

## Devotional Service.

BY REV. T. J. PARR, M.A.

### FEBRUARY 18.—"THE SIN OF LIQUOR-SELLING: HOW END IT?"

Habakkuk 2: 1-17.

#### HOME READINGS.

Mon., Feb. 12. The antiquity of drunkenness. Genesis 9: 18-21.  
Tues., Feb. 13. The persistence of habit. Matt. 12: 43-45.  
Wed., Feb. 14. Keeping our brothers. Gen. 4: 3-12.  
Thurs., Feb. 15. Responsibility for example. Rom. 14: 17-23.  
Fri., Feb. 16. Wickedness condemned. Job. 18: 5-10.  
Sat., Feb. 17. Soul-number. 1 Cor. 6: 9-10.

The Epworth League stands for total abstinence for the individual and total prohibition for the nation. There may be difference of opinion as to the best time, and the best way of securing total prohibition, but there is but one idea as to the advisability of such a course. The goal which the Methodist Church, and the Epworth League as part of that Church, is aiming at is the abolition of the traffic in intoxicating liquors as beverages. Let every Epworth League understand this and throw the whole weight of its influence, his practice, and his ballot in favor of this happy consummation.

#### TOTAL ABSTAINERS.

Of course, every member of the Epworth League is a total abstainer from intoxicating drink. He or she cannot be a consistent member of the Society, or of the Church, and not refrain both from the use and the traffic in strong drink. The Epworth League of the Methodist Church in Canada is a great Temperance Society consisting of more than eighty thousand members, banded together for the purpose, among other things, of securing the "touch not, taste not, handle not" principle for the individual and for the nation. There may be room for some difference of opinion as to ways and means in regard to national prohibition, but there can be but one opinion as to the safety and necessity of total abstinence for every individual, and that of *once*.

#### COST OF THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

Have you any idea, young people, what the liquor traffic costs Canada every year? The amount is almost incredible. It is enormous. And the worst of it is, we get no real value for the expenditure. The people of Canada spend annually for drink the vast sum of \$40,000,000 in round figures. And this amount is a loss to the spender—a dead loss. When money is spent for clothing, food, or other such commodities, the purchaser has value for his outlay. But when money is spent for strong drink, the purchaser is simply impoverished, and not benefited by the transaction. Then there is all the grain destroyed in the manufacture of liquor, which should be regarded as loss, for if not destroyed by the distillers, it would be available for other and profitable uses. And the value of the grain thus used is over a million dollars.

There is also the cost of jails, asylums, almshouses, which by a careful calculation amounts to more than six millions of dollars. And assuming that one half of this expenditure is fairly chargeable to the liquor traffic, we get the cost to the country, the sum of three million of dollars.

Then, there is the loss of labor owing to the fact that persons are in jail or idle through intemperance. Much of the manufacturing industry of the country is thus seriously hampered. The loss to Canada in this way is probably seventy-six millions of dollars annually.

Estimate also, if you can, the value of lives sacrificed to the liquor habit. Careful computation shows that 3,000 lives are annually cut short in Canada by intemperance, each death robbing the country of an average of ten years of productive labor. It is estimated we sustain in this way an annual loss of fourteen millions. The distress, heart-breaks, and misery caused by these deaths, money cannot estimate. There is also the item of misdirected work. The country loses by having about 13,000 men engaged in making and selling liquor, not actually adding anything to the wealth of the country. If properly employed, these then would add to the country an amount of wealth estimated at over seven millions.

#### A SUMMING UP.

Now, summing up all these items of cost to our country, we reach a total of over \$145,000,000. But as there is a revenue from the liquor traffic of about nine millions, we have a total loss to Canada through the liquor traffic every year of more than one hundred and thirty-four millions of dollars. What a startling revelation these figures make! And as our topic is "The sin of liquor-selling," what a sin it is to waste such an enormous sum of money every year in our country! The wonder is that, with such terrible waste, Canada enjoys any prosperity. If this waste could be made to cease, our country in ten years would not know herself, so prosperous, and wealthy would she have grown.

