

# National Temperance Study Course

### MR. SMITH AND THE COMFORT INN

(Junior Lesson)

Once upon a time there was a man called Joseph Hercules Smith, but he always signed himself Joseph H. and his people would think the H. stood for Henry.

Mr. Smith was a very kind man. He threw out crumbs for the sparrows in winter, and gave pennies to beggars and he was so fond of children that he used to stop and pat them on the head and ask them how old they were. He kept a public house, a very pleasant-looking public house; it was called "The Comfort Inn."

One day a traveller came to the inn and asked for a cup of tea.

"Tea!" exclaimed Mr. Smith. "Come now, let me draw you a glass of beer; nothing like beer to give you Comfort Inn-side, you know!"

"I never found beer a comfort, myself," said the traveller.

"Well, well, there's no accounting for tastes," said Mr. Smith, and brought the tea. "You're a stranger to these parts, I take it?"

"That's right," said the traveller. "I've a special line in spectacles that I'm trying to get people to use."

"Find it a paying business?" asked Mr. Smith.

"Not yet, but it will be a paying business for everybody in the end," said the traveller. "The fact is I'm so anxious to get people to see things straight that I'm giving the spectacles away!"

"You don't say!" exclaimed Mr. Smith.

"Yes, I do," said the traveller. "If people could only be led to see things as they really are, and not as they think they see them, there'd be a lot less trouble in the world, especially for the children."

"There you get me on a tender spot," said Mr. Smith. "When you talk about the children you can do anything with me; I wouldn't hurt one for a fortune."

"Humph!" said the traveller. "I saw some children playing in the gutter at the end of the street—curly hair and bad shoes."

"Blue eyes?" asked Mr. Smith.

"That's right," said the traveller. "I noticed the eyes because they were the only part clean enough to show the colour. Know them?"

"Know them!" echoed Mr. Smith. "Of course I do, bless their little hearts! Name of Thompson. Mother's a regular customer here, very regular."

"There were some other children playing a little lower down the street," went on the traveller. "Four of them; they looked as though they didn't know what it was to have a square meal."

"No more they do, poor little things agreed Mr. Smith; "I know the ones you mean. Father's a day-labourer — Dickson, Bill Dickson comes every night for his bit of Comfort Inn here—excuse my joke! Very poor wages, day-labouring, and with food so dear it's no wonder the children have to go hungry. Many a tall end of a joint of mutton, or the left-over half of a rabbit-pie my wife's sent 'em—she's as soft-hearted as myself where children come in."

"Humph!" said the traveller for the second time. "I'm thinking I'd better leave you a pair of spectacles!"

"So the traveller left the spectacles on the bar, paid for his tea, and went out.

Mr. Smith rubbed the spectacles on his handkerchief and put them on. Everything looked just as it always did—bright fire, gleaming brasses, everything clean and neat. "They don't seem to make much difference," he said and strolled out into the porch to see if the street, too, would look as it usually did.

Just at that moment twelve o'clock began to strike from the Market Hall, and Mrs. Thompson came out of her house higher up the street.

"Albert Egbert, come out of the gutter there, you naughty boy," she cried angrily. "No one would ever think I'd given you a watch only last Saturday as ever was! Maud, Annie, you take them all in the house this very minute!" And she slapped the nearest child and picked up the baby and thumped it on the doorstep.

"It's a deal too soft with them, I am," she said, as she came towards the inn. "There's not many mothers would make the sacrifices I do for the ungrateful brats."

Mr. Smith felt himself getting quite red with indignation. "I'm thinking the sacrifices are on the other leg, as one might say, Mrs. Thompson."

"Why, what do you mean?" cried Mrs. Thompson.

"Mean!" said Mr. Smith. "I mean it's the children that have made the sacrifices, not you. Look at their rags! Look at the dirt on their heads! If you hadn't fuddled your brains into a rice-pudding with beer you'd never have let the poor little things get into that state!"

Mrs. Thompson stood and stared. "Of all the impudence!" she gasped. "You can keep your old Comfort Inn; I'll never come near it again!" And away she flounced.

