

## SOCIOLOGICAL SECTION.

### The Church and Temperance.

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It will be remembered that just about a hundred years ago William Carey asked his famous question whether the Church of Christ was doing all it ought for the conversion of the heathen. It will also be remembered that godly and venerable men received the suggestion with great indignation, and demanded that Mr. Carey "sit down." Nevertheless we now see not only that the suggestion was true, but that it very much needed to be made. Our only wonder is that any one should have had occasion to make it to a church which had in its hands the New Testament.

It is the story of the ages. Christianity is an infallible revelation, but it is not committed to an infallible church. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Apostles had to toil and warn and plead to keep the Church in their own lifetime from departing to the right hand or to the left, as the epistles abundantly prove. For the same thing the glorified Redeemer had to warn and plead in the apocalyptic messages to the churches of Asia. The path of the Church down the centuries has been a series of recoveries from relapses to the simplicity of the Gospel at point after point. So far from its being unreasonable to suggest that the Church may now be falling short of its duty at some one point, the probability is that it is failing in ways which no one has yet suggested or even thought of, but which will be seen in the clearer light of coming days. Hence every suggestion of a possible defect to be remedied should be most carefully and prayerfully considered—dismissed if shown not to be according to the Word, but cherished and acted upon if it be.

Let us apply Carey's question now to the subject of temperance, and ask: "Is the Church of Christ doing all it

ought for the suppression of intemperance?"

It must certainly be admitted that if the Church is not doing all it can, it is not doing all it ought. I believe all thoughtful men must concede, on calm reflection, that the Church has not done and is not doing for the suppression of intemperance all it can. In fact, so far from having reached the boundaries of possibility, the Church has scarcely yet aroused and shaken herself for the mighty conflict.

One eminent minister, when asked if he preached on temperance, replied, "Not specifically. I preach against all sin." But it is the specific that is wanted. The sin is specific, the temptation is specific, the gilded saloon is specific, and the drunkard's grave is specific.

If we had a war with England, and a British fleet were sailing toward our shores, and if our navy were anchored off the coast somewhere and firing generally at intervals over the ocean, and if some enterprising correspondent were to ask an officer, "Are you watching against the British fleet? Are you making special preparation to meet and stop it?" it would hardly satisfy the country for him to reply, "Sir, we are firing in a general way against all enemies of the United States—all enemies, sir! We do not inquire whether they are British or French or Patagonian. We are firing these shells promiscuously over the ocean, and if any enemies of the United States come in the way they'll get hit. We cannot narrow our view to a single nation. All enemies, sir! We oppose all enemies!" We should think something more specific, if not quite so sublime, would be vastly more effective and patriotic.

Here is intemperance sailing down upon us, plundering \$1,200,000,000 a year from the wages of the people, and leaving in its path 60,000 dead, the blighted forms of millions living, and