

distinction between the allowable and the expedient. This position Paul took, this principle he held, and this practice he exhibited and advocated, and he never lived to regret, but ever to rejoice in the course he pursued. Whatsoever then makes a brother stumble or offensive or weak, should readily, and in the spirit of a liberal and loving Christianity, be cheerfully foregone. And what cause or combination of causes does this more effectually than strong drink? No one will dare assume that the Bible enjoins the habitual use of strong drink, nor will he dare to affirm that it forbids him to abstain. Such being the case, it can only be a man's liking for it that leads him to continue it. Example, we know, is weighty in proportion to the worthiness of the individual, and when Christians, acknowledged to be conscientious in their general deportment, are known unscrupulously to use strong drink in their homes and their haunts, oh! who can tell how powerfully this tends to strengthen temptation, to weaken resolution, to lessen restraint, and to lighten and lower in the popular mind the criminality and the guilt, the hatefulness and the horror, with which the bare idea of drunkenness ever should, and otherwise would be contemplated, and until otherwise respectable people cease to confer upon habitual drinking a respectability which it could never earn and can never deserve until they stand aloof from it and disown and denounce it as disreputable and debasing, God-dishonouring and soul-destroying, what hope have we, or what guarantee is given either for the safety of the young or the rescue of the old who may still be entangled in the toils of a long-fostered temptation? A man may maintain a so-called standing in society who makes, or sells, or drinks strong drink, although many thereby may be led down to temporal or eternal ruin. With the license in his hand and the law on his side he will tauntingly tell you, if so, they have themselves to blame. Yes, Adam blamed Eve, but while God condemned her, this did not clear him, and with the same God all have to do. Let each one then more and more, for the good of man and the glory of God, seek yet more and more to mature and to manifest that "love which worketh no ill to his neighbour."

IV. Christians should wage a ceaseless warfare against all iniquity. While Christ died to redeem us from *all* iniquity, the existence of the Christian and the organization of the Church are both in order to the conversion of the world. Now what, amid the world's manifold iniquities, does more to mar the beauty, sully the character, lower the tone, weaken the power, waste the resources, wilt the worthiness, and obstruct the progress of both, than strong drink. Yet, in view of all, a Presbytery such as that of Toronto, met in solemn conclave in the name of Christ, could only by a bare majority carry the following motion: "The Presbytery would recommend to the office-bearers and members of the Church the practice of total abstinence." But this was more than nullified at a subsequent sederunt, when these men of God without a single recorded dissent cast out the following recommendation of their committee: "The Presbytery would express the decided conviction of the expediency and desirability of the total prohibition of the traffic throughout the Dominion," on the ground that it was going outside of their functions as a Presbytery to meddle with the matter; that while Christians as subjects may do as they list, Christians as saints should let the matter alone. Instead thereof it was in substance solemnly decreed that the Church, as a Church, should leave its members, as members, to do in the matter as seemeth good in their own eyes, and asserting as plainly as words can do that the Presbytery declare it as their decided conviction that the total prohibition of the traffic throughout the Dominion is *neither expedient nor desirable*.

I trust that the Presbytery will ere long with a meaning that will not be mistaken and with a power that will not be unfelt, wipe out the dark blot that has blackened their record and obliterate forever the foul stigma that has stained their escutcheon. True, I am aware that so-called "advanced thinkers" hold that the evil is to be met and mastered not by combat and conquest, but simply by ignoring its ravages and daring and defying its power, that the Church, as a Church, and Christians, as Christians, are severely to let it alone. In this way sin is to be subdued, and Christian holiness and heroism be at once exercised and increased. This, however, ill accords with the faith that fights the good fight, the love that hates every evil way, the courage that assails and pulls down strongholds, or that hallowed heroism that goes

forth, sword of Spirit in hand, conquering and to conquer—ill accords with the injunction and example of Christ who came not simply to withstand but to *destroy* the works of the devil, and this in our day is the devil's masterpiece. In wisdom and in love water is the only drink that God provides and man needs, and the sooner and the more men become satisfied with God's providing, the sooner and the more they will shew their wisdom and secure their weal. Other drinks in all their manifold variety are the manipulations of men, and are no more the creatures of God than the bread we eat or the raiment with which we are clothed. Let the men then who lightly tamper with the temptation not only "abstain from all appearance of evil," but dread the "woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth his bottle to him." Let such feel and fear the awful possibility of dying a drunkard, for no one ever became a drunkard all at once, or ever *designed* to become one, and let him know that as long as he abstains he stands secure against such a woful issue. And let every lover of God and good remember that either religion must crush intemperance, or intemperance will cripple religion.

SECULAR SERMONS.—I.

CLERICAL WIDOWS AND ORPHANS.

