

TEMPERANCE.

Effects of Drink on Publicans.

A correspondent sends us some instances of the effects of intoxicating drink on the families of liquor sellers on the Air-drie district during half a century. These illustrate in a striking manner the dangers connected with the traffic, and the fearful price at which it is carried on.

CASE I.

Within a hundred yards of the old Air-drie Cross, a respectable spirit vendor and his handsome, active, well-educated wife, occupied a splendid tavern. The middle and upper classes were their principal customers. In the course of a few years the husband became a sacrifice to his unhallowed employment, and instead of continuing to hand poison to his fellow-men, death cut him down. I often admired his stately widow. She was tall and comely in appearance, refined by education, and adorned by costly apparel. Nature and art combined to produce an attractive personage, so all the respectable "tipplers" were attracted by her charms, like chips of old iron by an irresistible loadstone. She was in affluent circumstances. In a few months after her husband's death, a young man was enticed by her wiles like the fly by the spider. He was married to her. Soon a young stranger came, but alas! the mother was now on the downward path. The helpless babe had the misfortune to be in charge of a drunken mother who when intoxicated, smothered the little one, and hurried the child to a premature grave. A second child shared a similar fate; the father was horrified, and, in despondency, left his wretched partner to finish her sad career. She retired to a country village, and for a season occupied a tavern, but the messengers pursued her there with legal claims, and so she was ejected from her habitation, and left to wander over the world a monument of woe and a warning to others. The last time I saw her she was sitting at the foot of a stair clothed in rags, grim and colorless, trembling and feeble, cold and hungry. I entreated a friend to wash her face and give her a cup of tea. I then lent her a hand to move away, but my heart being in agony, I was forced to exclaim, "Oh, my God! surely, surely, Thy heaviest curse resteth on the liquor traffic." Had that poor mother been a tigress instead of a drunkard, she would have laid down her life to save her offspring. Cain was marked on the forehead because he slew his brother, but this woman is doubly marked by the death of two helpless children.

CASE II.

A little distance from the house referred to above, another tavern was attended by religious professors, who inclined to have a quiet gormandize without being exposed to the gaze of any people who prefer abstinence to intemperance, and consistency to inconsistency, and safety to inevitable danger and ultimate destruction. Some ten years rolled over the head of that very respectable merchant; but the drink that rolled into his system bereft him of reason, and in a fit of insanity he wandered away seven miles from home. After some days spent by his friends in seeking to find him, they discovered him at last standing in a mossy swamp, buried up to the mouth, dead!

CASE III.

An industrious couple, who had saved some money, commenced a grocery establishment not far from the last house mentioned. They flourished remarkably well. The wife was humorous and jocular. The husband was civil and obliging. By the fruits of their trade after a few years they built a house which was an ornament to the street in which they dwelt. But in an evil hour they sought and obtained a license to sell intoxicating drink. Their social nature predisposed them to become sure and speedy prey to the enslaving habits of song-singing and dram-drinking. The jocular lady soon sunk lower than the animal that wallows in a sty. Some time she lived in that condition, till death in mercy cut her down. The husband had also become a victim, and soon followed his wife to the dark and narrow dwelling. Their children found shelter in the poor-house.

CASE IV.

In another street a quiet man, who was a deacon in a church, commenced

the traffic in strong drink, but maintained Bible reading and psalm singing in his domestic circle. But Bible reading and psalm singing could not nullify the deleterious influence of poisonous beverages. He had three daughters and one son; all seemed to be moral and steady; but appearances are often delusive. A school-master selected one daughter for a wife. Poor man! he soon discovered, by stern experience, that his beautiful wife was unfit to be trusted with the wages of his industry. So he had to be pursuer and message boy; father and mother to his neglected children. A broken heart shortened his days and ended his earthly sorrows. The second daughter was joined to a grocer and spirit dealer. They often fought like tigers, and after one encounter the wife expired. The son got a good education; but the counter home influence neutralized all other lessons. He left his home and ran a prodigal's race, and when in destitution he returned to his native place in rags and wretchedness, some distant relatives in pity clothed his trembling frame, and gave him bread to satisfy his hunger.—League Journal.

