

## Messenger and Visitor

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### The Citizen and the Saloon.

Outside of those who have a personal pecuniary interest in the liquor traffic, there are probably few who would seriously contend that the saloon is not a curse to society. The business of the liquor saloon is thrice cursed. It works evil to the man who engages in it. To this country's great army of saloon-keepers it would be an inestimable blessing if the evil business which gives them a living could be utterly and forever destroyed. The saloon works also incalculable evil to an immense host of men who patronize it, and to their families. It likewise works evil incalculable to that part of society which does not patronize the saloon, for the saloon is constantly destroying the manhood and wealth of the nation, corrupting the healthy currents of its life and converting the elements of its strength into weakness.

The saloon is a constant menace to the material interests and moral welfare of the community in which it exists, and every honest and intelligent citizen must perceive it to be his enemy. Here is a man who sets himself industriously to work in some honest calling, endeavoring to do something which, while it shall provide a living for himself and family, will also be helpful to others and serve the general interests of society. He is ready and earnest to take his part with his neighbors in promoting everything that he judges to be for the material and moral interests of the community. And while he is thus co-operating cheerfully with others, and the life of the community is flowing in healthy streams through normal channels, a man comes and, on some street corner, starts a saloon. Now every honest and intelligent citizen in that place must perceive that this is the work of an enemy. The more money the people spend at the saloon, the less will they have to spend for the necessities and comforts of life, the less they will have, and the less they will feel inclined, to expend for the highest social, intellectual and moral interests of the community. Individual citizens suffer in their business and society suffers in all its best interests because the saloon has been introduced. Moreover, the longer it stays the larger and the blacker its shadow grows. It brings forth after its own kind. It prepares for itself a soil in which to scatter its evil seed, and the harvest of poverty, misery and crime which is brought forth becomes ever more abundant. It is a snare set constantly in the pathway of young men, and often the strong man is deceived and destroyed by the appetite which it has fostered.

Now the question is, What shall the honest and intelligent citizen do about the saloon? He sees how evil a thing it is, how inimical to all legitimate industry, to all social, moral and religious welfare, how it consumes men's earnings, lessens or destroys their power to earn, wrecks manhood, blights homes, multiplies sorrow, begets crime, entails endless unhappiness, endless expense for courts, prisons, hospitals and asylums, he sees that every saloon is a snare in the pathway of his own boy and a constant menace to the peace and happiness of his own home,—and can he help asking himself what is to be done about the saloon and the liquor business? Should we expect that the honest, intelligent, Christian citizen will be content to say that the liquor business exists by the permission of God, and that therefore he has no responsibility in the matter; or should we rather expect him to conclude that God has endowed him with the faculties of a man and charged him with the responsibilities of a citizen in order that he might unite with other honest, intelligent, Christian citizens to declare, in the name of God and humanity, that such a curse to

the community as the saloon should not be tolerated? Can there be any but one answer to these questions? And if his highest interest and his highest duty combine to urge the Christian citizen to act with his fellow citizens for the suppression of the saloon, wherever practicable, in the smaller community in which he has his home, will not the same considerations, in like manner, urge him to like co-operation with his fellow-citizens all over the country, to deliver the land from the curse of the drink business? When, therefore, a Christian elector is asked to say on the 29th of this month whether or not he is in favor of taking action to dry up at its source the evil stream which finds outlet by the saloon, can he be in any doubt as to what his answer should be?

### A Perpetual Conflict.

In the Bible lesson for the current week the sacred writer presents a graphic description of the degeneracy of Israel's worship in the time of which he writes, and on account of which the judgments of God are uttered against the people. In what they called worship the children of Israel were doing that which was not right in the sight of the Lord. Everywhere the land was being defiled. Alike in the hamlet and in the fenced city were to be found the altars of heathen divinities, with the idols and other symbols of their degrading worship; the hearts of the people were being turned from the pure worship of Jehovah and corrupted by the licentious and cruel rites of heathenism. Even the abominations of Moloch had been introduced in Israel, so that the people caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and sold themselves to do that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. "Yet the Lord testified unto Israel and unto Judah by the hand of every prophet and of every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by the hands of my servants the prophets."

The condition which is here described suggests two important truths. The first is the tendency of all flesh to corrupt its way upon the earth. Man is, indeed, a religious being. He feels impelled to worship, but his spiritual nature is so dominated by the sensual, his desires are so earthly, the thoughts and imaginations of his heart are so evil, that there is ever a danger that any spiritual flame of real religion that may glow in his breast will be extinguished by superstition and sensuality. The heathen nations by which Israel was surrounded had grown more and more debased in respect to the objects and the forms of their worship, until their national existence was no longer to be tolerated; and Israel, in spite of all its better teaching, was fast following in their footsteps.

