

wretch was dipped into a cask of tar, and then rolled him in the feathers of one of his own beds, and, in this plight, was mounted on a rail, which was carried, in solemn procession, a distance of seven miles, where he was placed out of town, with a threat of being worse dealt by if he ever entered it again.

The Spirit of Christianity Considered in its Bearing on the Temperance Cause.

It has been remarked by Paley, that one object of Christianity is not so much to furnish rules as proper motives for human conduct. This very obvious fact has been frequently overlooked, and in consequence, Christian effort has been withheld, when we would have expected it to be most vigorously exerted. The absence of *express precept* has been a reason to many why they have been inactive when they ought to have been 'up and doing.' This misapprehension is one which we would like to remove. We know that the 'cause' with which our *Journal* is indented has suffered from it. The fact that this 'cause' is not commanded in so many words in scripture, has been arrayed as a proof that it is opposed to this authoritative guide. Though this process of argumentation is false, and, if carried out, would involve in condemnation some of our institutions whose social utility is universally acknowledged, yet it has not been without effect; and it, therefore, becomes a matter of great importance to place the question in its proper light. To do this, we must glance at some of the leading characteristics of Christianity.

Now, one feature which separates christianity completely from pretended revelations, and gives it its high social value, is the *comprehensiveness* of its moral precepts. The New Testament is not like a work on casuistry: it does not detail minutely cases of conscience and show how they may be resolved; it does not enter into all possible exigencies, and point out the special course of conduct which should be adopted. It states the broad principles on which all human duty rests, and so links them with its doctrine that the man who is honestly inquiring the 'way he should go' can scarcely err. It proclaims the great truth that all men are brethren, and identifies the interests of our neighbour with our own. Besides stating the fact of the unity of our race, and thus, by implication, the blood relationship which unites us all, by revealing that we are the children of one Father, who is God, it discovers the basis whence branch out the moral ties which bind us together, and gives them both meaning and power. It shows us what God is, thereby teaching us what we ought to be, and by its revelation of the fact of our moral relationship to him, and of the true purpose of human life, it establishes the fundamental social law which has been announced in the two different forms:— 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' and 'whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, that do ye even so unto them.'

Another feature of christianity, equally attesting of its utility and divinity as the other, is, that it appeals to the *heart*. It concerns itself more with the feelings and affections from which our actions spring, than with the forms into which these actions are thrown. It attaches more importance to the enkindling in the heart of genuine love to our neighbour, than to a minute detail of the various ways in which it is possible for us to benefit him. It thus tries to purify the springs of human action, and through them to regulate moral conduct; for the outer life is but the embodiment of the inner.

For this purpose, it not only appeals to the manifestation of God's character in Christ, but presses into its services such other moral agencies as contribute to raise man's character, and make him what he ought to be: whatever is 'lovely and of good report' is commended. The various sources of

moral elevation are not neglected for the one great source, which is Christ. The motives which they furnish, instead of being superseded, receive additional power from the light in which christianity presents them to the mind, and are rendered subservient to the influence of the gospel on the heart. The very fact, for example, that we are to do all for the glory of God, and that with our compliance our happiness is bound up, gives weight to all those considerations which lead us to be careful of our personal character, and guarded in our intercourse with our fellow-men. We see that our conduct ought to have a tendency to strengthen virtuous principles and feelings in our breast, and to awaken them in that of our neighbour; and we recognise at once the wisdom and feel the power of the precept, 'To do good and to communicate, forget not.'

From these observations, it is plain that christianity, instead of discarding the use of secondary means, adds to their influence, by presenting them in their proper light. Moreover, we see that it does not descend to a minute detail of the various modes in which human duty may manifest itself; but states the broad principles upon which the whole superstructure is reared; and by its singularly clear enunciation of the character of the affections we ought to cherish in the heart, as well as its delineation of the moral excellence we should attempt to attain, it casts such a flood of light on the whole circle of man's relationship that we can be at no loss to discover, in almost any case, what course we ought to follow. If we apply these remarks to the temperance question, we shall find that we stand on a firm basis. The inquiry is not, 'Is there express precept to warrant the movement?' The character of the moral teaching of christianity does not lead us to expect this. Its code is perfect, we admit, not however on account of the minuteness of its details, but from the comprehensiveness of its precepts. It is, therefore, enough for us if there be a law with the *spirit* of which our conduct accords. So that, so far as the temperance movement is concerned, our investigation has regard to its *harmony* with the *moral teaching* and *moral purpose* of christianity. This is to act on the Saviour's principle of testing the tree by its fruits. The whole, then, is a question of aim and effects.

Now, that intemperance is to be deplored is not for a moment questioned; and that it is our duty to attempt to put it down, is also admitted. The difference between us and some of our christian brethren respects the *means*. Here, then, as we have said, the proper test is the result of *their* working. In personal abstinence, all grant there is nothing wrong. No one would so far hazard his character for common sense, as to deny this for a moment. The question thus comes to be, can we, by our example of abstinence, and by actively persuading others to follow it, contribute more effectually to the suppression of the vice of intemperance, than those who are as loud and earnest in denouncing it as ourselves, but who practise and defend the legitimacy of moderate drinking? If we can, then assuredly we are not only warranted but *bound* by the spirit of christianity to press our example. The obligation under which we lie 'to do good,' which comprehends, without specifying how it may be accomplished, the promotion of our moral improvement and that of our neighbour, brings in abstinence at once, if it proves itself sufficient for its purpose, as part of our duty. That purity of personal character which christianity so solemnly enjoins, and that warmth of social affection on the cherishing and manifestation of which it insists so strongly, leave no doubt on this point. What, then, are the facts of the case? Intemperance has long been the curse of our land. Tens of thousands have fallen as its victims, and among these men of the noblest talent. Moreover, in consequence of its prevalence, pauperism, crime, and immorality of every description have been increased. Drunkenness has proved itself a moral miasma in giving birth to a thousand