An Incident in Church Debt-paying.

BY EDWARD KIMBALL.

More than a year ago I met on a wharf in Boston Mr. C., a Philadelphia business man, who asked me to help the church with which he was connected, in an effort to reduce its debt. I promised to remember his request, and, taking his address, I later wrote him from New York, suggesting that he meet me half way, at Plainfield, N. J., and we would talk over the matter and arrange for the work. He came promptly, bringing with him the chairman of the board of trustees of the church.

This gentleman said to me: "Mr. Kimball, I do not think you will find our case a very difficult one, compared with many you have met, inasmuch as we shall only attempt to raise six thousand dollars, the amount of our floating debt."

"You speak, Mr. B., as though that were only a part of the church debt."

"Yes, we owe a permanent funded debt, which must lie yet for some years, probably; but, while we cannot touch that, we could go on with new life if our floating debt were taken off. But as we are now the work drags heavily."

"Is not your mortgage debt rather the heavy drag, and is not the floating debt the fruit from that vigorous and evil root? In other words, if you had no interest to pay, would not your income equal your expenses?"

"Probably so. But it is useless to talk of impossibilities. We feel poor and we are poor, and to raise that six thousand dollars would be all we could possibly do or wisely consider."

"Please tell me, if you can, the entire amount of your indebtedness as a church and congregation—principal, interest, arrears of every kind, with coming interest for one year."

"Oh! we have kept up our expenses, except what we have included in the six thousand dollars. Our mortgage is fourteen thousand dollars. Twenty thousand dollars will cover all we owe; but, Mr. Kimball, we cannot think of this. Our people will not think of it, and it can never be done till times improve."

"Then I must decline to visit your people, Mr. B.; but I believe your people would, as stewards of the Lord, to clear off all your debt, do four times what they would to remove the floating debt only."

"We cannot consider that at all; but let me understand you. Do you mean to say that you will not come to us unless you attempt our mortgage debt also?"

"Yes, sir; that is just what I mean. I must decline."

Mr. B. gave a long, low whistle, and said, "Well, I must say that puts a new face on this matter."

"Is not a new face what it wants, rather than to try to wash and cleanse that which cannot be made clean—an old church mortgage? But come! Don't be discouraged. Let us talk it over carefully. Your people can extinguish that debt, and I think they will enjoy doing it."

Talk it over we did, from 9 P. M., till after midnight; and the next Saturday evening ten or twelve of the active men of the church were together for prayer

and to strengthen each other in God. We spent an hour on our knees, and every man of us prayed. Separating just before the first hour of holy time, one of the brethren, who still believed in the reality of "the things which are seen," said to me:

"What will you do if it rains? We are going to have a heavy rain. It has commenced now."

I answered: "Do your people wash out easily? Never fear, brethren—Those prayers will not wash out. We will go on."

It soon commenced to rain steadily and heavily, and ceased not till after midnight on Sunday night. Sixty-five people formed the morning congregation, all ages included. We dismissed at 2 P. M., with fourteen thousand, six hundred dollars of the debt soundly pledged. Ninety-eight was the number who came at 7.30 P. M.—a little band like Gideon's. "I will test them by the water and try them for thee there." I had much difficulty in the evening persuading the people not to provide for the full twenty thousand dollars; but to leave a sum of the precious offerings to be made up by the absentees, who must not be debarred from the privilege of giving. They at length consented not to raise it all; but to leave a portion of the joy for their friends whom the storm had detained at home and by whom this amount was promptly assumed. There was present among the congregation; both morning and evening, a gentleman just entering upon middle life, who lives near the church, and who, though not a member of the congregation nor of any other, and not a Christian, either in name or in hope, sometimes dropped in to attend the services. On this rainy Sabbath he did so. He became interested in the work of the day, and shared somewhat in the earnestness of his intimate friend, Mr. C., who first spoke to me of this church as we met on the wharf in Boston. Mr. M. is an active and successful business man and a member of the largest firm in the country in his line of business. He offered one thousand dollars in the morning, to help on the debt, and took a pew in the evening, remarking to Mr. C. as he did so: "I think I am getting along pretty fast—a thousand dollars in the morning, a pew in the evening. I don't know what that man will do with me next. Have me converted, for aught I know." Mr. C. repeated Mr. M.'s remark to me after service Sabbath night, and I resolved to see Mr. M. the next morning. Accordingly, I called at his business warehouse, and, after a few pleasant words, I asked him if he made the remark, quoting it. He smiled and said:

