

PROHIBITION IS NOT RELIGIOUS, DECLARES RABBI

Mr. Lefkowitz in Address at Temple Emanuel Says There Is No Warrant for It Either in Biblical or Rabbinical Law. Avers That Christ Drank Wine.

Speaker Asserts That People Who Would Abolish Use of Liquor Entirely Are Not Achieving Aim, Since Want of Manhood, Not Drink, Makes Drunkard.

Prohibition finds no warranty in Christianity.

Prohibition is unreligious.

Prohibition is contrary to principles of justice.

Prohibition is un-American and undemocratic.

Prohibition has for its basis a generous amount of exaggeration.

Prohibition is ineffectual to attain the results it aims at.

Prohibition, being based on fear and using for its weapon the strong arm of the law is a regression to a lower civilization.

—Rabbi M. Lefkowitz.

Beginning his talk with a reference to the four cups of wine drunk at the Feast of the Passover in gratitude for the delivery of the Israelites out of Egypt and a pledge of consecration to liberty and freedom Rabbi M. Lefkowitz made an emphatic argument against prohibition last evening in an address at the Temple Emanuel.

"The attitude of Judaism towards prohibition is unqualified and absolute negation," said he. "We find no warranty for it in Biblical or rabbinical law. The rabbinical law makes it obligatory to usher in each Sabbath and holiday over a glass of wine, symbolizing the blessings and bounty of God as well as the zest and joy of life. The Bible speaks of wine as 'that which cheereth man and man' and wine was an essential feature of Biblical ceremonies and sacrifices. When the prophet wants to depict the reign of peace upon earth he can find no more fitting simile than 'Every man shall sit under his own vine and fig-tree.'"

"Prohibition finds no warranty in Christianity. The personal example of Jesus militates against it, for we are told that He partook of the paschal supper the night before His crucifixion, and drank the four cups of wine that has become the Catholic's 'Blessed Sacrament' and the Protestant's 'Lord's Supper.' At the marriage feast of Cana we are told that He changed water into wine, and to say that was unfermented

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SAYS PROHIBITION IS NOT RELIGIOUS

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betrays more ingenuousness than critical acumen.

"Prohibition is unreligious. Religion recognizes the existence of evil and tries to strengthen man to overcome it. Prohibition tries to weaken man by destroying the possibilities of evil. Religious method is persuasion while prohibition is versed on coercion.

"Prohibition runs contrary to the principles of justice, the legislation it seeks to have made would render valueless large investments made under the protection of the law of the land.

Prohibition is un-American and undemocratic. America guarantees to each of her citizens the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and to attempt to dictate as to what a man shall or shall not drink is to interfere with one's right to further one's happiness as one deems right.

'Instead of worrying ourselves about what goes into other people's systems we should be more careful as to what proceeds out of our own mouths. Prohibition has for its basis a generous amount of exaggeration. Statistics showing the relation to disease should be taken 'cum grano salis.' Often drink is given as the cause of vice or crime when it is in reality of a more shameful nature. Drink is a mantle of charity that covers a multitude of more grievous sins.

Doesn't Achieve Its Aim.

"Prohibition is ineffectual to achieve the result it aims at for the typical drunkard, and he alone, is to be considered in connection with the crime. He is as a rule abnormal by nature, a defective and often a degenerate and will find an outlet for his evil propensities through some other channel if that of alcohol be abolished. It is not drink that makes the drunkard, it is want of manhood. Educate men, train a strong, self-reliant manhood by inculcating temperance and the problem will be solved. Temperance and not prohibition is the panacea which will cure all evils. Be not only temperate in drinking but in all things. For if it be true that drink has slain thousands, gluttony, greed and incontinence have slain ten thousands. To focus temperance on one aspect of human life is to work evil rather than good. The slogan of the day must be temperance, moderation in all things.

"Prohibition being based on fear and using for its weapon the strong arm of the law is a reversion to a lower civilization. Temperance making human life is to work evil rather and interest is based on reason and this being an age of reason and enlightenment temperance will and ought to supplant prohibition."

Rabbi Lefkowitz made mention of the fact that though the Jews were accustomed to wine from childhood such a thing as a Jewish drunkard is unknown. He further averred that it was a bad idea to dwell on the evil effects of wine when speaking to children, and that it would be much better to ignore the fact that there could be such a thing as excess in its use.