

been received. It would appear as if wherever the children of God like the sons and daughters of Job assemble or dwell, Satan in some form or other, will come from his wanderings up and down in the earth, to interfere with their religious duties, and to mar their spiritual joys.

#### INTEMPERANCE.

Many of our Kirk Sessions feel that one of the great hindrances to the success of the Gospel and to the prosperity of Christ's Kingdom, is the sin of intemperance. This sin has been one of the most powerful antagonists to man's spiritual interests in every age since Noah cultivated the grape, and drank too freely of its fermented juice; and the light and blessings of our Christian civilization do not seem to lessen its influence, or to mitigate its evil. It interferes with the Christian ministers at home, and with the missionary's labour abroad. It is found with its evil concomitants in every city, town and rural district. There is not a congregation within our bounds which has not to bewail its evil influence. Indulgence in this sin steels the heart against the gracious influences of the Gospel, and unfits men for salvation. "The drunkard shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

#### WORLDLINESS.

The progress of religion is greatly hindered by worldliness. This sin is not so apparent in its opposition, and not so dreaded or condemned by men in general, as the sin of intemperance, yet it is one of the most dangerous foes we have to contend with. It blinds the minds of them who believe not, so that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the image of God does not shine unto them. It insinuates its poison into the affections with the recommendation to respectability which it receives from the world. It darkens the understanding, sears the conscience warps the judgment, leads saints away from Christ and prevents sinners from ever approaching him. Perhaps more than any other sin it hinders the progress of Christ's Kingdom. "He that loveth the world the love of the Father is not in him." This hindrance to the truth is not confined to any congregation, or community or class. It shows itself in every class of society and is connected with almost every evil. By long indulgence in worldliness sinners have become Ahabs who for gain would destroy the reputation and life of their fellows, and professors of religion have become like Demas. For the love of the world, they forsake Christ and His cause. Many people who are named Christians will not exercise the same self denial for Jesus and His cause which they will do for the possession and good-will of the world.

#### LACK OF FAMILY TRAINING.

In many of our congregations there is a grievous lack of religious family training. Some parents are too indolent to take any interest in the religious instruction of their children, and others imagine that they have performed all their duty when they permit them to go to the Sabbath School, and their spiritual interests are committed to teachers with whom, perhaps they have very little acquaintance. These children feeling the chilly influence of their parents neglect, are apt to become indifferent to religion; and when they come to maturity have no more appearance of piety than the children of non-professors. They become like Sampson after he rejected his parents dedication and was shorn of his locks. They become weak as the children of the world.

#### ELECTION STRIFES.

For the past few years in many of our congregations religion has suffered severely in consequence of a state of sinful commotion by election strifes, with all their accompanying evils, such as bribery, drunkenness, alienation among neighbours, and a spirit of contention among professing Christians. People appear to think that during a political contest religion should hold her peace, the Church should be dumb, and political partizans controlled only by political partizanship, may act as they please, and reign supreme in the community. Many times and oft when a political purpose had to be served, men like Herod and Pilate made friendship over the death of Jesus.

#### FALSE PLEASURE.

In some communities the religion, especially of the young is greatly hindered by having too ready an access to the ball-room, and the pleasure party. The tendency of such scenes as they witness in these places, is to keep them in a frivolous state of mind. "They are living in pleasure, but they are death while they live."

#### DESTITUTION.

Not a few of our congregations are destitute of a settled pastorate. With the exception of an occasional probationer, or Catechist, they have none that go in and out among them, to break to them the bread of life. They have no minister whom they call their own—whose voice is familiar to them, to whom they can go for sympathy in the hour of sorrow, for counsel in the hour of doubt, and for direction in the hour of prosperity. The ordinances of religion are not regularly maintained, and the friends of Christ and of the Church are discouraged.

In some localities where they have a settled minister, the Presbyterian population is so sparse, and the labours of the pastor are scattered over such a vast extent of