

The Damnation Army, Its Victims and Its Sponsors

by George Kulp

The Church must stand against the saloon, and the people must arise against the liquor traffic to save the nation.

Scripture: Esther 1:8, Proverbs 20:1, Proverbs 31:6, Isaiah 5:11, Habakkuk 2:15, Matthew 11:28, Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 6:10, Galatians 5:21, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Moral Reform", "Social Justice"

Description

George Kulp passionately preaches about the irreconcilable hostility between the Church and the saloon, emphasizing the need for Christians to take a stand against the liquor traffic by aligning themselves with God's position. He highlights the responsibility of the Church to lead the moral reform movement against the saloon, drawing parallels to historical movements like the anti-slavery agitation. Kulp urges Christians to save the youth from the dangers of the liquor traffic, emphasizing the devastating impact on families and society. He challenges the sponsors of the liquor traffic, pointing out the complicity of society in allowing the spread of this destructive industry.

Transcript

"And the drinking was according to the law."

Esther 1:8

"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink; that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken."

Hab. 2:15

I purpose taking to you tonight as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ; as a minister of the Christian religion; as a citizen interested in the welfare of all those around me. I claim most emphatically that the position I take during this discussion is the position of the Church of God, and the position of the Church of God should be the attitude of every individual Christian. The only inquiry for a Christian man to make as he enters upon the consideration of the saloon question is this: Where does God Almighty stand? If the Lord Jesus Christ were upon earth in person today, where would He stand? If He was at the polls with a ballot in His hands, with whom would He vote? Find out where the brewers, distillers, saloon-keepers, harlots and drunkards are, and make up your mind that God is on the other side, and there you and I must be, or be condemned.

The Church and the saloon occupy positions of open, irreconcilable hostility, and one must go down. And when I remember Jesus Christ said of His Church: "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it," I am ready to predict that the saloon must go, and it will. There never was a moral reform movement that did not owe its bone and sinew to the Church. The anti-slavery agitation began in the Church and was waged so fiercely that it rent asunder the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, but the work still went on until it entered the politics of the nation and slavery was put to the sword. The agitation for the suppression of the saloon today comes from men and women trained in the churches, and now is the opportune time when the Church must move forward, must agitate, must thunder the Word of God against the traffic, and she must do it through her ministers in the pulpit and her laymen in the pews. The minister of the Gospel cannot separate his responsibility from his act of suffrage. Called of God, he dare not consult his personal interest or popularity; he must obey his heavenly calling. The stability of human governments depends on their harmony with the divine, and the highest duty of the minister is to lead the people to obedience; to righteousness. Abraham Lincoln said: "God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time." Neither can an honest man. We know where God stands, for in the text He says: "Woe unto him that putteth thy bottle to thy neighbor's lips, and makest him drunken." The editor of the "Michigan Advocate" tersely puts it when he says: "The struggle of the American home, the school and the Church against the combined power of brewers, brothel and saloon death-trap is but another putting of the declaration of war between Heaven and Hell."

We bring the subject before you as we do because we want to save the boys of our cities and arouse you to your responsibility for the liquor traffic in our midst. During a convention in Chicago, one of the delegates met a burly, red-faced resident of the city who had just been patronizing the bar. In the course of conversation this citizen said: "What are you fellows trying to do down at the battery? You are hot on temperance, I see by the papers. Do you think you can make a temperance man of me?" "No," said the delegate, "we evidently couldn't do much with you, but we are after your boy." The fellow dropped his jocular tone and said seriously, "Well, I guess you have the right of it. If somebody had been after me when I was a boy, I should be a better man today."

"But the boys of our city are in no danger," you say. Aren't they? A few weeks ago Mrs. J. of went into a saloon in that city, read the Bible and prayed. While there she noticed a boy, and when she went out he followed her and said: "Madam, I am ashamed of myself that you found me in such a place. I wouldn't have my mother know it for the world. I am not in the habit of going into a saloon." Mrs. J. asked him, "Where do your parents live?" and the answer was, "In _____." Perhaps that boy is the son of some mother here tonight. I want to save the boys from blasted reputations and an eternal ruin.