"Yes, I said that, or something quite like it."

I said to him: "You do recognize, then, that conversion to Christ is what you need most, and that all the relations between the church of Christ and yourself should tend toward and aid in securing that, as the only valid and valuable result?"

"Yes, I suppose I do. But, as to that, I have always thought"—

"Pardon me for interrupting. But may I suggest that what you have always thought has not helped, or you would have been converted long since? What has, probably, hindered—what you have always thought—is, I think, just what has kept you away from Christ. Will you now for one hour drop your thought, and try to put God's thought in the place of it? If you will, Mr. M., you will be a Christian. I quote his words: 'The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.' Again: 'Casting down imaginations [or reasonings] and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' 'Cast down and cast our your thought and take in his, and in his light you will see light, and see through, too.'"

"Can I? That is what I want, then."

"Mr. M., can you and I have an hour alone in your private office, and will you secure us from interruption?"

"Yes. Come in."

He gave orders against being called for, locked the door, and we sat down together.

"My dear friend, can I come close to you with questions which shall reach down to the depths of your soul; and if you see the answer to my question, will you give me the answer, no matter what

it may be, or what it brings you to admit? I will ask nothing difficult or improper, of course."

"Certainly, Mr. Kimball, I will, at least, do that."

"Then there'll be no trouble, and I want you to expect that you will find God's Word converting your soul before we leave this office this morning. 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' I want you to expect now to find that exactly true and in your own case. Now, we are to keep down our own thoughts for a while, and we shall find that God has thought lovingly and well for us. Hear him tell his thoughts: 'I know the thoughts of my heart toward you—thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end.'"

We talked freely in this way for a little while. Mr. M. was candid, sincere, and in earnest; and, as

"God never yet forsook at need. The soul that trusted him indeed,"

he was soon able and glad to make a full and complete surrender as a lost sinner to Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

In his prayer of penitence and joy he earnestly begged for strength and help to train his motherless children to meet their sainted mother in heaven.

As we rose from our knees, I asked him: "Did your children ever hear you pray like that?"

"No, sir," he answered.

"Did no one ever hear you pray since your childhood till I did just now?"

"No, sir; never."

I asked: "What does your family consist of at this time?"

"My mother-in-law, my two children, and the servants," was Mr. M.'s reply.

I said: "Is the mother-in-law the mother of that sainted wife, and is she like-minded with her daughter?"

He answered tenderly: "Yes; and she is as dear an old 'mother in Israel' as ever was."

"Who taught you," I asked, "to talk about 'mothers in Israel'? Had you a praying mother?"

"Yes, Mr. Kimball; indeed I had."

"Mr. M." said I, "will you at home to-night, and before the children retire, take the Bible and sit down beside the 'dear old mother in Israel,' and, taking one child on your knee, put your arm around the other, read from the Word of God, and then, all kneeling together, will you pray with them, just as you did here with me just now?"

He thought a moment, and then answered: "Yes, Mr. Kimball; I will. It is right, and, God helping me, I will make it a part of our family life to continue it." And he did so.

We soon left the office and passed into the street. Walking along, arm in arm, he suddenly stopped, with: "Hold on! Mr. Kimball. There's my partner."

"Who?" I said. "Mr. W.?"

"Yes," he replied. "He has a Christian wife. She is a member of a Presbyterian church, and he is not a Christian. She would give her two eyes if he could feel as I do now!"

I said: "Let us go back, then, and see him."

