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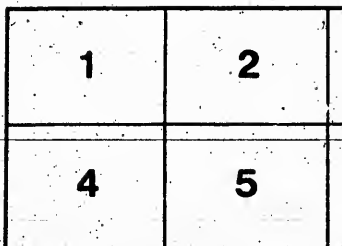
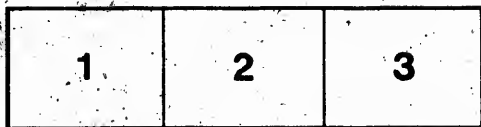
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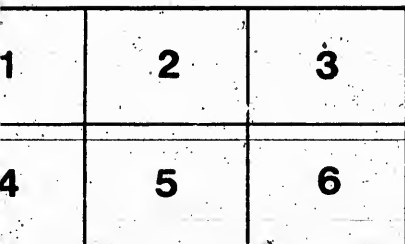
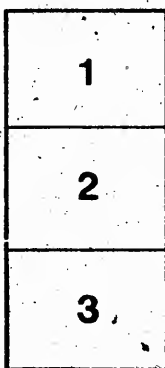
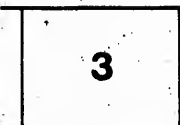
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WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CHATSWORTH,

ON THE 10th OF SEPT., 1876, BY THE

REV. JAMES CAMERON.

OWEN SOUND:

JMO. RUTHERFORD, GENERAL BOOK AND JOB PRINTER.

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Watchman, what of the Night?

"So thou, O son of man! I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me."—Ezek. xxxiii. 7.

To understand this passage, you must imagine yourself in Palestine. The farmers there do not live on their farms, but in villages—just as if all the farmers round here lived in this village, went out in the morning to work in their fields, and returned in the evening. This plan they adopted because of the danger from enemies. These villages were generally erected on hills; on the highest part of the village a tower was erected. The people, in any time of danger, chose one of their number to stand on this tower, with a trumpet. He was to keep a sharp lookout. If he sees a cloud of dust, he must watch it; if he feels satisfied that the enemy is coming, he ought to blow the trumpet to warn them that are in the field—the men to gird on their arms, and the women and children to flee. Such was the position of the prophets of the Old Testament, and such is the position of the preachers of the New Testament. Let us follow out this idea, that we as watchmen, may know *our* duty; and that you who set us as watchmen, may know *your* duty at this time, when there is a great public question stirring the minds of the people of this county.

Let us consider *first*, the office: It is to **WATCH**. A simple, easy thing, you say. Look at the people in the field: *they* toil hard; *he* is only watching. True; but that *watching* is harder than *working*. He is alone all day; others work in company. He must never sit down on duty; workers can rest at noon. He must watch into the night; the workers are asleep, each one in his own home. So with the ministers of Christ. Our work is to watch; but we are often alone. The people cannot enter into sympathy with us, in many things. But we are not alone, for the Father is with us. We carry into the night the cares of our work. The responsibility of the watchman is great. Brethren, pray for us. But there are too many who are more ready to find fault than to pray. To such we say: "But with me it is a very small matter that I should be judged of you or of any man's judgment; but he that judgeth me is the Lord."

II. The *position* of watchman. It is an **ELEVATED** position. The people are in the

fields down on the plain. He is on the hill, and on the top of the high tower. He therefore sees further; and being accustomed to watch, his vision becomes sharper. A man goes up from the field for a little while, to take his stand on the tower. The watchman suddenly stops, looks into the distance, and draws a long breath. What is the matter? A little cloud of dust. The other man sees no danger. It is the enemy coming. Watchmen on the towers of Zion are thus in a favourable position, with regard to some questions. Their education; their studies, their prayers, their study of the Word of God, place them in a favorable position to see the approach of moral danger. Now, there are two questions at present agitating the community here: Whether it would be wise or right in this county to put down the traffic in strong drink; and whether the Bill to be introduced on the 20th and 21st, would help to guard this matter. On these two questions, especially the former question which is the main question, there is no class better entitled to speak than ministers of the gospel. When the question is about politics, about railroads we are silent. You had exciting discussions in this county since I came in here, about narrow gauge and broad gauge railroads; about politics—reform and tory; but, except in the way of private opinion, I never interfered nor attempted to direct you. If a question should arise as to disease among the people, the prevalence of fevers say, and how to prevent them, I would leave the point to the medical men of the county. Their education and their training qualify them to speak on this point; and the ministers of the gospel would be to blame did they meddle with what they did not understand. But when the question agitated comes to be a question of morals, of social order, a question that concerns the welfare of families and the temporal and eternal happiness of men, women and little children, then we claim that such a question lies within the sphere of ministers of the gospel, and that a great deal of deference should be shown to their views. But this question about the Temperance Act now