Mr. Smith took off the spectacles to mop his face. "Now what made me talk to her like that?" he asked himself. "It's bad for business—end yet I don't know what else I could have said, and me so fond of children."

Just at that minute there came a tug at his coat. It was little Violet Armada Dickson, with an empty pie-dish in her hand.

"Well, my dear?" said Mr. Smith, and patted her kindly on the head.

"Please, sir, Mother's sent the dish back, and please, she said to

thank you kindly, because there wasn't any money left to get anything else to eat, and please, me and Bobby and Sarah and Joe liked it very much, only there wasn't enough of it."

"Well, well!" said Mr. Smith, and patted her on the head again. "We'll have to take care there's more left for you next time, eh? See, here's a penny — you know where the sweeties are sold."

Violet Armada ran off down the street, and Mr. Smith was left with the pie-dish in one hand and the spectacles in the other. That meant he had no hand to do anything else, which was awkward, so he put the spectacles back on his nose.

No sooner were they in place than he nearly dropped the pie-dish. "Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "What was it the child said about there being no money left to buy anything else to eat? Why, Bill Dickson spends money every night, and when I've got his money I've the impudence to give the children pennies and send his wife scraps of food I don't want to eat myself, and think I'm being generous! Not another glass does Bill buy here while those children go short," exclaimed Mr. Smith, "but it will be bad for business," he added, ruefully. "It must be these spectacles that make me see things so differently!"

And just then he looked up at the inn sign over the porch—he looked a second time; no, there was no doubt about it, the sign said plainly, "The Discomfort Inn."

"Well, well!" sighed Mr. Smith. "After all the other things those spectacles have made me see, I don't wonder even the sign looks different. The Discomfort Inn; yes, that's the right name for it when you see things straight; it's discomfort people buy here for themselves and the children, and it's only discomfort I'd get out of it for myself now, if I went on selling beer. I'll have to turn it into an ordinary shop and sell green-groceries and bread—and sweets, because I am so fond of the children. There may not be much money in the business, compared to selling beer, but I'll know that I'm doing what I can to be a Comfort Inn in the neighbourhood," he added, with his jolly laugh, "and that will give me Comfort Inn—inside, you know!" said he.

### QUESTIONS

- (1) How does intemperance cause poverty? Value, 10 marks.
  - (2) What have drinkers to show for money spent on alcohol? Value, 10 marks.
- (What Does It Matter, by Margaret Baker.)

### SOME CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES AND THE ALCOHOL PROBLEM

(Intermediate-Senior Lesson)

The earliest name by which the Christian movement was known was "the Way," and the followers of Jesus were spoken of as "People of the Way." What their neighbours noticed about those first century Christians was not their doctrinal beliefs but the way they lived; it was different from the life around them. In other words, their new loyalties and convictions were effective in their daily lives. That was surely as it ought to be.

It is still true that Christianity is a way of life, that there are religious principles set forth in the New Testament which in their application have a bearing on our social problems, and which will help young people today to find a satisfactory answer to the question of beverage alcohol.

### Christian Stewardship

One of the principles of Christian living is that of "stewardship." It means that the resources of the earth, and all the personal powers and abilities we possess are a sacred trust from God. We are not owners, but trustees. It is as if a father should entrust a son with a field of his farm or a section of his garden that he might produce for the family's needs.

According to government figures, the people of Canada spend annually on alcoholic drinks more than \$78,000,000. That amount of money represents a great deal of beer, wine and spirits. Those commodities in turn, represent very large quantities of grain, fruit and other foods which go into the manufacture of the beverages. Consideration of the principle of Christian stewardship raises the question as to whether or not, in a world where some folk are dying of starvation and many others are undernourished, that use of grain and fruit is justifiable.

This principle of stewardship applies to our individual lives as well. We are entrusted with intelligence, powers of judgement, ability to discern right and wrong, and various other aptitudes. Any willful impairment of these powers by the use of alcohol or by any other means is surely a betrayal of trust.