#### DRINK AND CRIME.

Among the causes of vice and crime intemperance holds the foremost place. "Drunkenness does more than any other cause to fill our jails, and unquestionably does much to recruit the ranks of the criminal classes" is the report of the Ontario Prison Reform Commission. Sir Oliver Mowat, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, stated that in his opinion "an enormous proportion, probably three-fourths, of the vice that prevails at the present day, of the crime with which we have to contend, is owing to the foul evil of intemperance." Apply this statement to the convictions recorded in the Canadian Courts, averaging over 34,000 a year, we reach the saddening result that fully 25,000 of these convictions are the actual result of the liquor sin. A traffic that has such an awful record of crime chargeable against it—it is not a sin to allow it to exist in any civilized country. These figures only give a faint idea of the awful evil which they represent. Behind every conviction lies a sad tale of degradation and shame; in many cases, a pitiful record of sorrow and suffering for others besides the offender. Far above all reach of imagination is the fearful extent of heart-break, and home-wreck, and all the physical and mental woe, involved in the tragic history of so many ruined lives.

#### HOW TO END IT!

There are three means that may be used to end it. First, continue to create public sentiment without ceasing, against the curse of the liquor traffic. Second, let every one convinced of the evils of intemperance, become a total abstainer now and forevermore, remembering that if all the people of Canada were total abstainers the traffic would die for want of nourishment and support. Third, the monster evil is not to be perpetuated by license laws, but cut down by the prohibition axe, for this is the only effectual remedy for this ghastly disease on the body politic. The power to annihilate the liquor traffic resides in the government. But the people are the government, and when the people are ready to strike the final blow the work will be done. Vote it out. Kill it with bullets made of ballots, and the curse will end, provided we have behind the enacted law a strong, healthy, intelligent, public opinion.

#### FLASHLIGHTS.

1. Are you intemperate in any matter?  
2. Is your influence always thrown actively in favor of temperance?

3. Fashish sayings about drink—  
(a) "I can leave it alone when I please."  
You may to-day, but you may not to-morrow. Every day weakens the will and strengthens the passion.

(b) "I am only exercising my personal liberty when I drink." Yes, that was what the man was doing who cut off his hand with a buzz saw.

(c) "Alcohol was made by God, and it is found everywhere." The same is true of sulphuric acid, but you do not drink it.

(d) "The moderate use of a blessing is a token of power." But the absolute avoidance of a curse is a token of wisdom.

(e) "The broad-minded men are all against total abstinence." Even if that were true, there is a broad-minded road that leads to destruction.

3. Wine is a treacherous dealer. It promises health and gives disease; good cheer, and gives despair; friends, and gives foes; mirth, and gives wallowing, fierce and bitter.

4. Wine cannot be satisfied. Give it your money, and it demands your wit; your wit, and it requires your strength; your strength, and it will have your virtue; your virtue, and it gets your reputation; your reputation, and it seizes your happiness.

#### POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Make this a thorough-going temperance meeting of the League. Make effective use of the arguments presented in the foregoing exposition. Have three papers prepared. The evils of intemperance for (a) The individual, (b) The home, (c) The nation. Have some one appointed to read Bible passages selected beforehand against intemperance. Make much of this. Circulate the pledge and have it signed. Send every one home a pledged total abstainer, and an intelligent prohibitionist.

### FEBRUARY 25.—"THE STRENGTH OF HUMILITY."

Luke 18: 1-15.

#### HOME READINGS.

Mon., Feb. 19. Real Humility. John 1: 19-27.  
Tues., Feb. 20. The meekness of Christ. Phil. 2: 5-11.  
Wed., Feb. 21. Is meekness a weakness? Num. 12: 1-10.  
Thurs., Feb. 22. The value of meekness. Ps. 25: 9-14.  
Fri., Feb. 23. Jesus teaching humility. Luke 14: 7-11.  
Sat., Feb. 24. Promises for the humble. 1 Pet. 5: 5-6.

It seems a contradiction in terms to say, strength and humility in the same breath. At first sight it seems impossible that the two could exist at the same time in the one person. But it is like a good many other things, the first-sight impression is often corrected by mature reflection. Humility and strength are not inconsistent qualities. They are combined in every genuine Christian character. The air at times so calm and still, so gentle and so balmy, in a moment is turned into a hurricane by the action of natural forces. The ocean so placid as it reflects the summer sun, is soon changed into turbulence and power when roused by the stormy wind. And the Christian, gentle in disposition and kindly in heart, is transformed into an Hercules of power when combating the opposition of evil in its various forms. These two qualities may exist in the one character—gentleness and valor, humility and strength—a wild excitement, but possessing forces for the mightiest resistance.

#### THE TWO CHARACTERS.

These two men, spoken of in the parable came from the widest extremes in society. The Pharisee came from the highest and most respectable class among the Jews, noted for their pretensions to special