MR. EDITOR,—With your permission I propose writing a few articles in your valuable paper from time to time, under the above caption, on various matters that affect the merely business or secular side of our Church. I think there is not only ample room but great need for laymen like myself expressing their opinions and venturing suggestions on many topics that concern the vital welfare of the cause we so much love. Let the minister preach from the pulpit and I'll exhort from the pew, the press and the platform—not antagonistic but auxiliary. The pew ought to second and support the pulpit in all good words and work. Both acting together harmoniously, conscientiously, and strenuously in the cause of righteousness, could soon Christianize the world. In these letters I will make no pretension to grace of style or flower of rhetoric. Dashed off at spare moments, snatched from the cares of an exacting profession, I will merely endeavour to state as plainly and tersely as possible what I wish to say. As you are aware, a great deal has for years past been thought out and written on the subject of Sustentation Funds for supplementing the salaries of the clergy, for supporting the aged and infirm among them, and providing for their widows and orphans in case of death. Let me add my mite to the general fund of accumulated opinion and suggestion. In doing so I may remark at the outset that an amazing amount of the world's work in modern times is carried on by companies and combinations of every kind. Nearly every enterprise of any magnitude is now managed by a company. Why? Because union is strength. The genius of the present age is combination, for the prosecution of peaceful objects. Formerly the ignorance of men and their distrust in one another kept them apart. In those times it was the unity of fear of force, of autocracy or despotism, that reigned supreme. Now it is co-operation and the combinations of republicanism that are destined to rule the world. Our Church is a large, wealthy, influential company, a united body, and has been so for years. Her ability to do good both spiritual and temporal is simply incalculable. It has therefore occurred to me that in her financial and secular departments she has not done, nor is she now doing, as much as she might. Her leading lay officers don't take the congregations sufficiently into confidence, nor do they explain and urge as a matter of business the many wants of the Church and the various schemes requiring support. They should shew by their own liberal, vigorous actions that they really believe in the truth of what they urge. I will at this time suggest one subject for their consideration, viz.: Provision for Widows and Orphans of the Clergy. Our ministers are badly paid while they live; they get next to nothing when they are sick, and when they die their loved ones receive the smallest possible pittance for their life support. This is not as it should be. Where are the shrewd business men, the able financiers, and the keen-sighted, far-seeing bankers, lawyers, and commercial men, of our Church? It is admitted that they exist in abundance within her jurisdiction. Let them then put a little of the energy and ability they exhibit in

their own affairs into those of the Church, and the result would be both great and beneficial. I for one will suggest the following plan for providing support in case of death. It is immediately feasible and practicable, and will secure a comfortable sum for the objects proposed. We have in our Church, I believe, in round numbers, 500 congregations in good standing, with stated ministers regularly dispensing the ordinances of public worship. At the death of each minister in good standing let the whole of these congregations be notified, and an average sum of \$5 for each be collected and sent to the treasurer of the Synod, within whose bounds the death occurs, to be by him at once paid over to the widow or legal representatives of the deceased. This would produce the sum of \$2,500, and would be a handsome legacy to the parties benefited. I don't mean that the above should interfere with any of the existing funds or schemes for the support of the clergy, but in addition thereto in case of death. I see no difficulty in making this plan at once available. Every minister is vitally interested therein, and on being notified of his brother's death would at once bring it before his congregation. His managers would then collect the money, be it large or small, and have it sent without delay, not knowing but their own minister's death-call will be the next on the list. I do not mean that the above assessment of \$5 each should be the amount granted by all the congregations alike. Rich churches would give more and poor ones less, but if it averaged this amount from all the sum total would be the same. Or let the total collection, whether more or less than this, be paid over, no matter how much the amount, and the good work is complete. The contributions from each congregation might be reckoned at so much per member. Five or ten cents each would do the work, and who could refuse this small pittance for so worthy an object? Again, this assessment would not often be required, as the death-rate among the 500 would not be large, not more perhaps than one death in every two years. I merely give the outline of the scheme, let others fill in the details. The above assessment or collection could be made the moment a minister in good standing became wholly incapacitated for labour through illness or otherwise. The amount might be invested until his death, then to be paid over as above, and the interest in the meantime handed over to him for his support. This plan would secure to our hard-worked, ill-paid ministers freedom from that worry and anxiety about a final provision for those they love, which so many now endure in heroic silence. It would secure the benefits of a perfect life insurance without any of its risks, expense or penalties, and is the plan in vogue by many of the friendly and the benevolent societies and orders in the country. If this scheme is not good, will some one rise and explain. I have had my say. LEX.

St. Marys, Ont., April 9th, 1881.

THE Presbyterian congregations of Cheltenham and Mount Pleasant have given a call to the Rev. John Gilchrist, of Shelburne.

A FIRST-CLASS Bell Organ, suitable for parlour or Sabbath school, for sale at a bargain. Apply at THE PRESBYTERIAN office, 5 Jordan street, Toronto.

COL. SCOTT, the railroad magnate of Pennsylvania, is wisely distributing his wealth during his life. He has recently given \$50,000 to the Chair of Mathematics in the University of Pennsylvania, \$50,000 to Jefferson Medical College, \$30,000 to the Orthopedic Hospital, \$20,000 to the Children's Department of the Episcopal Hospital, and \$50,000 to Washington and Lee University, Va.

EX-GOVERNOR E. D. MORGAN, of New York, has contributed \$100,000 toward the purchase of a site for the new buildings of the Union Theological Seminary in that city. Last year Governor Morgan made a similar gift of \$100,000 for the erection of the buildings. The site which has been selected by the board of directors comprises ten city lots between Sixty-ninth and Seventieth streets, fronting on Fourth Avenue and nearly opposite the Normal College for women. A building committee has been appointed, and work will begin immediately. The Faculty hope that the Seminary will be installed in their new quarters by September, 1882. To complete the buildings, \$175,000, besides the \$200,000 given by Governor Morgan, is required, and \$50,000 of this has been subscribed in amounts not less than \$10,000. One person subscribed \$20,000.