

totally inadequate. Within the past week there have been no less than four cases of this kind of offence, two being peculiarly heinous, and unless the magistrates inflict a penalty that will strike terror into these brutal ruffians, some people may feel very much like taking the law into their own hands." There is no doubt, as to the report we must bring in. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint."

II. *What are the causes of this state of matters?* A knowledge of the disease and its causes is half the cure. In reply to this question we would say in general terms that the cause of these crimes is mainly and chiefly the natural depravity of the human heart. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," etc. "The heart is deceitful." But there are influences at work that stir up this depravity. Can we lay our hands on any exciting causes of crime. (1.) There is ignorance of the word of God. "My people perish through lack of knowledge." "That the soul be without knowledge is not good." And yet hundreds of families are without worship and reading of the scriptures. Then, in many of our day schools the Bible is never read. So that many young people begin life in great ignorance of Christ. Their minds are like a city with all the walls broken down. 2. There is another cause—the prevalence of error in regard to the nature of sin, its awful villainess and its endless punishment. If there is no life after death, or if there is no punishment, or if the wicked are restored, etc., then what restraint on unconverted men from any crime they can commit, without fear of punishment. (3.) Another cause is the full reports given in newspapers of crime. Newspapers ought to record the news faithfully: but not all the circumstances. The judge and jury ought to hear the evidence; but there is no reason why the public should. But the newspaper is largely a speculation for making

money. "They who live to please must please to live." Hence whatever makes the paper sell, must be inserted. Readers, shut out all such papers from your houses. (4.) A cause worse than any is the traffic in strong drink. It is the opinion of many that three-fourth's of the crime committed is through strong drink. Of 7,000 prisoners in 1873, 5,000 were intemperate. The *Recorder* of Montreal says that nine-tenths of the crime in his city is through strong drink. These are some of the causes of the awful prevalence of crime in our midst. Our next enquiry must be: Is there a remedy? Is there balm, etc.

III. *Is there a remedy for this state of things?* We have reason to thank God that we can answer in the affirmative. There is balm, there is a surgeon. A wound, bruise etc., requires the knife of the surgeon and the balm of the apothecary. It requires sharp means and gentle means. Both these God has provided for us. The balm He provides in the gospel of His Son. Here is the remedy that soothes and heals. The knife He provides is the sword of civil power. "If thou do that which is evil be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." The minister, and magistrate, are both from God; each has its own place and sphere. They are like the fingers and the thumb on opposite sides, having opposite functions, powers, privileges, but working together as the five fingers do, to promote peace on earth, and glory to God in the highest. When these two institutions are faithful to their mission there is public health, or if wounds appear they are soon healed. But the existence of the balm and the physician, or surgeon, is of no avail without the application of the remedy. The ointment may be on the sick man's table, and the surgeon at his bed-side, but if the balm and the