under discussion is a question of moral order, and a question therefore on which ministers are warranted, qualified and demanded to speak, to speak out without fear of consequences. It is a question in which ministers are deeply interested and a question they have studied some of them long and earnestly. For my own part, it is now 22 years since I first embraced the views I now hold, in the necessity of national prohibition to stem the tide of drunkenness in Britain and the Colonies. I have, during that time, watched the progress of prohibition in Maine, made enquiries on the spot, in travelling through that State, have before me reports by travellers and official persons, and I feel that I have right to speak on this question, and that I have a claim to be heard, a claim to be heard surely before men who are travelling this county as the hired servants of Tavern-keepers and Distillers of Ontario, some of whom are so ignorant of the state of this great Temperance question that one of them in my own hearing asserted that the Permissive Bill had been passed in Britain, and repealed after a trial of a year or two; whereas that Bill has never yet come within sight of passing the British Parliament. I claim therefore that as a watchman on one of the towers of Zion, I have a right to speak from this pulpit on this great question. If this congregation will say that my mouth must be shut at this great crisis, not only in the history of this county, but in the history of the Temperance cause in Ontario and the Dominion; if you, as a congregation say that I am to be silent, then as soon as our Presbytery meets I will put my resignation into their hands and walk out of this pulpit and make room for some dumb dog that will not bark, or who will meekly bark as you direct him. We dare not hold these pulpits to amuse or to put you asleep, as figure heads; but for action and speech. While we stand here as God's watchmen, we stand where (as Knox puts it) conscience demands of us to speak the truth, the truth therefore we must speak impugn it whose list. But I have no such fear of you, you have stood by me in days that are past, when it was harder than now; you have encouraged me to be honest and outspoken in my speech to you and your children, and I know as a general thing, you approve of the position I have taken on this question, and that in a short time you will show that by your action on the approaching days that are to cover this county with glory or with shame.

III. The duties of the watchman. Look

at that watchman as he paces his anxious round, with sharp eye and quick step, on the top of his lonely tower, heedless of every one. I will never forget a short time I stood beside one of them on the top of the Seraskier Tower, in the City of Constantinople where a watchman is stationed to look out for fires—a terrible scourge in these eastern cities. The anxious look of that man, his indifference to everything, is often before me as an example in my work. Watchmen are furnished with two instruments—a telescope and a trumpet. With the former they see the danger, with the latter they sound the alarm. From this I infer that the duty of the watchman is to be *sharp and loud*, sharp in seeing danger and loud in rousing the people. A watchman that cannot see very well is worth nothing, nay, he is dangerous, and a watchman that sees but who is afraid to disturb the people, or to offend the robbers, is more worthless, is more dangerous.

(1) Let ministers of the gospel learn from this to be *sharp-sighted* in seeing evil approaching on the church. Evil comes in disguise often; it comes attired as good; it comes in small things. It looks like a body horsemen ten miles away, visible only by the dust they raise. The church of God is under everlasting obligation to those sharp-sighted watchmen who saw the rise of heresy and immorality in little clouds no bigger than a man's hand, and warned the church before the darkness of hell's night came over the sky; but it does not require very keen vision to see the black night that is gathering over this land if the traffic in strong drink is allowed to stand on its present footing.

It is not simply that crime will go on increasing in the alarming ratio in which it has been increasing of late, but a portentous evil for our children there will assuredly arise in the community a corporation of liquor-dealers, calling themselves plausible names, such as 'Licensed Victuallers,' that will by-and-by control the Dominion as the slaveholders of the South for many years controlled the United States. I do not wish to speak in harsh language of those engaged in the liquor traffic, they are licensed by Government; they occupy responsible positions as heads of our large hotels—useful establishments; and I know good, upright men among them who would willingly see liquor forbidden in all public houses. But you know well that as a class the tavern-keepers of this country are largely outside the pale of christian society. The law forbids them to hold municipal office, and few