### Man, the Temple of God

In writing to the people of Corinth, Paul stated another Christian principle which should help us in dealing with the alcohol problem. "Ye are the temple of the living God," and "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." That is, man's supreme value lies in the fact that he, including his body and personality is God's temple. Therefore, the human body is sacred. It is out of this view of man that the ideas of liberty, freedom and democracy that we cherish so dearly have grown. Why should man be free? Not because of those features of his

existence which he shares with the animals, but because of his uniqueness in being the temple of God. From that view stems our determined resistance to any form of society which would make the state supreme, and make persons merely tools working for the state.

Today our way of life, based on the Christian teaching about God's purpose, is endangered both from outside our country and from within. From the outside we are threatened by world communism; from the inside that threat comes from anything that would defile man as the temple of God, anything that would violate the sacredness of man's personality.

Now, the scientific study today of alcohol and its effects shows clearly the defilement of body and mind which takes place when alcohol is used. "There is a loss of physical skill and ability, a befuddling of the mind which Shakespeare noted when he said that people who drink "put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains," a slackening of moral power and judgement, "the gradual wearing out of the worthwhile parts of the human personality."

History provides abundant evidence to support the last part of the quotation from Saint Paul — "him shall God destroy." One thinks of gifted persons like Lord Byron, Stephen Foster, Alexander the Great, and others who were destroyed by alcohol. The same has been true of empires. One night a ruler in the ancient world named Belshazzar gave a very large banquet where wine flowed freely. This Babylonian tyrant ordered

that the gold and silver vessels taken from the temple in Jerusalem should be brought to him, and these sacred vessels were used to drink toasts to their idols of brass and stone and wood. That night their enemies the Medes attacked the city. Belshazzar was slain in his drunken stupor. Babylon fell, and the course of history was changed.

Coming down centuries later, among the causes assigned by historians for the fall of the mighty Roman Empire was included indulgence in wine.

On the eve of the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon's "General of Armies" Marshall Ney is said to have spent his time drinking wine, and the next day he had such a "hang-over" that his befuddled mind failed to grasp the seriousness of the situation and he failed to bring up his reinforcements at the right time. The result for a French force was defeat, although from a military standpoint Napoleon's forces had the advantage in both position and training.

When Marshall Petain broadcast the fall of France in World War II, his message contained this statement: "Our men were drunk and could not fight." So one could continue tracing the path of destruction across the centuries caused by alcoholic drink.

### For the Sake of Others

No one lives to himself alone. We are all tied together in the bundle of life. What others do affects your life, and what you do influences the lives of others. From the first, the Christian church was

vitaly aware of these inter-personal relationships, and set a high standard in the matter. This standard was expressed by Saint Paul in a way that has become a classic in Christian history. "If meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat, no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble." The eating of meat that had been offered to idols was a problem in the early church, the use of liquor is a problem today. But the principle is the same.

Paul was acting under no external compulsion. There was no dictator or official telling him what to do. He was a free man acting under the direction of his own conscience. His conscience told him that the highest exercise of his freedom was to refuse a right for himself for the sake of another person for whom the exercise of the same right might be disastrous. That principle has a very definite application to the liquor traffic today.

We hear much in our day about personal liberty, especially in connection with one's right to drink alcohol if one wants to. But personal liberty is not an absolute thing. If we live in a society our liberty is hedged around with limitations on all sides, from how we shall drive a motor car to how we shall behave if we contract a communicable disease. As someone has put it, "My right to swing my arms ends where my neighbour's nose begins." The highest way of regarding our liberty in the matter of alcohol, as in other matters, is not as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but as a chance to become our best—to live for the

# Island Soldiers Returning

## Home From Korea



Left to right are Pte. G. Arnett Howatt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Claude Howatt, Cape Traverse, Pte. A. E. MacDonald, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin MacDonald, Alberton, and Gnr. G. T. Marshall, son of Mrs. Horace Marshall, 86 Richmond St., Charlottetown, who disembarked at a west coast port by transport from Korea last Monday and who are expected home this evening.

highest ideals, and to act from the highest motives. One of the highest motives of which man is capable is self-limitation for the sake of another's well-being.

### QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by Saint Paul's statement that man is the temple of God? How does this affect your decision about al-

coholic drinks? Value 10 marks.

2. Supposing you could take alcoholic drinks without personal harm, what Christian principles still make it desirable to abstain? Value 10 marks.

### PIONEER MISSION

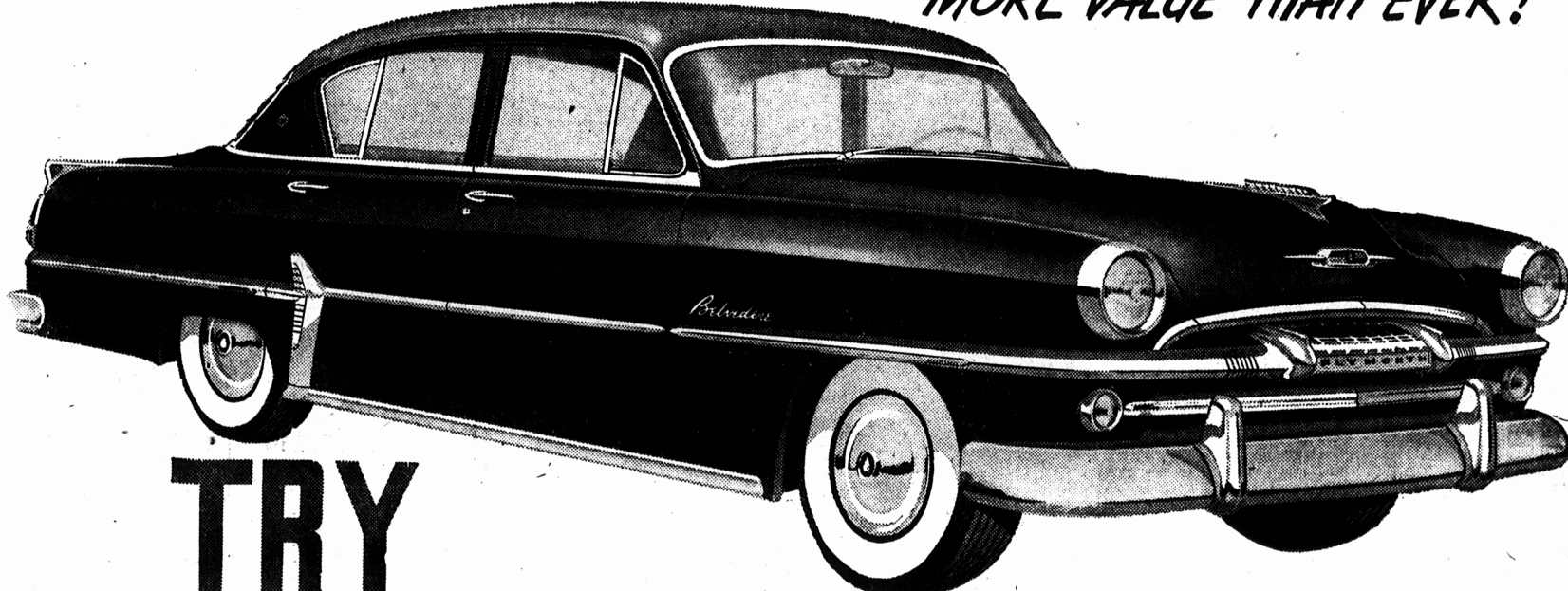
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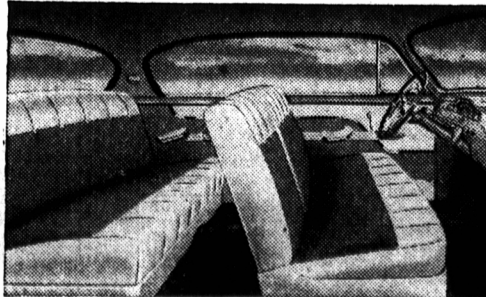
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