A magician came before his audience, and bringing a young man with him said: "Ladies and gentlemen, I want to Show you my power: by a few passes with my hand I will turn this young man into a beast." Then waving his hand a few times the young man became a beast. The people applauded, but soon some of the more thoughtful became fearful and cried, "Transform him; make him a man again," but the magician answered, "I can't do it; I can change men into beasts, but I can never restore the man." That magician is the liquor traffic, and that power to transform men into beasts is given to the traffic by the people. Mothers may cry, "Give me my boy again," but he'll never come -- you may have a sot, a wreck, a shadow, but your pure, clean boy -- never.

The subject of this sermon is, The Damnation Army, Its Victims and Its Sponsors. Do you think that too severe? Listen to what some public men have said about the liquor traffic. Lord Chesterfield called saloon-keepers, "Artists in human slaughter." Ruskin said they were "moral assassins." Carlyle spoke of

public houses as "seething hells of vice and immorality." Bunyan called drink-selling "an infernal traffic." Wesley declared, "The money received in exchange for drinks is blood money." Robert Hall spoke of drinks as "liquid fire and distilled damnation," while Mr. Walters, of the "London Times," charged it with being "the devil in solution." We mean it, and we repeat it, the saloons of this city are a division of that Damnation Army that is hurrying more people unprepared into eternity than war, pestilence and famine combined.

Before looking at the division, let us look at the army. The nation supports 200,000 saloons which absorb three millions of dollars daily, or the total sum of over one thousand millions of dollars each year. Each one of these saloons seduces at least one boy a year (a low estimate) presenting the appalling spectacle of two hundred thousand young men ruined each year, or a million every five years -- a greater destruction than that incurred by the Civil War. It is estimated that each saloon controls at least ten votes, influenced by this national curse, the liquor traffic, and there is not a great political party in the nation today that dares to put itself squarely in array against the enemy. The saloons in many places are political headquarters, schools in which criminals are trained, armories where they equip themselves for the battle against the peace and rights of society, an enemy to all purity, all godliness, all homes.

To be seen entering or coming out of a saloon is of itself a suspicious circumstance, and the law so regards it. A judge in one of our courts said to a man who pleaded innocent "You, McCauley, were arrested in a saloon with two thieves. You would have gotten into no trouble had you avoided evil company and objectionable places." If it is not suspicious to be seen in a saloon, why does the saloon provide back doors, screens and frosted windows? -- for the purpose of protecting its customers from the view of their friends who may be passing by? And yet right here in our city (Battle Creek, Michigan) we have one hundred and eighty bars, over which liquid damnation is dealt out, to the detriment of men physically and spiritually, and the ruin of their homes.

In Java and Sumatra they have a tree called by the natives "The tree of death." They say its breath will kill birds and even human beings. A traveler one day, chasing a bird of paradise, saw it drop to the ground lifeless, and without apparent cause. He found the bird under the tree which gave forth the peculiar odor described by the natives, and he knew it to be the tree of death. A faint perfume like chloroform came from the flowers, and breathing it he became almost insensible. We have no death tree in our city; if one was to grow near your home you would uproot it to save your boy -- unless you could get a revenue out of it. But we have numerous bars flourishing with your permission; bars to pull down reputations, to destroy homes, to rob women and children of happiness, to take the bloom out of their cheeks, to hasten men Hellward. All this that the owners of these bars may fatten on the griefs and woes of the possessors of depraved appetites, for perhaps you know that a saloon-keeper can get rich if he has twenty regular customers. Of course the list has to be recruited often, for when the old customer gets to be a bum his patronage is no longer profitable, and the boys, your boy, perhaps, will step in as a new recruit. Aye, a big division of the Damnation Army is right here in this city. Not because we cannot get rid of it, but because there are so many professing Christians -- Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Catholics -- who prefer their party prejudices and party victories to siding with God Almighty on election day against the saloon. But we will talk of the responsibility farther on.

