

A POLITICAL JUDGMENT DAY.

By Daniel A. Poling, National Citizenship Superintendent of the United Society of Christian Endeavour.

(Conclusion of an address delivered in St. Louis, Missouri, January 15, 1914, at a Union meeting of temperance and religious organisations held in the Washington-Compton Presbyterian Church, under the auspices of W.C.T.U.)

No local, state or national law, nor the sum of all anti-liquor laws alone, can ever solve the gigantic liquor problem. We who insist that the United States Government shall assume a proper attitude upon this vital national question; that she shall go out of partnership with the liquor traffic, and that in the last analysis she shall settle with organised alcohol upon the high moral plane of righteousness and patriotism, know that mandatory law is a tool, an opportunity, a fighting chance, and that it does not enforce itself. A tool calls for a labourer; a fighting chance calls for a warrior; an opportunity calls for a man.

Prohibition is not an automatic machine. Prohibition is not "permissive law." Prohibition is mandatory law. Prohibition does not, can not enforce itself. "Prohibition does not prohibit." But Prohibition is prohibitable. Prohibition is subject to enforcement. Prohibition can be made effective. We who here declare for national constitutional Prohibition and for the passage of the Sheppard-Hobson Bill, must be thoroughly aroused to the fact that, should Congress pass the measure and should the Legislatures of the necessary three-fourths of the States declare for Constitutional Prohibition, thus amending the organic law of the land, we will still have failed of accomplishing our high purpose unless we elect to power political administrations openly committed to the safeguarding and enforcing of this national anti-liquor law. More clearly than ever before we see the folly of entrusting worthy laws to unworthy political demonstrations. Out of a multitude of past bitter defeats we have learned political wisdom. It would be a monumental tragedy to achieve national Prohibition by an amendment to the Constitution of the

United States without capturing for the administration of that law the executive department of Government. We are fully determined that no splendid enthusiasm shall in these fateful days become our undoing. To-day the united army of temperance commands:

"Our laws shall declare Prohibition, and our political administration shall be held accountable for the enforcing of Prohibition." Worthy government is not by law alone, for government by law is anarchy; worthy government is not by administration alone, for government by administration is tyranny. Government is by law and administration.

For some months the conviction has grown upon me, that we stand in the morning of a great political judgment day—a day when men shall be made; a day when men shall be unmade; a day when political parties shall be weighed in the balances of a quickened political conscience, and when those found unworthy shall be abandoned. Not as a prophet, but as a humble assembler of facts, I am bound to declare that the despised political John the Baptist of this Republic's forty-four great rum years has not cried in vain. In this national day of prayer proclaimed by the incomparable White Ribbon host, the political fighting lines of the on-sweeping enemies of the liquor traffic more nearly converge than at any time since the rum war began. And this is the morning of the judgment day.

Since the 4th of July, 1913, my eyes have seen, my ears have heard, and my mind has testified to incidents and developments in the anti-liquor fight, many of which twelve months ago would have found no place in my farthest hope.

I have heard five thousand men with upraised hands, clenched into fists, say in a voice that sounded like the ominous rollings of a great thunder: "God helping me, no political candidate or party, not declaring for the destruction of the liquor traffic, can have my support or vote."

I have heard the Anti-Saloon League sweeping on from ten thousand victories declare for national constitutional Prohibition, and in one of the greatest reform gatherings of history, say, "On this issue we fight—when ever a politician, or executive office, or a political party, prefers the liquor traffic above public morals, such men

must be set aside and such parties abandoned."

I have seen the united church of Jesus Christ under the leadership of her consecrated, organised youth, become militant for the political regeneration of the nation, and write upon her cross-crowned banners the inspired words, "A saloonless nation by 1920, the three hundredth year from the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth."

I have looked into the glorified faces of the women of the land, as they sat under their white standards and far-visioned leadership at Asbury Park. I have heard them say again as through all these wilderness marchings they have ever declared, "Total Abstinence for the individual, Prohibition for the State and Nation."

I have turned to an ever-increasing number of great periodicals to hear them prophesy, with Norton of Maine, with Collier's, and the Philadelphia North American, the setting aside of men and parties unwilling to declare themselves upon the liquor question. To-day the Christian Endeavour World thunders editorially:

"The voters of the country are coming to see that a party, any party, that either actively or passively allies itself with the liquor interests, is not fit to live."

Only a month ago I heard the lion-hearted Hobson challenge his colleagues of the Lower House of Congress, and in the presence of crowded galleries say:

"We ought to have our party understand now, while the war is on, that it was never intended for an alliance with the liquor interests. Yet there is a great Democrat, a great Alabamian, who is present to-day, who recently announced—at least that is the way I read it in the reports—that if Prohibition continues to be injected into Democratic politics, either Prohibition would be ground to powder or the Democratic party must die. I take second place to no man who loves his party, and let me tell you that if the Democratic party can only live by joining with the liquor interests to debauch the American people, then in God's name let it die!"

I am violating no confidence when I tell you to-night, just a few days in advance of the official public announcement, that a group of men, nearly all of whom are national and international figures—a United States