The other remarkable fact to be noted is that in the midst of, and in spite of, all this downward tendency, while the nations, blinded by their superstitions, were wallowing in the sloughs of sensuality, and while Israel with them was corrupting its way, and sacrificing all its national virtue on the altars of superstition and lust, there was still a class of men in Israel and in Judah who, with clear spiritual vision, perceived, and with no uncertain sound, uttered, the truth of God. The old Hebrew prophets and their teachings, in respect to God and his worship, are not to be accounted for except on the basis of a divine revelation. Whatever theories men promulgate or adopt, respecting the authorship of the Old Testament Scriptures and the history of Israel, there are facts here the force of which are not to be gainsaid or resisted. The monotheism and lofty spiritual teachings of the Hebrew prophets, respecting the one God, His Supreme personality, His absolute holiness, and to the nothingness of the so-called gods of the heathen and the vanity of all idol worship—this surely was no part of the stream of tendency of the times in which these men lived, a natural product of the forces everywhere fermenting in the world around them. Unless these men were taught of God, how did they come to be possessed of truth so vital to all true religion and so foreign and obnoxious to the age in which they lived?

That disposition of men to put the sensuous in the place of the spiritual, to multiply objects of worship, to put the human in the place of the divine, to

ascribe to "no-gods" the attributes and the praise which belongs alone to the One Living and True God, is not wholly a thing of ages past. It is not absent from some forms of Christianity. What but this is the meaning of the extreme ritualism and sacerdotalism, becoming so rampant in our day? What but this is the explanation of that tremendous drift of Anglicanism toward Rome,—Rome with its sensuous worship and priestly tyrannies, its elevation of things human and material into the place of things spiritual and divine, its worship of a woman and a wafer god, its vestments and posturings, its burning of incense, and offering of prayers in an unknown tongue, its confessional, its subjection of the worshipper's conscience to the keeping of a priest and the ascription of divine attributes to a sinful man?

But let not the heart of any believer faint at this. Let no one fear that the Word of God is to be bound or that it shall not prosper in the thing whereunto He has sent it. God who spake of old unto the fathers by the prophets, and who has spoken also by His Son, still speaks, and will speak. The word which found voice by the prophets of old and by the reformers of a more modern age, will find still larger and clearer utterances in these later days. Yet it is surely a day which calls for faith and spiritual activity. Those who have received the gospel of the spirit should walk in the light of the power of it, lest they be carried away captive into a land where the sun of truth is darkened by clouds of superstition and idolatry.

### Editorial Notes.

—The annual sessions of the N.B. Convention and the N.B. Baptist S.S. Convention were held last week and the first of this week at Havelock, Kings Co., N.B. The meetings, especially those of Sunday, were largely attended. Senator King, of Chipman, was elected President; Rev. J. H. Hughes and Rev. S. D. Ervine, Vice-Presidents; Rev. W. E. McIntyre, Secretary, and J. S. Titus, Esq., Treasurer. The Secretary's report on Home Missions was presented by Rev. S. D. Ervine on Saturday afternoon. This report will be found in full on our third page. The Convention sermon was preached Sunday morning by Rev. Geo. Howard. A mass temperance meeting, having special reference to the Plebiscite vote, was held on Sunday evening. Vigorous speeches were delivered by Rev. C. W. Townsend, Senator King, Rev. R. M. Bynon, Havelock Coy, Esq., Rev. Geo. Howard, Rev. Milton Addison and W. H. White, Esq. A resolution was adopted pledging support to the Plebiscite cause. An extended report of the proceedings of the Conventions will appear in our next issue.

—There was a very pleasant gathering in the school room of Germain Street church on Thursday evening last, on the occasion of a reception given to Pastor Gates and wife on their return from their trans-Atlantic trip. A very large number of the members of the church and congregation, with some from other churches, were present. After a time spent in social intercourse, the meeting was called to order by Deacon J. J. Bostwick, who explained the object of the gathering and spoke of the pleasure that it gave all to meet the pastor and his wife again. It had been hoped that Dr. Keirstead, of Wolfville, who has supplied the pulpit much of the time during Mr. Gates' absence, would be present, but a letter was read by the clerk regretting his inability to accept the invitation on account of a slight illness from which he was suffering. The letter conveyed his congratulations and best wishes for pastor and church. An informal address to the pastor and Mrs. Gates was then given by a member of the church, after which Rev. A. Lucas offered prayer. Mr. Gates, replying to the address of welcome, spoke at some length and in a very interesting way of incidents of his trip, and especially of his experiences in the Holy Land. After this, light refreshments were served and opportunity given for further social intercourse. An orchestra furnished excellent music. Everyone is delighted to see Mr. and Mrs. Gates looking so well and to know that they have enjoyed their trip so much. Mr. Gates seems particularly vigorous and looks as if his six months' vacation had added more than as many years to his working life.