Let us inquire next as to the victims of the traffic. Read the daily papers; scan their columns and see how many men and women are before the recorder for drunkenness. Said the judge the other day to a victim: "Bill, why don't you stop this kind of work?" The answer was, "I can't go by a saloon door; I must go in." The drinking man is not the only victim; the woman who never drinks, the innocent wife, suffers, even

though the "drinking is according to law." Read the book of Esther from which the text is taken and learn this fact -- the first divorce on record was caused by drinking "according to law." Licensed drinking produced the first divorce. Twelve thousand women in New York State recently procured divorces from drunken husbands. Three hundred thousand divorces in this country in the last twenty years, and the most of them caused by licensed rum selling, and, in the greater number of instances, the woman is the sufferer.

A gentleman in one of the schools was giving a lesson on the human heart. He had sent to the butcher's for a sheep's heart, and he allowed the class to see, touch and handle it for themselves. Then he asked the question: "What is the difference between a sheep's heart and the heart of a man or woman?" One poor, pale looking boy held up his hand to answer. "Well, B____, what difference is there, do you think?" "Why, sir," said he, "a sheep's heart is the softest, for you can bite a sheep's heart, but a woman's heart you break." The secret of the answer? That boy's mother died of a broken heart, the result of a husband's brutality and desertion.

Here is the will of a frequenter of the saloon as he wrote it: "I leave to society a ruined character, a wretched example, and a memory that will rot. I leave my parents as much sorrow as they can bear. I leave my brothers and sisters as much shame as I could bring on them. I leave my wife a broken heart, a life of shame. I leave to each of my children poverty, ignorance and the remembrance that their father filled a drunkard's grave." Well might he remember the children, for they, too, are victims.

In Kittaning, Pa., they lately closed the saloons and a merchant tells how a woman came to trade. Said she: "I want a pair of shoes for a little girl." "What number?" "Well, she is twelve years old." "But what number did you last buy?" "She never had a pair in her life. You see her father used to drink when we had the saloons, but now they are closed he doesn't drink any more, and this morning he said to me: 'Mother, I want you to go down town and buy a pair of shoes for Sissy, for she has never had a pair in her life,' and I thought if I told you her age you would know what size to give me." Think of it! Children of this great republic robbed of shoes that a few idlers may be supported. Oh, the woe! Oh, the degradation that comes to homes through this legalized traffic! In London, lethal chambers exist for the purpose of destroying vagrant dogs, that are quietly poisoned by carbonic acid gas. We need no lethal chambers for destroying men, the state is licensing agents to do the work, and they are doing it most effectively.

Let us now consider who are the sponsors of the liquor traffic. Where does the responsibility rest? Some time ago I read an account of a burglary in old Saint Paul's Church in New York City. The burglar had packed up two bundles containing one thousand dollars' worth of silk and satin draperies and vestments, and in his search he came across the communion wine. He drank it, and, overpowered by the deep draughts of the rich old wine, he was found in the morning by a policeman and taken to the station too drunk to tell his name. That kind of a church, administering the communion in alcoholic wines, must share the responsibility for the drunkenness of the land.

But now let us go into the saloon and see who is responsible for it, and you point to the saloonkeeper and say, "He is sponsor for the saloon; he is responsible for the traffic carried on there." You are mistaken, my friend. Judge Field of the United States Supreme Court has decided that no man has a natural right to sell liquor. He says, "There is no inherent right of the citizen to sell intoxicating liquors by retail. It is not a privilege of a citizen of a State or of the United States." Then it follows that the only right a man can have is a legal right. Who in the name of the high Heaven gives the saloon-keeper the right to scatter death and liquid damnation all over the city, all over the State? Who is responsible for our bars? Abraham Lincoln

said in his Gettysburg address, "This is a government of the people, by the people, for the people." We, the people, make the laws that give the saloon-keeper the right, upon payment of a tax, to sell liquor for us. We are in the business. Go into a saloon and ask the proprietor by what right he sells -- he does not claim a moral right, nor a natural right, but he at once points you to two papers; one is from the municipality and tells you that the saloon-keeper has the right to keep the bottle there, and the other is from the United States Government, to witness that he has the right to fill the bottle with the stuff and to sell it or, in other words, this being a government of the people, the man is rum-seller for their sovereign majesties, the people.

