt was made, we are told, to legalize selling of liquor on Sunday in Greater New York, on the plea that out of 12,546 saloons, 8,600 were open and running full blast in defiance of the law.

The liquor traffic is also the greatest hindrance to Missions. It obstructs and annuls the work of missionaries in foreign lands; in Africa where great cargoes of New England rum are demoralizing the blacks; in the islands of the Pacific, where Dr. Paton tells us that his work of fifty years is threatened with destruction because of American liquor, among the Indians where the white man's fire-water blots out the vision of the white man's God. And thus we see in its effects on the religious life of the nation, which is after all the true foundation and explanation of its moral life, the temperance problem again and more significantly than ever, becomes a pregnant moral issue.

"And what if it does?" says some one, "what has that to do with my attitude toward this business." Simply this, that when a moral issue of so momentous a character as that of the temperance problem is presented to the moral consciousness of any man, it involves on his part at once the taking of a clear definite and active stand for the right and against the wrong, that is to say in this case for temperance and against intemperance.

No man can escape his obligation with reference to so clearly defined a moral issue.

The Japanese have a legend to the effect that the original founder of the Mikado's dynasty was a god who came to this earth in the form of a beautiful prince. One day, so the story goes, as he wandered in the hills, he came upon a lovely woman weeping. His heart was touched and he gently made inquiry, as to the reason of her grief. She replied, "O, sir, I have had five lovely daughters, but only one is left to me and she too, must be taken from me. For every year a great serpent with many heads comes over the mountains and he demands one of my daughters as a sacrifice, and then he devours her and returns to the mountain until another year. The time has almost arrived for another horrid visit and he will demand my only child and what shall I do," and the poor woman burst out afresh. "Wait," said the prince, "Do not weep, I will kill the serpent and save your daughter." The prince proceeded to make several gates corresponding to the several heads and behind each of these he placed a tempting bait. Soon the great serpent trailed his vast length into view and glided at once toward the gates, each head entering one, seeing which the prince fastened the gates, and then drawing his magic sword, he cut off the heads in succession and the serpent no more troubled the vales of Japan.

There is a mighty four headed serpent trailing across our country seeking to destroy the four fold citadel of our national life. It is the liquor traffic. One great head sends its poisonous breath into the moral life of our young men; another forces its befouling way into our homes; another threatens with flaming eyes our civic virtue, while another dares even to attack the Holy of Holies, our religion.

The great moral issue in other words the great serpent is before us. We the Christian men and women of this land are the sons and daughters of God with the magic sword. Are we not criminal if we do not strike!

Be strong!

It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong, How hard the battle goes, the day, how long. Faint not, fight on! Tomorrow comes the song.

The Bible a Missionary Book.

By Rev. Rupert Osgood Morse, M. A.

Wasting no words in introductory matter, let us look to Luke's version of the Great Commission, Luke 24:44-49. We find there:

- 1.—The provision for a world-wide salvation in the suffering of the Messiah vs. 46.
- 2.—The possibility of universal acceptance of this salvation vs. 47.
- 3.—The obligation to publish this gospel of repentance and forgiveness vs. 47-48.
- 4.—The assurance of power to make effective this universal mission, vs. 49.

All of these, Jesus argued from scripture. If, like Him, we may find in scripture this provision, possibility, uroclamation, and power it surely constitutes "The Bible a Missionary Book."

Notice.

1. The Missionary Purpose in Scripture. This is implied in the scriptural view of the unity of the race. It is implied in the promise to Eve of her seed bruising the serpent. Noah, being a preacher of righteousness, was plainly a missionary. God's call of Abraham designed a worldwide blessing through a single race. Despite the Hebrew failure, the repeated repetition of promise and commission, to the descendants of Abraham makes dear the world-wide purpose

of Abraham's call to the earth be blessed. Melchizedek, on priest of the most

From Moses' mission to forgive all the conditions of the Hebrews, who were opposed by the terminating the Hebrews, desires all men, period, we have race, to whom law makes special To the period both world wide Solomon's dedication look.

Throughout the world-wide; equi gospel, Isa. 45, outlook.

In Jesus' holy wide mission! tile blood. He brew capital. in the fulfillment birthplace. The done the Son Man.

Thus it is t flows unbroken from the First atonement mark

II. Missionary, pregnant with missionary promphesies of the Kingdom of God into the Holy of Jehovah, a knew him not.

Examine some second psalm VI-3 (2). A p the heathen V hovah in the prophecy of 9.12. Psalm 2 outlook. In P dominion. From the ends of t Him. Psalms triumph of the Tsaiiah touch kingdom. Ch nencing purpose Chapters 44 a and call upon clusive sovereignty triumph glory Chapter 52 is umph to be b of Chapter 53 forth the triu nations.

But it is in prophecy is p "And I if I be men unto me."

III. The Mis Missionary Ca plan. Here w scious forces

A. Election, blessing. Such choice of the

B. The attra redeemed life. true Christian ward the Cro only as we le It was such t epistles known

C. There is Gospel as illu This is manifi city and gov is dominant.

But the big "Conquest." quest." "As world so sen meaning of th through Chris plan of Conqu

1. "Witnesses to be witness Luke 24-48, J cords this w learns who ar witnesses. Jes for him.

2. "Organiza Conquest. Th churches thus