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of them are members of christian churches. Their families grow up in a rough, godless school; their sons often follow the father's business, each generation sinking in morals and rising in wealth, caring for neither church nor state if they can only follow their trade. It needs no keen vision to see what we will come to if this class gets the upper hand of us. A taste of their morals and manners we are now having in the documents with which they are flooding the country, that set sense, decency and truth at defiance; and in the whisky, which, like water, is running down every throat open to receive it, free to all comers, at the expense of this population of liquor-dealers. Being "Licensed Victuallers," why don't they give their followers victuals? This dangerous class has been ruling some of our townships and counties for years; they aim at reaching our Parliament! The time to fight for our liberties is even now, before the enemy is too strong; now, when it is smarting under the heavy blow dealt by the legislation known as the "Crock's Bill," now, when the temperance feeling has been aroused, by the fearful increase of crime in the Dominion, traceable largely to strong drink. He would indeed be a blind watchman, who did not see in the liquor traffic the greatest enemy to the peace, order, and well-being of society on this continent, since American slavery went down in blood, under the awful frown of the Lord of Hosts.

(2) Let ministers of the gospel learn from this to be loud and outspoken in warning the people of the approach of the enemy. The call to faithfulness is very solemn in the chapter. "If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand." Solemn words, truly, for me and men in my office! What is the criticism of any of you, my hearers, however highly we esteem the critic, in comparison with these words, as I understand them? And this is the way I understand them: Supposing, through my blindness or my cowardice, the traffic in strong drink is saddled on this village for years coming, as it has been in these sad shameful years past, when a village of a few score of houses, had in it five taverns. Let us suppose this to be so; and let us suppose that a man was stabbed through drink in one of these houses, as happened once in this village, and that he was taken away in his iniquity, some of that blood would be on me and some of it on this pulpit, and all the

soap on earth could not wash that stain from my skirts and this pulpit, because I ought to have sounded the trumpet, and did not. Whether the liquor traffic is put down in this county or not, one thing I am anxious to do - to free myself from all participation in the future consequences of the continuance of the traffic. In the past time when the duty was harder than now, I tried to be faithful. On my first coming here in 1856, as a missionary, strong drink was threatening to blast and destroy this county if ministers of Christ made no attempt to stop it. Soon after my settlement, in 1859, I saw the necessity of raising my voice against christians patronizing the games got up by tavern-keepers, to draw crowds at Christmas and New Year; against women having regard for christian character being seen or found at the balls got up by the tavern-keepers throughout the winter months; against christians sitting out evenings in bar-rooms or treating others there after the dangerous and expensive habit of this country; against liquor at your funerals, and liquor at your "bees." Some ten years ago, when it was a harder business than today, with others I tried to secure the passage of the by-law now under discussion in Holland, and we had then, to pay the penalty of defeat - a pretty severe one. Again and again I have told you from this pulpit that in such a country as this, in such a state of society as ours, every christian should be a total abstainer, if not for his own sake, for the sake of his children and his neighbors, and I have set you the example. When it was proposed to add a fifth tavern to our four, I headed a petition which was signed by almost every one in the village, save those in the liquor trade, for the council of Holland to refuse license. I do not regret these things to-day. Have I cause? Have you? I would do all over again. Can I, therefore, or should I be silent to-day? "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, so God help me." And now "Whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head." I am on this point at least free from the blood of all men, as I this day call you to record. Thus far, then, as to the office, the position, and duties of watchmen on the towers of Zion. Their office, position and duties it is necessary thus to define because there are not wanting in the community men who think and are not slow to say that ministers have no business to meddle in the controversy that is now agitating the county. If we have no right to raise our voice against one

of the greatest sins in the community; no right to discuss, in the pulpit and out of it, the methods by which the evil can be removed, no right to guide and educate the membership of our churches as to their duties as citizens, towards a traffic that is ruining the land and demoralizing the people; no right to say what Parliament ought to do in this in our present carnival of crime, to save the country. If we have no right to do any of these things, then I would like to know what we are here for? Are we to be mere ornaments on the tower, or set standing there to sing pleasant songs to amuse you, while the enemy is laying waste the fields and drawing near to attack the walls? We ought to tell you of Christ and his love; of heaven and its joys; of justification, adoption and sanctification; of all the benefits that belong to you as christians; but we must tell you of the work you are to do, of the cross you are to carry, of the sword you are to use, of the enemy you are to fight. They are babes in Christ, who must always be fed with milk, and rocked, and consoled. When christians reach the stature of men they are ready for work, and delight in doing battle for their Lord. That is our answer to those who wish to make our pulpits toys, and ourselves dummies in them.