In this nation the people rule. Let them arise in their might against any unjust law, any iniquity, and they will banish it, but they are so forbearing and longsuffering, especially if the blood money will lay their sidewalks and clean their streets, that they are willing to damn the young men of the city, if they can have the license money in the treasury. Take the barrels of beer and other liquors that come into our city and pile them up, make a pyramid of them, examine them, and on every barrel you will find evidence that "We, the people" are in the business; they are all marked U. S. -- us.

I admit that the saloon-keeper is more intimately connected with the business than you are; he is doing your unclean work, but he is no more closely connected with it than the man who owns the property used for a saloon. I would as quickly handle the stuff over the bar as to rent the property to another for saloon purposes. One is just as wicked as the other, and in the day of reckoning with Almighty God, the saloon-keeper and the landlord and the bondsman will stand together equally guilty. Back of the saloon-keeper are the bondsman and the property owner, and back of them are the people who favor license, and also all those who refuse to avail themselves of the law we have by which we could close them if we would. In Van Buren County, Michigan, the saloon is banished under our local option law. When Rhode Island was carried for Prohibition, we thanked God and did some hurraing, but right here in southern Michigan we have four tiers of counties, a territory twice the size of Rhode Island, from which we could banish liquor by our local option law, Wayne County being the only exception, and yet every political party refuses to avail itself of this law.

We have saloons because of the moral cowardice and Prejudices of the better class of citizens. The man or the party who howls for national or state prohibition and yet will not avail himself of county prohibition, when he can have it by the law of the State, is terribly inconsistent, caring more for the party than for banished saloons.

Well, is there any hope? Yes, for

'Right's right. since God is God --

And right the day shall win.

To doubt would be disloyalty,

To falter would be sin."

The time clock of God Almighty is ringing out the hour of high noon. He is speaking to the conscience of the nation. The time has come when the rum power must be destroyed or the nation die. Sin is I reproach unto any people Jehovah calls to righteousness "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek through the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man," said God to His servant, the prophet. Men

are needed today, men with convictions and the courage to express them. When ministers in the pulpit and laymen in the pew stand firmly and unitedly against the saloon, then it will surely be destroyed.

When one emperor tried to rival another in building a most splendid coliseum in the second century, he sent for a Greek architect. "Make me a coliseum," said he. "You shall have everything in the way of means, but make me the best in the world. When it is completed we shall have a gala day, and crown you."

The coliseum was built. Yonder on his emerald throne sat the emperor, and by his side the Greek architect. The emperor arose and said to the eighty thousand people before him, "We have come to a great day; we have the finest building in the world; we have met to do honor to the Greek architect." Then stooping down, he cried, "Let in the lions; bring in the Christians." Then from his seat arose the Greek and said with a voice that penetrated every part of the building, "Sir, I, too, am a Christian." The maddened multitude hurled him over on the pavement below, where he lay crushed, bleeding, dying. That was sublime courage. He had convictions and declared them in the face of death.

Such men and such courage are needed today; men who will stand for God, though they stand alone. Go South, and they will show you the slave pen, and the auction notice of the sale of men and women as slaves. Only a little over forty years have passed since these things. The same period of time more and the legalized saloon will be looked upon as a relic of our barbarism, and men will wonder at our greed for gain that led us to license such a soul-destroying business. Were it not for the enormous foreign immigration, rum would be banished today from the greater part of the land, but, oppose what may, there can be no compromise. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the men and women who are following Him, must follow against all evils, by their prayers, their example, their votes, and when men vote on God's side, regardless of all else, then right will triumph and the saloon become a thing of the past.

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