

—unjust. It establishes a monopoly of a most degraded character, a monopoly in evil. It is monopoly in a product which does not lose its money value with age—a product which increases the demand for itself the more it is used. To the members of this monopoly the State says, You may sell, sell all you will, sell at what figures you will. And so it gives a special protection to a system which in almost every other line of business it antagonizes, and shuts off in it that which it compels in almost every other line of business, a fair and free competition.

Not to expatiate longer on the immorality of the license system, we believe that that system may truly be called unconstitutional in its relation to government—that is, it is opposed to the principles of that unwritten constitution, of which the written is ever but an imperfect transcript. It is one of these principles to which the Supreme Court recently gave expression in the memorable words: "No legislature can bargain away the public health or public morals. The public themselves cannot do this, much less their servants. Government is organized with a view to their protection, and cannot divest itself of the power to provide for them." Those "cannots" are noteworthy. They indicate that nothing that is morally wrong can be constitutional. It is the recognition of that basal truth which finds so emphatic a statement in Scripture, that righteousness alone constitutes, holds together, and exalts any nation, while sin is not only the reproach, but also the disintegration of any people.

We would emphasize one final thought, a thought for men to whom the Scriptures represent the mind of God, to whom a command of the Lord Jesus Christ is law. It is that the license system is directly contrary to the principles of the Divine Word. The attitude of the Word written and the Word incarnate toward all forms of evil is ever one and the same, that of

uncompromising hostility. What the Lord Christ thought of the high license of evil may be gathered from His treatment of the devil in the wilderness, when he offered Him the kingdoms of the world for a crook of the knee. What He thought of compromises with evil may be gathered from His words, "If thy right hand offend thee"—that is, cause thee to offend—"cut it off and cast it from thee; it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." It is a principle for a nation as well as for an individual. Better one eye seeing clearly, than two eyes whose vision is crossed. The Divine law with reference to wrong is an eternal no. The wealth of ten thousand universes could not secure its reversal; and that nation stands nearest the supreme throne whose answer to wrong is likeliest God's. To such an organized wrong as that of the liquor traffic there is but one answer at all in accord with Scripture and the Christ-mind in Scripture. It is a no as fixed and unalterable as the no of God. The righteousness of such an answer will exalt the nation that makes it. To it the mountains with their hidden treasures and the little hills with their wealth of flocks and fruits shall speak peace. The story of Mahmood, the image-breaker, as Lowell tells it, is worth recalling:

"Mahmood once, the idol-breaker, spreader of the faith,
Was at Sumnat tempted sorely, as the legend saith.

"In the great pagoda's centre, monstrous and abhorred,
Granite on a throne of granite, sat the temple's lord.

"Mahmood paused a moment, silenced by the silent face
That, with eyes of stone unwavering, awed the ancient place.

"Then the Brahmins knelt before him, by his doubt made bold,
Pledging for their idol's ransom countless gems and gold.