Let me now answer two questions that are frequently asked about the legislation we are wishing to secure.

(1) Is it possible, many are asking, that under the Dunkin Bill, (you will excuse my using this short name for the Temperance Act of 1864) liquor may be sold in quantities of five gallons? With many that objection is only an excuse. They have other reasons for wishing to oppose the by-law; but not willing to question them they give this one. There are others however, who are quite sincere and honest in their difficulties. We must remember that the temperance Statutes of this country are not in a very clear and satisfactory position at present, and it must be admitted that the Dunkin Act taken by itself would allow liquor to be sold wholesale. But the Province of Ontario has something to say in this matter. She has, under confederation, the right of regulating her liquor traffic by giving or refusing license, at least nothing to the contrary has been decided yet. When therefore, a county passes a by-law according to the provisions of the Dunkin Act, forbidding, as every one admits, the retail traffic, the Province of Ontario steps in, according to the promise of its present ministry, and stops in that county the wholesale traffic. The two jurisdictions—

the higher one of the Act of 1864, and the lower one of the Acts of 1874 and 1876, manage the thing between them. If a father says to his boy "John, you must not smoke tobacco;" and his mother says "John, you must not chew tobacco," between them both, between the higher and the lower jurisdictions, the boy is debarred entirely the use of the noxious weed. So between the two jurisdictions: that of old Canadian Parliament which enacted the Dunkin Bill, and the lower jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario, which enacted the License Act of 1874 and the Act of 1876, the traffic can be completely stopped, that is so far as Acts of Parliament can at present stop it.

But this is only your opinion, you say. Exactly so. Nothing more. But facts confirm the opinion. Here is a fact which is stubborn. "In order," says a gentleman well known in this county, to solve the point, and find out the effect of this clause where the Act is in actual operation, we sent the following telegram to the Mayor of Picton, the county town of Prince Edward:

"Do the Merchants in your town claim to sell liquor wholesale without a license, and are they permitted?"

To which we have received the following reply:

"Picton, Sept. 4, '76.

"To D. Creighton, Owen Sound.

"Merchants do not sell liquor. No license granted except one brewer's.

J. H. ALLEN, Mayor."

This answer practically settles the matter. If merchants, under the Dunkin Act, could sell wholesale without license, the merchants of Picton, where the fight is being fought so bitterly, and where they know the law as well as we do, would certainly avail themselves of the power. But supposing the Province of Ontario was forced to grant licenses, it could very easily fix the license at such a high figure as to place the wholesale business in drink in a position that it would cease to be profitable, and then we would be no further troubled with it.

But (2) some are inclined to ask, supposing it were even so, that the liquor was sold *legally* neither by wholesale or retail, would the drinking of it be entirely stopped thereby? I wish you to mark my answer to this question, as it may save reflections on me in the future. I do not believe that this Act, nor any other Act will stop drinking all at once in this County or any other County where drink has been much used; where dealers have for years

made money by selling liquor, and drinkers have made merry by drinking it; such habits, appetites and associations cannot be easily rooted out. When one of your fields is over-run with Canadian thistles it is not one ploughing or two that will rid it of the noxious weed. You must wait till you can get something better to take root, to drive the intruder out. It is not in one day you can subdue a horse that for years had the upper hand of his driver. So with the appetite for drink, and the lust of making money out of it. This horrible traffic will die hard, will die slowly, in this very county, and in this Dominion, as slavery died hard, and the influence of the slave holder is now dying slowly, in the United States. It will take many years of watching and working, of praying and fighting, before the battle is won. It is not one stroke of the axe, nor a hundred, that will overturn the Upas tree that our fathers planted, and their children watered, for the sake of the bitter and accursed fruit of revenue that grew thereon. Should the temperance by law pass, as I almost believe it will, such a joyful event will not be to us so much a call to raise the shout of victory, as a call to prepare for a keener, closer and more costly struggle. You can, dear friends, thus perceive that I am not very sanguine of very astonishing effects, at first, from the legislation we seek; but I expect good, substantial good, from our conflict, and from its successful issue, should God grant it. Good, great good, has already come, and will come, from the agitation now going on. In the conflict of views and interests, there may arise hard feelings. We need not wonder. The first planting of Christianity was like "sending a sword on the earth." But when the thunder storm is over, the atmosphere will be purer, and men can breathe better. It has been so in our past struggles. But further, the enactment of prohibition in this county will diminish drinking to some considerable degree. It will banish drink into dark corners; it will surround drinking with the atmosphere that surrounds all crime; men will drink with doors locked, shame on their faces, and fear in their hearts. Respectable men will respect the law, though they took no hand in enacting it. Such is the effect in Prince Edward County, as we learn by a recent letter, which concludes as follows:

