

NON-PARTISAN NATIONAL



1890.

"The truth shall make you free."

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Cleveland, Ohio, February 15, 1890.

Dear Brother:

From reports widely circulated in both the secular and religious press you have already learned something of the objects and aims of the Non-Partisan National Women's Christian Temperance Union; of the demand for its existence; its auspicious beginning, prospectively covering a wide area of christian effort, and multiplying the results of such effort adown the lengthening vista of the years.

Scarcely any achievement is impossible upon this basis.

Experience has clearly proven the wisdom of non-partisan methods of temperance work; history emphasizes the necessity of work by such methods as the only guarantee of success. Society is not ideal but real, and the "glow of a future" idealism loses something of its radiance when it rests upon the stern problems of every-day life. Not what ought to be, but what is, is the fact we face. The liquor traffic is here entrenched; its horrible results are everywhere manifest. If rum's victims are not our own flesh and blood they are kin to others, who in the name of a common humanity have interests allied to ours. The claims of this work rest upon us all, nor are we exempt though we pray to be excused. In the light of modern science as well as Christian ethics, total abstinence for the individual, is the correct rule of life, and the extinction of the traffic in alcoholic beverages the end to be sought in all good government.

How shall we attain these objects? 1. By reaching the women and making every home a center in which total abstinence is the standard of practice, and from which shall radiate influences that will lift society to a higher plane of living--in other words--the first step is in the line of organization. 2. Education by all the means that experience has proven effectual, and 3. Legislation--protecting the weak against the rapacity of the strong--blotting out a traffic, the results of which are evil and evil only.

Instead of only 143,000 women organized for temperance work, we should have a standing army of not less than one million women in readiness for this holy war. This number cannot be enlisted under a partisan banner and in a society having many departments of work in regard to the utility of which christian women honestly differ. Hence a society less complex in its aims, free from any party alliance, affording the widest range for political preference and the fullest scope for individual effort, is the great demand of the hour and meets the expressed approval of thousands. Such is the Non-Partisan W. C. T. U., organized not as a rival society, but largely to cover unoccupied ground, to enlist new recruits, to bring again into active service many who had retired from the field, and to open up "ways of pleasantness and paths of peace" which do not diverge widely from the Christian church, wherein those who hold a common temperance faith, may walk in harmony.

Many Christian ministers have voluntarily proffered assistance in various ways. Are we then presuming, in asking you, as a minister of the Gospel, whatever your individual party preference may be, to kindly hand the enclosed letters to women, and constitutions for local unions to such persons in your church or community as you think would most likely respond to our appeal and urge upon them the importance of organization without delay? The great majority of women are as yet indifferent to the demands of this great moral reform upon the womanhood of this nation and especially upon christian motherhood. Many have been unwilling hitherto to engage in active temperance work, because of various complications, but now that the lines are clearly drawn, every woman may find her true place in one organization or the other, where she may work with her whole heart. Will you then set the ball in motion, urge the necessity for immediate action; encourage, exhort, and entreat the women of your congregation to lose no time in allying themselves with a Christian organization that seeks to build a wall of defence over against every home, "to rescue the perishing," to hold up the Gospel as the power that can "save unto the uttermost," and by methods of prevention and cure endeavor to secure the safety of coming generations.

Will you kindly forward the work in the manner indicated, and also send some word of encouragement to us, if the object of this movement has your hearty approval?

Yours in Christian service.

F. JENNIE DUTY, Gen. Sec'y.

ELLEN J. PHINNEY, Pres.