"No. You will lose your train," he replied. "Let me go to him."

I told him I cared little about missing the train; but said: "You never loved his soul so before, did you? That is the 'love of God shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost,' who has taken up his abode therein. Can you and will you, at once, lead Mr. W. over the same sweet road you have just taken in your soul's coming to Christ?"

"Yes," he answered, eagerly. "I believe that I can."

How clear it was! "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed," etc. "Quench not the Spirit." "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

Here was God's love for dying men instantly taking the control of this newly-born soul. The Lord had come to his temple, and taken the gladly accorded and regal place there.

I said: "Mr. M., When will you do this? Without delay?"

"Yes," he answered; "to-day, sure." "I leave him with you, dear Mr. M., and I will take the train," said I. And I did.

so: "Charlie, where's W.? Call him. Tell Mr. R., also, to please come to the office." In a few moments two middle aged gentlemen, whom I had never seen, entered the office, and Mr. M. introduced me to them. They were the partner of whom he had before spoken so earnestly, and another, also connected with the firm, both of whom had, through Mr. M.'s faithful and loving testimony, been led to the Son of God and the Saviour of Men.

All three of these men had confessed Christ and united publicly with his church, and all were now heads of Christian families.

"The Holy Spirit shall testify of me, and you also shall bear witness, because you have been with me," said Christ. "They overcame, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the Word of their testimony."

Months later, as I stood laboring to remove another debt from a church whose place of worship is exactly opposite the one I have spoken of, I held in my hand the wholly cancelled mortgage which had been the objective point of our efforts on the stormy Sabbath when I first met Mr. M.

"Bring ye all the tithes, and see!" saith the Lord of Hosts.—The Independent.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

More from "Crito" on John iii. v.

Mr. Editor,—

I may possibly have misunderstood Rev. Mr. Richan's double interpretation of *pneuma*; but his explanation is not very helpful. If I understand him now, the matter stands thus,—the word Spirit means the Holy Spirit, but spirit is a symbolical name applied to "the Third Person in the Trinity, and also indicates the office he performs in regeneration." That is, spirit without the initial letter capitalized has a more extensive meaning than the same word with its initial letter capitalized. This seems equivalent to saying,—man properly means the agent, but man while meaning the agent, also symbolically means the office he performs! This may be clear enough, but mankind has not yet learned to talk and write in that way.

Mr. R. thinks it more reasonable that in answering the question of Nicodemus our Lord should refer to the manner, or how the great change was to be effected, rather than to the ordinance or act that symbolizes that change. It is sufficient to reply, that Mr. R. admits baptism to be a symbol of regeneration; and the further fact should be remembered—that our Lord in the great commission (Mark xvi. 16) connects baptism most closely with faith, which, either as cause, means, or effect, is most intimately connected with regeneration, and so with salvation. Mr. R. seems to suppose that the process of regeneration must be given in order to answer the Jewish Ruler; but if that were necessary, the question remains unanswered; for it does not appear that any description is given in the scripture of process in that inexplicable and mysterious operation.

But, seeing water had been used from the beginning of the gospel in connexion with the profession of repentance and faith, in relation to the Kingdom of God, that our Lord submitted to be baptized in "water," and that during his ministry he sanctioned the administration of such baptism, and ere he ascended to heaven commanded this baptism to be observed by believers to the end of the world, it does seem to me very natural and reasonable to understand "water" in the above discourse of our Lord as meaning baptismal water.

Notwithstanding Mr. R.'s exegesis was not sought out to escape the hastily reached conclusion that "baptism is essential to salvation," that however seems, after all, to be the trouble.

Instead of taking "water" in its literal meaning and obvious reference in relation to the Kingdom of God. Mr. R. insists that it means the word of God or the instrument of regeneration. It looks auspicious, however, when an interpreter deserts, without sufficient stress, the native and proper meaning of a term. Where, I ask, in scripture is the word designated "water?" Notwithstanding the passages Mr. R. has referred to, I cannot see any proof that "water" means the "word," no more