"We have had the law in force for four months. Even in that short time a great change has been effected. Many who often went staggering home, now go home sober. A favored few, who can be trusted by the tavern-keepers not to appear as witnesses against them, can have the luxury of getting drunk. But once in a while they make a mistake which costs them \$20 to correct.

"In Milford, a village seven miles from here, no liquor is sold at present. Before the introduction of the present law this place was the rendezvous of drunkards for miles around

and her streets were daily trodden by these victims coming and going to and from its bar-rooms. Since the first of May not one single case of drunkenness has been known, unless they came from other parts, and this has been but seldom.

"Demorestville, surnamed 'Soborn,' was a desperately wicked place, but a marvellous change has been wrought there. No more nightly orgies, but quietness is in her streets and the people feel that there is a change for good.

"Similar statements can be made of every village in our county. There has been already a wondrous change.

But better even than any effect we can look for at first in the County, is the effect our vote for prohibition will have on the slumbering ears of our Legislators next winter in Ottawa. We have sent petitions upon petitions down there, asking prohibition for the Dominion; but the reply of our Premier, who is favorable to the temperance cause, has been, "Shew us, by using the laws you have, that you are in earnest, and we will give you more stringent legislation." Let us take him at his word. Let county after county show, in the only way they can show at present, that they are on the side of prohibition, till county after county in Ontario is carried, and then we will get legislation ten times better than the Act for which we are now contending. The great temple of national prohibition that is yet to rise for our children in the New Britain of America, must be built, as rose the walls of Judea's second temple, with the sword in the one hand and the trowel in the other; must be built painfully, laying one stone upon another in sweat and anxiety, till the top stone is brought forth with shouting. And this by-law is a stone in the great structure—a coarse, unpolished stone, I admit—a stone not easily fitted to the other stones, but, nevertheless, an important stone in the structure. With the help of God, let us raise it into its place.

And now, in conclusion, allow me, as your pastor, to give you these words of counsel and guidance at this solemn crisis in our affairs. I speak not by way of authority, though authority belongs to my office, but entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ to take good heed to the following things:

1. Be on your guard against taking a cent of money or a drop of drink from either side in this conflict. I hope neither money nor drink will be given by the temperance party; but I fear that money, and especially drink, will be given freely on the other side. Resist with indignation the very first approach of such a loathsome way of debauching the electors.

2. Consider well how parties stand in the conflict. On the one side are the Ministers of the Gospel of all denominations; on the other side are the Licensed Victuallers. That is enough, surely, for Christian people, and it is

to them I am now speaking. I could say more, having seen and heard things that would make the heart of any Christian sad, but that is enough. We have opposed to us a wealthy corporation, who make their gain of this traffic. But for their gain they would not be against us, and but for their being against us, we would have no struggle, and not the least difficulty in getting the legislation we want. Consider these facts. Weigh them well.

3. Be fully persuaded in your own mind before you act. If you cannot make up your mind in the conflict of opinions, seek on your bended knees the guidance of God. Say to him, "O! send thy light and thy truth; let them lead me," and to the upright light will arise. And if you do not know what to do, rather keep neutral in the struggle than run the great risk of being found on the side of evil.

4. Let us do nothing in this contest unworthy of our name as Christians. Let us follow Him in, not being easily provoked, nor easily terrified; nor easily silenced. Like Him let our chief motives be the glory of God and the good of men; our chief dependence God's arm; and our chief joy God's sympathy. Let us, as He did, reply to our opponents in all meekness, with soft words and hard arguments. Let us try to convince them; and if we cannot convince them, let us try to put them to silence; and if we cannot do this, let us, like our Master, pray for them. Great is truth, and it will prevail. Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning. "May God's kingdom come!"—may Satan's kingdom be destroyed; the kingdom of grace be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it and kept in it; and may the kingdom of glory be hastened. Amen!

