

NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

(Incorporated)

Organised 1885

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THE NEED FOR NEW WORKERS

[The following very well written article is from the pen of a Scottish Union member, of over four score years, and is taken from the "Scottish Women's Temperance News." Its applicability to our own position is worthy of note.—Ed.]

It will be generally agreed that the most urgent need of the Temperance movement today—every section of it—is new workers, resolute, and convinced that "abstinence is best" as a way of life. To carry the movement forward in the difficult times that lie ahead, new life will be required to reinvigorate the work, and to initiate new methods and schemes of service. For this important task young men and women with a definite sense of vocation must be sought. This need not be a fruitless search. Let us consider the position and its implications. Remembering that the word vocation bears a wide and varying definition, it will be helpful if we start with clear understanding of the sense in which it is used, namely, a calling by the will of God; acceptance of responsibility for work in which we seek to serve the coming of the Kingdom of Righteousness, Justice and Truth among men. It is no exaggeration to say that it is in that spirit and from that motive that the most fruitful Temperance work has been accomplished.

A Master Destroyer

The drink evil is recognised as a master-destroyer of human happiness and moral worth. A stumbling-block

in the path of little children, and the ally of all the forces that combine to hinder men and women realising their highest destiny. The gigantic organisation known as "the Trade" is deeply entrenched in the life of the community. Vested interests are reinforced daily by the growing profits of the drink purveyors and the mendacious publicity methods employed. All that is enough, but it is not all. The conspiracy of silence on the part of many members of the medical profession who know the facts, added to the complacency of religious leaders, for whom there can be no excuse of ignorance, make the task of the total abstinence advocate more difficult. Nor has wartime experience made things easier. High in the national life there has been all too frequently a lamentable patronage of drinking customs. Flippant references to beer as food by members of the Government, who ought to know better, combine with the drink barrage of the B.B.C. to invest drinking with a glamorous aspect. The main-brace is still spliced on British warships; the calendar of crime associated with drink grows daily; recommendations of the Licensing Royal Commission presented to Parliament twelve years ago are still interred in official pigeon-holes (if they have not already gone the way of salvage), and promises made to deputations have not been kept. This is only a brief list of some of the facts in relation to drink confronting us today. As we contemplate the forces arrayed against us we realise afresh that it is not within our power to match weapon with weapon in the struggle for a drink-free nation. The ultimate decisive factor in any movement for righteousness is spiritual power, and this is also fundamental to our cause. A full recognition of this fact will enable us to see all our problems in a clear light. Considerations of finance, organisation and methods are not the first essentials, important though they be.

The Master Builder

There is an inescapable summons for all who would put a hand upon the plough of total abstinence work: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things will be added unto you." In "Remaking the World" to which we are encouraged to look forward there will be great opportunities for the men and

women who are prepared to face life in this spirit, who accept service as an act of faith, determined to sublimate the task, however hard it seems to be. Therefore it behoves each one of us to search our hearts, and examine ourselves in the light of our responsibilities. All the circumstances laid bare in the present position, and all the prospects opening before us in a changing world, call for a re-dedication of our powers and fuller devotion to the cause that has won our allegiance. Primarily the movement is dependent for its quality and standard upon the men and women doing the work. We have succeeded to a goodly heritage. As we remember the example and work of the founders and pioneers of the movement, and recall the memory of those with whom we have served in other days, we offer our tribute of thankfulness and praise. From time to time proposals have been made for more ambitious aims in training, and we can continue to hope that the necessity for this will find practical expression in the near future. But whatever plans are ultimately formulated, nothing can be of more importance for the movement and the workers than the realisation of the spiritual forces made available for all. Energy and organisation can accomplish much, but who among us does not know that work without prayer is presumption. Not infrequently conferences terminate with a sense of frustration. The fellowship is helpful and the addresses informative, but deeper things seem to elude us, and we miss the quickening of the spirit which alone brings true enrichment of our life and work. This need is expressed in the words: "Not by might nor by power but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." In the coming days of new programmes and reconstruction we must put first things first, and that means dedication in our work. We shall know a richer quality of service in so far as we experience the vocational sense of our service. A great opportunity lies before us. There are hopeful signs that in the field of education, and in the realm of legislation, Temperance reformers will be able to carry their cause forward on the mighty impulse of the coming peace. On us rests the responsibility of inspiring the projected changes by our witness, and by stern resolution that God helping us we shall not be found wanting.

C. KIRBY.