

SOME GREAT EVANGELISTS AND TEMPERANCE WORKERS

(By Victoria Grigg, M.A.)

No. 1.

This is the first of a series of articles on a subject which, I feel, should be of intense interest to us as members of a Christian organisation. In the course of reading a number of biographies of great evangelists who were used mightily to win souls for their Lord, I was struck by their forthright condemnation of the evils of strong drink. In my mind are such men as Dr. Lyman Beecher, John Wesley, Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody, Billy Brya, General Booth, and a recent visitor to our shores, the Rev. Lionel Fletcher. I think, too, of that great Catholic, Father Mathew. These men have been worthy successors to the Old Testament prophets who so fearlessly condemned the drunkenness and other evil practices by which they were surrounded.

PLEDGE-SIGNING CAMPAIGNS.

What we need today is a revival of the great Pledge-signing Campaigns sponsored by these men of God. How many potential drunkards were saved from a tragic end? How many others were saved from the unhappiness of seeing a dear one succumb to the craving for drink? Total abstinence for the individual is still, and always will be, the most effective way of combating the Drink Evil.

Alas! The solemn words of Micah are only too true today. "If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and strong drink, he shall even be the prophet of this people." So it was also a hundred years ago, when a Scottish minister wrote: "If we understand aright the design of the Church, one of the main objects of its institution is to testify against sin in all its forms, and to devise means for its destruction. What, then, are the facts of the case respecting Intemperance? Infidelity, Sabbath desecration, Schism, and other evils are all looked at specifically, and measures adopted to meet them; but intemperance is shunned till circumstances render the matter imperative; and then some declaration is issued that is worse than worthless, inasmuch as such documents have the appearance of meeting the evil, for which they promulgate no active remedy."

This statement, and others of the same time, were followed by an upward movement in the churches, which appears to have reached its zenith some thirty years ago, and has been declining ever since.

THE POSITION TODAY.

Today, many of our Christian ministers (not all, thank God) have become vague and indefinite on this subject. In fact, we seem rarely to hear anything about the drink evil from the pulpit; and yet, many of the same ministers are preaching to rows of empty seats.

We do not attach all the blame to the ministers. We have our own Christian duty as Church members; but where the minister gives a lead, the congregation will follow. The reason for the strong temperance enthusiasm of thirty and forty years ago was that it was fostered in our churches. How we long to see it return, hand in hand with a strong evangelistic message!

PROPAGANDA

How insidious today is the liquor propaganda over the films and the radio. In the films we get such incidents as occurred in a recent British film shown in Christchurch. A young naval officer visited the vicar of a country village to have a cup of tea with him at a London railway station. When they came to the station tea-room, the naval officer said to the vicar, "What will you have, sir?" "Oh, I think I will have a glass of beer," said the clergyman. "I was going to ask you that, sir, but I thought you would not want it," replied the young officer. They laughed together over the young fellow's misapprehension, and both sat down to glasses of beer. Later on in the film, the vicar's son told his father to come and have some champagne which he had brought from his father's cellar to celebrate a certain occasion. "That's right, my boy," said the vicar. The spectacle of reverend gentlemen in clerical dress partaking in such jovial fashion of alcoholic liquors is not edifying to the young picture-goer particularly, but is as good as an advertisement from the liquor trader's point of view as it can be.

This incident made me think of the words of another minister, English this time, who wrote these words in 1843: "The ministers and professors of religion have it in their power to remove a vast amount of crime, misery and wickedness—they have it in their power to reclaim hundreds and thousands of drunkards; and all this at the paltry sacrifice of abandoning the use of intoxicating drinks; yet ministers and professors hesitate—refuse—to make the sacrifice; and this crime, misery and wickedness exists and will continue—these hundreds and thousands of immortal beings are drunkards and will continue to be drunkards—because the professors, followers and ministers of the Cross will not abandon their pernicious drinking practices."

However, the fact remains that while many of the early opponents of temperance came from the Church and claimed the Church's authority for their opposition; at the same time, in both the earlier and latter part of the nineteenth century the great volume of advocacy for temperance came also from the Church. I hope to tell something of that advocacy in future articles.

If the Church today and its ministers can be roused to some of their old-time enthusiasm, there will be hope for those who will otherwise surely be the victims of the evils of strong drink in the future.

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Evidence Of Dr. Richards Before The Royal Commission On Licensing

A correspondent has sent an extract taken from the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Licensing, by Dr. Richards, D.S.O., M.B.B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., of Auckland.

It is well worth quoting. Indeed the whole of his evidence should be broadcast. If we can do anything in the way of making it widely known, let us do it.

Dr. Richards speaks "As a Citizen," and also "As a Doctor," and what he says is marked by a simple, unvarnished style which carries conviction because it is free from any attempt to be sensational. "As a Doctor," he gave details of 14 cases with which he had dealt in the previous fortnight, where the trouble was directly caused by alcoholic drinking. "The children suffered," he said, and gave instances of the repercussions caused by drinking parents.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT.

For May.

OPAWA: 1 new member. 1 transfer.
SPREYDON: 1 transfer.
RICCARTON: 1 new member.
NORTH BRIGHTON: 2 new members.

For July.

PAPANUI: 1 new member.
SPREYDON: 1 new member.
N. BRIGHTON: 1 new member.
ST. ALBANS: 1 transfer.

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GRANDMOTHER'S RULES

Somebody's grandmother has bequeathed to her descendants these admirable rules of conduct:—

Always look at the person to whom you are speaking.

Look straight at the person who speaks to you.

Speak your words plainly. Do not mutter. If the words are worth saying they are worth pronouncing distinctly and clearly.

Do not say disagreeable things. If you have nothing pleasant to say, keep silent.

Think three times before you speak once.

If you have something hard to do and would rather not do it. Do the hard thing first, get it over with.

If you have done wrong to any person, go and confess it.

If your lesson is tough, master it.

If your garden needs weeding go and do it and play afterwards.

Do first the thing you do not like to do and then with a clean conscience try the next.—Presbyterian Record.